Manga, Murder and Mystery: Investigating the Revival of the Boy Detective in Japan's Lost Decade

by

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Abstract

The past two decades have seen a sustained growth in the number of Japanese mystery and detective comics (manga) publications that feature boys (and girls) as crime fighting agents. While the earliest incarnation of the boy detective character type can be traced to the works of Edogawa Rampo (1894-1965), little critical attention has been paid to the impact of his works on contemporary manga narratives. This thesis takes up the genre of Japanese mystery/detective manga and explores the construction of the boy detective (*shōnen tantei*) to address the crisis of young adult culture during the so-called Lost Decade in Japan. It conducts a comparative textual analysis of three commercially successful manga: Kanari Yōzaburō and Seimaru Amagi's *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* (1992-1997), Aoyama Gōshō's *Meitantei Konan* (1994-), and Ohba Tsugumi's *Death Note* (2003-06), and reveals that the boy detective is defined by his role as the other, but that each series deals with this otherness in thematically different ways in response to the discursive formation of youth delinquents in 1990s Japan. Additionally, because the boy detective tradition in manga emerged from more traditional literature, this thesis takes an interdisciplinary approach to contextualizing the deeply complex literary history of Japanese detective fiction as it contributes to an understanding of how (youth) identity can be analyzed in detective manga. The objective of this thesis is thus twofold: to trace the literary development of the boy detective to identify how the genre evolved into the medium of manga, and to identify the social and cultural factors that led to the resurrection of the boy detective in the 1990s. In taking an interdisciplinary approach, this thesis foregrounds themes and critical discourses of identity, nation and youth culture. And, in doing so through the case study of children's literature and manga, I re-center discourses of the nation towards youth itself to explore how the boy detective emerged as a site of national trauma.

Preface

Some of the research conducted for this thesis builds on forthcoming and on previously published works. Sections from the introduction and parts of Chapters One and Three of this thesis appear in, and also build on a forthcoming publication in, *Mechademia Second Arc,* vol. 11, edited by Sandra Annett and Frenchy Lunning, and published by the University of Minnesota Press: "Combatting Youth Violence: The Emergence of Boy Sleuths in Japan's Lost Decade." A condensed version of the historical context on Sherlock Holmes in Japan from Chapter One appears in the article, "Global Partners against Crime: Rewriting Sherlock Holmes and Watson in Japanese Video Games." *Replaying Japan Journal*, vol. 1, no. 1, 2019, pp.40-51. The textual analysis of Volumes One and Four of Aoyama's *Meitantei Konan* series in Chapter Four of this thesis, has been slightly modified from the article "From Sherlock Holmes to "Heisei" Holmes: Counter Orientalism and Post Modern Parody in Aoyama Gōshō's *Detective Conan* Manga Series," *International Journal of Comic Art*, vol. 15, no 1, 2013, pp. 230-50.

Acknowledgements

"There is nothing more deceptive than an obvious fact."

— Arthur Conan Doyle, "The Boscombe Valley Mystery"

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Glossary of Terms

Non-English Key Terms:

Japanese	English
Aum shinrikyō	Japanese cult founded by Shoko Asahara in 1984
Gakureki shōnen	A student who has achieved top grades and attended top schools throughout his/her life course.
Gekiga	Comics aimed at adult audiences with a cinematic style and more mature themes
Mangaka	Manga creator
Meitantei	Great detective
Ochikobore	Describes somone who fell through the crack of society; loser
Shōjo/ Shōjo manga	Girl/ manga aimed at a teenage female target-demographic readership
Shōnen/ Shōnen manga	Boy/ manga aimed at a teenage male target-demographic readership
Shōnen A	Boy A or Youth A
Shōnen tantei	Boy detective
Shōnen tanteidan	Boy detectives club
Tankōbon	Individual volumes of a single manga, as opposed to magazine serials
Tantei manga	Detective manga
Tōdai	Abbreviation of Tokyo University

Author's Note

  For all Japanese names, excluding those of scholars publishing in English, I follow the traditional order with the surname appearing before the given name (e.g. Aoyama Gōshō). All Japanese to English translations are my own, unless otherwise specified. Japanese authors who use pennames are referred to by their first names, as in common Japanese practice (e.g. Edogawa Rampo is referred to as Rampo). All Japanese names and words are romanized according to Hepburn style (e.g. Hyōjun-shiki). Note that the spelling of the name コナン has been

romanized to Konan, following Japanese convention, though Aoyama himself spells it as Conan in the title of the manga series. Japanese words are italicized with exception to those that have been adopted in the English language. Titles of texts appear in English first followed by the original Japanese title and date of publication. Throughout the thesis, I mostly refer to original Japanese titles.

Introduction

Tracking the Boy Detective Across Time and Cultures

Has the world outgrown the classic boy detective? The title of John Finlay Kerr's article, which appears as the last chapter in *The Boy Detectives: Essays on the Hardy Boys and Others* (2010), asks this very question. It is also one of the many questions that I explore in this examination of boy sleuths in Japanese manga. According to Kerr,

> Boy detectives have laid down their magnifying glasses, so to speak, in the "putting away of childish things," and are not as popular as they once were. Sleuth youths like Tom Swift, the Hardy Boys, the Three Investigators and Encyclopedia Brown now seem woefully outdated: they are pie-eyed and wholesome and utterly WASP, and their mystery-solving is laced with stereotyping, class-bias and patriarchal values. (180)

Kerr's position on the issue is clear. For him, the world has "undoubtedly" (195) grown too old for boy sleuths. However, he lists three different ways in which the boy sleuth has been revived for contemporary readers; specifically, he identifies three archetypes of modern-day boy sleuths. These include Mark Haddon's Christopher Boone, "who modifies the boy detective archetype radically by depicting a sleuth who is also a sufferer of autism" (181), which has redefined the role of the boy sleuth and his mode of detection by means of addressing a level of "self-referentiality" (183) and "self-awareness" (184). According to Kerr, this "offers an appropriately estranged new perspective on familiar themes" (184). The second archetype of the boy sleuth is that exemplified in Joe Meno's *The Boy Detective Fails,* who "matures into a fallible adult, failing to live up to his crime-solving potential" (184). This archetype is often easily parodied, suggesting that "to modern tastes, the boy detective appears as a ready-made, prepackaged joke"

(190). The third archetype of the boy sleuth is found in "texts that branch out into new media forms where their simple restoration of order can still appear original, such as in the revivals of the Hardy Boys series in technologically savvy books, comics, and computer games" (191). These boy sleuths can be found in Original English Manga series such as *The Hardy Boys* comics (2005) and Jill Thompson's *The Dead Boy Detectives* (2005). [1]

Despite these different strategies and approaches to reviving the boy detective for modern readers, Kerr ultimately seems to be concerned with the trajectory of the genre of children's detective fiction asking, "why are there so many of these last ditch efforts to revive boy detectives, to shift them into more current surroundings, if the only avenues that are available are through cynicism, or desperate attempts to reenergize them with technology?" (195). Perhaps, for Kerr, this shift signals stagnation, or worse, the "death" of the genre of classic boy detective stories, but what can be said of the construction of boy sleuths in other cultural works and in more recent works? Has the *world* outgrown the classic boy detective? What might the boy detective in other parts of the world reveal in terms of cultural attitudes towards children, crime, and detection? In Japan, the boy detective is a popular character type, with manga, anime, film, and TV series featuring boy and girl sleuths released on an annual basis. This thesis addresses the crisis of youth culture in Japan as it examines the construction of boy sleuth in detective manga, specifically the literary construction of boy sleuths influenced by Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and the Baker Street Irregulars in order to uncover the culturally meaningful ways in which they have been appropriated in Japan. The texts discussed include Yōzaburo Kanari's and Seimaru Amagi's *The Case Files of Young Kindaichi* (*Kindaichi Shōnen*

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[1] According to Kerr, OEL (Original English Language) manga refers to "modern cross-pollination [which] includes a visual grammar that is decidedly a conglomeration of American and Japanese styles: reading as American comics do [. . .] but using Japanese iconography for emotions and actions" (193).

no Jikenbo, 1992-97), and Aoyama Gōshō's *Case Closed* (*Meitantei Konan,* 1994-), two of the most iconic series of the boy detective genre—and Ohba Tsugumi's *Death Note* (2003-06), which I briefly discuss in Chapter Five. In this thesis, I investigate how the boy detective emerged to address perceived youth problems, but in thematically different ways—through the role of the rebel boy detective, the ideal boy detective, and the criminal boy detective—exploring them in relation to the wider political backdrop of Japan's Lost Decade, a period of economic stagnation, to situate a reading of how the boy sleuth reflects and responds to cultural anxieties and discourses of youth deviance at the time. A further contestation of this thesis is that boy detective tradition in manga developed from a literary tradition, and it does not exist in a vacuum. The first two chapters of this thesis are dedicated to contextualizing the boy detective tradition in literature and manga. My approach to "interpret[ing] a text from its grounding in culture and time" (Henderson 7) refers to what Deborah Henderson has described as the cultural studies approach to the study of crime literature. This introduction briefly explains this interpretative framework in relation to my own approach to the study of detective manga. I then turn my attention to situating this study within the broader field of children's mystery stories by drawing extensively on the tradition of the boy detective in America and Britain, in order to provide a platform from which to understand the construction of the boy detective across cultures. At the end of this introduction, I provide a summary of the chapters in the thesis.

A Note on Critical Approaches to the Study of (Children's) Detective Fiction
The study of detective fiction has been approached from many different critical perspectives. I will begin by framing detective fiction and its scholarship in the Western enterprise then will later look at Japanese scholarship, as well as Western scholarship on Japanese detective fiction.

According to Heta Pyrhönen, literary criticism of detective fiction can be categorized into four

phases. The first phase was largely defined by "authors of detective fiction and aficionados who

wanted to justify their writing and reading habits and to explain what made the genre worthy of

study" ("Criticism and Theory" 45). These included G.K. Chesterson's critical discussions on the

genre in *The Defendant* in 1902, which was followed by a host of other writers in the 1920s,

including "Dorothy L. Sayers, Willard Huntington Wright (S.S. Van Dine), and the poet C. Day

Lewis (Nicholas Blake) together with such academics as Marjorie Nicolson and E.M. Wrong"

("Criticism and Theory" 45). The second phase is said to have emerged with the arrival of

structuralism, which gave way to the formalist approach of deciphering the genre through its

structural units and grammar. By the 1970s and 1980s, a serious study towards an understanding

of the cultural function of detective fiction marked the third phase. Most notably, in his landmark

Adventure, Mystery and Romance, John G. Cawelti developed a theory of understanding

narrative formula as a form of cultural myth making.[2] Cawelti and other critics of the 1970s drew

attention to the understanding of popular culture as having what Pyrhönen describes as a "benign

function of teaching individuals how to adjust to and cope with modern society" (*Murder from*

an Academic 90), which set the groundwork for exploring the "ideological underpinnings" (47)

of detective fiction. The notion of ideology as a site of cultural and political contestation gained

momentum in the 1980s, but, as Pyrhönen points out, "studies of generic ideology during this

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[2] According to Cawelti, the cultural function of narrative formula, detective fiction included, lies in its escapist tendencies, or what he calls "moral fantasy," a means by which a text "generates some temporary suspension of disbelief" (*Adventure, Mystery and Romance* 38). For example, the moral fantasy of the classic detective story is that "the problem always has a desirable and rational solution" (*Adventure, Mystery and Romance* 42-43). Simply put, as Rita Elizabeth Rippetoe explains, "despite the superficial realism of the form, the mystery reader knows that in actual life crimes may go unsolved and unpunished (7). Drawing a connection between the genre's form and cultural content, however broad, Cawelti notes that "readers of the classical detective story shared a need for temporary release from doubt and guilt, generated at least in part by the decline of traditional moral and spiritual authorities, and the rise of social and intellectual movements that emphasized the hypocrisy and guilt of respectable middle-class society" (*Adventure, Mystery and Romance* 104).

period were by no means unified" ("Criticism and Theory" 47). At one end of this debate, critics such as Stephen Knight and Dennis Porter voiced their concerns of the genre's complacent conservatism. Knight once argued, "The notion that knowledge is personal property [. . .] responds directly to the ideolofy of the bourgeois professional intelligentsia who were and still are the central audience for the cerebral detective story" (62). Porter has claimed that "the most popular detective fiction everywhere represents an ideal form of policing insofar as it is in conformity with the most cherished behavioral norms of a given society" (129). At the other end, critics such as Pyrhönen, who builds on Jim Collins's works, claims that detective fiction has the potential to "pu[t] forth views that are dominant and oppositional, regressive and progressive" ("Criticism and Theory" 48). Finally, in the 1980s and 1990s, with the emergence of feminist and other cultural revisions of the classical detective fiction formula, the fourth phase of detective fiction criticism focuses on investigations of race, gender, and class.

Indeed, the dismissal of detective fiction as mere entertainment and as escapist literature has long been challenged, yet the genre of children's mystery, and more specifically, a study of the ideological implication of the role of boy and girl detectives, has received little critical attention by comparison. This is surprising considering that "post-structuralist readings of the underlying value systems of detective fiction" (*Murder from an Academic* 85) have been around since the 1980s. In 2010, C. M. Gill drew attention to this gap in scholarship, arguing that "in spite of the considerable influence of the Hardys, few scholars seem interested in the boy detectives, and their significance within our literature and culture has gone largely unrecognized" (35). In his essay "Crime and Detective Literature for Young Readers" (2010), Christopher Routledge lamented that "crime and detective writing for children has frequently been omitted from the wider history of detective fiction" (322). As a result, "the importance of mystery and

detection in stories for young readers has been seriously underestimated and underexplored"

(322). One possible reason for the lack of critical reception may be due to an assumption that boy

sleuth stories, with a focus on simple puzzles and petty crimes, lack the very "rigor" and

"complexity" of adult detective fiction. Needless to say, "detective writers have frequently used

the conventions of the genre as vehicles for social and cultural criticism" (William W. Stowe

570), and this includes authors of children's mysteries. According to Stephens and Mccallum,

ideology in children's literature, broadly speaking, refers to

> systems of belief which are shared and used by a society to make sense of the
>
> world and which pervade the talk and behaviors of a community, and form the
>
> basis of the social representations and practices of group members. [. . .] No
>
> narrative is without an ideology, and since narratives for young readers maintain a
>
> primary focus on events and characters which are isomorphic with actions in the
>
> world inhabited by readers, they are always imbricated with ideological positions
>
> (370).

It should be understood that the discursive formation of the boy detective has little to do with

boys themselves. In her introduction to *The Return of Peter Pan or The Impossibility of*

Children's Fiction (1984), Jacqueline Rose once stated that "Children's fiction is impossible, not

in the sense that it cannot be written (that would be nonsense), but in that it hangs on an

impossibility, one which it rarely ventures to speak" (1). Rose further argued, "To say that the

child inside the book—children's books are after all as often not about children—is to fall

straight int a trap. It is to confuse the adult intention to get at the child with the child it portrays.

If children's fiction builds an image of the child inside the book, it does so in order to secure the

child who is outside the book. The one who does not come so easily within grasp" (2). Scholars

of children's mystery fiction have pointed out that the boy detective is often defined in relation to idealized standards of boyhood, which are legitimized through certain institutions and legislative policies and by people in positions of authority, and therefore power, that monitor and police the boundaries of boyhood/manhood and childhood/adulthood (Andrew; Cornelius; Nash). My thesis adds to this ongoing scholarly discussion by re-centering discourses of nation towards youth itself to contextualize a reading of the boy sleuth in 1990s. The creators of the manga series examined in this thesis were around their mid-to-late twenties at the time that their works were published. They were once youth themselves who lived through Japan's age of economic prosperity in the 1980s as well as through the aftermath of the country's economic collapse in the 1990s. Considering their role as young adults, the three manga series discussed in this thesis show, to some degree, how the youth of Japan can move themselves from the object-positioning of being represented in literature, towards being the subject-position in national rhetoric, speaking their own truths about school, home and social expectations.[3] In other words, detective manga are not only written by young adults who represent youth as an object that symbolize the nation, but might reveal what youth themselves have to say about nation and identity.

What has generally been said about the boy detective is that he is often embedded within cultural knowledge and values of how "good" and "proper" boys ought to behave. His role varies across cultures, but often the boy detective is seen to patrol other boys (and girls) to keep them away from the dangerous world of crime and by teaching them right from wrong. As such, the boy detective in children's mystery stories often serves a didactic purpose. This is not to argue that the genre restores conservative values, as critics such as Stephen Knight have argued, but

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[3] Here, I would like to thank Dr. Rachael Hutchinson for pointing this out.

quite the contrary; as Stowe points out, "Writers can also use the detective-novel formula [. . .] to criticize its own assumptions about the world's intelligibility" (572).

According to popular culture critic, Deborah Henderson, crime fiction "provides writers a forum to reflect upon a culture's motives for conformity or deviance, what it considers important or unimportant and how it thinks about the possibility of finding justice given the existing political and judicial systems" (8). In order to decipher the "cultural motives" of texts, Henderson stresses the importance of understanding texts within their respective cultural and historical contexts and traditions. This she argues, is also integral to a cultural studies approach to crime literature: "A cultural studies approach takes into consideration larger socio-historical phenomena that might be meaningful to members of the culture and which the author employs as taken-for-granted knowledge or events" (22). These include "the mythologies that underlie a culture's tradition; the historical events that helped shaped the culture's identity and the people's sense of the future; the economic, political, or legal system that organize the culture" (22) and so on. Given the interdisciplinary nature of cultural studies, however, and the fact that it can be approached through various theoretical frameworks, Henderson's approach lacks a clear methodology. Instead, she provides several interpretative frameworks for analyzing topics of race, gender, sexuality, and history in crime literature, suggesting the importance of open-ended readings over any monolithic application.

Because critical approaches to children's mystery fiction (Andrew; Cornelius; Nash), often frames analyses of texts in specific historical and cultural contexts, I conduct a close textual analysis of selected works in relation to the discursive formation of the category of adolescents in Japanese society within the wider socio-political, economic and cultural contexts of the Lost Decade as it foregrounds themes and critical discourses of youth identity. If crime

fiction represents "dominant ideas of the time and those that struggle for cultural space" (Henderson 3), what can the boy detective tradition tell us about the discursive formation of youth identities and the cultural practices related to it in Japan? A reading of the boy detective within a specific historical and cultural moment helps situate an understanding of the ideological underpinnings of his role in fiction. Specifically, the boy detectives examined in this thesis, which I argue can be read in response to a perceived rise in youth crimes and a moral panic regarding out-of-control Japanese youth, which was triggered by the economic recession and sustained through sensationalized media depictions of criminal youths, mediate their difference from, and their fundamental challenges to, their role as individuals within society in different ways.

As a genre that emerged in response to cultural anxieties of the rise of youth culture and/or juvenile delinquency, the boy detective, as detectives often do, upholds the status quo and a middle-class worldview. However, some stories offer alternative, sometimes even controversial, worldviews. In this light, it is important to understand the construction of the boy detective on a continuum of the two major trends that characterize the genre: its function as a reinforcement of social and cultural conservatism, and its capacity for (radical) social critique. Is the boy detective a subversive figure or a compliant one? Throughout this thesis, I demonstrate how cultural fears and anxieties of Japan's uncertain future were projected and inscribed onto the Japanese youth and how the boy sleuth emerged as a site of national trauma to make sense of contentious questions of identity and oppositions between tradition and modernity and Japan and the West.

Before I discuss the significance of my findings, it is necessary to situate my research in relation to studies that have also examined the boy detective in other cultural traditions. The

following section explores the construction of the boy sleuth in greater detail, contextualizing his role in American and British traditions.

The Boy Detective Tradition in North America and Britain

Stories of detection for children do not exist in a vacuum. Christopher Routledge's periodization of crime literature for young readers suggest that the genre has a long and varied history, but often scholars, including Christopher Routledge, tend to focus on either the American tradition of boy detective narratives or the British one. For the most part, the study of children's mystery fiction tends to focus on Western stories in the English language, with the American and British traditions forming two distinct categories. Currently, there are two book-length studies and a handful of journal articles that critically analyze the role of boy sleuths in fiction. These include Michael G. Cornelius' anthology *The Boy Detectives Essays on the Hardy Boys and Others* (2010) and Lucy Andrew's *The Boy Detective in Early British Children's Literature: Patrolling the Borders Between Boyhood and Manhood* (2017). Both Cornelius' and Andrew's studies provide invaluable chronologies, analyses, and perspectives on the cultural and literary construction of the boy detective in their respective traditions. The essays collected in Cornelius' anthology focus mainly on *The Hardy Boys* and Nancy Drew stories, whereas Andrew traces the evolution of boy detectives in the medium of boys' story papers, serials, and fiction series.

Generally, in detective fiction, the adult detective is experienced and often celebrated for *his* intellectual and physical dexterity. He is savvy and fights to rid evil in order to restore moral, social, and patriarchal order within a fragmented society. In this predominantly male-oriented and adult world, the representation of women, and particularly that of children, has left but an

impression of their presence.[4] Indeed, children within the genre of detective fiction seem to have made little impact as detecting agents in comparison to adults. This is because children often serve as the detective's assistants, such as the Baker Street Irregulars in Doyle's *Sherlock Holmes*. The Irregulars were a gang of young boys who were hired by Sherlock Holmes as his Unofficial Force. They were paid a shilling a day, with a guinea prize for a vital clue in an investigation. In all fifty-six short stories and four novels that make up the Sherlockian Canon, the Irregulars are featured in two novels and one short story.[5] Typically, within the Sherlockian Canon, children have occupied three roles. The first category, as Auberon Redfearn notes, consists of "incidental characters—messenger boys, street arabs—diminutive agents populating Watson's pages, expending their little sparks of energy in the service of the saga, leaving only the small shadows of their passing across the leaves of the biographer's notebook" (47). The second category includes "characters related to plots but not directly concerned—neither seen nor heard by illustrious visitors" (47). Finally, children are cast as "characters of intrinsic importance" (47). According to Redfearn, "although the number of children mentioned is surprisingly large, [within the Sherlockian Canon] those involved in plots are curiously few" (47). Rarely do children take on a position of authority and therefore power.

This might come as no surprise when considering that detectives dwell in a world of crime, corruption, and corpses, a world in which children, typically, do not belong. However, detective fiction for children has had a longstanding history. The earliest incarnations of the boy sleuth in the American tradition might include the Tom Swift books first published in 1910, but as Cornelius states, "the Hardy Boys series is, of course, the epitome of the boy detective story"

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[4] This is not to argue a lack of female sleuths or women writers of detective fiction.
[5] These include, *A Study in Scarlet* (1887), *The Sign of the Four* (1890) and "The Adventure of the Crooked Man" (1893)

(15), and the Nancy Drew series (1930) is the "epitome of the girl detective story." Both the

Hardy Boys Mysteries (1927) and *Nancy Drew* Mysteries (1930) were created by Edward

Stratemeyer, who founded the Stratemeyer Syndicate in 1905, "where he devised concepts for

series books and hired ghostwriters to develop his outlines into complete manuscripts, which he

published under a variety of pseudonyms" (Nash 73). In the first installment of the Hardy Boys

series, *The Tower Treasure* (1927), Frank Hardy, a sixteen-year-old student at Bayport High, and

his younger brother Joe work together to solve a robbery with help from their father, Fenton

Hardy, a famous detective. The series became an instant success as "the first few volumes of the

Hardy Boys [. . .] sold well enough to warrant further volumes and a further extension of the

format to a girls' series" (Nash 74). The popularity of the Hardy Boys was surpassed by none

other than the Nancy Drew books, which, Nash argues, "would eventually become the

Syndicate's most famous and most successful creation" (74). A close textual analysis of the

Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew series is beyond the scope of this introduction, but as a study

couched within cultural studies, and where the aims of this thesis are concerned, I draw on the

cultural and political climate in which these stories emerged.

Within the American tradition of children's mysteries, Ilana Nash connects the

emergence of the Hardy Boys as a response to the rise of teenage culture throughout the 1930s

and 1950s. She points out that "In every decade of their production, the Hardy Boys and Nancy

Drew capitalized on the growing cultural fascination with adolescence as a time of disruptive

power" (84). According to Nash, "When the Hardy Boys debuted in the late 1920s, the United

States was experiencing its first nationwide introduction to the concept of a unified youth

culture" (Nash 75). The boy and girl sleuth emerged as an effort to combat the image of youth

delinquents typically depicted in pulp fiction that "portrayed high-schoolers as violent gang

members and sex-crazed drug addicts" (77). Boy and girl sleuths, on the other hand, were law-abiding citizens who displayed model behavior.

In her brief chronology of youth culture in America, Nash explains that in post-World War I American society, young people embraced alternative ways of expressing their identities, from consuming bootleg liquor and jazz music, to "[g]irls [who] 'bobbed' their hair in defiance of traditional styles" (Nash 75), and to having "a more open attitude toward sex than their parents' generation" (Nash 75). As a result, youth were perceived as "damaging the traditional hierarchies of race, class and gender upon which society relied" (75). Anxieties about out-of-control American teens are manifest in every decade since "[t]he word 'teenager' [. . .] became a commonly accepted moniker for adolescents" (Nash 75) in the 1930s. The discourse of juvenile delinquency was produced and re-produced by media, pulp fiction, and people of authority, who exaggerated facts and fostered a sense of moral panic. Nash reports that by the 1940s and 1950s, "[a]nxieties about the atomic bomb and the Cold War were transferred, as political anxieties often are, on to the image of the nation's youth, and many unquestioningly consumed the widespread story of teen behavior as a serious threat to postwar American society" (76). Contrary to the belief that detective fiction produces criminals or teaches readers how to commit the perfect crime, the genre worked as a kind of remedy to ease cultural fears of juvenile delinquency. For example, Nash points out that "Frank and Joe Hardy and Nancy Drew exemplified modern youth who supported the sensibilities of conservative, white, adult society" (79). In other words, "the reader is generally asked to identify with the actions of the sleuth and not the scoundrel" (Cornelius 6). For this reason, "children's mystery series offered a consistently positive image of youth's power to triumph while upholding traditional values, thereby appealing both to young readers' and to adults' desires" (Nash 84).

While not much critical attention has been paid to the literary construct of boy sleuths in the American tradition, according to Cornelius "[a]ll adult detective fictions are, in many ways, a response to, or a redaction of, Poe's Dupin, from Conan Doyle to Christie to even modern takes on the detective like the popular television franchise *CSI*" (7). However, the boy detective in the American tradition was "a juvenile outgrowth of the popular dime novels of the latter half of the nineteenth century" (7) and was more specifically influenced by "popular tales of Horatio Alger Jr., who popularized boys' and girls' 'rags to riches' tales" (7). The prevailing American myth of the self-made hero and the belief that perseverance against all odds will lead to a life of material wealth and success were central to these narratives, but Edward Stratemeyer redefined the formulae of the Alger boy books by upgrading the status of his protagonists to "middle or upper-class background" (7).

Class is also an important aspect in the development of the genre in the British tradition of boy detectives, as middle-class sensibilities and values came to define the ideological construct of boyhood and therefore the role of the detective. To this day, boy detectives are marked by what Dominic Cheetham has observed as "an upward shift in class" (37), which he attributes to the "pressures of convention in children's literature" (48). Although issues of class are not central to this thesis, it is important to acknowledge that a shift in class allowed the boy detective to take on a greater degree of social responsibility, authority, and power.

In the British tradition, the Victorian cultural context is important to an understanding of the emergence of the boy detective. It also provides vital clues about the different ways in which cultures define detection, schooling, and the role of the detective. Taking this into account, Andrew draws attention to the differences between the American and British traditions, pointing out in particular that "while American boy detective protagonists and their boy readers alike

were directed towards individualised maturity" (7) in Britain "social reformers wanted to cultivate characteristics in boys that would later enable them to enter into proper manhood—a collective adult identity that focused on the nation's needs over individual desires" (7). In other words, while the American tradition of boy sleuths can be characterized by its emphasis on individualism, the British boy sleuth exhibited a "collective ideal of manhood" (7), which was in line with the belief that boys were meant to "remai[n] subservient to and under the influence of the men whose shoes they would fill one day" (Andrew 7). This emphasis on the collective, however, is not a distinct characteristic of British boy detectives, since themes of teamwork also resonate in the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew series, and are also a defining characteristic of Japanese boy sleuths. Another significant difference between the American and British traditions is that while the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew were segregated in terms of gender, the boy detectives in the British tradition popularized by Enid Blyton "are more commonly members of mixed-gender investigative groups such as the Famous Five, Secret Seven and Five Find-Outers rather than detectives in their own right" (Andrew 1).

The Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew are iconic youth detectives who emerged in early twentieth-century America as a kind of solution to the moral panic over the rise of teenage delinquents. The earliest incarnation of the boy detective in the British tradition has been traced to Ernest Keen, who made his first appearance as "the hero of the 'penny dreadful' serial *The Boy Detective; or, The Crimes of London. A Romance of Modern Times* (1865–1866)" (Andrew 2) and was "[c]reated in response to anxieties about pernicious literature and juvenile delinquency—and as a direct opponent of the boy criminal hero popular in the "penny dreadful" form" (Andrew 2). Like early youth detectives such as the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew, Ernest

represented the best characteristics of nineteenth-century youth. Andrew offers a comprehensive list of Ernest's outstanding attributes:

> He successfully performs detective duties—tracking, spying, undercover work, disguising himself, hunting for clues making deductions, rescuing damsels in distress and engaging in physical combat where necessary. He works in a professional capacity, alongside the police, and successfully solves crimes and captures criminals. He is intelligent, quick thinking, observant, physically fit, plucky, loyal, patriotic, and incorruptible. He has a sense of duty to society, a respect for the law, a strong moral conscience, and while he himself is socially mobile, he reinforces middle-class values and upholds the social status quo. (2-3)

Like most boy detectives, Ernest Keen has an emblematic name that is "designed to encapsulate some kernel of truth, some aspect of identity [. . .] in a wholly earnest (though sometimes quite ironic manner" (Cornelius 2). Ernest was a cultural symbol of ideal middle-class boyhood who "play[ed] an active role in the moral and social education of its readers" (Andrew 34), particularly in demonstrating the importance of middle-class virtues for working-class boys in order to steer them away from "develop[ing] into the wrong kind of men" (7).

Stories featuring Keen, which began in the 1860s, were replaced in the 1890s with the emergence of the professional boy detective in the Harmsworth's boys' story papers. However, by the turn of the century, with fears of "the decline of the British Empire and the impending threat of war," the professional boy detectives who appeared in "[n]arratives featuring young sleuthing heroes such as Stanley Dare, Harry Fairfax and Bob Dawson, Robert Lomax and Frank Dennis, and Mark Youall emphasised the growing independence and investigative skills of the boy detective protagonists" (Andrew 93). It was in these stories that the boy detective took on a

more central role as an autonomous detecting agent free of adult supervision. The rise of the Boy Scouts movement, spearheaded by Robert Baden-Powell, was seminal to the development of this subgenre, "as boyhood came to be seen as a period of preparation for the role of defender of Empire in manhood" (Andrew 188). However, as Andrew points out, "the aftermath of World War I saw the boy detective's role in professional detective narratives set in an adult, violent, criminal world become increasingly, and perhaps inevitably, restricted—responding to the real-life passivity of boys in wartime and a shift in attitude towards boyhood" (147).

Whereas the boy detectives of the late Victorian period rose to positions of leadership, the boy detectives of the Edwardian period took a backseat in comparison as they transferred "from a dangerous, urban, adult environment to a relatively safe, enclosed, rural, child-centric domain" (Andrew 148). In other words, it was the Edwardian cult of childhood, defined by "a growing interest in child welfare and an increasing protective segregation of childhood and adolescence from adulthood" (148), and also a series of legislative policies regarding children's rights, that influenced the emergence of the new subgenre of boy detective stories in which school played a central role. For this reason, Andrew stresses that "more than any boy detective model that came before it, [the schoolboy detective] contributed to the moral education of the boy reader" and "demonstrated to the boy reader that his behaviour and actions could affect not only his own moral development but also that of his wider boyhood community" (178). Considered a "safe haven from the dangerous adult world, both in fiction and reality" (148), the school, as an agent of socialization, was the ideal place for moral instruction and peer culture for both boys and girls.

The school detective genre, however, posed some limitations for the boy detective: "School rules and the obligations of school life frequently act as an impediment to detective

work, and it is the adult enforcers of these rules that pose the biggest problem for the schoolboy detective [. . .] his sleuthing activities are still restricted by adult supervisors of the child-centric school environment" (Andrew 180). According to Andrew's chronology, the school detective genre was replaced by holiday-adventure stories, which "are set outside the school environment during Christmas or summer holidays" (82). More importantly, Andrew points out that "this subgenre firmly established the boy detective as middle-class, amateur investigator, in contrast to the earlier working-class professional boy detective" (184). One of the most prolific writers of this subgenre at the time was Enid Blyton, who produced over 600 stories (Andrew 198, n.9) that "became the dominant mode of detective fiction in the children's series novel in Britain from the 1940s onward" (183). Consequently, however, this novel format of detective fiction replaced the paper-story format, which "brought with it a decline in the social and cultural significance and the ideological functions of the British boy detective" (Andrew 193). According to Andrew, "the weekly publication of the Amalgamated Press story papers enabled them to respond rapidly to contemporary events and attitudes in a way that is not possible in the series-fiction market" (192). As a result, what is lost in the series novel is "the same disciplinary, monitory or aspirational impact as the earlier story papers, which had been produced by middle-class adults for working-class boys" (Andrew192-93). Thus, with its relative lack of timeliness and political significance, the series novel signalled the end of the boy detective tradition in story-papers, at least in England.

Surprisingly, remnants of the early British boy detective, according to Andrew, can be found in American superhero comics. There are several reasons why the boy detective has survived in the comics medium. First and foremost, as Andrew points out, they are "[c]loser in format and formula to the British story-paper detective narratives" (193). Using DC's *Batman*

and Robin series as her primary example, Andrew argues that American superhero comics "adopt an adult hero/boy sidekick formula reminiscent of the detective/assistant pattern established in the British Sexton Blake and Nelson Lee series" (193). Furthermore, because the comics are issued on a monthly basis, "they are better placed to respond directly to contemporary cultural changes" (193). Andrew has observed the various ways in which the character of Robin has been utilized to address contemporary matters, including the fight against AIDS, crimes committed by youth, and mental illness. These observations have led Andrew to the conclusion that "the American boy detective […] is the true heir to the boy detective tradition forged in Britain from the 1860s to the 1930s" (195).

Whereas the classic boy detective seems to have lost some popularity and relevance in the American and British imaginations, he remains a culturally relevant figure in the Japanese manga tradition. Similar to story-papers and American comics, manga are also published on a weekly basis in thick magazines that are printed on relatively cheap paper and contain multiple stories by multiple authors. The *Weekly Shōnen Jump* and *Shōgakukan's Weekly Shōnen Sunday* have produced two of the most iconic boy detectives to this day: Kindaichi and Konan. For over two decades since their first publications in 1992 and 1994, respectively, both series have sustained commercial success. It is noteworthy that the school detective genre continues to thrive in Japanese manga; both junior high and high school settings are very common in Japanese popular culture. According to John E. Ingulsrud and Kate Allen, the focus on school life in manga "describe[s] a world familiar to the readers such as classes, relationships, sports clubs, bullying, and examinations" (141). The high school setting can be read as a microcosm of society at large, in which students prepare themselves to become "productive" citizens as adults. The boy detectives examined in this thesis are all high school students who, in addition to their

crime fighting duties, or lack thereof, must juggle student-life like many of their readers, but not all of them uphold model standards of boyhood. Rather, this thesis demonstrates how these detectives operate on a continuum of resistance and consent, making visible the potentialities and limitations of the school's role in preparing youths for the future.

The genre of Japanese detective manga is vast and one way of limiting my scope of inquiry is by setting boundaries. This study seeks to understand how the boy detective demystifies the false stereotype of youth who have fallen outside cultural norms in three thematically different ways: through the role of the rebel boy detective in Kanari's and Amagi's *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo*, the ideal boy detective in Aoyama's *Meitantei Konan*, and the criminal boy detective in Ohba's *Death Note*. A critical investigation of the boy detective tradition in manga, however, requires some literary and historical grounding. **Chapter 1** is the longest chapter of this thesis, as it traces the literary history that informs detective manga. First, it provides an overview of famous Japanese detectives and their creators, some of whom modelled their own sleuths after Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. This chapter contextualizes the connection between the detective in Japanese detective fiction and discourses of identity politics. It then compares Rampo's *shōnen tantei* (boy detective) series to the construction of the boy detective in Osamu Tezuka's manga. Each of these topics deserves a discussion of its own; however, for the purposes of this thesis, they serve to contextualize the deeply complex and rich history of the revival of classic detective stories in 1990s Japan.

Chapter 2 grounds the study in manga scholarship. While tracing the literary history and development of Japanese detective fiction is crucial to an understanding of how its central themes and concerns are dealt with in manga, it is equally important to situate the boy detective in the manga tradition. As such, this chapter makes the argument for manga as a powerful force

for social and political critique. It also traces the earliest construction of the boy detective in manga to the works of Osamu Tezuka and to the *gekiga* manga tradition, as they both establish the visual aesthetics, tropes, and conventions of the boy detective tradition, but in different ways. Having established the context from which to explore the political undertones of the boy detective tradition in manga, the remaining chapters trace the emergence of the boy detective to the rise of youth violence during Japan's economic recession in relation to three main concepts: schooling, detection, and the role of the detective. This discussion begins by foregrounding the Japanese education system as a major player in the formation and reformation of youth identities. **Chapter 3** focuses on a textual analysis of *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* to situate a reading of the manga as a critical response to the failure of Japan's educational system to protect its youth. Kanari's and Amagi's construction of the boy detective pays homage to Yokomizo Seishi's Kosuke Kindaichi, while Aoyama's *Meitantei Konan* borrows from Rampo and Sir Arthur Conan Doyle and, in effect, produces a different kind of boy detective than Kindaichi. **Chapter 4** focuses on *Meitantei Konan*, identifying its differences from *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* by exploring the revival of the Tezuka-esque tradition of the boy detective. This chapter points out that the underlying themes of friendship, community, and teamwork in Aoyama's manga series work to reify an image of idealized boyhood. More importantly, it stresses that although the ideological positions of the boy detective tradition in manga can be traced to its literary precursors, manga narratives reinvent the boy detective tradition in culturally formative and meaningful ways. **Chapter 5** explores the future of boy detective tradition and the new directions the genre has taken in the twenty-first century. With a focus on mystery manga such as *Death Note*, this chapter asks what new fears have been inscribed onto the boy detective and how much longer 'classics' such as *Meitantei Konan* and *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* can last in the

competitive manga market. Finally**, Chapter 6** ends by highlighting the study's key findings and

a discussion about future research directions.

Chapter 1

The Boy Detective in Japanese Children's Detective Stories: Forms, Themes, and Context

There are two literary precursors to the boy detective tradition in Japan: Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and his Baker Street Irregulars, and Edogawa Rampo's boy detective stories. This chapter briefly discusses the significance of each in relation to the development of the boy detective character type in manga and begins by tracing the development of detective fiction in Japan to situate its influence on manga. The conclusion of this chapter sheds light on the political circumstance that revived the boy detective in the 1990s, highlighting several key events that are important to my reading of the manga series, which I explore in the latter chapters of this thesis.

I begin with a breif discussion of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes as it sets the groundwork for exploring how western detective fiction influenced writers of Japanese detective fiction who came after Kuriowa Ruikō, which I discuss in detail later. Doyle published a total of fifty-six short stories and four novels, the bulk of which were published in *The Strand Magazine*. The first of these, *A Study in Scarlet*, which appeared in *Beeton's Christmas Annual* in 1887, introduced the detective Sherlock Holmes and his partner John H. Watson. Since his first appearance, Holmes has gained iconic status in Britain and around the globe. Although Holmes is a celebrated eccentric genius, he has also been a target of criticism, especially in relation to the British imperial context in which Doyle was writing his stories. Many critics have commented on the Victorian conservatism that informs the Canon. For example, in *Fiction, Crime, and Empire,* Jon Thompson points out that Doyle was "one of the great Victorian apologists of empire" (68), and further elaborates on this as follows:

The values and methodologies of the Enlightenment provided the indispensable

conceptual and material conditions for the organization of capitalism and, later,

the British Empire; that knowledge created that form of power. Sherlock

Holmes's knowledge, his ability to unravel the most intractable puzzles, gives

him the power to penetrate the mysteries of London. The same form of knowledge

that ultimately produced the empire also produced the figure of the empirical

detective hero, Sherlock Holmes. (76)

The world of Sherlock Holmes is populated with foreign and exotic caricatures. For example,

Doyle has been criticized for his "sensationalist portrayals of Mormons" (Bergem 40) and for

"perpetuat[ing] the myth of the [American] West as an empty landscape" (57) in *A Study in

Scarlet*.[6] According to Sebastian Lecourt, "Doyle refused to apologize for the novel, arguing that

it had been based upon the best information available to him at the time" (85). Yumna Siddiqi

has observed that "[a] striking number of characters in Arthur Conan Doyle's detective stories

who return to England after a sojourn in the colonies have an outlandish aspect" (223). This is

evident in stories such as "The Adventures of the Speckled Band," in which India is depicted as a

country that breeds corruption, reinforcing orientalist stereotypes. According to Siddiqi, "Doyle's

preoccupation with the fate of the returned colonial in his detective stories stemmed not only

from a traumatic personal experience, but also from broader cultural anxieties about Empire"

(236). It should come as no surprise that criminality in many of Doyle's stories is coded in terms

of cultural Otherness, which worked to "affir[m] most of the values of traditional British culture

in his stories by making Holmes and Watson embody the combination of solidity, morality and

eccentricity so central to the British gentry" (Cawelti, "Canonization, Modern Literature" 6).

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[6] See Dearinger and Lecourt.

Caroline Reitz says of the politics of the genre of classic detective fiction that "the detective narrative turned national concerns about the abuses of authority into a popular story about British authority in the contact zone of Victorian culture; this in turn allowed the detective and the imperial project to become extensions of rather than anathema to English national identity" (xiii). There are many other examples in the Canon of cultural attitudes that are today regarded as problematic toward foreign places and people. Although the actual extent to which Doyle was critical of matters such as empire, class, and race is questionable, an understanding of the British imperial context that informs the characterization of Holmes allows for an interesting comparative analysis of how he is (re)interpreted in other cultural contexts. Since there is no doubt that Holmes is a cultural product of the Victorian and Edwardian eras, why has he gained such a cult following in countries such as Japan? What happens to the Victorian sleuth when he is taken out of a British context?

Detective Fiction in Japan: A Note on Periodization

The periodization of Japanese detective fiction is a site of critical debate. However, Satomi Satiō has pointed out that "According to critic-writer Kasai Kiyoshi, the history of Japanese detective fiction is marked by three dominant waves, and all of them are closely tied to the debates about the authenticity of the genre" (19). In *Theory of Detective Fiction* (*Tanatei shōsetsuron*), Kasai Kiyoshi writes that the first wave (*nami*), which he refers to as the "*Shinseinen* era (*Shinseinen jidai*)," (6) was largely represented by prewar detective fiction writers such as as Edogawa Rampo whose works were published in *Shinseinen* Magazine.[7] The second wave, "*Hōseki* era (*Hoseki jidai*)," (6) comprised of postwar classic puzzle mysteries such as by Yokomizo Seishi,

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[7] Kasai Kiyoshi is a writer and critic of Japanese detective fiction. He is probably most well known for his award-winning, debut novel *Bye, Bye Angel* (*Bai bai enjeru* 1979) that features his detective, Kakeru Yabuki.

as well as by Takagi Akimitsu and Ayukawa Tetsuya whose work were discovered in *Hōseki*

Magazine. Finally, the third wave, is made up of novels and detective novel series published by

Kōndansha and Tokyo Sōgensha. Specifically, Ayatsuji Yukito's *The Decagon House Murders*

(1987) and Natsuhiko Kyōgoku's *The Summer of the Ubume* (1994), as well as other stories

published between this time, are considered as representative works that revived the classic mode

of detective fiction, which Saitō points out was a movment initiated by Shimada Sōji.[8] Although

Saitō is critical of Kasai's privileging of classic puzzle stories in his periodization of the genre,

Saitō observes that it "correspond[s] to, and intersect[s] with, important moments in the history

of twentieth century Japan; prewar nationalism, postwar democracy, and neonationalism after the

death of the Shōwa Emperor" (19). In other words, Saitō suggests that Japanese detective fiction

should be understood as a site of "contested discourses" that emerged in relation to the discursive

formation of the country's national imaginary. For example, Japan's prewar years marked the

development of what is arguably called inauthentic detective fiction (*henkaku*), which refers to

stories that focused on elements of the erotic and grotesque, and was thus viewed as representing

the premodern era in Japan.[9] In contrast, the postwar years (1950s-1960s) gave rise to what is

considered authentic detective fiction (*honkaku*), which focused on the "classic whodunit written

true to the rules and conventions set in the Golden Age of detective fiction in the West" and was

"considered 'modern' in terms of its celebration of scientific reasoning" (19). Situating his study

in critical debates of genre, and specifically in the debates over the authenticity of Japanese

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[8] Since Satomi Saito's thesis publication, Kasai Kiyoshi published the 3rd volume of *The Theory of Detective Fiction* (2008), in which he takes up critical debates of genre in relation to the end of the third wave. For details see, Kiyoshi, Kasai. *Theory of Detective Fiction* [*Tantei shōsetsuron*], vol. 3, Tokyo: Sōgensha, 2008.

[9] The erotic grotesque movement, or *ero-guro* for short, was a literary and artistic movement that began in the Taishō Era. For a discussion on Rampo and *ero-guro* see, for example, Jim Reichert. "Deviance and Social Darwinism in Edogawa Ranpo's Erotic-Grotesque Thriller 'Kotō No Oni.'" *Journal of Japanese Studies*, vol. 27, no. 1, 2001, pp.113-141, doi:10.2307/3591938. See also, Silverberg, Miriam Rom. *Erotic Grotesque Nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times*. University of California Press, 2006.

detective fiction, Saitō makes visible the fuzzy boundaries of classification demonstrating how ideas of inauthenticity and authenticity were relative to how the Japanese perceived themselves on the world stage.

Saitō's recontextualization of detective fiction in Japan as a genre that critically reflects and responds to a nation in crisis is important because it provides an explanation of the revival of the classical mode of detective fiction in manga in the 1990s. According to Saitō, shifts in the genre's form, and specifically the revival of the classic mode, mirror changes in the cultural attitudes of Japanese national identity. The authentic movement was followed by the social school (*shakai-ha*) movement pioneered by Matsumoto Seichō, who "was more interested in the realistic depiction of the rapidly changing postwar Japanese society and the crimes caused by the frictions in contesting layers of the society" (190). Writers of the social school favoured the whydunit over the whodunit, and pushed the boundaries of the classic puzzle mysteries by placing emphasis on "characters' psychological motives and to social problems" (Seaman 9). As a result, this transition marked a shift from the *tantei shōsetsu* (detective story) to the more generic *suiri shōsestu* (mystery fiction). Matsumoto and his social school triggered a new movement called the New Authentic School of detective fiction (or *shinhonkaku-ha*), initiated by writers such as Shimada Sōji, who, fearing the deterioration of classic puzzle mysteries, revived the form in the late 1980s. Shimada's revival came "at the time when the entire nation mourned the death of the Shōwa Emperor and positively started rereading postwar history in 1989" (224). As such, Saitō suggests that the "revival of 'authentic' detective fiction is strongly motivated by his [Shimada's] nostalgic recreation of Japan's history before the economic miracle when the market was not yet dominated by the social school of detective fiction" (224). However, the revival of authentic movement was short-lived, because writers who had once popularized the

form were believed to have stopped producing novels by the mid-1990s, and their works were

gradually replaced by cross-media adaptations (anime, films, and manga) of the authentic form.[10]

Such works include Kanari's and Amagi's *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* and Aoyama's

Meitantei Konan, but critics and writers who belonged to the New Authentic school regarded

these modern spinoffs as unworthy of being classified as new authentic because they were not

novels.

  The following section situates the study of Japanese detective fiction, focusing on

selected canonical authors of puzzle mysteries and those who adapted Doyle's Sherlock Holmes,

in my discussion of the construction of the boy detective in manga.

Detective Fiction in Japan: A Brief Overview

There are currently four book-length studies of detective fiction in Japan, beginning with Sari

Kawana's *Murder Most Modern: Detective Fiction and Japanese Culture* (2008), which

considers the genre as a mobilizing force in the discursive formation of the nation. Kawana's

work explores the "interactions and intersections between discourses of detective fiction and

broader discourses of modernity, the making of the Japanese nation-state, urbanization, private

and public spaces as sources of mystery for urbanites, and the impact of Western knowledge on

the social construction of deviance in sexual behavior" (Schulz 421). Published one month after

Kawana's study, Mark Silver's *Purloined Letters: Cultural Borrowing and Japanese Crime

Literature 1868-1937* (2008) also covers the genre's early stages of development, drawing a

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[10] Saitō points out that the "New Authentic School of detective fiction quickly faded in the late 1990s, and quite naturally the designs they introduced came to be employed by far more popular media of *manga*, animation, and computer games, and, we have to admit, those crossmedia adaptations had a much greater success than novels" (249).

connection between nation and narration, as deep-seated anxieties over the limitations and possibilities of cultural imitation served as commentaries on what was at stake in Japan's efforts to gain equal footing to the West. In *Bodies of Evidence: Women, Society, and Detective Fiction in 1990s Japan* (2004), Amanda Seaman examines the rise of feminist detective fiction at the end of the twentieth century. In her sociocultural analysis of works by Miyuki Miyabe, Natsuo Kirino, and Asa Nonami, to list three of the women writers she examines in her book, Seaman "explores the worlds that these authors construct in their novels and examines how these worlds intersect with other political, cultural, and economic discourses and with the lived experiences of contemporary Japanese women" (2). Whereas Silver, Kawana, and Seaman examine detective fiction as a vehicle for sociopolitical critique, each identifying in their own way how the genre reflects and responds to wider cultural discourses of nation and identity, Satoru Saitō's *Detective Fiction and the Rise of the Japanese Novel 1880-1930* (2012) focuses on cultural debates surrounding the issue of detective fiction and its place within the Japanese literary canon. His comparative study of prewar Japanese detective fiction and the Japanese novel sheds light on the dialectic relationship between both genres, as they contemplated issues of state power and its influence on the modern Japanese subject. My thesis, which takes on a sociocultural analysis of the emergence of the boy detective in manga in Japan's post-bubble society, builds on the works of Silver, Kawana, and Seaman to elucidate the relationship between discourses of youth deviance and the rise of the boy detective, and frames detective manga within the deeply complex history of the sociopolitical development of detective fiction in Japan.

Seaman characterizes the history of Japanese detective fiction as "complicated" (2). As a genre that developed from the Western tradition and through translated works imported to Japan during the Meiji Restoration Period (1868-1912), "it has been both celebrated and dismissed on

account of its foreign pedigree" (Seaman 2). At the same time, as an urban genre, "detective fiction had a special appeal in the Meiji (1868–1912) and Taishō (1912–1926) eras in Tokyo, which was witnessing unprecedented changes not only in its economy, but in the details of everyday life as well" (2).[11] The Meiji period signalled the dawn of a new era, as Japan underwent rapid modernization and Westernization and it was during this time that, "as part of the so-called Meiji Enlightenment, Japan imported numerous assumptions about progress and rationality that originated in the West" (Kawana 3). In particular, "the ideals behind the Meiji slogan *bunmei kaika* (Civilization and Enlightenment) were Japan's keys out of its cultural 'immaturity' of feudalism and Confucianism that would put the nation on the fast track of becoming a world power" (3). In this process of modernization, "English education became a part of national policy," and detective fiction, as Tsutsumibayashi Megumi notes, "eventually aligned itself with this policy by transforming into a vehicle of Western values" (95). For example, she argues that detective fiction "assumed an educative role—something well-illustrated by the fact that many translated detective stories in addition to factual accounts of investigation (both domestic and international) were serially published in widely-read journals and newspapers catered for [sic] police officers" (89). The *Tantei Jitsuroku* was one such example of early crime writing in Japan that focused on "the factual account of investigation" (Tsutsumibayashi 88-89). The first of these was "a translation of a book written in Dutch, entitled *Report on the Virtues of Dutch Politics*," which was intended to "demonstrate the virtues of Dutch politics equipped with a police system" (Ito 2002: 32)" (89) that the Japanese could strive to emulate as it constructed a modern state.

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[11] According to Seaman, detective fiction is an urban genre because "[d]etective fiction in Europe and America was intimately linked to the urban environment and reflected both the terrors and the pleasures offered by newly industrialized cities like New York or Paris" (3).

It is important to note that Japan had its own indigenous form of crime writing prior to the Meiji Restoration. According to Silver, "the two major forms of crime narrative in circulation before the detective story arrived in Japan were the courtroom narrative, based on a Chinese tradition of stories about wise judges, and the criminal biography" (22) such as *dokufu-mono,* a genre of crime biography "that narrated the colorful exploits of female outlaws such as the notorious flimflammer and seductress Takahashi Oden" (30). Other forms, such as *Tsuzukimono,* "consisting of exaggerated tales derived from minor newspaper articles" (Tsutsumibayashi 88), and *Shiranamimono*, stories that depicted thieves in a sympathetic light, were also circulated widely. According to Tsutsumibayashi, these early examples of Japanese crime writing can be seen as the equivalents to Western crime literature produced in the eighteenth century, such as *The Newgate Calendar* in the British tradition and the *Roman feuilleton* in French tradition.[12] For Silver, these early works of crime writing in Japan are important to the history of the genre as inspiration for writers such as Kuroiwa Ruikō, who would become the driving force behind the genre's first wave, to use "translated" works of Western detective fiction to criticize the depiction of the law as an infallible system, as many of these early works did. According to Seaman, "The individual most commonly accepted as the first Japanese detective writer, journalist Kuroiwa Ruikō (1862–1913), was part of the burgeoning literary market of the late Meiji era (ca. 1905–1912)" (2). Ruikō is known for having taken great liberties in "translating" the works of many French writers such as Émile Gaboriau and Fortuné du Boisgobey and by "expanding certain passages, cutting out others completely, or gratifying entirely new material

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[12] *The Newgate Calendar* refers to sensationalized records of crimes, criminals, and methods of execution, which were mass produced and targeted to the British working class. Tsutsumibayashi points out that "Japan does not differ significantly from Britain and France in that such stories initially attracted an increasingly literate populace prone to be dazzled by sensational depictions of real criminal incidents" (88).

that he seems to have invented from whole cloth" (Silver 66). [13] Although Ruikō's contribution

to the canon remains controversial because he only wrote one original story, *Cold Blood* (*Muzan*,

1889), he set into motion debates on foreign borrowing and on the authenticity of Japanese

detective fiction, which would have lasting effects on writers and thinkers of the genre. [14]

Although many of his works have been criticized as blatant imitations of Western originals,

Ruikō used their narrative structures to critique the flaws of Japan's juridical system and his

dissatisfaction with "the shortcomings of the state's reforms and to point out the

underdevelopment of democratic principles in Japan" (Kawana 8). The fuzzy lines between

Ruikō's role as an imitator and inventor become apparent in his use of foreign detective

narratives to articulate domestic concerns.

Doyle's works were not the first detective stories imported to Japan. That credit goes to

Kanada Kōhei who, as previously mentioned, translated Jan Bastian Christemeijer's *Belangrijke*

Tafereelenuit de Geschiedenis der Lijfstra ffelijke Regtsplegling in 1861 (Hirayama 9;

Tsutsumibayashi 89). Doyle's stories, however, have arguably been the most influential on the

canon of Japanese detective fiction. Sherlock Holmes was first introduced to Japan in the 1894

abridged translation of "The Man with the Twisted Lip" ("Kojiki Doraku"), which appeared "in

a magazine named *Nihon-jin* [. . .] in a four part series from January to February" (Higurashi 3).

In 1898, "*The Speckled Band* appeared as part of an anthology bearing the Japanese title *Prose of*

English Great Writers with Annotations (*Eimeika Sambun Chushaku*)" (Tsutsumibayashi 92),

followed by serialized publications of *A Study in Scarlet* and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*

in 1899. "The first complete Canon was published by kaizo-sha in eight volumes from 1931-

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[13] See Mark Silver's *Purloined Letters* for plot summaries and in-depth critical analyses of these stories and Rampo's translations of them.
[14] *Muzan* has been translated as *In Cold Blood* by Amanda Seaman, *Merciless* by Sari Kawana and Satoru Saitō, and *Cruel* by Satomi Saitō.

1933, along with the rest of Arthur Conan Doyle's works in The Complete Works of Doyle"

(Webb 19). The translation of Jack Tracy's *The Encyclopaedia Sherlockiana* and Baring Gould's

Annotated Sherlock Holmes helped cement literal translations of Doyle's works by the late 1970s

and early 1980s. To this day, however, the translations of the Canon by Nobuhara Ken in 1951

"are the most well read" (Hirayama 1). This list is by no means intended to provide a

comprehensive chronology of Sherlock Holmes in Japan, but highlights some of the most

commonly cited texts in academic scholarship to date.

Critics have pointed out that the translations of Doyle's stories in the Meiji period

appeared in the format of abridgements, adaptations, or as retellings (see e.g. Higurashi;

Tsutsumibayashi; Webb). For example, altering the names of Doyle's original characters was

common practice. In the first translation of *A Study in Scarlet* in 1899, *Chizome no Kabe*

(Bloodstained Wall), the names of Sherlock Holmes and Watson were localized as Omuro

(Holmes) and Wada (Watson). Watson's backstory as an assistant surgeon who had served in the

medical corps in India and in Afghanistan was given culturally relevant references, as Wada is

depicted as "an ex-army surgeon [who] came back to Tokyo from the Sino-Japanese War (1894-

1895)" (3). According to Keith E. Webb, in "The Adventure of the Golden Pince-nez" (1910)

"Holmes bears the name Honda and is a silver-haired old man. Watson is named Watanabe"

(18). The title of the story "Adventures of the Red Headed League" was changed to "Bald-

headed League," "since Japanese all have black hair, [and] red hair was beyond the average

person's imagination" (18-19). These examples show how authors altered Doyle's original

content in order to cater to a Japanese reading audience unfamiliar with foreign names and

places. It would not be until the Taishō Era (1912-26) that literal translations of Doyle's stories became more popular, largely through the efforts of literary scholars.[15]

Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories were also translated and adapted for young readers. Ueda Hirotaka's short chronology maps out juvenile versions of Sherlock Holmes, which were published within the past century, and traces them to epoch making events in Japanese history. Notable examples include: the two very different translated versions of Conan Doyle's "The Naval Treaty" that were published in a monthly magazine *World Adventure* (*Bōken Sekai*) only ten months apart from one another.[16] Ueda hypothesizes that the popularity of "The Naval Treaty" was a response to how "editors assumed any article with the word 'naval' in its title could not fail to make a success, when everyone—especially boys—was drunk with the glorious victory of the Japanese navy in the Russo-Japanese War (1904-1905) and idolized the naval officers" (14). Specifically, however, it was during the robust economic climate of postwar Japan that juvenile versions of Sherlock Holmes became more prominent. Hirataka writes:

> The great vogue of juvenile mystery tales owed much to the conviction that tales
> of ratiocination encourage cultivation of the powers of observation, analysis and
> deduction—that is to say, the scientific mind—as well as entertain. The economic
> growth of post-war Japan was brought about by the nation's progress in scientific

[15] Several critics have pointed out that detective fiction in Japan sits at an intersection of high and low literature According to Saitō Satomi, "Despite its common image as a popular genre, however, detective fiction [in Japan] has developed close relationships with "high" literature thematically and stylistically as represented by writers like Satō Haruo, Tanizaki Jun'ichirō, and Hirabayashi Hatsunosuke" (1). Tsutsumibayashi points out that "detective fiction in Meiji society had multifarious implications. Entertainment and enlightenment, populism and elitism, state-building and social critique—these different factors intertwined to form a complex landscape in which detective fiction played its distinctive roles" (90); and in her study of Sherlockian fan studies, Lori Morimoto has also observed that "references and allusions to Holmes and his creator litter the modern Japanese literary landscape," which can be found in the works of Tanizaki Jun'ichiro, Akutagawa Ryūnosuke, and Mori Mari.
[16] Or *Adventurous World*

thinking, which, in turn might well have been promoted by the nationwide

enthusiasm for the detective novels and scientific-adventure novels. (17)

The question of why Sherlock Holmes gained popularity with the Japanese remains to be

answered. In the preface of his book *Sherlock Holmes in Japan* (1998), Webb notes that

"Sherlock Holmes is certainly attractive to the modern Japanese person. He is honest, logical,

self assured, well versed in the sciences, and a respected expert in his field. These are

characteristics that many Japanese value highly" (12). While aspects of Webb's description may

contain kernels of truth, it runs the risk of essentializing the complex history and reception of

Sherlock Holmes in Japan. As mentioned above, prior to the 1920s translated works of Sherlock

Holmes prioritized entertainment over fidelity and were consequently viewed as "sensationalist

novels" (Tsutsumibayashi 91). However, with the emergence of literal translations, "the focal

point of the story has shifted from awe-inspiring ingenuity to scientific reasoning" (91),

emphasizing the intellectual appeal of Sherlock Holmes and the potential for detective fiction to

be taken seriously as a literary genre. According to Tsutsumibayashi, "This process of change

leading up to its consolidation in the Taisho era signified a rapprochement within Holmes's

imagery—bridging popular entertainment with political aspiration of the learned elites, and

creating a milieu in which the private and public interests coalesced" (91-92). Furthermore,

Takahashi Yuri points out that detective fiction in Japan was popularized by print media in the

1920s. Specifically, Takahashi identifies Nobuhara Ken, the editor-in-chief of the magazine

Shinseinen (New Youth), as an important contributor to the encouragement of the Sherlock

Holmes stories in Japan. *Shinseinen* also played a crucial role in cultivating the authentic and

inauthentic debates of detective fiction, and Saitō describes it as "the most important magazine

of prewar detective fiction" (247) in Japan. Japanese Sherlockians such as Higurashi Masamichi

have pointed out that the popularity and success of Sherlock Holmes in Japan was sustained by members of Japan's Sherlockian Society. Most notably, Higurashi regards the works of Naganuma Kōhki and the translation of *Sherlock Holmes of Baker Street: The Life of the World's First Consulting Detective* by Kobayashi Tsukasa and Higashiyama Akane as two important precursors to the development of the Japanese Sherlock Holmes Community that in turn sustained cultural interest in Sherlock Holmes.

Several questions remain unanswered: how did Sherlock Holmes come to articulate Japan's national interests? What does the re-presentation of Sherlock Holmes in Japan reveal about the discursive formation of a Japanese identity? Through the character of Sherlock Holmes, Doyle epitomized England's status as a leader in the fields of science and technology, and there is no doubt that the detective upheld the Victorian worldview defined by ideas of progress and civilization. Such values were important to the Japanese as the nation itself transitioned into modernity especially during the Meiji era:

> the fact that Doyle's Holmes was a highly intelligent man equipped with
> exceptional aptitude for analysis and scientific reasoning signified that he was a
> figure to be taken seriously by those who aspired to elevate Japan to the status of
> the great powers. Indeed, Holmes was often seen as a personification of certain
> Western values—values that were considered by many Meiji intellectuals as the
> key to realizing their aspiration. (Tsutsumibayashi 84)

Doyle's Sherlock Holmes emerged in the sociopolitical context of British imperialism. Having once colonized all but twenty-two countries of the world, the British Empire was once described as the "empire on which the sun never sets." London was the cosmopolitan centre of the world and the hub of fine arts and culture. It is no coincidence that in the world of Sherlock Holmes,

the city of London is inhabited by foreign criminals and vigilantes. Such representations worked

to stabilize the values of a predominantly white, male, and Victorian middle-class society that

was necessary for the empire's claim of cultural superiority. In Japan, Sherlock Holmes had a

special appeal to a nation and its people by the 1900s, as "the Japanese were no longer on the

receiving end of Western imperialist pressure but exploring the role of imperialist themselves"

(Hutchinson 1).[17] In their feverish attempt to catch up to the West, contentious discourses of

what constitutes a Japanese identity emerged as Japan simultaneously transitioned into a "semi-

Westernized non-Western state" (Tsutsumibayashi 96). Many critics have commented on the

paradoxical nature of Japan's status as both a colonizer and semi-colonized. In what follows, I

provide brief summaries of selected writers who adapted Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, explicating

the political significance of the re-presentation of the Victorian sleuth in Japan by examining the

cultural climate in which they emerged.

As Japan matured into a nation-state, detective fiction served as a vehicle for writers to

grapple with Japan's changing identity in the modern world. According to Satoru Saitō, "The

ideology of *risshin shusse* (rising in the world) that drove ambitious youths of Meiji Japan and

beyond to seek success through education, in general, and Western learning, in particular" (7),

and which pushed for Japan's modernization by mimicking Western arts and culture, eventually

lost its sway against the discourse of "'*seiyō kabure*, the 'Western infection' on Japan" (Silver

132). Since its inception, Japanese detective fiction has borrowed Western formulae and

structures, but since the time of Ruikō, the genre has also been imbued with characteristics

distinctive of its own domestic politics, resulting in a hybrid form. This hybrid nature of

Japanese detective fiction has broader implications for the ideological construction of a national

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[17] Hutchinson's book explores the discursive formation of the Japanese Self in Meiji Japan through her critical
reading of a body of literature composed by Nagai Kafū.

identity as seen in the construction of the role of the Japanese Sherlockian detective. Best known for *The Curious Casebook of Inspector Hanshichi: Detective Stories of Old Edo* (*Hanshichi torimono-cho*) published between 1917 and 1937, playwright and novelist Okamoto Kidō (1872-1939) became one of the prominent writers of the Taishō period. Throughout his literary career, Kidō wrote sixty-nine stories featuring Inspector Hanshichi, a Sherlockian type detective who left his legacy as "an icon of Japan's feudal past" (Macdonald xviii). Although both Ruikō and Kidō used western detective fiction to articulate their political visions, they did so in different ways. They were both self-conscious borrowers of Western detective fiction, but Ruikō emulated the foreign literary form "more or less indiscriminately" (Silver 99), whereas Kidō approached it with a conflicted conscience; as Silver points out, Kidō "was leery of standing too fully in Conan Doyle's shadow" (99). By refashioning the Victorian sleuth within the cultural setting of Edo Japan, Kidō created "original" works that became "the first truly homegrown example of Japanese historical detective fiction" (Macdonald xxviii) by conveying an "entirely different ideological valence from the original" (Silver 100) through the invocation of a longing for Japan's nostalgic past. Kidō's works functioned as critical responses to Western modernity, calling attention to the need to restore Japanese traditions. However, Kidō's homage to the works of Doyle in order to assert a Japanese cultural identity demonstrates the paradoxical nature of the politics of identity presented in his works.

Heralded as the "father" of the genre, Tarō Hirai, otherwise known as Edogawa Rampo (1894-1965) was a prolific writer of numerous critical and autobiographical essays, novels, and short stories. [18] Unlike Kidō, whose works depicted a nostalgic past of Japanese culture and

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[18] The name Edogawa Rampo is a play on the Japanese pronunciation of Edgar Allan Poe that also means "a stroll along the Edo River" when spelled out in Japanese, 江戸川乱歩.

tradition, Rampo "fixed his gaze on his rapidly modernizing and Westernizing surroundings with fascinated horror" (Silver 132). The construction of his great detective (*meitantei*), Akechi Kogorō, the equivalent of Sherlock Holmes for the Japanese, manifested the cultural anxieties of a cosmopolitan Japan from his first appearance in the locked-room mystery *The Case of the Murder on D-Hill* (*D-saka no Satsujin Jiken*) in 1925. In this story, Akechi physically appears as "a man no more than twenty-five" who "appeared to hold no regard for his attire and always wore a cotton kimono tied with a worn-out sash" (Rampo 13). In the introduction to the English translation of *The Early Cases of Akechi Kogoro*, William Vartersian points out that "Rampo originally based Akechi's character on Kanda Hakuryū, the fifth professional storyteller to inherit that name, whose work he encountered while on a trip to Osaka" (xiii). Akechi's image underwent three transformations over the years. In *The Dwarf* (*Issunbōshi*), published the year after *D-Hill*, Akechi, who is said to "have been in Shanghai for a long time" (Rampo 83), is seen wearing black Chinese robes. By 1929, in *The Spider Man* (*Kumo-otoko*), Akechi is described as resembling "'an English gentleman in the African or Indian colonies, or perhaps an Indian gentleman used to living in Europe.' Later novels put Akechi in tailored Western suits and refer to cases he has solved on trips to Europe" (Vartersian xiv). Through his fiction and through the role of his detective, Rampo illustrated the various forms of cultural influence on Japanese society, but as many critics have pointed out, "This acceptance, however, was not always uncritical or without trepidation" (Vartersian xv). Silver reflects on this paradox in Rampo's fiction as a link between nation and narration:

> The inherent contradictions these works confront as they attempt to duplicate
> Western precedent without sacrificing Japanese national identity mirror the
> contradictions faced by Japan itself as it attempted to create a modern colonial

empire that would earn it legitimacy in the eyes of the Western powers, while at

the same time preserving its sense of national and cultural difference from the

powers on which it felt compelled to model itself. (133)

Such feelings of ambivalence were prompted by writers' "perception[s] of a wide gap in cultural

achievement between Japan and the West" (Silver 177), which was cultivated in magazines such

as *Shinseinen*. According to Satoru Saitō, "in *Shinseinen*, the colonial gaze onto Asian countries

and the colonial gaze 'from' the Western Other curiously co-existed resulting in an ambivalent

hybrid subject position" (53). Japanese Studies scholar Rachael Hutchinson uses the term "gap

theory" to explain how Japan's attempt to catch up to the West in the Meiji period led to mixed

feelings about its own cultural superiority over East Asia and its perceived inferiority in the eyes

of the West. She argues that this phenomenon is especially manifest in the works of Meiji writers

who travelled to the West, such as Nagai Kafū. Writers of detective fiction during the late Meiji

and Taishō periods also confronted such ambivalent feelings in their fiction, even though they

did not leave their homeland.

Japan's interwar period signalled the dawn of a new subgenre that would confront the

horrors of hybridity. According to Kawana, these works were characterized by what she calls the

"mad scientist murders" (112), which were featured in the stories of Yumeno Kyūsaku, Oguri

Mushitarō and Unno Jūza.[19] Many of these stories raised, to varying degrees, ethical and moral

questions about the promotion of modern science imported from the West. For example, Jūza's

Sherlockian detective Homura Sōroku fights against unethical scientific practices such as human

experimentation.[20] At a time when "science and technology played a growing role in the

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[19] For detailed analyses of these authors' works, see Kawana 130-144.
[20] As Kawana explains in her reading of "Hae otoko" (The Fly Man), Jūza's story "tackles the problem of the unrelenting human desire to engineer a 'superman' using the seemingly boundless power of technology" (141).

formation of Japan's political and military ideology" (Kawana 145), the detective became an agent of surveillance in a nation that grew suspect of the prosperity and growth of the Japanese Empire. As Kawana contends, "the fictional horrors of runaway science [. . .] was actualized in the all-too-real terrors of the atomic bomb [. . .] and scientists involved in the human experimentation projects such as Unit 731 in Wartime China" (146).

It is believed that Japan's imperial expansion and sheer militarism resulted in the production of detective fiction being suppressed by the Japanese government. Consequentially, writers such as Rampo turned to what Satomi Saitō describes as "'diluted' detective fiction for children" (122) for fear of censorship, and Rampo's *Shōnen tantei* (boy detectives) series first appeared in 1936. Although government censorship led to the stagnation of Japanese detective fiction, Kawana states that "the 'ban' on the genre was not carried out in the form of a strict top-down decree, but as a symbolic elimination of decade-old work by one author, and largely though the self-imposed restraint and willing collaboration on the part of writers and publishers" (158). The so-called "ban" proved a myth, for as Webb notes, "Curiously, the outbreak of World War II did not decrease the popularity of the Holmes stories. Inexpensive paperbacks were published as part of the "En-pon" (penny-wise books) boom, further widening the popularity of the Canon" (919). Writers such as Kyūsaku, Mushitarō, and Jūza continued to produce works of fiction despite the cancellation of their magazine *Shupio* in 1938, in which they had published many of their earlier works. Like Rampo, Unno also turned to children's fiction, reviving Homura Sōroku in *The King of the Mysterious Tower* (*Kaitō-ō*).[21] Juvenile mystery series aimed at young boys and girls were, in fact, not rare at the time, as Ueda Hirotaka's survey of juvenile versions of Conan Doyle's works in the Meiji and Taishō periods demonstrates. And it would not

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[21] For more information regarding the works of Oguri Mushitarō and Unno Jūza, see chapter four of Kawana's book titled "Drafted Detectives and Total War: Three Editors of Shupio," pp. 147-185.

be until 1946, with the publication of Yokomizo Seishi's *Honjin Murder Case* (*Honjin Satsujin Jiken*), that the genre was restored and revived as a means of coping with the trauma of war.

The works of Yokomizo Seishi are generally recognized as the models for postwar detective fiction. Many of his works featuring the detective Kindaichi Kōsuke, who unravels mysteries in the rural countryside of Japan, invoke the premodern Edo setting of Kidō's work, but while the latter was writing against the threat of Western encroachment, the former looked to the past with critical eyes. As critics such as Kawana and Nakagawa Chiho have noted, Yokomizo's criticism of Japan's involvement in the war stemmed from the lack of logic and rationality among the Japanese people. In his 1946 essay, Yokomizo testifies that "we all have to admit that we neglected to practice how to think and act rationally [. . .] we detective writers need to write rational (*goriteki na*) and intellectual (*chiteki na*) detective fiction in order to enlighten our readers" (qtd. in Kawana 187). The pastoral landscape in Kidō's work, which solicited a kind of nostalgic escape, became the site of irrationality, superstition, and corruption for Yokomizo as a means to criticize "the stubborn tradition and rigid conservatism" (189) of Japan that ultimately led to the fall of an imperial nation. The first novel set during the Sino-Japanese War (1936) thematically deals with "[t]he conflict between the old, traditional value system and the desire for a modern, liberal lifestyle" and served as a commentary on the how "the imperial nation failed" (Nakagawa 92). These details about Yokomizo's work will be important in my discussion of Kanari's and Amagi's *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* in Chapter Three.

These brief examples demonstrate how writers of classic detective fiction in Japan used their detectives to address political matters of a nation in crisis. Although Silver's, Kawana's, Satoru Saitō's, and Satomi Saitō's works provide useful chronologies and analyses of detective

fiction in Japan, scholarship on the genre has been limited to studies of Ruikō, Kidō, Rampo, and Yokomizo. Kawana offers an insightful look at non-canonical authors such as Jūza, while Amanda Seaman explores feminist rewriting of the genre that reached its peak in the 1990s thanks to the socialist movement initiated by authors such as Matsumoto Seichō. However, the influence of classical works on contemporary Japanese popular culture has been seldom discussed, with the exception of Satomi Saitō, who makes cursory nods to Kanari, Amagi, and Aoyama when reflecting on popular media adaptations of classic detective stories. Saitō concludes with a few remarks on the state of detective fiction as expressed by critics of the New Authentic School of detective fiction:

> As Ayatsuji Yukito humbly comments in his afterword written six years after his lengthy conversations with Shimada Sōji in 1991, authentic mystery might well be remembered by many people only through extremely popular mystery *manga* such as *Kindaichi shōnen no jikenbo* (The Murder Cases of Young Kindaichi) or *Meitantei Konan* (Detective Conan), and their TV and movie adaptations (both live action and animation) instead of their novels. The end of the genre corresponded to the end of the medium called the "novel." Narrative devices are nevertheless the final "frontier" where the novel survives in the age of visual media. (248-49)

As noted at the beginning of this chapter, the New Authentic literary movement was "advocated by the detective fiction writer Shimada Sōji (1948-) in referring to a series of writers who started writing classic puzzle stories" (Saitō 205). Here, Ayatusji's anxiety of the future of authentic detective fiction is fostered by the success of "cross media adaptations" (Saitō 248) of classic mysteries rather than the original novel, but an implicit claim is made about the literary merit of

novels in comparison to manga. Saitō points out the irony of such critical disdain, noting that, for

example, "many writers of the New Authentic School derived inspiration" (225) from

"successful an appropriation of Yokomizo's sensational designs in the Kadokawa films in the

1980s" (225). Moreover, these film adaptations "would be found in more popular entertainment

than the novel, such as manga, anime, and later computer games, which Shimada ignores

completely" (255). This attests to Saitō's assertion that "almost all the critics who discuss the

detective fiction genre tend to look down or openly ignore movie adaptations of detective

novels" (255), and may also explain the lack of scholarship on other cross media adaptations

including detective manga. Saitō acknowledges detective fiction and its place within a broader

spectrum of the media mix: "Detective fiction's narrative structure has successfully been

employed in other media such as manga, anime, TV drama, film, and computer games, and the

discursive space about the genre will be reconfigured again in the cultural "interfaces" across

multiple media" (255). In this, I agree with Saitō, who sees the potential of visual media as not

necessarily signaling the death of the genre as Ayatsuji has suggested, but instead as contributing

to the longevity and sustained popularity of classic mysteries.

An Overview of Edogawa Rampo's Boy Detective Stories

The introduction to this thesis discussed the emergence of the boy detective in two cultural

traditions: the American boy detective, who was created by Edward Stratemeyer and his

Syndicate, and the British boy detective, who was popularized by Enid Blyton. Here, I situate the

Japanese tradition within the wider context of boy detective stories from around the world. In

Japan, the tradition of boy detective stories (*shōnen tantei*) was created and popularized by

Edogawa Rampo, who wrote a twenty-six stories featuring his boy protagonist Kobayashi

Yoshio and his team of boy and girl sleuths. [22] These stories were serialized in various magazines

between 1936 and 1962 and collected in books (*tankōbonka*). It is important to point out that

Rampo did not stop writing detective fiction for adults when he began writing the *shōnen tantei*

stories. Rather, he worked simultaneously on fiction for adults and children, and on critical

essays, throughout his writing career. Moreover, his *shōnen tantei* stories should not be

considered as anything less than his other works. To date, there is no scholarship on Rampo's

shōnen tantei series in North America, which may be due to the fact that not all of them have

been translated into English, as is the case with many classic works of Japanese detective fiction.

Principal exceptions include Gavin Frew's translation of Rampo's second story, *The Boy*

Detectives Club (*Shōnen tanteidan*), published by Kōdansha International in 1988, and Dan

Luffey's manga adaptation of Rampo's first story, *The Fiend with Twenty Faces,* published by

Kurodahan Press in 2012. This reading of some of Rampo's stories identifies several tropes and

conventions established in the series, in order to provide the groundwork to compare the

construction of the boy detective in Tezuka Osamu's manga.

       According to Ochiai Takayuki, a research specialist at the Edogawa Rampo Memorial

Centre for Popular Culture, before the Second World War, Rampo wrote four stories, which

were all serialized in a magazine called *Boy's Club* (*Shōnen Kurabu*). The first of these stories

was *The Fiend with Twenty Faces* (*Kaijin Nijū-mensō,* 1936), which introduced the infamous

master of disguise and gentleman thief, Nijū-mensō, inspired by Maurice Leblanc's Arsène

Lupin. The series follows the never-ending game of cat and mouse between Nijū-mensō,

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[22] According to Ochiai Takayuki, the publisher of the *shōnen tantei* series changed from Kōbunsha, which was in charge of *Shōnen magazine*, to children's book publisher, Popurasha. Consequently, Popurasha rewrote Rampo's other stories (for adults), tailoring them to a child reader. These rewritings were added as part of the *shōnen tantei* series. According to Ochiai, these rewritings are not without their problems, but he goes on to say that the versions by Popurasha are the ones that are widely read by many Japanese. See the reference for Ochiai, p. 108.

detective Akechi Kogorō and his boy apprentice, Kobayashi Yoshio. Many of the stories in the series begin with a robbery, a kidnapping, or a mysterious incident that leads Kobayashi and the boy detectives, with help from their mentor detective Akechi, to solve Nijū-mensō's crimes. This story was followed by *The Boy Detectives Club* (*Shōnen Tanteidan,* 1937), *The Phantom Professor* (*Yōkai Hakase,* 1938), and *A Bullion of Gold* (*Daikinkai,* 1939). When the war broke out in 1940, Rampo took a break from writing his *shōnen tantei* series. One possible explanation for his decision was that the stories of Nijū-mensō's heists reminded the Japanese people of their own poverty during the war.[23] Consequently, Rampo turned his attention to writing stories of adventure (*bōken shōsetsu*) or science and wonder (*kagaku tanpen*) under the pseudonym Komatsu Ryūnosuke. Inspired by *Robinson Crusoe*, Rampo wrote *Treasure Island* (*Shintakarajima,* April 1940), a story about a group of three boys who escape captivity from a pirate ship and find an unknown island on which their game of survival and treasure hunts unfold. Two years later, *The Wise Ichitaro* (*Chieno Ichitarō,* 1942) was serialized in *Shōnen Kurabu* and later collected in 15 books.[24] This series features Akashi Ichitarō, a clever elementary school student who uses his knowledge of science to unravel the mysteries of everyday life in his small town. It was not until 1949 that Kobayashi and his entourage of boy detectives would make a comeback in the serialization of *The Bronze Magician* (*Seidō no Majin,* 1949) in *Shōnen Magazine* under Kōbunsha. Thereafter, stories including, but not limited to, *The Tiger's Fang* (*Tora no Kiba,* 1950), *The Invisible Phantom* (*Tōmei Kaijin,* 1951), and *The Strange Fiend with Forty Faces* (*Kaiki Yonjū mensō,* 1952) were serialized between January and December and eventually turned into paperback editions (*tankōbon*) over the course of a decade.

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[23] Translated from *Edogawa Rampo no Meikyūsekai* (The Labyrinth World of Edogawa Rampo) (116).

[24] According to the editors of *Edogawa Rampo no Meikyūsekai,* 14 stories were published by April 1943. As part of a book campaign, one of Rampo's unpublished stories was added to the series for a total of 15 books (116).

The last story, *The Golden Monster* (*Ōgon Kaijū*), initially titled *The Extraordinary Nikola* (*Chōjin Nikola*), was published in 1962, three years prior to Rampo's death.

The popularity of the *shōnen tantei* series was sustained through various adaptations across different media, including radio programs, TV series, manga, and toys. Sunada Hiroshi comments on the popularity of the series in the afterword of *Kaijin Nijū-mensō* published by Popurasha: "it is believed that the emperor, himself, was a fan of the *shōnen tantei* series. To this day, it is most likely that the series has been read by over a million boys and girls" (240). There is no doubt that the *shōnen tantei* series had a strong impact on the Japanese popular imagination. And although more than fifty years have passed since Rampo's death, the *shōnen tantei* series continues to be adapted and revived in contemporary Japanese popular culture, such as in the anime *Rampo Kitan: Game of Laplace* (2015) and anime adaptation of the manga *Trickster: Edogawa Ranpo 'Shōnen Tantei-dan' Yori* (2016), to name two examples.

From Conan Doyle's Irregulars to Rampo's *Chinpira Betsudōtai*

The influence of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes on Rampo is evident in the characterization of Akechi, who is modelled after the Victorian sleuth. In the *shōnen tantei* series, Akechi supervises the boy detectives' club and often lends a helping hand in solving a case. Kobayashi is Akechi's boy apprentice (*joshu*) who later becomes the leader of the boy detectives' club. Kobayashi was introduced in the third installment of *The Fiend with Twenty Faces* in *Shōnen Kurabu*, whereas Akechi was not introduced until the sixth.[25] The story follows the exploits of Kobayashi Yoshio who, in the absence of Akechi, is called upon to take on the case of the kidnapping of a boy named Hashiba Sōji. The kidnapper is Nijū-mensō, who agrees to free his hostage in exchange

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[25] According to the editors of *Edogawa Rampo no Meikyūsekai* (The Labyrinth World of Edogawa Rampo) (111).

for a national treasure, the Kanzeon statue (*kanzeon-zō*), which is stored in a museum belonging to the Hashiba family. Although Kobayashi successfully rescues Sōji, he ends up as Nijūmensō's next hostage. Eventually, Kobayashi is saved, and soon afterward, Nijū-mensō announces that his next target is the art collector of the Kusakabe household. However, the story ends with Nijū-mensō's arrest, thanks to the combined efforts of Akechi, Kobayashi, and the boy detectives.

Sōji initiates the formation of the boy detectives' club (*shōnen tanteidan*) in *The Fiend with Twenty Faces*. In order to help solve the mystery behind Akechi's disappearance, he and ten other school boys and school girls form the club, because he was inspired by Kobayashi and wants to be just like him. Kobayashi is thus appointed as the leader (*danchō*) of the club. Rampo introduces other members of the club throughout the series, and by the time of *The Boy Detective* (*Tantei Shōnen,* 1955) the team, which began with ten members, grew to twenty-three members. Many of these boys and girls come from affluent families that possess rare gems, jewels, and other assets that Nijū-mensō targets. In other words, as Hirayama Yūichi has pointed out, unlike Conan Doyle's "Irregulars [who] were street urchins, [… the] members of the Boy Detectives were boys from decent homes who could ask their parents without hesitation to buy books [for them]" (10). Also, unlike the Irregulars, whose incentive for assisting Sherlock Holmes is monetary, detection for Kobayashi and his friends functions as a form of "professional" entertainment. Detective work, according to Sōji, is something that "should not interfere with school work and other important things" (Rampo, *Kaijin Nijū-mensō*, 202).

Another group of boys featured in Rampo's stories bear a closer resemblance to Conan Doyle's Irregulars in terms of their supporting role in the stories and their socioeconomic background. These include the *chinpira betsudōtai*, which began with of a group of fifteen or sixteen orphaned boys between the ages of twelve and thirteen, who lost their parents in the war

and make a living by stealing or collecting used cigarette butts (*mokuhiroi*). [26] The *chinpira betsudōtai* make their first appearance in the story *Seidō no Majin* (1949) as part of a special force organized by Kobayashi. Although some of the boys disagreed with the name *chinpira* (thugs) at first, Kobayashi justifies it by explaining that it was inspired by "the types of vagrants and children whom the great British private investigator Holmes himself recruited to fight against villains. In England, Holmes refers to them as the Baker Street Irregulars. These kids are very handy and the whole world praises them. So, there's absolutely nothing wrong with the name *chinpira betsudōtai*" (Rampo, n.pag.) The *chinpira betsudōtai* have long, disheveled hair and pale complexions and speak in colloquial Japanese, and unlike the members of the boy detectives' club who must attend school and whose activities are restricted by their parents, the *chinpira betsudōtai* have no curfew and fewer restrictions, allowing them to operate past bedtime. In *Seidō no Majin*, for example, they help Kobayashi tail the bronze beast—the name given to the criminal responsible for a string of robberies—late into the night. At the end of this story, the *chinpira betsudōtai* are rewarded by Akechi, who helps some of them enroll in school and others find employment.

Although the *chinpira betsudōtai* are considered Kobayashi's assistants, they often play a formative role that leads to the capture of the criminal. The *chinpira betsudōtai* appear in about sixteen other stories in the *shōnen tantei* series, in which they demonstrate their fearlessness and audacity. In *Seidō no Majin*, for example, one member of the group, Noppo no Matsu-chan, risks his own life by swapping places with the kidnapped Kobayashi. Notably, however, among the approximately twenty members of the *chinpira betsudōtai*, the smallest of the group, Poketto Kozō (the pocket kid, or Pockets), who is described in The *Magic Doll* (*Mahō Ningyō,* 1957) as

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[26] In Japanese, *chinpira* translates to *thug*, and *betsudōtai* means *separate force*, or *unofficial force*, which is the phrase that Holmes uses to describe the Irregulars.

"so small for his age that he can fit into someone's pockets" (Rampo, n. pag.), plays a central

role in several stories, such as *Electric-man M* (*Denjin M,* 1960). In this story a scientist's son,

Jirō, is abducted by Nijū-mensō in exchange for his invention, a device that is described as more

powerful than both the hydrogen bomb and the atomic bomb. [27] Poketto Kozō plays a vital role

in finding Jirō and locating Nijū-mensō's secret base in which all the stolen goods are stashed.

Eventually, Poketto Kozō reports back to Kobayashi and Akechi, prompting them to set a trap to

capture the bandits. He ultimately saves the world from danger by making sure that the device

does not fall into the wrong hands. By the time of *Iron Man Q* (*Testsujin Kyū,* 1958) the

chinpira betsudōtai, who at the beginning of the series invoked an image of what Sherlock

Holmes describes as "little beggars" (34) in *A Study in Scarlet*, are clothed in fine boy scout

uniforms, a purchase that they were able to make thanks to Poketto Kozō and Kobayashi, who

were rewarded with five million yen in their previous adventure in *The Mask of Fear* (*Kamen no*

Kyōfu-ō, 1959). Moreover, in *The Magic Gong* (*Yōjin Gongu,* 1957), the narrator recounts that

the *chinpira betsudōtai*, which once boasted twenty members, has over time been reduced to

five. According to the narrator, "vagrant boys (*furō shōnen*) have become less common in

peaceful times" (Rampo, n.pag.) Although Poketto Kozō and the *chinpira betsudōtai*, as the

name suggests, are not official members of the boy detectives' club, their role throughout the

series is noteworthy; however, a detailed account of their adventures is beyond the scope of this

thesis.

There are other important elements in the series worth mentioning. Similar to how objects

such as the deerstalker, magnifying glass, and pipe are associated with the enduring image of

Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, the boy detectives in Rampo's stories also have a trademark of

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[27] In the story "Kaijin to Shōnen Tantei," Poketto is said to be in grade five or six, but he looks like a student in kindergarten.

their own: the "7 tools of the trade" (*nanatsu no dōgu*). These tools are a boy detective badge (abbreviated as B.D. badge), which is worn by members of the club and at times used as a means to alert other members to an emergency situation; a fountain pen flashlight; a magnet, which can also be used as a compass; a whistle; a magnifying glass with a handle, used to identify small objects and fingerprints; a mini telescope; and a pocketbook and pencil. [28] These tools are introduced throughout the series as needed by the boy detectives in their investigation. In addition to these seven tools, the boy detectives also use gadgets such as walkie talkies (*musendenwaki*). Kobayashi, as the leader of the group, has access to several more items such as a messenger bird named Pippo-chan and a rope made of silk thread used for climbing. In contemporary manga adaptations such as Aoyama's *Meitantei Konan*, these gadgets have been updated with modern technology.

As mentioned earlier, the boy detective has been part of both American and British traditions, and according to critics such as Cornelius, these cultural traditions are distinct in that the American boy detective has roots in Horatio Alger's rags-to-riches tales whereas the origin of the British boy detective can be traced to Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. Specifically, Andrew's study reveals that early boy detective stories such as those that appeared in the Harmsworth's story paper were not modeled after Holmes himself, but adapted the role of Watson, which resulted in a dichotomy between the adult detective and boy assistant: "These boy assistants serve some similar functions to Watson. They provide a point of reader identification, allow the adult detective to discuss his methods and findings, act as an admiring audience for the Holmesian figure's great feats of detection and, by dint of their inferior skills and intellect, emphasise the genius of the adult master detective" (3). However, Andrew also

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[28] For example, in "Shōnen tanteidan," one of the boy detectives leaves a trail of B.D. badges when he is kidnapped by Nijū-mensō. For more details about each item, see reference for "Testsujin Kyū."

notes that the boys in the Harmsworth papers "engage in far more detective work than does Holmes's companion, often, in contrast to the ineffectual Watson, successfully performing investigative tasks such as tracking and spying independently of their adult masters" (3). In Rampo's boy detective series, the dichotomy between Kobayashi (the boy assistant) and Akechi (the adult detective) draws a curious parallel between British and Japanese cultural trends of the genre, which might be because they are both influenced by Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, even though they were produced in different cultural settings and at different historical moments. Furthermore, whereas Kobayashi serves as an assistant to Akechi, the *chinpira betsudōtai* serve as assistants to Kobayashi adding another dynamic to the detective/boy assistant paradigm. One way of understanding Kobayashi's role as the leader of the *chinpira betsudōtai* is within the context of the didactic function of Rampo's fiction. In other words, under Kobayashi's leadership, the *chinpira betsudōtai* are given the opportunity to live a life free of crime. According to Andrew, in early British boy detective stories, "the detective role is not only used as an ideological tool to encourage working-class boy readers to develop into ideal men—useful members of society—but also has disciplinary and monitory functions, discouraging particular types of behaviours and imposing certain restrictions upon boys" (6). Within the context of Rampo's *shōnen tantei* series, Kobayashi articulates the standard and expectation of boys of his time. In rallying up of the *chinpira betsudōtai* in *Seidō no Majin*, Kobayashi tells the boys: "Sometimes, you boys steal, don't you? You can't hide it from me, I know it all. But you steal not because you want to, but because you have no mum or dad to care for you. Even if that's the case, you can't go on stealing forever. So, what'd you say about joining my boy detectives club?" (Rampo n.pag.). As this is the first story published after Rampo's hiatus after the Second World War, it may come as no surprise that children without parents and families, like the

chinpira betsudōtai, are represented in Rampo's fiction for children. Kobayashi shows sympathy towards the boys, but he also sets the record straight when it comes to activities such as theft. As someone who works under the great detective Akechi, Kobayashi is the exemplar of justice whom the *chinpira betsudōtai* can strive to emulate. The threat of *chinpira* (thugs) committing theft and other crimes is further contained in the fictional world of Rampo's stories in a village called Ari (*ari no machi*), where the *chinpira betsudōtai* live under the care of one of Akechi's friends.

Indeed, in Rampo's stories, children play a far greater role in the development of the plot and in the solving of a crime than a character such as Conan Doyle's Watson. However, at times, Akechi's role as the master detective tends to take away the spotlight, *per se*, from Kobayashi and the boy detectives. Key moments such as the unveiling of the trick used by Nijū-mensō are often reserved for Akechi, which works to reinforce his authoritative role. There are times when Akechi conceals his knowledge, providing only hints to Kobayashi and in turn to the (child) reader who must try to solve the mystery by him/herself. However, there are several stories in the series that end with a congratulatory note that acknowledges teamwork. The last line in *Kaijin Nijū-mensō*, for example, is "Akechi tantei banzai. Shōnen tantei banzai" (Rampo, 239).[29] Similarly, *Yōjin Gongu* ends with children cheering "Shōnen tanteidan banzai" and "chinpira betsudōtai banzai" (Rampo n.pag.). These moments encourage a reading of the relationship between the boy assistant and adult detective in terms of equality and partnership. The role of children should not be underestimated, as Akechi himself warns: "when push comes to shove, children are capable of demonstrating tremendous focus just like adults, and when they do, I find them more trustworthy than adults" (Rampo, *Shōnen Tanteidan* 153).

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[29] "Banzai" is an expression used in Japanese that means "(may you live) ten thousand years." It can be translated as "Hurray for detective Akechi. Hurray for the boy detectives."

In the Sherlockian Canon, Watson is strategically set up as the first-person narrator with whose perspective readers are expected to identify. However, in Rampo's *shōnen tantei* series, even though children are the main protagonists of the story, the narrative unfolds in the third person omniscient point of view with frequent authorial interjections.[30] One of the critical functions of the narrator is to build the story's suspense while also providing readers with a sense of reassurance and comfort. Authorial intrusion is a technique commonly used in children's stories in order to make the (child) reader feel as though he/she is part of the narrative as it unfolds. In *Kaijin Nijū-mensō*, for example, Kobayashi falls through a trap in the floor that the narrator describes as a "mouth to hell" (Rampo, 73). With no way to escape, Kobayashi is alone in the dark, a circumstance in which "any other boy would have most likely cried out in despair" (Rampo, 74-75). However, as if to relieve the dramatic tension, the narrator addresses the reader directly: "Dearest reader, please rest assured. There is no need to worry. There is a rope ladder for situations like this. The time has come for Kobayashi to make use of the *nanatsu no dōgu* (seven tools of the trade)" (81). Using the tools in his rucksack, Kobayashi writes a letter, which he attaches to his bird in hope that the police will rescue him. Throughout the story, the narrator conceals information from the reader, asks rhetorical questions, and highlights important scenes in the story for the reader to remember. In manga these narrative techniques are renegotiated in interesting ways as I shall discuss in Chapter Two.

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[30] Rampo employs this technique in his fiction for adults as well, such as in *D-saka no Satsujin Jiken* (*The Case of the Murder on D-Hill*), in which he refers to the reader as "*dokusha*" in comparison to "*dokusha-kun*" in the *shōnen tantei* series. The honorific "kun" in the latter is used to refer to boys and children.

From the "Wild Child" to the Child Detective: The Crisis of Youth Identity[31]

Given Japan's history as a powerful imperial nation suddenly subjugated by a twentieth-century war, it is not surprising that scholars of Japanese cultural studies have identified an inherent paradox in Japanese culture. Critics such as Jennifer Robertson and Richard Minear have examined "Japanese orientalism," which they see as different from the general definition of orientalism used in the West popularized by Edward Said's definition of that term, since Japan can be positioned simultaneously as both a colonizer and a "colonized" nation. In the words of Robertson, Japanese orientalism deviates from Said's definition because Said insists that "presentation of the 'Other' (the non-West) [is] absolutely different from the West" (98). Such revisionary orientalists argue that orientalism is not homogeneous, but is nuanced in different cultures. Minear argues that Japan demonstrates "orientalist attitudes even in the absence of [a long-standing] domination" (515), suggesting the country's inferiority complex as a driving force to be more like the West even as it struggles to be different from it. Eiji Oguma has also drawn attention to the diverse range of perspectives and discourses that have shaped ideas of identity in Japan, dispelling the myth of homogeneity as a defining characteristic of the Japanese people.

In the postwar years, one way that the crisis of identity manifested itself was in postwar consumer culture, which was defined by Japanese media depictions of the pursuit of "The American Way of Life" (Igarashi 78). The atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki brought about a devastating defeat, but also motivated the Japanese to rebuild their nation so that it would surpass America. Implied in this statement is the underlying assumption that in order for Japan to recuperate from a fallen empire, it must now look to the West as its competition but also as a model, offering guidance, which echoes the cultural ambivalence experienced by writers of the

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[31] The term "wild child" is a reference to the title of Andrea's Arai's article, "The 'Wild Child' of 1990s Japan" in *Japan after Japan: Social and Cultural Life from the Recessionary 1990s to the Present*. See entry for Arai.

Meiji and Taishō periods as they saw "a wide gap in cultural achievement between Japan and the West" (Hutchinson 177). At the same time, the pursuit for an "orthodox" Japanese identity began to emerge in the decades following Japan's defeat in attempt to restore a sense of national solidarity. In the 1950s, various critics, including Katō Norihiro and Maruyama Masao, introduced the concept of in-betweenness and hybridity. [32] One of the serious implications of hybridity within a Japanese postwar context is that it "ultimately serves as the ideological tool that masks the historical disjuncture in US-Japanese relations" (Igarashi 75). Repressing the memory of conflict between both countries not only redefined Japan's relationship to America as its ally, but also exonerated Japan's colonial history. The future of Japan, therefore, rested on trying to forget about its (colonial) past as it rebuilt the nation with American aid. According to Igarashi Yoshikuni, "tropes of in-betweenness and hybridity" became the pretext for *Nihonjinron*—"the enormously popular discourse on Japanese uniqueness in the 1970s and the 1980s [which] instantiate[d] the ideological construction of Japan, in the worst sense of the ideology" (I73). *Nihonjinron* has been critically derided for making essentialist claims about the uniqueness of Japanese identity and demarcating Japaneseness by "ahistorical categories, such as biology or ethnicity" (Igarashi 72). My argument here is that, in a society struggling with defining itself in the aftermath of the burst of the economic bubble, which "allowed the Japanese populace to perceive that Japan had again been defeated by the US in the war over the global economy (Yoshimi, 2010, pp. i–ii)" (qtd in Park 372), the boy sleuth re-emerged as a site of national trauma whereby contentious questions of hybridity, tradition/modernity and Japan/West, once again, crept into the Japanese consciousness.

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[32] For details, see Igarashi 79.

Japan's unprecedented financial success in the 1980s came to a staggering halt in 1992 when stock prices peaked, signalling the burst of the economic bubble. The term *Lost Decade* describes the period following this economic downturn that led to the collapse of the lifetime employment system, which critics such as Kawamura Yuniya describe as "the root of the transformations that had ripple effects throughout Japanese society" (36) and which "[cut] deeply into the core of postwar Japanese social compact and the sense of national identity" (Harootunian and Yoda 2). Japan's lifetime employment system assured workers a sense of financial security and ensured social and political stability. It was a system that guaranteed structure and order in the lives of the Japanese people. In the whirlwind of the economic crash that swept the nation with "waves of bankruptcy," "unemployment rates [that] reached post 1940 peaks" (Harootunian and Yoda 2), and high suicide rates among middle-aged men (see Kawamura), the youth of Japan were faced with an uncertain future. The deterioration of the "monolithic postwar Japanese middle-class goals of good diploma, good job at a big company, and good marriages (for girls) [. . .] used to socialize individuals into national subject" (Yoda 39) led some youth astray as they began to "see the unhappiness and self-destructive conducts of adults still tethered to them" (Yoda 39). Once again, conflicted discourses regarding one's place within a national community fostered "a paradoxical nexus of the retreating national order, on one hand, and the widespread eruption of nationalistic sentiment, on the other" (17).

The economic recession of the 1990s gave rise to discourses of a new kind of national identity that stemmed from anxieties about the future of Japan's youth. In May 1997, a series of child murders committed in Kobe by a 14-year-old boy made national headlines and had a profound impact on discourses of childhood development thereafter. The boy reportedly severed the head of an elementary school student named Jun, which he left at the gate of Tomogaoka

Junior High with a note stuffed in the victim's mouth addressed to the police and signed Seito Sakakibara. As a juvenile offender, the boy criminal was convicted and persecuted as *Shōnen A* (Boy A), the name later given to the incident. The sensationalized and violent nature of the crimes committed by an unsuspected criminal raised concerns about the moral depravity of Japan's youth. [33] Marilyn Ivy contends that "Shōnen A becomes the epitome of the monster himself, the apotheosis of societal fear about *ijime* (school bullying), youth violence, perversity and confusion; he embodies the terror surrounding the very figure of the "child" in postwar Japan" (206). In contrast to the images of disorder and fear perpetuated by the monstrous acts of real children, Miyazaki Hayao's *Mononokehime* (*Princess Mononoke,* 1997), released two months after these tragic incidents, provides an alternative representation of the child, "neatly contained within the idealized view of a child that is *not too wild*" (Arai 221). Such depictions reinforce notions of innocence and purity, which specifically lie at the core of many *shōnen* manga narratives:

> The word *shonen* embraces not only the young male readers but also the genre itself, and, as Paul Gravett explains, it "not only means 'boy' (made up of the characters for "few" and "years"), but also 'pure of heart'" (59). In addition, *shōnen* might also connote the possibility of development of the immature and the unskilled, who in the early phases of life, or of a narrative, lack life experience. Whether they are infants, teenagers or adolescents, all the heroes show the quality of *shōnen* in boy's manga works. (Sasada 193)

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[33] According to Andrea Arai, the police were initially looking for a male suspect in his 30s or 40s.

Within the context of detective manga, the boy detective embodies the pure heart in the form of law and order personified. His sense of justice, duty, and honour produce an image of an idealized child who stands in striking contrast to child criminals such as Shōnen A.

Although the works of Kanari, Amagi, and Aoyama predate the Shōnen A incident and Miyazaki's film, when read in light of emerging concerns about the future of Japanese youth, these works may have predicted symptoms of youth problems to come. Indeed, the Lost Decade was marked by economic malaise, social crisis, and moral panic, triggered by a series of troubling events. The death of Emperor Hirohito in 1989 signalled the end of Japan's long postwar era, and the Great *Hanshin-Awaji* Earthquake in January 1995 caused over a hundred thousand deaths and literally shook the core of Japanese society. In that same year, the Tokyo Subway Sarin Attack, carried out by the religious cult Aum Shinrikyō, marked Japan's first case of domestic terrorism. It is not surprising, then, that the detective emerged in a nation undergoing a state of crisis.

Including the works of Kanari, Amagi, and Aoyama, since the 1990s there has been a sustained growth in the number of mystery manga: *Clamp School Detectives* (*CLAMP Gakuen Tanteidan,* 1992-93), *Steam Detectives* (*Kaiketsujōki tanteidan,*1994-), *Cuticle Tantei Inaba* (*Kyūtikuru tantei Inaba,* 2008-), *Detective Academy Q* (*Tantei Gakuen Kyū,* 2001-05), *Daughter of the Fiend with Twenty Faces* (*Nijū-mensō no Musume,* 2002-07), *Psychic Detective Yakumo* (*Shinrei Tantei Yakumo,* 2009), *Neuro Supernatural Detective* (*Majin Tantei Nōgami Neuro,* 2005-09), *Dear Holmes* (1996-2007), Detective *Opera Milky Holmes (Tantei Opera Mirukī Hōmuzu,* 2010-11), Andō Yūma's *Sherlock Bones* (2013-), *Tantei Zeno to Nanatsu no Satsujin Misshitsu* (*Detective Xeno and Seven Locked-room Murders*, 2018-2019), *and Misuteri to iu Nakare* (*Do not Say Mystery* 2018-).

Although not all of these manga pay homage to Doyle's representation of the Baker Street Irregulars, or to Rampo's boy assistant Kobayashi, they demonstrate various cultural ramifications of the child detective who employ ratiocinative methods of solving crimes.[34] Clearly, one of the ways in which the genre of detective fiction has been reconceptualized is in the medium of manga, and particularly the *shōnen* genre, which raises the following questions: why is classic detective fiction retold in the *shōnen* genre? Why are classic (adult) detectives recreated in the figure of the *shōnen*? [35]

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[34] Moreover, not all of these manga feature a male protagonist. Manga such as *Daughter of Twenty Faces* and *Tantei Opera Milky Holmes* feature female protagonists, or a group of women detectives, and in so doing, redefine the typical *shōnen tantei* narrative by giving girls/women agency.
[35] A genre targeted for a boy audience, though it is read by girls and women as well.

Chapter 2

The Boy Detective in the Manga Tradition: Forms, Themes, and Context

Having traced the literary history and development of Japanese detective fiction in chapter one,

this chapter builds on how the genre's central themes and concerns are dealt with in manga to

situate the boy detective in the manga tradition. It traces the earliest construction of the boy

detective in manga to the works of Osamu Tezuka and to the *gekiga* manga tradition as it

explores how these two styles have established the visual aesthetics, tropes, and conventions of

the boy detective tradition, but in different ways.

Before proceeding to a discussion of detective manga, I would like to return momentarily

to a discussion on the origin of detective fiction in Japan. It should be noted that although

Japanese detective fiction as an imported genre might suggest that Japan's self-fashioning relies

on branching outward to the West, critics of Japanese detective fiction warn us of the fallacy of

direct influence. Kawana, for example, compares the works of Rampo and Christie to show how

both authors utilized the figure of the deceitful narrator. However, she points out that although

many would assume "Rampo's work to be a copy of Christie's" (20), the publication dates of

their respective works would suggest otherwise. Kawana draws attention to the "facility with

which Japanese authors could access translations seems to fuel the fallacy of direct influence and

devalue their creative production" (21). Also, according to Silver,

> Such conventions as the locked room, the series of interviews with the suspects,
>
> the dramatic reappraisal of the evidence, the revelation of the intricate yet utterly
>
> compelling solution by the detective, and the guilt of the least likely suspect have
>
> been so widely circulated and recalculated as to make the question of originality
>
> largely moot. And perhaps not only detective stories, but all texts are, as

poststructuralist literary critical theory has suggested, made up of fragments of

other texts. (134-35)

As Kawana points out, "the numerous instances of unintentional overlaps or confluences

between Western and Japanese detective fiction suggest that what we may intuitively perceive as

results of intercultural influence may be mere coincidences made possible by cultural

globalization" (19). She also contends that detective fiction is a "synchronic tradition [that]

stretches across geographical boundaries and allows individual instances of transnational

affinities to emerge" (24). It is within this framework that Kawana develops her concept of genre

as an "imagined guild" (24). According to Kawana, "this awareness of the global nature of their

endeavors allowed Japanese detective fiction writers to operate within an imagined guild of like-

minded aficionados. This community is 'imagined' in the same sense that Benedict Anderson's

idea of 'nationhood' is imagined; and it is worthy of the name 'guild' as it stretches across class,

race and gender (24). Kawana's description of the guild gestures towards the idea of what critics

such as Stewart King describe as the "denationalization of detective fiction," (10) or, a

consideration of detective fiction as world literature. Arguing that "[t]he exclusion of popular

fiction in the study of world literatures replicates a division that already exists in literary

studies," Stewart proposes that "works and authors can be identified who enter into the pantheon

of world crime fiction through the numerous intertextual references to earlier works and writers

that appear in the crime narratives of writers around the globe. Two such examples are

pioneering Japanese and Catalan crime writers Taro Hirai and Jaume Fuster" (11). Indeed,

writers such as Tarō Hirai (or Edogawa Rampo) were "keenly aware of their status as borrowers

from Western sources and of the inevitability of comparison with those sources" (Silver 3).

Kawana's concept of the guild (as it specifically relates to the Meiji and Taishō historical

context) recognizes the cultural production of the genre as something that ought to avoid the west-Japan classification, as she writes, "mentioning names and plots from pre-existent works is not an admission of creative piracy but a way to show one's mastery of the genre's conventions" (25). Although I acknowledge that Kawana's concept of the imagined guild might trouble notions of authorship and might even raise concerns about the issue of plagiarism, from a theoretical standpoint, the imagined guild is provocative because it challenges an understanding of Japanese modernity as mere imitation of Western art and modernization.

Kawana's imagined guild theory ultimately destabilizes ideas of origin, though not unproblematically, that are implicit to Hutcheon's *Theory of Parod*y (1985), which I have used in the past as a theoretical framework to examine Aoyama's manga series.[36] A consideration of the series as a parody of Holmes might ultimately run the risk of reinforcing cultural and literary hierarchies. Like detective fiction, detective manga can be seen as operating within an imagined guild that Kawana asserts is "a new 'home' [for] Japanese detective fiction writers to escape the 'pervading feeling of cultural homelessness' [. . .] and reinterpret such sense of loss as freedom and a right to join another community" (25). Although the imagined guild does not seem to encompass a dialogical mode of exchange, what is important to takeaway from Kawana's theory is that rather than imitating or borrowing from the Western and Japanese novel forms, Japanese writers and *mangaka* alike pay homage to canonical writers and their detectives from around the world, reinventing them in ways that are culturally meaningful.

Japanese detective fiction represents the nation as a set of narratives as outlined by themes of hybridity and reveals the very complex layers of "postcolonial" discourse that also inform detective manga that invoke literary classics. When I speak of boy detective (*shōnen*

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[36] See Okabe, Tsugumi. *From Sherlock Holmes to "Heisei" Holmes: Counter Orientalism and Post Modern Parody in Aoyama Gosho's Detective Conan Manga Series.* 2012, Brock University, Master's Major Research Project.

tantei) manga, I refer to a subgenre of mystery (*misuterī*) manga that privileges the role of the genius boy detective, who utilizes ratiocinative methods of crime-sovling, and is modelled after classic detectives and/or inspired by classic detective stories. This chapter draws mostly on English-language and translated scholarship on manga to situate the study of detective manga in its historical and theoretical contexts.

Approaching Manga

Much like Japanese detective fiction, manga also developed out of a transcultural tradition. With respect to manga criticism in North America, Frederik Schodt's *Manga! Manga!: The World of Japanese Comics* (1983) and Paul Gravett's Manga *Sixty Years of Japanese Comic*s (2004) are the best-known studies of manga outside of Japan. Notably, however, it is the English-language and translated scholarship on manga, mostly originating in Japan, that offers important cross-cultural perspectives. English-language studies on manga, for example, tend to address manga generally as Japanese comics, but in Japanese manga criticism, definitions of manga are more nuanced; as Natsu Onoda Power points out, "the word manga has three different iterations in its written forms: kanji, hiragana and katakana" (9), all of which are designated to a particular historical and cultural moment. According to Onoda Power, "the story comic genre that has become mainstream since the postwar era, is usually written in *katakana*," whereas manga written in kanji "refers to older forms of comics, dating back to Hokusai manga" (10). Finally, "the hiragana term manga emphasizes the humor, not necessarily with political or subversive overtones" (11). In my examination of post-Tezuka works, with a focus on two manga published in the 1990s, I refer to the katakana derivation of the genre.

One of the most widely read Japanese manga genres is *shōnen* manga, consisting of stories that, more or less, "carefully balance suspense with humor: dramatic stories of sports, adventures, ghosts, science fiction, and school life" (Schodt 15), among other themes. The genre is characterized by its "considerable crossover in readership" (Schodt 16) as is the case with other manga genres. According to Angela Drummond-Mathews, *shōnen* manga consists of multiple subgeneric categories, with sports manga as the most popular, followed by action/adventure manga, martial arts manga, war manga, historical manga, and giant robot manga. It is interesting to note that the genre of detective manga in Drummond-Mathews' categorization does not make the cut. *Shōnen* narratives were popularized in the decades "following post-World War II boom in magazines such as *Manga Club*, *Manga Shōnen*, and *Tokyo Pakku* [at a time when] *mangaka* such as Osamu Tezuka and other began to sell children's-oriented manga magazines [. . .] (Ito 2005, 467)" (qtd. in Drummond-Mathews 63). Prior to being collected in individual volumes, called *tankōbon*, manga stories are first serialized in magazines, "and if [they] prov[e] to have lasting popularity it is compiled into paperback form and sold through regular book distribution channels" (Schodt 13). *Weekly Shōnen Jump* is "one of the highest selling magazines in the world, having sold as many as six million copies per week" (Schodt 12; Drummond-Mathews), followed by *Shōnen Magazine* and *Shōnen Sunday*. In 1992, *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* was first published in the *Weekly Shōnen Magazine*, and was recorded as one of the best-selling manga of the 1990s.[37] Two years later, *Meitantei Konan* was first serialized in *Shōgakukan's Weekly Shōnen Sunday* on January 19, 1994, and has since been collected into 95 *tankōbon* volumes and ongoing.

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[37] According to Man Tan Web in "*Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo*: 20th Anniversary since Its Birth and its First Full 12 Years," the series sold 90 million copies. See mantan-web.jp/article/20120228dog00m200043000c.html.

In terms of form, there are fundamental physical and tangible differences between manga, *bandes dessinées*, and other comics from around the world. Fusanosuke Natsume summarizes these differences as follows:

> There is the medium of appearance, the size of the market, and—putting diversity aside for the moment—also forms of expression. There is the difference in reading direction: East Asian manga, for example in Japan, Hong Kong, and Taiwan, are read from right to left and contain mainly vertical script, whereas BD [*bandes dessinées*] and [American] comics are characterized above all by the opposite direction and horizontal lines of text. Another subtle difference, perhaps brought on by the previous element, can be found in panel arrangement and gaze movement. There is also the different amount of pages in book editions, the difference between mainly monochrome manga and richly colored BD and comics, and so on. (50)

These differences influence how stories unfold on the pages. Visual language, "like sequential units of sounds in speech or bodily motion in sign languages" (Cohn 187), consists of visual expressions, symbols, and cues that are culturally specific, but are not limited to a specific culture of origin. *Keiyu*, or graphic emblems, "are used to represent invisible qualities such as emotions and motions (Cohn 192). Some recognized emblems in standard Japanese visual language include a boy with a bloody nose to symbolize lustful thoughts, or a bubble coming out of a character's nose to symbolize sleep. These emblems are not exclusive to Japanese manga, and have appeared in original English manga and in manga-styled art produced in Europe, Singapore, Korea, and East Asia. At time when the graphic style of manga has been appropriated across cultures, Japaneseness cannot be ascribed to manga style. As Cohn posits, "JVL [Japanese

Visual Language] is the graphic system of communication, manga is the socio-cultural context in which it *appears* most" (188; emphasis mine). Furthermore, Cohn points out that "like all languages, JVL changes over time" (189), specifically noting that few *mangaka* today use the same visual style or language as Osamu Tezuka. This points to what Cohn calls graphic dialects within JVL, which are genre-specific. *Shōjo* manga, for example, employ a different visual grammar and language from *shōnen* manga. [38] Certain sub-genres within *shōnen,* such as mystery and detective narratives, also use specific emblems and signs, as *Meitantei Konan* and *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* both demonstrate.

Motivated in part to counter Western prejudices about manga, Gravett's *Manga: Sixty Years of Japanese Comics* challenged the popular opinions of manga, which he argued were premised on preconceptions that "'They are full of sex and violence.' Often misrepresented as little more than 'tits and tentacles', manga were, and still are, open to being doubly damned in the West for being Japanese, and for being comics" (8). Nowadays, in North America, manga are sold at major commercial bookstores and comic shops, and are accessible online in the form of scanlations and fansubs.[39] Furthermore, scholars such as Itō Kinko accept that manga is a pervasive medium capable of generating political and cultural commentary and influencing society as a whole:

> Manga, or Japanese comics, have traditionally been a significant part of Japanese popular culture. However, Japanese comics do not exist in a vacuum; they are closely connected to Japanese history and culture, including such areas such as politics, economy, family, religion, and gender. Therefore, they reflect both the

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[38] A manga genre often targeted at a female reading audience.
[39] Scanlation refers to fan-made transaltions of manga, which are scanned, then made available on the internet. Fansub refers to unofficial, translations or subtitles of manga and/or anime.

reality of Japanese society and the myths, beliefs, and fantasies that Japanese have

about themselves, their culture, and the world. The history of manga shoes how

they reflect and shape Japanese society and how they came to be what they are

today. (26)

The genre of Japanese detective fiction is inseparable from its historical and political context.

The same argument can be made for manga, a medium that is often viewed and dismissed on

account of its entertainment value. However, caricatures had long been used to tackle serious

treatments of religion, dating back to the twelfth century, as seen in *Gaki zoshi* and the *jigoku

zohi* (Hell scroll).[40] During the Russo-Japanese War (1904-05), political cartoons were used to

mobilize a sense of national unity against a common threat.[41] Okamoto Rei has shown that

humour magazines "such as *KariKare* (Caricare), *Osaka Pakku* (Osaka Puck), *Manga Ōkoku*

(Manga Kingdom), and *Manga no Kuni* (The Country of Manga) played an active role as agents

of the war by utilizing manga as a propaganda tool" (33). According to Eldad Nakar, by the late

1950s and 1960s, positive images of Japan's militaristic past emerged in accordance with

"Japan's rapid economic recovery, the anticipated Olympic glory, and Japan's postwar

emergence as a high-tech powerhouse [which] creat[ed] fertile ground in which positive links

between Japan's past and its present could grow" (194). However, such positive images of

Japan's postwar reconstruction were challenged in the 1970s with the outbreak of the Vietnam

War that brought back horrifying memories of the Second World War (as seen in Keiji

Nakazawa's *Barefoot Gen* 1976-1980) and Japan's involvement within it. These examples

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[40] For details on the history of manga, see Schodt, Frederik L. Manga! Manga!: the World of Japanese Comics. Kōdansha International, 1983

[41] For more information on the role of political cartoons see, for example, Mikhailova, Deborah. "Intellectuals, Cartoons, and Nationalism During the Russo-Japanese War." *Japanese Visual Culture: Exploration in the World of Manga and Anime*, edited by Mark W. MacWilliams, M.E. Sharpe, 2008, pp. 137-54.

demonstrate how manga grapples with serious issues that reflect and respond to cultural and sociopolitical anxieties of specific moments in Japanese history.

Manga Criticism in Japan

According to Jaqueline Berndt, manga criticism in Japan is classified into four stages, beginning in the early 1960s with critics such as Tsurumi Shunsuke, Fujikawa Chisui, and Saitō Toda, who "first treated manga form caricatures and newspapers strips to entertaining stories, as an object worthy of intellectual investigation" (Berndt, "Considering Manga Discourse" 303). These critics, according to Berndt, "illuminate the potential of manga to be a medium for adults and related to social issues of their time" (303) and "they understood Japanese comics as an outgrowth of traditional folk culture, characterized by close ties between creators and consumers in small communities" (303). The second stage of manga criticism was initiated by critics such as Ishiko Junzō, Gondō Susumu, Kaiji Jun and Yamane Sadao who "founded the review journal *Mangashugi* (Manga-ism, 1967-1978) …[and] were primarily interested in comics as a medium of communicating social experiences…" (303). These critics were also critical of the literary approaches to the study of manga that came before and pushed for a more genre-specific mode of analysis. By the 1970s, attention shifted towards a more individualized and personalized understanding of manga, establishing what "went down in the history of manga criticism as 'the first-person narrator' (*bokugatari*)" (Berndt 304) that characterized the third stage of manga criticism. The fourth stage pioneered a "semiotic approach [that] was intended to claim manga as an autonomous medium by explicating its unique means of expression from an internal perspective" (304). This wave was spearheaded by "[s]cholars and critics such as Yomota Inuhiko, Fusanosuke Natsume, and Takeuchi Osamu [who] cultivated an approach called

hyōgenron [theory on expression]" (Suzuki, "Manga/comics Studies" 69), which emerged in response to earlier manga discourse that "tended to only discuss narrative themes or often treated manga merely as a reflection of the society or age out of which the comics emerge" (Suzuki, "Manga/comics Studies" 69). Critics of the *hyōgenron* approach, which has a strong connection with the school of New Criticism, were interested in "'examin[ing] the internal logic of what makes manga 'manga'" by analyzing the "'system of expression that is unique to manga'" (Yomota 1994: 15-17)" (qtd. in Suzuki, "Manga/comics Studies" 69). While an examination of the visual language is crucial to determine the constituents of the genre of detective manga, it is equally important to interrogate texts in relation to their wider socio-political and cultural contexts.

The history of manga lies in the critical debates about its origin. In 1983, Schodt defined manga in relation to sixteenth-century scrolls. Koyama Richard's historicization of manga in *One Thousand Years of Manga* (2007) follows Schodt's chronology in a similar vein. However, the linking of the past to an understanding of contemporary manga has been problematized by many critics (see Berndt; Ōtsuka; Stewart). Stewart, for example, has accused Richard of "collapsing modern Japan to an exotic past" (45; see esp. n. 19), claiming that "the zeal to locate current Japanese culture in the past takes on distinctly orientalist exoticizing tendencies" (30). This view is also supported by Ōtsuka Eiji, who once asserted that "a history that traces manga to picture scrolls is in itself orientalist."[42] In other words, critics of manga generally agree that a chronology of manga rooted in the art of *Chōjūgiga,* for example, assumes a kind of

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[42] Mentioned during his lecture at the 2014 Media Mix Summer Program held at Kadokawa Publishing in Tokyo, Japan.

ethnocentrism that risks conflating the history of manga as a form derived from traditional Japanese art and Japanese culture alone.

Like the history of Japanese detective fiction, which developed from Western models, the history of American (Western) influence on Japanese manga cannot be ignored. Rakuten Kitazawa and Ippei Okamoto were two players who "helped popularize American cartoons and comic strips" (Itō 32). As early as the Meiji period, there were clear implications of the influence of Western political caricatures in the works of Kitazawa; as Berndt claims, "Without their early openness to European caricatures and American comic strips, Japanese manga would not be as successful as they are today" ("Comics World" 5). Itō further notes that "Okamoto was fascinated with Western cinema and drew manga that were full of cinematic expression and images" (32). Ōtsuka Eiji states that "it is a mistake to view Tezuka Osamu's manga system of representation as originating entirely in Japan" (119). Tezuka himself once claimed, "there are three filmmakers whom I deeply admire, Cecil B. De Mille, Chaplin, and Disney" (qtd. in Ōtsuka 117), pointing to the hybrid constitution of manga in both its form and content. However, even as he celebrated American popular culture, "Tezuka has mixed feelings about the United States, a love-hate relationship that alternated between rejecting and borrowing from American popular culture" (Phillips 74). On the one hand, "Tezuka's manga often featured idealized utopian American cityscapes depicting a way of life that was foreign to Japanese children" (Phillips 74), which fostered a kind of exoticism. On the other hand, he reinforced the image of America as cultural enemy in *The Destroyer of the World* (*Sekai o Horobosu Otoko,* 1954), which depict "American generals [who] discuss dropping another newly developed bomb in Japan" (Phillips 74). Like writers of classic detective fiction, whose works thematically dealt with their own ambivalence towards cultural borrowing, Tezuka's works represented this tension

not only thematically, but visually. In particular, the adventure and science fiction manga of

Tezuka's early phase reveals his familiarity with American and European tales such as "*Tarzan*,

Treasure Island, or *Robinson Crusoe*, Hollywood and the VFA (the former German film

production industry) film" (Phillips 74). In addition, Phillips mentions that Tezuka's manga have

been influenced by literary genres including "English detective fiction" (68) and American

"comic book heroes like Dick Tracy" (68). I would add that Tezuka also derives inspiration from

Edogawa Rampo's s*hōnen tantei* series.

Both *Shōnen Tantei Rokku Hōmu* and *Ken'ichi Tanteichō* were published during what

Phillips describes as Tezuka's "early 'classical' period from 1947 to the mid-sixties" (69).

However, little critical attention has been paid to Tezuka's works featuring detectives. In

examining narrative patterns in Tezuka's manga, Phillips posits that the adventure and sci-fi

genres constitute the early classical works of Tezuka's canon: "The former is characterized by

the exotic, locales and extraordinary situations that one can imagine" (70) whereas the latter

"decidedly reflect Japanese war experience and the privations of the postwar period" (71), as

seen in the *Chiteikoku no Kaijin* (*The Mysterious Men Down the Earth*, 1948), [and] *Metropolis*

(1949)" (70). It is curious, however, that Phillips makes no mention of the genre of detective

fiction in its own right, but describes it as a mere element in Tezuka's five-part plot structure,

which alternates between adventure and science fiction. In *Adventure, Mystery and Romance*,

Cawelti identifies three minimum conditions for a work to be considered a detective story:

> If a work does not meet these conditions, it is something else: (1) there must be a
>
> mystery, ie, certain basic past facts about a situation/and number of the central
>
> characters must be concealed from the reader and from the protagonist until the
>
> end, or as in the case of the inverted procedural story the reader must understand

that such facts have been concealed from the protagonist; (2) they story must be

structured around an inquiry into these concealed facts with the inquirer as

protagonist and his investigation as the central action; however, the concealed

facts must not be about the protagonist himself; (3) the concealed facts must be

made known at the end. Only when these rudimentary conditions are present will

a story be able to generate the particular interests and satisfactions of the detective

story genre. (132)

Both of Tezuka's detective manga series, *Shōnen Tantei Rokku Hōmu* and *Ken'ichi Tanteichō*,

begin with a mystery that the detective must solve. The mystery presented in the first story of

Ken'ichi Tanteichō titled "The Case of the Tornado Bomb" ("Tatsumaki Bakudan no Maki"),

surrounds a species of unidentified, glowing fish that have been discovered on top of a mountain

in Kuzui city. Believed to have come from outer space, researchers collected the fish into a crate

and delivered it to the University of Tokyo for further investigation. However, the crate was

intercepted by thieves. Ken'ichi is invited to Kuzui city to solve this mystery. In his

investigation, Ken'ichi discovers that the fish were contaminated with radium which made it

appear as if they were glowing, and he eventually finds clues that lead him to one man: a

journalist at Soho News paper company. At the end of the story, a character by the name of

Okaryō is identified as the criminal and his motive for using the contaminated fish as a hoax to

gain more readers and profits for his newspaper company is revealed. The story ends with the

arrest of Okaryō and his subordinates. Having solved the case, Ken'ichi returns to his

headquarter in Tokyo.

    Shōnen Tantei Rokku Hōmu, on the other hand, does not fit Cawelti's formula to the

letter. This is most likely because some stories in the collection emphasize elements of

adventure, fantasy and even sci-fi over mystery. However, there are some stories that can be considered a detective story. These include "13 Secrets" ("13 no Himitsu"), which involves Rock who investigates the assassination of a young prince. The story begins with a mystery that prompts the detective's call to action and ends with the detective who apprehends the criminals. In this story, there is an image of Rock searching for clues, using his magnifying glass, which may be a homage to Doyle's Sherlock Holmes who often used a magnifying in his investigations.[43] In Tezuka's "The Phantom-like Disks" ("Maboroshi no Enban") the story revolves around Rock's investigation of a series of UFO sightings. At one point in his investigation, Rock finds particles of red dirt or soil (*akachi*), which leads him to a set of footprints that eventually helps him track down the criminal. This method of investigation is similar to how Sherlock Holmes "[t]ells at a glance different soils from each other" (Doyle, *A Study in Scarlet*, 12). Although they generally emphasize elements of adventure, some of the stories in *Rokku Hōmu* also match Cawelti's three conditions for detective fiction and help to lay out important tropes of the genre. What is absent from manga scholarship is a serious consideration of shōnen mystery (*misuterī*) manga and all its variations—boy detective, girl detective, *honkaku*, hardboiled, spy, police procedural, supernatural, occult, and others—and one that examines how each of these forms consists of its own set of conditions, visual tropes, narrative/graphic styles, and conventions.

The Case of the Missing Narrator (?): A Brief Analysis of Rampo and Tezuka

Among the earliest manga to combine elements from Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes and Edogawa Rampo's stories that feature boy (and girl) sleuths are Tezuka Osamu's *Boy Detective*

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[43] See for example in *A Study in Scarlet*, "A Case of Identity," and "Black Peter," to list but three examples.

Rock Home (S*hōnen Tantei Rokku Hōmu,* 1949) and *Chief Detective Ken'ichi* (*Ken'ichi Tanteichō,* 1954-56). S*hōnen Tantei Rokku Hōmu* has been collected into a single-volume *tankōbon,* containing thirteen, short chapters that follow Rock on various adventures. *Ken'ichi Tanteichō* has an interesting publication history, but in this thesis, I refer to Osamu Tezuka's *Complete Works: Ken'ichi Tanteichō*, which has been collected into two volumes. [44] Though analysis of each story deserves a discussion of its own, for the purposes of the thesis, I draw on chapters relevant to my discussion. Both Rock and Ken'ichi also appear in other works by Tezuka. According to Ada Palmer, Rock is said to appear in over sixty series.[45] Finally, though there are other works by Osamu Tezuka that feature detectives, such as *Detective Danbukuro* (*Keiji Modoki*, 1973-74) and *Boy Detective Zunbera* (*Zunbera*, 1975), I draw on S*hōnen Tantei Rokku Hōmu* and *Ken'ichi Tanteichō* as examples of early detective manga by Tezuka.

There are manga adaptations of Rampo's *shōnen tantei* stories, which belong to a rare collection of sources housed in the Edogawa Rampo Memorial Center for Popular Culture Studies at Rikkyō University in Tokyo, Japan. Tezuka's reputation as an icon of manga and his prolific contributions to Japanese popular culture make his work important in tracing the origins of detective manga.

As noted in the previous section, a striking feature of detective fiction for children is the narratorial intrusion into the story. However, in Tezuka's manga, the narrator's role is less prominent than in Rampo's stories. The protagonists of Tezuka's manga, Rock and Ken'ichi, are focalizing agents of their own adventures, but they play more autonomous roles, indicating a shift from Rampo's representation of the boy detective as a team player. In fact, in Tezuka's

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[44] In total *Ken'ichi Tanteichō* were published in 3 *tankōbon*, which contained stories in random chronological order. The details about publication can be found in the pages following Tezuka's afterword.
[45] For an overview of Rock's transformation throughout the series, refer to Ada Palmer's essay which has been published to the official Osamu Tezuka website: http://tezuainenglish.con/wp/?pageid=1419

manga, the boy detective appears, for the most part, to work alone rather than with a partner or on a team. In Rampo's story, teamwork is what defines the unwritten code of the club, for as the narrator explains, "members of the boy detectives' club all vowed to help each other in times of turmoil (*fukō*)" (*Shōnen Tanteidan,* 1955). Both Rock and Ken'ichi seem to emulate the leadership skills exemplified by Kobayashi, but because they are not under the supervision of an adult figure, they enjoy greater degrees of autonomy and agency. In other words, the lines between boy assistant and adult detective seem obscured with the emergence of the solo boy detective in Tezuka's manga adaptation who takes on a role closer to Sherlock Holmes, or Akechi Kogoro.

Furthermore, the absence of a narrator marks a significant departure from the pattern of classic detective stories. In the case of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, the narrator is a "devoted but fearless brilliant friend" (Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery and Romance* 83) to the detective hero. John H. Watson is the narrator of all but three stories in the Canon.[46] The purpose of the narrative voice, according to Cawelti, is to "[keep] us away from the detective's point of view" (84), so that "the writer can make the moment of solution an extremely dramatic and surprising climax since we have no clear indication of when it will arrive" (84). In addition, Cawelti sums up the role of the narrator in detective fiction as follows:

> By using a narrator other than the detective, the writer can manipulate our
> sympathies and antipathies for the various suspects without forcing a revealing
> commitment on the detective himself. Moreover, the classic story's narrative
> method does not encourage identification between the reader and the detective
> because the latter's feelings and perceptions remain largely hidden. Instead, the

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[46] Both "The Blanched Soldier" and "The Lion's Mane" are narrated by Holmes himself, while two other stories, "The Mazarin Stone" and "His Last Bow," are written in third person.

reader is encouraged to relate himself to the Watson figure and to the various

suspects. (84)

Such narrative techniques in manga are omitted and replaced by the narrating private-I. One of

Cawelti's central argument is that the role of the narrator in classical detective stories is what

distinguishes it from other traditions, mainly the hardboiled detective genre, precisely because

the hard boiled detective "is not presented as a man of transcendent intelligence of intuition and

does not solve the crime primarily by ratiocinative methods [. . .] for the hard-boiled detective is

usually as befuddled as the reader until the end of the story" (83). The risk of omitting the

Watsonian chronicler entails that "the writer must either use a detached and anonymous narrator

who sees the detective's actions but does not have any knowledge of his mental process" (84).

Detective manga navigate these issues in ways that are distinctive to the manga medium.

In the field of Adaptation Studies, much critical attention has been paid to cinematic

adaptations of books (McFarlane, Stam, Hutcheon) and less on comic book adaptations of

literature. According to Colin E. Beineke, "Analyzing adaptations that cross over 'medial

boundaries' requires a close understanding of the capabilities and limits of each medium

involved" (15). However, Beineke has observed that "Comics studies, particularly in the United

States, has been hampered by the inability to draw from theory that deals specifically with the

comics medium. Instead most scholarship is forced to turn to established theories of literature,

film, and even music to engage the comic medium" (13). Although critics such as Linda

Hutcheon mentions comics in her seminal work *A Theory of Adaptation* (2006), she tends to

draw attention to the consumer culture of comic book spinoffs, rather than working toward

establishing a theoretical framework that explores the potentialities, limitations, and complexity

of visual translation from books to comics. Commenting on Hutcheon's works, Dirk Vanderbeke

notes, "graphic novels [. . .] only receive a few cursory nods" (105). Vanderbeke further argues that "the rare examples she [Hutcheon] provides deal almost exclusively with the relationship between graphic novels and the movies, while the adaptation of literary texts is only mentioned once" (105). While the field of comic book adaptations of literary classics seems to be an emerging one, there are a few scholars that have drawn attention to the topic, especially as it relates to the shifts that occur in narrative point of view.

In "Novel Based Comics," Paul Ferstl discusses some techniques used in comic book adaptations of literary classics. On narrative point of view Ferstl writes:

> …generally speaking, a text narrated in the first person is inevitably drawn toward a third person point of view in the adaptation, even if parts from the original are prominently featured in the comic. This is due to the almost unavoidable graphic depiction of protagonists referred to as 'I' which widens the gap between reader and narrator and make identification and the classical perception through the eyes of the first person narrator more difficult" (62).

The shift from the third person omniscient point of view to the private-I in Tezuka's manga signals a reversal of Ferstl's model. And, perhaps, this reversal can be understood in relation to the trope of fair-play in classic mysteries. Fair-play is the idea that a reader has an equal shot at solving the mystery as the detective. So when, for example, a crime scene is laid out on the page, readers are given a chance to compete with the detective to find clues, and because the story is filtered through the perspective of the private-I, the reader essentially sees the same thing that the detective sees himself and, therefore, has an equal chance at solving the crime. This ludic element of mystery manga might be one of the possible explanations for the use of the private-I,

but as I will discuss shortly, its function significantly alters the role of the boy detective that is depicted in Rampo's stories.

Building on the works of Gérard Genette, Angela Yannicopoulou has observed a number of different kinds of focalization or points of view in children's literature, and specifically in children's picture books. Focalization functions to "provide the reader-viewer with different information ranging from a more restrictive to a more encompassing presentation and interpretation of the fictional universe" (66). According to Yannicopoulou's classification, Rampo's *shōnen tantei* stories use non-focalization or zero-focalization, in which "facts, events and thoughts are related in a rather authoritarian and objective manner. The written text describes, in the third person, the words and deeds of others, and the visual narrative delineates the same events while observing them from outside, from a distance" (67). However, Tezuka's manga recontextualize the didactic function of the narrator in Rampo's stories, since in a visual medium such as manga, readers rely on the visual cues conveyed by images and texts. Readers are able to *see* the protagonist in action and *see* the events unfold. This is not to say that Tezuka does not use narrative techniques in his manga, since, for example, elements of plot are written in the gutters, but that he renegotiates authorial intrusion by changing the tone of the story being told, which in turn influences the reader's engagement with the text.

One of the implications of the narrator's authoritative tone in Rampo's fiction, particularly for an experienced reader, is its drawing deliberate attention to the genre's form and content. The reader is constantly reminded that a story is being told, and that the story has a child or youth audience in mind. In both *Shōnen Tantei Rokku Hōmu* and *Ken'ichi Tanteichō*, the actions and thoughts of the boy sleuths seem to convey a greater depth of agency, mystery, and appeal, as they are not filtered through the voice of the narrator. This is because both Rock and

Ken'ichi are constructed as figures of authority. Dressed in his trademark shorts and a bowtie, Rock begins the first installment with a quest to the Galapagos Islands in search of treasure. The first page of volume I, chapter I, "Spider Island Incident" ("Kumo Jima no Maki") begins with Rock addressing the reader himself: "In my home, there is a big turtle's shell hanging on a wall, which my grandfather, who was an explorer, brought back with him from the Galapagos Island. On that same day, he also brought a child from the island. The child's name was Edward and he is now our head servant. One day, the shell fell on his head and he suddenly came across intriguing words written behind it" (4).

The first person narrative, indicated by the word *boku* (a pronoun young boys use to refer to themselves), establishes Rock as the narrator of the story. In the first chapter, Rock emerges as an authoritative figure by demonstrating his intellectual and physical dexterity. In particular, Tezuka portrays the relationship between Rock and Edward as a master/slave
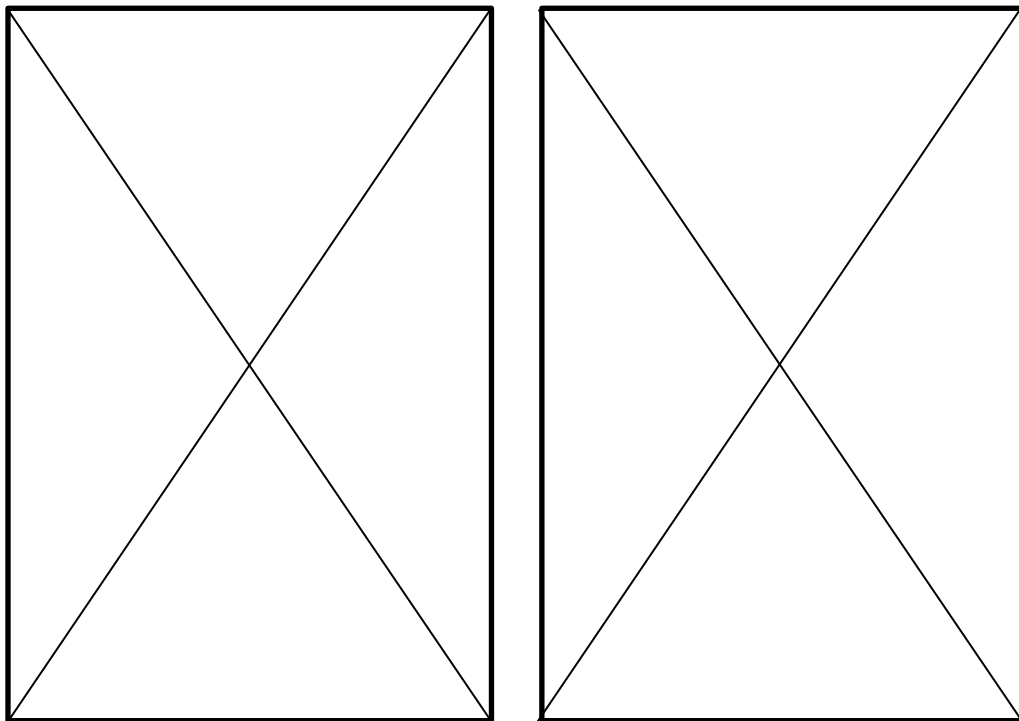

Figure 1. Cover of *Shōnen Tantei Rokku Hōmu*, vol. 1 (right). Rock finds a mysterious letter behind a shell at the beginning of vol. 1, "Kumo Jima no Maki" (left).

dichotomy, which emphasizes Rock's superiority. Rock knows how to read, finds the island, and possesses a gun, all of which demonstrate his role as a leader and a member of "civilized" society. The colonial implications of this story are also made visible in the racial coding of Edward.
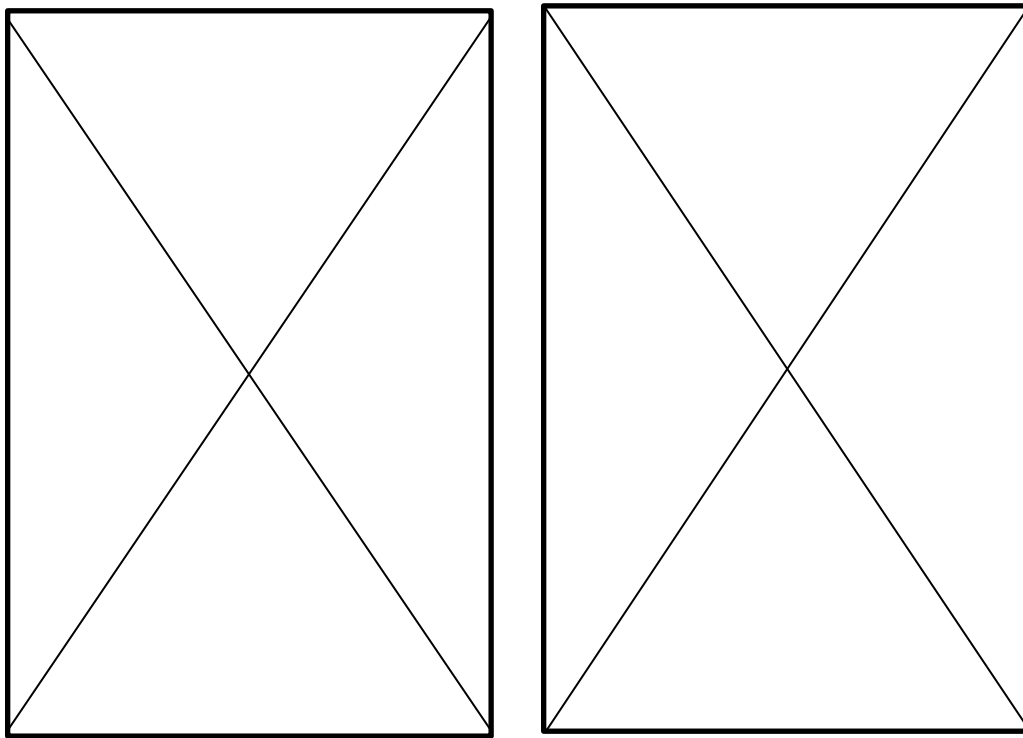
Figure 2. Cover of *Ken'ichi Tanteichō*, vol. 1 (right). Ken'ichi addresses the reader in the bottom right panel in vol.1, "Tatsumaki Bakudan no Maki" (left).

Unlike *Shōnen Tantei Rokku Hōmu*, which is, as its title suggests, influenced by Sherlock Holmes, *Ken'ichi Tanteichō* can be considered to draw more on Rampo's *shōnen tantei* series. A succinct example of this is seen in the characterization of Mouse-Boy, a version of Nijū-mensō, who first appears in the chapter "Kaitō Mouse Boy." Like Nijū-mensō, Mouse-boy is a master of disguise and a thief who steals national treasures and jewels. He also lives by a no-kill rule, though he tries to interfere with Ken'ichi's plan such as in "The Abu Murder Case" ("Satsujin

Abu Jiken"). [47] Though Mouse-boy and Ken'ichi are seen as rivals, at times they end up saving each other's lives similar to how Nijū-mensō and Kobayashi, despite being "enemies," lend a helping hand in a critical situation. In "The Phantom Mouse-boy" ("Kaitō Mouse-boy"), for example, Ken'ichi takes Mouse-boy to his family's home to treat an injury that he sustained while trying to escape. Moved by Ken'ichi's kind gesture, Mouse-boy hands over the treasure he stole at the end of the story. In "The Beijing Caveman Fossil Incident" ("Pekin Genjin no Kaseki Jiken"), Mouse-boy helps prevent Ken'ichi from being kidnapped. In addition to characters such as Mouse-boy, which make strong allusions to Rampo's Nijū-mensō, Tezuka incorporates characters from Rampo's original work, such as Kobayashi's pet dove, named Pippo-chan, but renames it Donguri (Acorn) in his manga. In the first volume of the series, Tezuka also reimagines the scene where Kobayashi is held captive in *Kaijin Nijū-mensō*. However, a close examination of Tezuka's version reveals that unlike in Rampo's version where narrator consoles the reader, Ken'ichi directly addresses the reader in the manga by stating: "Dear reader: Don't you worry, I have with me a prized possession. Let me introduce you to Donguri, my radio operator that I cannot do without on a business trip" (See Figure 2). Here, Ken'ichi, who seems slightly older than the boys depicted in Rampo's stories, undermines the juvenile tone and form of the *shōnen tantei* series. Moreover, upon returning to Tokyo after solving his first case, Ken'ichi points in the direction of his headquarters as though to guide the reader and make him/her feel as though he/she is part of the narrative. One panel shows Ken'ichi pointing at an atlas as he states: "Now everyone, you should by now have some understanding of what we the Boys Secret Agency are about. In the country there are twenty-six branch offices" (14). These sorts of personalizing gestures give Ken'ichi a degree of agency by defining his role as a

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[47] Abu is a reference to the species of bugs (orthorrhapha) that are responsible for causing human deaths in the story.

storyteller of his own adventures. At the same time, they become less prominent features of the narratives in subsequent stories. Another interesting way that Tezuka recontextualizes the role of the narrator in his manga is by shifting frames, or points of view in flash back scenes. A clear example of this occurs when the village boys in "The Case of the Tornado Bomb" ("Tatsumaki Bakudan no Maki") report the events that had occurred prior to Ken'ichi's arrival. The scene begins with one of the boys pointing to the mountain where the mysterious fish was discovered. Each of the six panels that follow relate information about the events that unfolded without the village boy having to explain them. This technique imitates the third-person omniscient narrator used in Rampo's stories.

The narrating-I presented in speech bubbles constructs Rock and Ken'ichi as authoritative figures by replacing Rampo's all-knowing narrator. The scene in which Rock is captured by the gigantic spider is accompanied with his internal monologue that describes what is happening. Scott McCloud uses the term "duo-specific panels" to describe how both words and pictures send essentially the same message, which, he argues, detracts from the reader's engagement with the text. However, just as Rampo's narrator helps to ease the minds of readers when Kobayashi is captured by Nijū-mensō, the use of duo-specific panels also offers a "soft-landing," *per se,* for young or inexperienced readers to make sense of this scene. The first panel of this scene begins with Rock being attacked by the spider and ends with the spider's demise. The thought bubbles read: "the spider easily knocked me over then spun me in a web, ah! I'm going to be bitten!" This terror, however, is undermined in the next scene, which reads: "Or so I thought then suddenly it turned its attention to the villagers and started attacking them." Then, in the panels that follow, Rock narrates his experience: "I was finally able to straddle on top of the spider. I aimed for its head and shot two, three bullets" (See Figure 3).
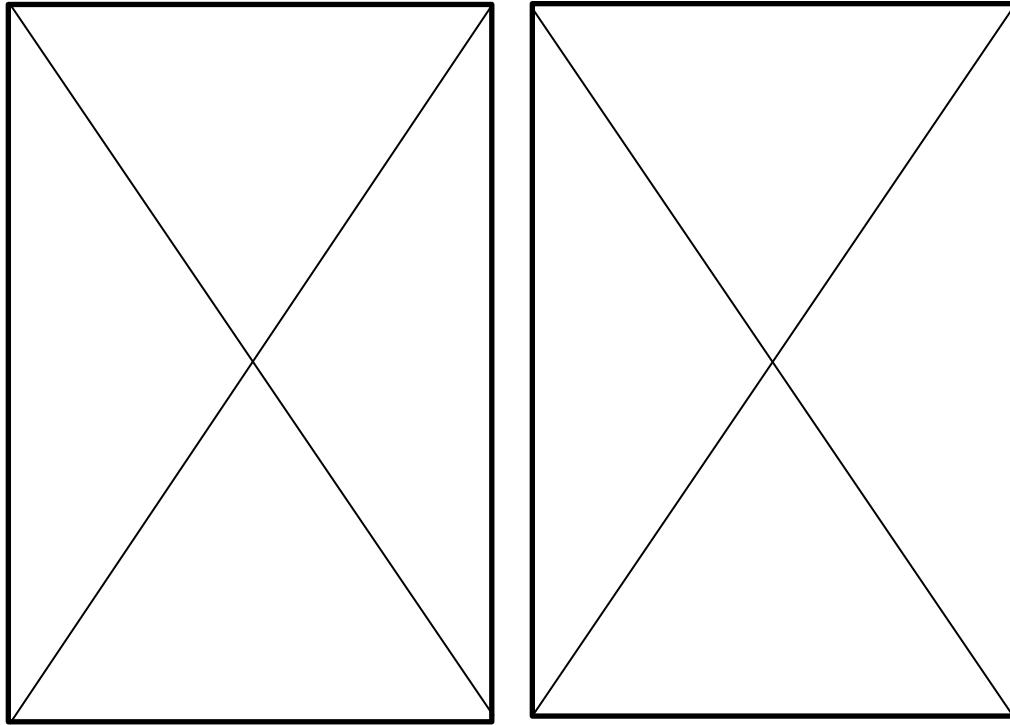
Figure 3. Read from right to left. Rock gives a step by step plan to escape from the spider's grasp in vol. 1, "Kumo Jima no Maki."

Rock's internal thoughts describe what the sequences of images reveal, but through his thought process, readers are able to reconcile the horror or suspense of this scene. Thought bubbles are seldom used in the *Ken'ichi Tanteichō*; instead, readers are presented with a highly verbal character. Although there are instances in the first installment that show Ken'ichi in deep thought, the audience is never exposed to them. The boy sleuth withholds information from the reader, creating an element of suspense while also inviting the reader to pay close attention to the visual and textual details, enabling the reader to position him/herself in the role of the boy sleuth. One of the characteristics that define early *shōnen tantei* manga adaptations of Rampo's short stories is that these adaptations refocus the story through the lens of the boy detective, which alters the didactic tone of Rampo's originals. Focalization matters because "different types of focalization bear various ideological implications" (76). As Yannicopoulou further posits, "The

immediacy imposed on the reader by a fixed, single viewpoint can be reinforced by unframed illustrations that call the viewer to step into the fictional universe; this facilitates the identification process that may encourage the acceptance of the focal hero's ideological commitments" (76). In his allegorical reading of the classic Japanese folktale, *Momotarō* (Peach Boy), David Henry argues that "[f]or the half-century from the Sino-Japanese War of 1894–1895 to the end of World War II in 1945 stories for children reimagined imperial adventures as a new kind of child's play that was avidly consumed by a burgeoning youth market" (218). In the first volumes of both of Tezuka's detective manga series, the boy detectives emerge as adventure-seeking heroes, and their strange encounters with the foreign other are never brought into question. In fact, by taking the idea of detection for entertainment even further, Tezuka's Rock and Ken'ichi are presented as typical heroes of the colonial adventure narrative, whose detective work often takes them to "strange" and "unfamiliar" lands. The financial logistics of their seafaring adventures are never questioned because money is never an issue. The lives of these boy sleuths are so secure that their access to capital that enables them to navigate the world is normalized, and is most likely in line with the nostalgic sentiments of Japanese imperialism. However, as the ideological commitments of the boy detective begin to shift, so too does his role and the nature of the crimes he solves.

To date, in North America, little critical attention has been paid to manga representations of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. While studies of non-British cultural representations of Sherlock Holmes are an emerging field, discussions of manga are curiously few. Other than my own published work on Aoyama's series, which considers a reading of *Meitantei Konan* as postmodern parody, there are, to date, only a handful of other scholars who have touched upon

the topic.[48] Ashley D. Polasek, a Sherlockian and adaptation scholar, mentions manga twice, but in passing, in her thesis "The Evolution of Sherlock Holmes: Adapting Character Across Time and Text" (see e.g. 127, 143). Independent scholar Lori Morimoto explores the world of Sherlockian fandom in Japan, and though she does not specifically examine manga, she offers insightful perspectives on the transcultural interactions between producer and consumers of Sherlockian narratives. Anna Maria Jones is one of the few scholars to have explored the representation of the Sherlockian detective in manga. As indicated in the title of her work, *"Palimpsestuous" Attachments: Framing a Manga Theory of the Global Neo-Victorian*, she proposes a theoretical model for reading neo-Victorian manga and its place within the field of Neo-Victorian Studies. Specifically, she explores Toboso Yana's *Kurohitsuji* (*Black Butler*, 2007-) and Moto Naoko's *Dear Holmes* (1996-2007), both of which she considers adaptations of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes.[49] Jones reads these texts in relation to Linda Hutcheon's "description of the 'inherently palimpsestuous' nature of adaptation," which Jones argues "becomes literalised in these neo-Victorian manga through the integration of reproductions of Victorian texts as images" (24). According to Jones, neo-Victorian manga in both its form and content "layers historical and fictional antecedents" (32) that "oscillat[es] between the past and

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[48] See Okabe, Tsugumi. "From Sherlock Holmes to 'Heisei' Holmes: Counter Orientalism and Postmodern Parody in Gosho Aoyama's *Detective Conan* Manga Series." *International Journal of Comic Art*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2013, pp. 230-50.

[49] In this essay, Jones states, "*Kurohitsuji* and *Dear Holmes* adapt Sherlock Holmes especially for female readers" (18). I am not convinced that *Kurohitsuji* is an adaptation of Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, as her analysis focuses on a chapter in the manga series in which Doyle himself makes an appearance. Also, although Toboso herself reimagines a scene in which Sebastian (one of the series' protagonists) is seen standing back to back with Jeremy Rathbone, I think instances such as these should be read as homages to rather than adaptations of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes himself. There are elements of mystery in Toboso's manga, and the pairing of the two protagonists of the series can be read in terms of Holmes/Watson. In addition, it is possible that in her treatment of *Kurohitsuji* as an example of an adaptation of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, her reading of the manga as "uncanny" stems from the series belonging to the supernatural or occult genre of detective manga. Developing her theory in deeper connection to their respective genres within the subgenre of detective manga might have been worthwhile, but it is beyond the scope of her study.

present, between acknowledgment and disavowal of absence and between familiarity and estrangement" (24), even as it is produced within a non-British cultural context. Both Toboso's and Moto's manga demonstrate their connection to the Victorians by invoking the Sherlockian canon in different ways that mediate on the continuum of uncanny and melancholic attachments.

The Influence of Gekiga

To this point, I have contextualized detective manga as a tradition that emerged from Tezuka's early works. It is important to note that detective manga is also informed by the early works of *gekiga* artists led by Tatsumi Yoshihiro and Yashiharu Tsuge. *Gekiga*, a term coined by Tatsumi Yoshihiro in 1957, is translated as "dramatic pictures" (Gravett 38) associated with "realistic depictions" (Suzuki, "Tatsumi Yoshihiro's *Gekiga*" 54). According to Suzuki, "The term loosely refers to a type of comics with a long narrative (story manga) that is oriented toward youth or mature readers with little or no humorous content" ("Tatsumi Yoshihiro's *Gekiga*" 50). Often used to differentiate itself from children's comics, *gekiga* emerged in reaction to mainstream manga's simplistic themes and "cartoon style" (Suzuki, "Tatsumi Yoshihiro's Gekiga" 54). Thus, stories were created that catered to the growing preference for "*kurai*, or 'dark' manga, in full-length books of 68 pages or more" (Gravett 40). The representation of violence, blood, gore, and sex set *gekiga* works apart from the works of Tezuka Osamu, and redefined the visual tropes and conventions of the tradition of the boy detective in ways that allowed artists to represent the grotesque nature of the crime committed with a degree of realism, or verisimilitude as seen in their depictions of bleeding bodies, wounded bodies, and decapitated bodies.

What is of particular interest is that the style of visual storytelling such as by Tatsumi were inspired by "Japanese suspense horror and detective films, such as Henri-Georges Clouzot

Les Diaboliques (1955) and the Japanese detective suspense film Get him! (*Kyatsu o nigasuna*) (1956)" (Suzuki, "Tatsumi Yoshihiro's Gekiga" 58). These details suggest that the boy detective tradition in manga also developed in association with other media forms, such as films, as was the case with Kagemaru Jōya's manga adaptation of Kindaichi Kōsuke, which I discuss in some detail later.

The *gekiga* tradition provides an important context for understanding the shift in the representation of violence in manga that feature boy detectives. In the early boy detective tradition, violence is mediated in several ways. For example, in *Shōnen Tantei Rokku Hōmu*, despite being shot at, electrocuted, and fed to a deadly snake, Rock manages to escape these different situations without being seriously injured. Other characters such as the prince who is assassinated at the beginning of "13 Secrets" ("*13 no Himitsu*") does not bleed despite being shot. In the same story, but in a different scene, one of the members of the search party finds the weapon that was used to kill the prince but accidently pulls the trigger, hitting his colleague in the rear, making light of a situation that would have otherwise resulted in serious injuries. Similarly, in *Ken'ichi Tanteichō,* for example, despite being involved in hand-to-hand combat, a sword fight, or a shootout, characters often do not bleed; that is, with primary exception to "The Incident of President Pero's Hidden Treasure" ("*Pero Daitōryō no Hihō Jiken*"), where a small pool of blood is found at two to three locations. Deceased bodies mostly appear unscathed as if they have been untouched and unharmed. In combat scenes, blunt force trauma is at times conveyed through the use of swirls, stars and the onomatopoeic "zushīn" (145). For both Rock and Ken'ichi, detection is a source of sport and entertainment. They are detecting agents in a world where they are not troubled by violence (or the "real" implications thereof). This is not to argue that Tezuka's manga series censor violence altogether as his works published during the

1970s and onward depict more "realistic" representations of violent crimes. It is worth mentioning that Tezuka's aesthetic style in *Detective Danbukuro* ("Keiji Modoki," 1973-74) can be argued as exhibiting qualities of *gekiga*, especially in comparison to his earlier detective manga *Rokku Hōmu* and *Ken'ichi Tanteichō*. The protagonist of the two-part series, detective Danbukuro, appears older than the boy detectives (Rock and Ken'ichi) and the stories also deal with more "mature" themes involving affairs and depicts more "realistic" human caricatures. Representations of violence, sex and sexuality are not censored, and unlike the treatment of detection as a form of entertainment and adventure as seen in his earlier works, detection for detective Danbukurō is a serious profession. However, he is not a bright detective and the one who solves the crimes in both "Emuletto" (Hamlet) and "Shika no Tsuno" (The Deer's Horn) is his partner (and former swindler) Sukegorō.[50]

In Tezuka's early manga that feature boy sleuths, the censorship of violence and blood, things expected to be found at a crime scene, is ultimately tailored to a child audience. *Gekiga* artists in the late 1950s contributed to the development of crime and detective manga, breaking away from characters that are "tough to kill" (Ōtsuka 118) as seen in Disney's and Tezuka's works. According to John A. Lent, "since realism is one of *gekiga's* main characteristics, [. . .] heroes can actually die, or be hurt terribly in the course of a story" (114). The protagonists of the manga series discussed in this thesis sustain life-threatening injuries or are eventually killed off in the narrative, indicating a major shift in the genre's portrayal of violence since Tezuka's time. As representative works that revived the classic mode of detective fiction in manga, the next sections will discuss *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* and *Meitantei Konan* in detail, exploring their aesthetic similarities and differences from the early manga tradition that feature boy detectives,

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[50] "Keiji Modoki: Emuletto" and "Keiji Modoki: Shika no Tsuno," are the first two chapters that appear in the volume *Short Arabesque* (*Shōto Arabesuku*.)

and further contextualize the series in relation to their respective literary and manga traditions to trace the evolution of Kindaichi Hajime and Edogawa Konan from fiction to manga.

Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo and *Meitantei Konan*

Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo (*The Case Files of Young Kindaichi*), written by Yōzaburo Kanari and Seimaru Amagi and illustrated by Fumiya Satō, began serialization in *Weekly Shōnen Magazine* in 1992. Born on August 20, 1965, in Kanagawa Prefecture, Yōzaburo Kanari made his debut as a manga story writer (*manga gensakusha*) with *Chōzunō Silver Wolf* (1991), followed by *The Sweet Story of Penguins Couple* (*Sakuragai no Yakusoku*, 1992), *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* (1992-1997), *Mystery Minzokugakusha Yakumo Itsuki* (2001-04), and *Gimmick!* (2005), among others. Seimaru Amagi is one of many pseudonyms used by Kibayashi Shin, who is also a manga story writer, novelist and screenwriter. Born on July 22, 1962, Kibayashi has created a number of mystery manga within the *shōnen*, *shōjo,* and *seinen* genres. Under the pseudonym Seimaru Amagi, Kibayashi created *Detective Academy Q* (*Tantei Gakuen Kyū,* 2001-05) and *Rimōto* (2002-04). As Yūma Andō, Kibayashi wrote stories for *Psychometrer Eiji* (*Saikometorā Eiji,* 1996-2000) and *Sherlock Bones* (*Tantei inu Shādokku,* 2011-13). Satō Fumiko is a *mangaka* who publishes under her pseudonym Satō Fumiya. Born in Saitama Prefecture on December 22, 1965, Fumiya has not only contributed to the *Kindaichi* manga series but was the illustrator of *Detective Academy Q*.

Since its first publication in *Weekly Shōnen Magazine*, the *Kindaichi* manga series has been collected into *tankōbon* published by Kōndansha. The series contains the original *File Series* (1992-97), which have been collected in 27 *tankōbon*. The *Short File Series,* published between 1997 and 2000, have been collected in 6 volumes, followed by the *New Series,*

published between 2004 and 2011 and collected in 14 volumes. In 2012 and 2013, the *20th Anniversary Series* was released in 5 volumes and, finally, from 2013 onward, the series has been revamped in *The Return "R" Series*, which is currently at 11 volumes and is still ongoing. In all, the manga series sold over 90 million copies, making it one of the best-selling manga of the 1990s, and in 1995, it won the *Kōdansha Manga Award* for *shōnen*. The cultural fascination with Kanari's and Amagi's *Kindaichi* manga series is evident in its media-mix, which consists of anime spinoffs, various live-action dramas and films, video games, and light novels. It can be argued that part of the manga's success stems partially from an audience that is already familiar with Yokomizo Seishi's works and his detective Kindaichi Kōsuke, which were revived in 1976 in Kadokawa's cinematic adaptations. The first of these films was *The Inugami Clan* (*Inugamike no ichizoku,* 1950), "which became a major best seller, selling over 50 million copies after the
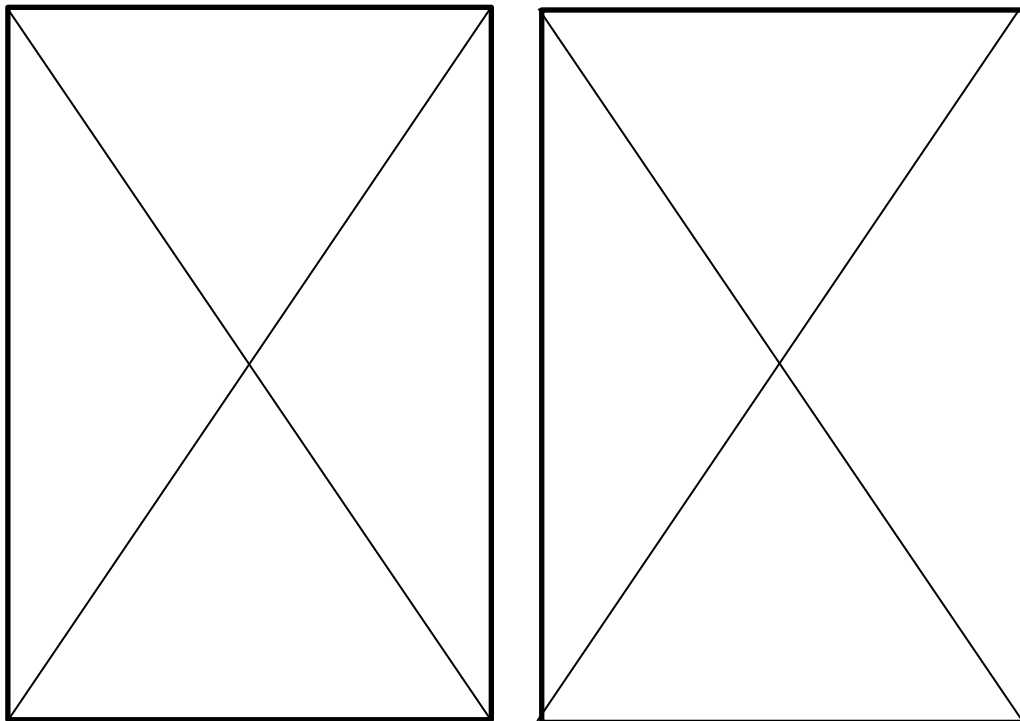

Figure 4. Cover of first volume of *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* (right). Image of Hajime Kindaichi skipping class in vol.1, "Operazakan Satsujin Jiken" (left).

film's release--compared to the mere sixty thousand copies sold after the book's initial 1972 Kadokawa reprinting" (Steinberg 151). However, it was the manga adaptation by Kagemaru Jōya, which was "published in one of Japan's representative manga magazines of the time, *Shūkan Shōnen* (*Weekly Boys*) magazine" that arguably "lit the fuse of the Yokomizo revival" (Steinberg 152) in the twenty-first century. According to Nakagawa, Yokomizo's "novels featuring the detective Kōsuke Kindaichi have been made into movies and television dramas so many times that most Japanese people picture Kindaichi by imagining the famous actors who have played the detective" (90). It can be argued that the crossover between film and manga is evident in Jōya's manga adaptation of Tōei's *The Devil Blows the Whistle* (*Akuma ga kitarite fue wo fuku,* 1973), though a closer examination is needed to support this claim. Nagao Fumiko's2004 manga adaptation of *Yatsu hakamura* also seems to pay homage to the 1977 Shōchiku film. [51]

Kanari's and Amagi's manga adaptation features Kindaichi Hajime, the seventeen-year-old grandson of the famous detective Kindaichi Kōsuke. Readers are first introduced to Hajime as a lazy and unmotivated high-school student, who is more or less represented as a "delinquent" or "troubled" youth, a point to which I will return later. Not only is he clumsy, but he is broke, unpopular with the girls, and with the exception of his childhood friend/love interest Nanase Miyuki, he has few friends. From the beginning, Hajime is set up as a failure of sorts who is in the shadow of his grandfather's legacy. However, we soon discover that Hajime is, in fact, gifted with an IQ of 180. Throughout the series, Hajime uses his intelligence and keen observational skills to solve complex locked-room mysteries and other gruesome crimes, proving a first-rate detective. His competence at detection earns him the respect of Isamu Kenmochi, an investigator

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[51] Nagao is believed to be Kagemaru Jōya's assistant.

for the Tokyo Homicide unit, who invites Hajime to crack difficult cases. Some of the crimes committed in the manga deal with issues such as bullying and teacher-student relationships and often take place on school grounds. Other stories unearth the consequence of greed, jealousy, and familial rivalry. Hajime's famous motto "jicchan no na ni kakete" (in my granddad's name) indicates Kanari's way of building upon and revising Yokomizo's private detective in the role of a high school student.

Whereas *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* is informed by stories of Yokomizo Seishi, Aoyama's *Meitantei Konan* is informed by another author. Aoyama Gōshō was born in the city of Hokuei, in Tottori prefecture. Before *Meitantei Konan*, Aoyama made his debut as a *mangaka* (manga creator) with *Wait a Minute* (*Chotto Mattete,* 1987), published weekly in the popular magazine for boys, *Weekly Shōnen Sunday*.[52] He then published the four-volume series *Magic Kaitō* (1987-91), featuring a gentleman thief named Kaitō Kuroba, adapted from Maurice Leblanc's Arsène Lupin, who also stars in the *Meitantei Konan* franchise.[53] Kaitō makes his first appearance in Volume 16, File 6, as Konan's rival. Between 1988 and 1993, Aoyama's comedy series *Legend of the Sword Master Yaiba* (*Ken'yū Densetsu YAIBA*) was published by Shōgakukan in 24 volumes, and also appeared in *Weekly Shōnen Sunday*. Multiple references to *Yaiba* occur in *Meitantei Konan,* such as in Volume 2, File 3, in which *Yaiba* appears in a television show that Konan is watching. Aoyama's other works include the sports manga *3rd Base 4th* (1991-93), a collection of short stories, most notably *Detective George's Mini, Great Operation* (*Tantei Jōji no Minimini Daisakusen,* 1988), and a one-shot manga, *Tell Me a Lie* (*Watashi ni Uso wo Tsuite,* 2007) about a girl who has the ability to read people's minds.

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[52] A manga about a boy genius named Yutaka Takai, who creates a time machine that sends his girlfriend through time for two years.

[53] Prior to the first *tankōbon* volume of the series, which was published by Shōgakukan on April 18, 1998, the series was published in *Weekly Shōnen Sunday*. *Magic Kaitō* has also been adapted into anime.

Aoyama's works arguably fall under the generic category of *shōnen*, but his manga series appeal to a wide reading audience and are not limited to a *shōnen* readership. Specifically, the unparalleled success that Aoyama has achieved with *Meitantei Konan* stands as a testament of the story's resonance with readers regardless of age and gender. The right combination of adventure, romance, comedy, suspense, and mystery, particularly in *Meitantei Konan,* might be what accounts for its ongoing success in comparison to his other works.

With sales exceeding 150 million copies in Japan, the domestic success of *Meitantei Konan* has made Aoyama into a local celebrity. The people of Hokuei have carried out several *machi okoshi* (town renovation) projects in his honour, such as the bridge that was built across the Yura River as a tribute to Konan, as well as a museumand twelve bronze statues lining the street, which was named *Konan dōri* (Conan Street). [54] The manga series has been adapted into anime, which has reached over 800 episodes. Animated films are released annually, which are then adapted into manga. The ninth film, *Strategy above the Depths* (*Meitantei Konan: Suihei Senjō no Sutoratejī* 2005), was nominated for the feature film category at the 5th Annual Tokyo Anime Awards, and the following five films were nominated for the Japan Prize for Animation of the Year in their respective years of release. Other parts of the *Meitantei Konan* franchise include a series of light novels, live-action drama, video games, board games, audio CDs, pop-up cafes, and paraphernalia. In 2001, *Meitantei Konan* won the 46th *Shōgakkan Manga Award* in the *shōnen* genre, and in 2003, Konan was even used as the mascot to promote road safety for the Tottori Police Force. It can be argued that with the exception of *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo*, no

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[54] In September 2018, the American comedian Conan O'Brien paid a visit to the Konan Museum in Hokuei, Japan after jokingly claiming that the municipality in Tottori prefecture owed him 27 billion dollars in indemnities for making money off the "Detective Conan" series, which he claimed was an imitation of himself.

other detective manga series has achieved and maintained the same level of success as Aoyama's *Meitantei Konan*.

Both *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* and *Meitantei Konan* have been translated into English for North American audiences. The former was published by Tokyopop as *The Kindaichi Case Files,* and though it ran for the first 17 volumes, it was discontinued due to poor sales. Outside of Japan, the English-language version of *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo*, originally produced by Tōei Animation, was broadcast by Animax Asia between 2014 and 2016. *Meitantei Konan*, on the other hand, has been translated into several languages, and the global circulation of the manga series is evidence of its popularity on the periphery. *Meitantei Konan* has appeared on the *New York Times Best Seller* list and was also nominated for the Angouleme Festival Graphic Novel award among the Japanese selection in France, and in 2004, the anime adaptation was the second most broadcast animated series in China. In a digital age, scanlations of the manga and fan-subbed versions of the anime are available on the World Wide Web. In North America, the series, which was licensed by Funimation in 2003, premiered on Cartoon Network as part of its Adult Swim programming block, but was discontinued due to low ratings.

Upon a closer look at the first volume of the English translation of the *Meitantei Konan* series that was launched in 2004 by Viz Media in North America, the most striking change made to the original is the title of the translation, *Case Closed*. The alteration to the title resulted from a copyright infringement claim against the name of the series' protagonist, Conan, because it coincided with Marvel's *Conan the Barbarian* comic series. Despite its catchy English title, the changes in the names of Konan and other characters in the English translation downplay the literary significance of Aoyama's characters and of the Sherlockian tradition his series invokes. This lack of literary allusions in *Meitantei Konan* is a disservice to the original that undermines

Aoyama's encyclopedic knowledge of detective fiction woven throughout the series. It is likely, then, that such changes to the English translation may have contributed to its relatively limited success in North America and the United Kingdom.

The first publication of *Meitantei Konan* featured in *Weekly Shōnen Sunday* begins with Kudō Shin'ichi, a sixteen-year-old high school detective, who at the start of the manga, imitates and embodies Sherlock Holmes's skills and mannerisms, and emulates the "great" detective's egotism by styling himself as a next-generation version of Holmes himself. However, while spying on suspicious men at an amusement park, he is poisoned with a noxious substance that catapults him back into the body of a second-grader. The manga series then follows the adventures of Edogawa Konan, who must hide his identity as Shin'ichi to protect himself, his family, and his friends from the criminal syndicate members, also known as the Black Organization, who shrank his body. As a further part of his cover, Konan is conveniently adopted
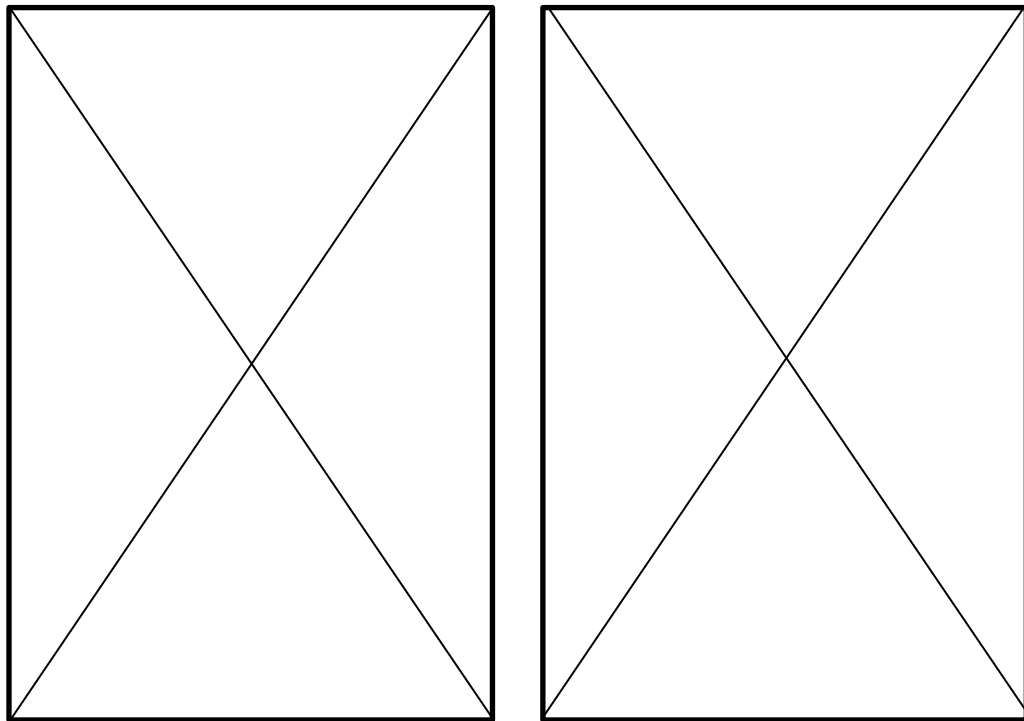

Figure 5. Cover of *Meitantei Konan*, vol. 1 (right). Seen on the left, an image of the shōnen tanteidan in vol.6, "Kessei! Shōnen Tanteidan," (Formation! The Boy Detectives).

by Akechi Kogorō, a clumsy detective who, with Konan's help, becomes a celebrated detective. Konan also attends a primary school at which he befriends Mitsuhiko, Genta, Ai, and Haibara, who form a *shōnen tanteidan* (boy detectives' club), a clear homage to Rampo, to help their classmates solve mysteries that often lead them to bigger and more dangerous cases.

In February 2009, as part of the 50th anniversary project of *Weekly Shōnen Sunday* and *Weekly Shōnen Magazine,* both *Meitantei Konan* and *Kindaichi Case Files* were featured together on the cover of *Sunday Magazine* promoting their first crossover video game, *Kindaichi Detective Conan & Kindaichi Case Files: Chance Meeting of Two Great Detectives* (*Shōnen no Jikenbo: Meguriau Futari no Meitantei*), released by Namco Bandai for the Nintendo DS. In that same year, Konan and Lupin III appeared in a crossover anime, *Lupin III vs. Detective Conan* (*Rupan Sansei Vāsasu Meitantei Konan*), released on March 27 in Japan, and released on DVD in North America by Discotek Media on October 27, 2015. Maurice Leblanc's gentleman thief is a recurring stock character in both literary fiction and manga, though an exploration of this topic is beyond the scope of this thesis.[55] In short, just as Edogawa Rampo paid homage to Leblanc's gentleman thief in *Kaijin Nijū-mensō*, the creators of *Kindaichi* and *Meitantei Konan* allude to Lupin in their own works.[56]

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[55] Published under the pseudonym Monkey Punch, *Lupin III* (1967-69) began as a manga adaptation of Maurice Leblanc's gentleman thief, Arsène Lupin, written and illustrated by Kazuhiko Katō. The story features Lupin III, the supposed grandson of LeBlanc's fictional Lupin, who becomes a notorious gentleman thief like his grandfather. Lupin III remains popular thanks to its media mix, which consists of anime spinoffs, live-action films, animated films, and video games. In North America, the manga series was published by Tokyopop in 2002 and 2004. In 2002, Funimation Entertainment purchased the rights to some of the animated television specials and films, and Geneon licensed and dubbed 79 episodes of the second television series, of which 26 were broadcast on Cartoon Network's Adult Swim in 2003.

[56] In Volume 17-18 of *Kindaichi*, "Kaitō Shinshi no Satsujin Ichi" ("Gentleman Thief the Killer," 1996) the so-called gentleman thief commits a series of murders. Originally from the *Magic Kaitō* series, Kaitō Kuroba, the protagonist of the series, is modelled after Lupin and makes cameo appearances in *Meitantei Konan*.

Ponytails and Glasses: Refashioning the Boy Detective

If asked to visualize Sherlock Holmes, one may picture him with a deerstalker, a cape, a pipe, or

a magnifying glass. Perhaps Jeremy Brett's iconic role in the Granada TV series or Benedict

Cumberbatch from *BBC's Sherlock* may come to mind. In *A Study in Scarlet*, Watson describes

Sherlock Holmes as follows:

> In height he was rather over six feet, and so excessively lean that he seemed to be
>
> considerably taller. His eyes were sharp and piercing, save during those intervals
>
> of torpor to which I have alluded; and his thin, hawk-like nose gave his whole
>
> expression an air of alertness and decision. His chin, too, had the prominence and
>
> squareness which mark the man of determination. His hands were invariably
>
> blotted with ink and stained with chemicals, yet he was possessed of
>
> extraordinary delicacy of touch [. . .] (Doyle 10)

Sidney Paget brought the detective to life in his illustrations for the *Strand Magazine*, of which

Doyle himself presumably approved: "Holmes's tweedy attire, cape and his now famous

deerstalker hat—created by Paget in the drawings rather than by Conan Doyle—are as iconic as

his trademark cane and pipe" (Dorling Kindersley Ltd 24), and it is this version of Holmes that

has had a lasting impression even though the detective has undergone many "makeovers" and/or

transformations since his first appearance in 1887. Specifically, within the context of manga,

Jones contends that "Doyle's description certainly corresponds more closely with the *bishōnen*

(beautiful boy) aesthetic [. . .]—festishising an ultra-slender, angular, and refined male form"

(27), which is also inspired by Paget's drawings. Examining works featuring Sherlock Holmes

such as *Kurohitsuji* and *Dear Holmes*, two manga series that Jones discusses, reveals a

romanticized and idealized depiction of the British detective. The Sherlockian-type detective in

manga undergoes a significant transformation as he is catapulted into the role of the child or youth. In *A Study in Scarlet*, Holmes is believed to be around twenty-seven years old, and throughout the Canon readers see Holmes age.[57] By "The Adventure of the Lion's Mane," Holmes, who is sixty years old, laments: "My house is lonely. I, my old housekeeper, and my bees have the estate all to ourselves" (Doyle 1129). Cornelius says of the boy detective tradition, "Boy sleuths have, in most instance, even eschewed aging, even avoided that final transcending act of actually reaching adulthood, in order to forestall college, occupation, marriage, responsibility--all in the name of pursuing not fun or frivolity but justice" (11). This *puer aeternus* (eternal child) archetype, which in the West is most famously associated with the boy who never grows up in J.M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* (1911), is one of the defining qualities of the *shōnen* manga.[58] It is rare to find narratives that follow their boy protagonists all the way into adulthood.[59] On June 15, 2018, Amagi released a new series in the Kindaichi manga franchise, *The Case Files of the 37-year-old Kindaichi* (*Kindaichi Sanjū- nanasai no Jikenbo*). Although this series is outside the scope of this thesis, which focuses on the first 27-volume *Case File* series published between 1992 and 1997, an exploration of how Kindaichi is portrayed at the age of 37 would be an interesting subject for future work. For our purposes, in both Kanari's and Amagi's *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* and Aoyama's *Meitantei Konan*, both Hajime and Konan "eschew" aging, like the Hardy Boys. Such static representations of youth and childhood, when considered within the socioeconomic circumstance of the Lost Decade, might represent a degree

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[57] Tradition holds that Holmes was born in 1854, because his character is said to be 60 in "His Last Bow," set in 1914. The consensus, therefore, is that *A Study in Scarlet* is set in 1881.

[58] The earliest incarnations of the *puer aeternus* can be found in biblical texts and in Greek myths, but it seems to be a pervasive trope in literatures from around the world.

[59] Stories of youth who transition into adulthood fit the generic framework of "seinen," which is a genre of manga targeted at youth.

of wish fulfillment in terms of a return to a nostalgic past, or a stubborn resistance against having to grow up in the uncertainty of 1990s Japan.

Rampo's Akechi and Yokomizo's Kindaichi

Like Sherlock Holmes, whose character was inspired by Dr. Joseph Bell, a professor at the University of Edinburgh, Yokomizo's famous Japanese detective Kindaichi Kōsuke was inspired by three individuals: "the Japanese playwright Kikuta Kazuo; Masayuki Jō, editor-in-chief of *Hōseki*, who often sported a hakama; and Kindaichi Keisuke, who was neighbors with Yokomizo while he was living in Tokyo" (Yamamae 544). [60] Kōsuke made his first appearance in *Hōseki* with the publication of *The Murder at the Honjin* (*Honjin Satsujin Jiken*) in 1946, though the story is set in 1936. [61] Like Rampo, who was inspired by Doyle's Holmes, Yokomizo's stories were inspired by western writers of detective fiction, as demonstrated when the narrator of *Honjin* compares Yokomizo's locked room mystery to that of "Gaston Leroux's *Le mystère de la chambre jaune* (*The Mystery of the Yellow Room*) and mentions titles such as Maurice Leblanc's *The Teeth of the Tiger*, S.S. Van Dine's *The Canary Murder Case*, and John Dickson Carr's *The Plague Court Murders*" (Nakagawa 91). It is in this novel that readers first encounter Kindaichi:

> By appearance he looked about 25 to 26, medium built—or so I like to say, but he was a young man with a small frame. He wore a *kasuri* (splash) patterned kimono and *haori* (coat) with *hakama* (pleated skirt) that had thin stripes. However, his *haori* and kimono were both very wrinkled to the point where the ruffled collar was made indistinguishable, and it drooped down. You could almost see his toe

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[60] *Jewels* or *Hōseki* was a magazine dedicated to mystery fiction founded by Edogawa Rampo in 1946.
[61] To avoid confusion, I refer to Kanari's detective as Hajime and Yokomizo's as Kōsuke.

nails through his navy blue *tabi* (socks). His *geta* (wooden shoes) were starting to

tear, and his hat started losing its shape. (Yokomizo 57-58)

Jōya's representation of Kōsuke visually brings this description to life. In Jōya's manga, Kōsuke

wears a loose kimono that bares his chest. He appears clean-shaven, but with thick brows, and

when he is not wearing his bucket hat, he reveals his disheveled, semi-long, wavy hair. This

shabby image of Kōsuke Kindaichi reappears in Kanari's *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* in the

character of Hajime, a teenage delinquent, who is supposedly the grandson of the great detective.

Although Kanari's Hajime keeps his hair tied back in a ponytail, he has his "grandfather's" thick

brows, and the bad habit of scratching his head. Kanari aligns himself to Jōya and Yokomizo by

creating a kind of linear narrative that continues the Kindaichi family line. While both Kōsuke

and Akechi are first seen wearing kimonos, Akechi's attire is replaced with "sophisticated, dark,

double-breasted suits" (Nakagawa 91) in later stories. Kōsuke's fashion sense, however, does not

undergo such a change. As noted above, Rampo's Akechi bears semblance to Doyle's Sherlock

Holmes, emulating a kind of Victorian gentleman-esque image through his dress in the latter part

of the series. In contrast, even though Kōsuke "has been educated in the United States, his

signature style [. . .] and his 'unsophisticated' appearance ground him in the old lifestyle, as well

as make him more sympathetic to villagers" (Nakagawa 91) in Japan. In other words, both

detectives negotiate their similarities between and differences from old and new Japan, but in

different ways.

For the past sixty years, Yokomizo's Kindaichi has remained a popular icon in Japan

comparable to Sherlock Holmes.[62] However, unlike Watson's description of Holmes, whose

"whole expression [had] an air of alertness and decision," there is something lackluster about

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[62]See the Afterword of *The Case Book of Kōsuke Kindaichi by Seishi Yokomizo*, by detective fiction scholar
Yamame Yuzuru.

Kōsuke's appearance in comparison. What do readers find so compelling about Kōsuke? The legacy of Kindaichi Kōsuke is, perhaps, best summed up by Yokomizo himself:

> That is to say, he always wore a kimono that was stained at the collar and a shabby *haori*. He had a habit of scratching his head and whenever he did so, it's said that dandruff fell from his head. He's always a lone wolf. Yet it's precisely because he's a small framed, seedy looking detective that women are drawn to him. I realized that a woman's innate desire to protect, and her maternal affection is what attracts her to Kindaichi. (545)

Furthermore, as Yamamae notes, Yokomizo received fan letters asking him to never marry off the detective, a request to which he agreed. Similar to Sherlock Holmes, Kōsuke's bachelor status may have something to do with part of his appeal, but it also works well within the context of the *shōnen* genre, with its emphasis on youthful protagonists. Aside from Yokomizo's sexist statement, which can be contradicted by the fact that his works were also read by men, one of the qualities that draws readers to Kōsuke is that he is humanized and made into a mundane and ordinary hero. Like a wanderer, he is both at the centre and periphery of his community, occupying a liminal space in more ways than one. In her discussion of Yokomizo's *The Village of Eight* Gravestones (*Yatsu Hakamura*, 1951) Nakagawa points out several dichotomies regarding Kōsuke:

> [the] detective himself represents the conflation of the modern and traditional, the Western and Japanese, for in history arc, he graduated from a college in the U .S in the 1930s, yet he insistently dresses himself in worn-out kimonos. His sense of logic, which enables him to understand and solve crimes, symbolizes his Western

education [. . .] whereas his understanding of the emotional landscape of

complicated human relationships indicates his Japanese footing. (34)

Yokomizo thematically deals with the impact of Japan's defeat in the Second World War and its

postwar reconstruction in his novels. Yokomizo's Kōsuke differs from Rampo's Akechi Kogorō

in a number of significant ways. Whereas Akechi "lives and breathes urban air" and solves

crimes in urban settings in which "modern logic fights a modern darkness, [and] where

numerous strangers randomly encounter each other" (Nakagawa 91), many of Yokomizo's

novels are set in rural Japan, in which crimes are often committed by one's kin. Furthermore, as

Nakagawa points out, the countryside that Kōsuke occupies is a place "in which everyone knows

everything about almost everyone—secrets are hardly secrets in this environment. Whereas

Akechi's Tokyo resembles Holmes's London, Kindaichi's setting is not like that of English

detective novels" (Nakagawa 92). These differences ultimately determine the kind of detection

the detective performs, which in turn inform Kanari's and Amagi's *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo*

and Aoyama's *Meitantei Konan* in different ways.

From a Cat-and-Mouse Chase to Bloody Crime Scenes: The Boy Detective's New

Challenge

The representation of violence in Edogawa Rampo's *shōnen tantei* series is kept to a minimum.

Although Kobayashi and members of the boys' detective club encounter several dangerous

situations throughout the series, such as being abducted by Nijū-mensō, they never encounter a

bloody corpse, nor are they asked to investigate bloody murders. Rather, their investigations tend

to be limited to finding ways to prevent Nijū-mensō from stealing national treasures and

paintings belonging to wealthy families or museums. They also help to recover these items,

spoiling Nijū-mensō's plans. Nijū-mensō himself lives by a "no-kill rule," as it is understood that he cannot stand the sight of blood. He reveals that he kidnaps the children in order to teach them a lesson for meddling in his plans. In the story *The Strange Fiend with Forty Faces* (*Kaiki Yonjū-mensō,* 1952), the villain Yonjū-mensō, who is actually Nijū-mensō in disguise, saves Kobayashi from a burning building. In other words, although the cat-and-mouse chase between Kobayashi/Akechi and Nijū-mensō might suggest that they are enemies, the fact that Nijū-mensō saves Kobayashi's life is, perhaps, an indication that he is not as evil as he may seem. The fact that Nijū-mensō always finds a way to escape prison adds to the playful but formulaic nature of Rampo's fiction for children. Other than experiencing a few fainting spells, Kobayashi does not experience life-threatening injuries or bodily harm, nor is he involved in gruesome cases. Violence is, thus, neatly contained, so that the stories themselves are about the adventures of the boy detectives rather than the crime itself. Similarly, as noted earlier, Osamu Tezuka's manga depictions of the boy detective also censor violence and death in interesting ways.

By contrast, the boy detectives in Kanari and Amagi's *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* and Aoyama's *Meitantei Konan* encounter the harsh realities of their profession, such as bloody murders and decapitated corpses. The boy detectives endure life-threatening injuries, and both character and reader experience a "real" sense of danger. For the most part, the criminals and the crimes they commit are vicious and are malicious in intent, a far cry from Rampo's Nijū-mensō who terrorizes museum curators and the socialites of Tokyo to steal their artwork and ultimately create a museum of his own. Though the representation of violence takes a drastic turn in *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* and in *Meitantei Konan*, one of the striking differences between Kanari's and Amagi's and Aoyama's works is the presentation of the crime scene.

Satō Fumiya's illustrations in *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* seem to invoke the *gekiga-*esque aesthetic tradition, as seen in Jōya's manga adaptation, producing a kind of realism in ways that Tezuka's and Aoyama's caricatures do not. Unlike the noir-esque elements that inform *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo,* Aoyama's characters are drawn with rounder and softer features, reminiscent of Tezuka's style, which is common in Aoyama's other works. Konan's icnonic look—his blue school uniform and red bowtie—is reminiscent of Tezuka's depiction of Rock Home. Nakagawa says of Yokomizo, "One characteristic of Yokomizo's murders is the pictorial impressions that dead bodies create; culprits stage their victims in aesthetically interesting ways" (93). In the novel *Gokumon Island* (*Gokumon-tō* 1947) for example, "Chimata's youngest sister is found tied with a kimono sash to a branch of a plum tree, as if she were a monstrous python hanging from it" (93). In a visual textual medium such as manga, vivid details are brought to life (or death) in expressive and compelling images.

Representations of violence and nudity are perhaps unavoidable in a genre that deals with crime, and Kanari and Amagi handle such representations differently from Aoyama. In the first volume of the series, "Murder at the Opera House" ("Operazakan Satsujin Jiken," 1992), a story
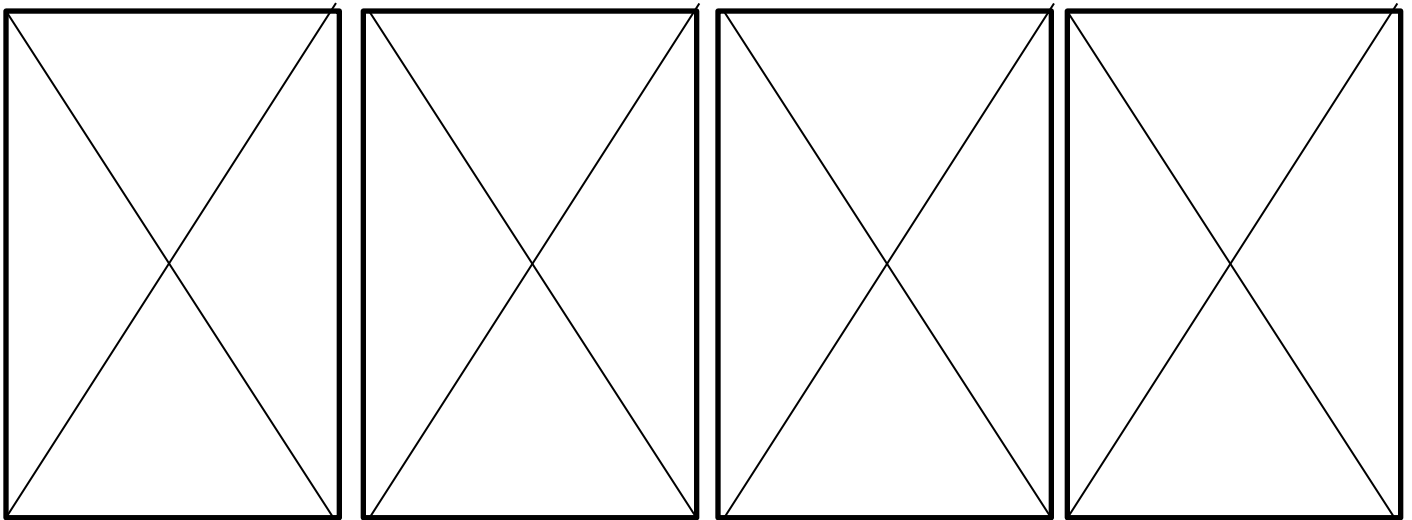

Figure 6. Images of the first three victims of the series in vol.1, "Operazakan Satsujin Jiken" of Amagi's and Kanari's. *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo*. From right to left: Hidaka Orie, Kiriyu Harumi and Ogata Natsuyo.
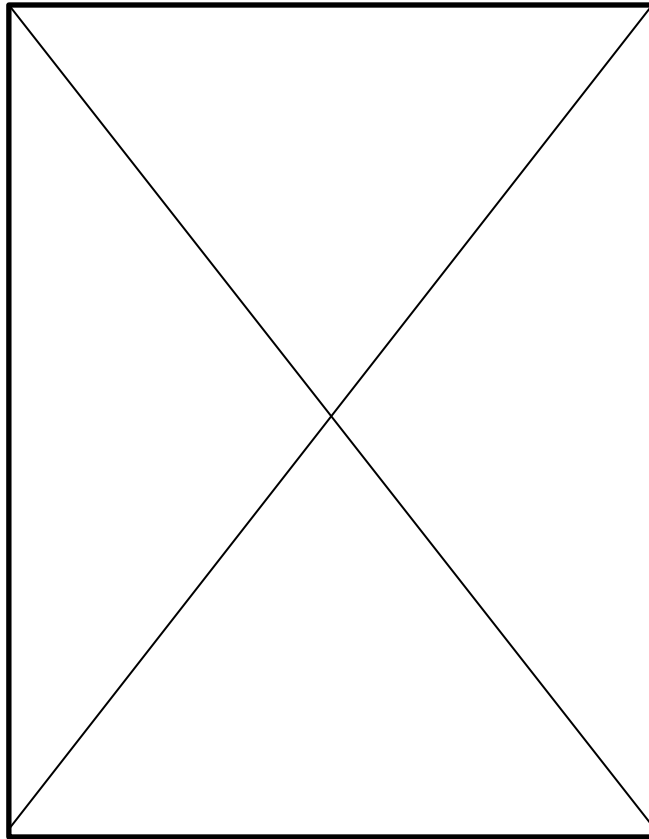
Figure 7. In Aoyama's *Meitantei Konan*, a man is beheaded while riding a roller coaster in vol. 1, "Heisei Hōmuzu."

of revenge that ultimately prompts the murderer to kill two women who were responsible for his

lover's suicide, the bodies of his victims are staged in a way that invite the voyeuristic gaze. The

death of Hidaka Orie, who is the phantom's first victim and the first person to die within the

series, sets the tone for Kanari's representation of a crime scene.

The caption on the page reads: "Orie's lifeless body was lying centre stage, illuminated

by the dazzling, beautiful light. The iron, lighting equipment that probably weighed a few

hundred kilos had crushed her fragile body." Here, the word "beautiful" to describe a crime scene

is an unusual choice, but Orie's body, which is literally and figuratively staged from a bird's-eye

point of view, is treated as spectacle. Moreover, Orie's serene expression makes her look as

though she were alive, evoking the uncanny. The second victim, Kiriyu Harumi, is found

hanging from a tree. In a kind of blazon, the scene begins with a close-up image of her feet, then moves up to her chest, revealing a thin wire. In a kind of over-the-shoulder shot, Hajime gazes at Harumi's body, dangling from a tree. The silence of the scene is reinforced by the onomatopoeic ギィーギィー (*gī-gī*), which imitates the creaking sound of her body swaying to and fro.

Finally, the third victim, Ogata Natsuyo, the drama teacher who is killed because she discovers a vital clue, is found murdered in a tub, face-down. Unlike the first two victims, who were either fully or partially clothed, Natsuyo is found naked. Her dead body is likened to seagrass floating in a pool of blood. These examples might speak to how manga translates the "pictorial impressions of dead bodies," akin to Yokomizo's fiction.

Aoyama's portrayal of violent scenes is unlike Kanari's and Amagi's. In the first volume of Aoyama's series, the chapter "Heisei Hōmuzu" (Hesei Holmes) begins with Shin'ichi and his love interest Ran at an amusement park. They decide to ride a roller coaster, but while they are on the coaster, a man is beheaded, and the image of the headless man becomes the focus of attention. Blood spews out like a fountain from the man's neck, epitomizing the shock value of this scene.[63] The image is also accompanied by the sound effect ブシュウウ (*bushū*), followed by a woman's scream. The diagonally framed panels coupled with the scream bubbles convey utter chaos and mayhem. Unlike Satō's illustrations, which allow the eyes to wander the page through her use of aspect-to-aspect transitions, Aoyama uses action-to-action panels to represent the speed at which the events unfold. [64] Furthermore, there are no close-up images of the victim's body; the headless body is transported off the rollercoaster, examined by Shin'ichi, and never

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[63] When I taught this manga in a course on Sherlockian adaptations, many of the students were shocked by the representations of violence in *Case Closed*.

[64] Refers to panels depicting a single subject moving over a progression of actions.

seen again. The swift rate at which the crime occurs and is solved creates an emotional distance between the reader and the victim, and works to highlight Shin'ichi's investigation of the crime. For Aoyama, then, murder is strategically employed as a plot device to emphasize the central role of the detective, as is the case with many classic tales of detective fiction. According to Cawelti's formula of the classic detective story, "Treating victim and criminal as figures without much emotional interest or complexity places the detective story's primary emphasis on those characters who are investigating the crime, the most important of which is the detective" (*Adventure, Mystery and Romance* 93). Although it is rare to find scenes in Aoyama's work in which the death of a victim evokes pity and/or sympathy, there are a few exceptions.

What both manga series demonstrate in terms of the aesthetics of the genre is their mediation on what McCloud describes as "the continuum of realism and "cartoonish" style and their general avoidance of "the world of non-iconic abstraction" (54). Although this may be the case for most mainstream manga, such an artistic decision serves a particular function in detective manga. Abstract representations have no place in a world that privileges logic and reasoning. Things must be represented in a practical and clear way, and the reader must see exactly what the detective sees to have a fair chance at solving the crime. Simply put, there is a clear connection between the genre's form and content.

Though I have laid out some of the aesthetic similarities and differences between Kanari's and Aoyama's works, focusing mainly on their representation of violence, the question remains as to why *shōnen tantei* manga such as *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* and *Meitantei Konan* feature such graphic depictions of violence, in contrast to the crimes solved by the boys in Rampo's *shōnen tantei* series. This question receives an answer in the following chapter, which

contextualizes the role of the boy detective in discourses that circulated about what Andre Arai, a

cultural anthropologist, describes as "the strange child" in 1990s Japan.

Chapter 3

The Boy Detectives of the Lost Decade Part I: The Rebel Boy Detective

"In both their worst and best guises, teens in crime writing are defined as people with a subversive power to cross boundaries in the search for knowledge and experience" (Nash 71).

This chapter introduces the boy detectives of the Lost Decade, beginning with a textual analysis of *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo*. Specifically, it analyzes the series' protagonist, Hajime Kindaichi, who reassigns new meaning to the word *ochikobore* by dispelling the myth of out-of-control teens associated with the term. [65] It also situates a reading of the manga as a critical response to the failure of Japan's educational system to protect its youth, and contextualizes its findings in relation to anthropological studies conducted on Japan's education system, and patterns of socialization from youth to adulthood.

Why Youth? Socialization, Schooling, and Detection

Ilana Nash has made a strong connection between the rise of American cultural anxieties of teenagers and the emergence of the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew series in the American boy and girl detective tradition. In contrast to stories of teenage delinquency in pulp fiction, which contributed to the moral panic of teens in America, Nash argues that mystery stories for youth such as "the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew series offered readers the pleasures of seeing adolescents triumph over adults in their superior ability to know: the teen detectives out-perform adult police and outwit adult criminals" (72). According to Nash, "Both types of literature, written by adults, assume that adolescents have a natural drive toward transgressive knowledge" (73) and "[t]his assumption reflected developments in the early twentieth century that influenced

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[65] Describes someone who fell through the cracks of society; loser.

adult conceptions of youth" (73). As in the British tradition, as discourses of the boundaries between boyhood and manhood shifted, so did the boy detective and his means of detection. According to cultural anthropologist Andre Arai, in Japan "what made the child available as a symbol or metaphor of modernity is also what has made the child the locus of problems when the certainty of the national trajectory was in question" (6). In other words, the teenage boy detective featured in the works of Kanari and Amagi and of Aoyama also emphasize the pursuit of knowledge for all the right reasons, which restores middle-class values and social mores, contrary to the image of the delinquent youth perpetuated in sensationalized stories about out-of-control teens. Ohba Tsugumi's *Death Note*, on the other hand, showcases the dangers of pursuing the wrong kind of knowledge, which I explore in Chapter Five.

One of the central aims of this thesis is to understand the construction of the youth detective in manga as it relates to the discourse of the youth problem within the socioeconomic climate of Japan in the Lost Decade. Therefore, I will begin by exploring the role of education, both within the home and at school, in the construction of social roles and identities in Japan. This lays out the foundation from which I will critically investigate the cultural production of the youth detective in the manga series examined in this thesis. My main argument is that *shōnen* detectives can be read as a complex response to the socialization of youth to adulthood as they simultaneously model and delegitimize the adult social order in Japan, so that Hajime's, Konan's and Light's roles as detectives are defined in different ways.

The Role of the School, Schooling, and Socialization in Japan

Schooling in Japan begins at home and is later refined through formal education. The Ministry of Education (MOE), however, is invested in supporting a particular kind of schooling. The

censorship and revision of Japan's colonial past in school textbooks, such as the Nanking

Massacre, and what Norma Field describes as "the regressive policies regarding anthem and flag

that went into effect in the 1990s" (65) are two particular examples of the MOE's influence on

the school's curriculum in Japan. Other examples include a high school textbook written by

physicist and Nobel laureate Tomonaga Shin'ichiro, which was rejected by the MOE "on the

ground that it did not present 'correct knowledge [. . .] in a predetermined and exact style" (14).

A sixth-grade text book was also rejected because it used unofficial onomatopoeic sounds to

convey the sound of a rushing river. Although education in Japan was not always under such

careful surveillance of the MOE, it can be argued that changes to the educational system and its

curriculum are deeply tied to national interests. In lieu of a detailed historical account of

education reforms in Japan, I will highlight some key moments in history that demonstrate the

relationship between state, ideology, and schooling. [66]

In her chronological overview of the Japanese education system over two centuries,

Merry White explains that in the Tokugawa Period (1603-1868), "the most common educational

experience for a Japanese child was that of the *terakoya* (the parish school) [. . .] where Buddhist

priests taught children to read and write" (53). By the time of the Meiji Restoration of 1868, the

Japanese educational system was influenced by "German, Italian, French, and American

pedagogical ideas and systems" (White 58), which was fused with Japan's own national

interests. It was also during this time that the Fundamental Code of Education in 1872 was

revised, which made schooling accessible to all members of Japanese society regardless of social

rank. By the turn of the nineteenth century, as Japan gained cultural momentum as a modern

nation-state, its policies toward education underwent a process of "'re-Japanization' of the

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[66] For further critical readings on this topic, see Horio.

educational system," (61) which, for example, eliminated "most foreign language instruction" (62). Following the Second World War, "the need for schools as institutions to develop children for the nation's rebuilding became central in Japanese planning" (62), and the Occupation sought to "democratize" the educational system. From what began as teaching lessons of hard work and diligence, pioneered by Ninomiya Sontoku in the Tokugawa period; to the importation and cultural customization of the educational system in the Meiji period; to the nationalist aims of Japanese education in the wartime years followed by the reconstitution of the educational system after the war, the school was central to the maintenance of Japanese social and political order.[67]

Specifically, the school plays an important role in maintaining a rigid social hierarchy (*tate shakai*) that defines Japanese society. Rebecca Iren Fukuzawa has observed that as early as middle school, "[p]ersonal development in Japan is a progression through a number of predetermined social roles. This sequence establishes strong expectations of age-appropriate behavior along a predetermined developmental path" (317). According to Mary C. Brinton, the period between the 1960s and the 1980s were characterized as "a culture of security than a culture of risk. There were established pathways from school to work and from work into marriage" (18). The concept of the *ba,* a term she borrows from Nakane Chie and is central to her study. *Ba* is used "interchangeably [with social location] to denote an organization or bounded collective to which individuals belong and from which they derive a sense of identity and security" (3). Brinton argues that during this period "social institutions such as the school-work system supported the postwar family system and the accompanying postwar life course by

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[67] White's chronology begins with a description of Ninomiya Sontoku, "a Tokugawa-period philosopher whose statue still stands in many schoolyards" (51) who became the "exemplar of Japanese nineteenth-century morality" (51) defined by values of "self-discipline, willingness to work hard, and drive to learn" (51).

helping Japanese young people move from one secure *ba* to another" (18). [68] In Japan, schools

are not only places in which children and youths acquire moral and practical instruction, but have

also been institutions on which students rely to secure employment opportunities. Field argues

that "the conflation of the school and work models of life in Japanese education is both

symbiotic with and inscribed by the conflation of state and corporation in the educational

system" (62). High schools were mainly responsible for establishing strong ties with companies

in order to ensure smooth transition from the school to the workplace, demonstrating how "the

goals of the education fail to suggest even a modicum of autonomy from the goals of the

economy" (Field 62). However, this model, which once played a crucial role in determining a

person's life course and "thrived during the 1960s to 1980s" (Brinton 119), according to Arai,

began to wane as did discourses of dependency in an age of neoliberal educational reform

following the economic recession of the 1990s, which redefined notions of schooling and

school/work ties, and ultimately modified the conventional life path for youth that had defined

Japanese society for so long.[69]

  There are two competing ideologies that underpin the curricular agenda in the Japanese

school system. The first is the idea of dependency, which was reinforced by psychologists such

as Takeo Doi in the 1950s, who came up with the idea of *amae* as a national identity construct,

though not unproblematically. According to Doi, connotations of *amae* include "passive love,"

(21) "sweet," (29) "to behave self-indulgently," (29) and "excessively optimistic" (29). Doi,

whose own cultural theories were influenced by Ruth Benedict's "characterizations of Japanese

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[68] Brinton also mentions that "being able to identify oneself as a member of a well-recognized *ba* defined one's
location in the social and economic universe, a universe that was distinctly Japanese rather than global" (31).
[69] The actual extent to which the school-employer ties have actually declined is unclear; as Brinton points out,
"evidence offered by Japanese researchers had been based mainly on teachers' own reports of a decline" (111).
Quantitative studies (see Brinton; Ishida; Kaiya) have revealed that vocational high schools tend to have stronger
ties with firms in comparison to (low-ranking) general high schools, which lost their ties to firms during the
recession, making it difficult for Japan's non-elite to join the workforce and fulfill their life course.

national character and culture" (25), suggested that "*amae. . .* was the foundation for Japanese socialization processes and interpersonal relations, as well as the explanation for cultural coherence and continuity" (26). It should be noted that Benedict has been criticized on the grounds of essentialism and academic Orientalism. Doi has also been criticized for feeding into *Nihonjinron* discourse. The point here is not a justification of these discourses, but to demonstrate how they were recuperated into the nation's curricular agenda. In arguing that "Japanese society is permeated by the concept of *amae*" (28), Doi identifies the mother-child relationship as a site in which children first learn *amaeru*, or to rely on others. Cyril Simmons's comparative study of Japanese and British school systems and childhood development reveals the importance of dependence for the Japanese (99). She explains that the "iiko" (102), or "good" child is one "who will maintain harmony in society" (102), in contrast to the importance of independence in the British system. Membership within a community and group is, thus, crucial to the development of early childhood: "The concept of *minna to issho*, or 'all together,' is a prime curricular goal in the early years of education" (Rohlen and LeTendre 76). White argues that groupism can be seen as part of the Japanese moral instruction of *nemawashi*. In her analogy she explains that, like the idea of "digging around the roots," (17), in which "one doesn't try to pull up a tree stump without accounting for all the roots, one doesn't try to impose a perspective or solution on a group without eliciting the (wholehearted) consent of each individual" (17-18). Ideas of group compliance and harmony ground "the central agenda of Japanese education" (18), which is backed by the pedagogical management of the *han* (or team), particularly in elementary school settings. Each *han*, which consists of a small group of children, is assigned "to pursue a wide range of activities from art projects to science experiments to eating lunch together" (87). Catherine C. Lewis has found that "a good group is 'one that works

well together' and has *matomari* (cohesiveness, or a sense of unity)" (88). In addition, lessons of teamwork are reinforced through the teacher's "investment in *gakkyūzukuri* ('creating classhood')" (Lewis 87).

Ideas of dependence worked well to support cultural discourses of homogeneity and collectivity throughout the 1960s to the 1980s (at a time when *Nihonjinron* was at its peak) and were also recuperated into Japan's curricular agenda through the teachings of group compliance and harmony, and the establishment of school-work ties. However, as Arai has observed, this idea of dependence began to wane in the period of recession and when the child as a marker of progress was called into question by media accounts of out-of-control youth. To remedy the so-called "child problem," the Japanese government and the Ministry of Education (MOE) implemented a new educational reform by 2006 that replaced Doi's ideas of dependence with ideas of "independence, self-development, responsibility, and inner frontiers" (28), and which "also included a language of cultivating a "heart" to love one's country" (8). Spearheaded by Hayao Kawai whose "prominence as psychological expert on Japanese education and national identity grew dramatically in the 1990s" (61), the discourse of independence paved a way for pressure-free education (*yutori kyōiku*), which encouraged the idea that the individual is responsible for his or her own success. At the same time, the discourse of independence was ultimately utilized to justify government cutbacks and to combat criticism against the MOE for Japan's competitive and rigorous exam culture, which according to Arai, created the conditions for neoliberal patriotism.

The three archetypes of the boy detectives examined in this thesis, exemplify different outcomes of Arai's idea of neoliberal patriotism, which refers to a form of governance that emerged out of this paradoxical educational reform that promoted, on the one hand,

independence in the sense that one is responsible for his/her own future, and on the other hand, dependence in terms of how one is also responsible for "cultivating a heart to love one's country" (Arai 8). According to Arai, this "seemingly impossible individualized collectivism [or] neoliberal patriotism" (8) is what "transformed a whole history of Japanese cultural and national identity representations" (9). The question then remains of how this discourse is represented in Japanese poplar culture and specifically within the genre of mystery manga.

Neoliberal patriotism as defined by Arai and based on the discourses that led up to the 2006 revision to the Fundamental Law of Education ultimately encourages a shared vision of the future through competition. And Arai explores how the private education sector such as cram schools (*juku*) "promoted themselves as substitutes, rather than supplements, to the public schools for children" (109) in order to provide services that compensate for the flailing public education system, and in order to combat the threat of the "strange child." In other words, neoliberal patriotism disguises the idea of competition through the rhetoric of personal development at the expense of its own people. Those who are able to afford private services are the ones who are able climb to the top. This notion of competition characteristic to neoliberal ideology is criticized in the works of Kanari and Amagi who paint a pessimistic worldview dominated by a dog-eat-dog mentality as depicted in stories such as "Kubitsuri Satsujin Jiken" as I will explain in detail shortly. Similarly, one way that ideas of individual accountability are critiqued in *Death Note* is through the ways in which the series' main protagonists Light and L treat competition as a deadly game as I explore in Chapter Five. Finally, in *Meitantei Konan*, the paradox of "individual collectivism" might be exemplified through the character of Edogawa Konan, who is re-educated about the values of partnership, friendship and community in order to

become a better version of himself as I discuss in Chapter Four. Thus, the idea of "chasing your hopes and dreams" in the climate of the Lost Decade is a site of contestation.

Boy detectives of the Lost Decade uphold different worldviews regarding a progressively better future, or self. The rebel boy detective, Hajime, is a figure who lives in the moment. He resists the social drive for success, having witnessed the destructive consequences of people who are blinded by their selfish pursuits and dreams. The criminal boy detective, Light, is a calculating and opportunist figure. He plays with the rules of society, trying to recreate a world in line with his own twisted vision, and ultimately demonstrates the limitations of the neoliberal idea as he fails to achieve his goal. Finally, the ideal boy detective, is a law-abiding figure who best exemplifies the intended goals of neoliberal patriotism as I mentioned above, he manages both his individual and collective duties as a detecting agent. Certainly, the impact of neoliberal ideology on education in Japan can be further explored, but it is one way that the boy detective tradition of the 1990s, with its focus on school life and the school setting, can be understood in response to the shifting dynamics of the educational system, which in turn impacted the life course pattern. I will now move on to a discussion about the perceived rise of youth incidents that triggered a national crisis about youth delinquents in Japan as further grounds for my reading of the boy detectives of the Lost Decade.

Lost Boys and the Rise of Youth Incidents

Throughout the late 1980s and 1990s, and into the 2000s, several youth-related incidents occurred that fed into the moral panic about youth deviance. This panic was partly sensationalized by mass media and confirmed by a host of institutions, professionals, and policy makers that set out to remedy the youth problem. From the serial murders of young girls between

1988 to 1989 by Tsutomu Miyazaki, to the child murders committed in Kōbe by a junior high school student in 1997, to the Akihabara Massacre, which involved the 25-year-old Tomohiro Katō driving a truck into a busy intersection and fatally stabbing 7 people in 2008, these incidents are examples of what Toivonen and Imoto characterize as "discovered" as part of "a powerful 'agenda-setting' process" (18) that draws attention to the institutionalization of various youth problems. Taking on a constructivist approach to the study of youth problems in Japan, Toivonen and Imoto argue that "individual youth problems proceed as 'waves' of collective attention, characterize by relatively short episodes of moral panic, followed by longer two-to three-year policy cycles, after which some issues wane and others re-emerge" (17). One such example can be seen in the shifting discourses of otaku from "symbols of Japan's cultural power and as key components of the government's 'Cool Japan' branding strategy" (12) to representations of a threat to social order, as in the cases of Miyazaki and Katō. These three incidents are examples of trigger events that policy makers conveniently cited to justify new reforms. The 1997 incident in particular drew attention to the problem of the strange child, which policy makers would use in revising educational reforms for their own agenda-setting goals.

Public discourse of the youth problem is nothing new; indeed, such discourses recur in every culture and every generation. In *A Sociology of Japanese Youth from Returnees to NEETs* (2012), sociologists Goodman, Imoto, and Toivonen discuss various examples of youth crises from around the world. From the "violent acts of aggression" of American teenage girls in the early 2000s, to the "moral panic over 'hoodies, knife attacks, gangsta rap culture, ASBOs [anti-social behaviour disorders], chavs and bling and the rest of it' (Pearson 2006)" (qtd. in Toivonen and Imoto 1) that seemed to have plagued British society, to Finland where "Nordic stability and well-being was thrown into a youth crisis by the Jokela school shooting incident in 2007, and to

China where "youngsters were now suffering from 'web addiction' (BBC News, 6 August 2009)" (qtd. in Toivonen and Imoto 1), youth tend to draw negative attention from the press. These critics claim that "there can be no dispute that high-profile youth problems are a shared phenomenon across advanced societies with different histories, socio-economic characteristics, cultures and traditions" (1), including Japan. In Japan, according to Mary C. Brinton, "social concern over changing patters among Japan's youth was fueled by the publication of sociologists Yamada Masahiro's *Parasite shinguru no jidai* (*The age of Parasite Singles*) in 1999" (5). Mathews and White explain how the "'problematic young people' depicted in Japanese mass media today range over a span of three decades" (6):

> Since the end of World War II, each new generation of young people has been targeted for its *strange ways* (emphasis mine), from the *taiyōzoku* of the 1950s [. . .] to protesters against the U.S.—Japan Security Treaty, and 1960s radicals [. . .] to *shinjinrui*, the 'new breed' of the 1980s, to *otaku*, [. . .] and, in the late 1990s, *kogyaru* [. . .]. (5)

Toivonen and Imoto add to this list by categorizing how each generation is classified under even more labels, such as *tōkō kyohi*, *kikokushijo* and *monatorium ningen* in the 1970s, *dokushin kizoku* and *otaku* in the 1980s, *adult children*, *freeters,* and *parasite singles* in the 1990s, and *hikikomori*, *NEETs* and *shōshokukei-danshi* in the 2000s.[70] While a description of each of these categories is beyond the scope of this study, my point is that many of these youths are perceived by older people as undoing the fabric of Japanese society due to their unwillingness to "become full-fledged members of the 'adult social order'" (Mathews and White 6), and perhaps for good reason. At a time that called into question things such as lifetime employment, which

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[70] See Table 1.1, p. 22 in *A Sociology of Japanese Youth: From Returnees to NEETs* (2012) for explanations and definitions of each label.

consequently led to the deterioration of the bedrock of Japanese social order and stability, young people who were faced with an uncertain future resisted following in their parents' footsteps. Unlike their parents, who experienced the nation's bubble period when "labor demand soared and many young people—especially university graduates—had their pick of jobs," (5) young people during the recession had severely limited opportunities in comparison. Mathews's and White's rhetorical question: "why bother becoming part of the adult social order in such a constraining, unrewarding world?" (8), summarizes the attitude held by many young people following the economic stagnation of the 1990s.

According to Arai, "The term *collapse* associated with the school and the home first entered into regular use in the mid-1990s" and "by 1998, 'classroom collapse' (*gakkyūhōkai*) had become a catchword in the media. In 1999, it was rated one of the top ten new words of the year" (86). Such discourses of the collapse of the classroom and home were spearheaded by Ryōichi Kawakami "and the private, all-male Professional Teachers' Association (Purokyōshi)" (Arai 80) who wrote extensively about the strange child throughout the 1990s and "were the first to introduce the terms *strange* and *incomprehensible* into the discursive space of the early 1990s recessionary period" (82). For Kawakami and the Purokyōshi, the educational reforms set forth by the MOE were not the answers to the problem, but centralizing the authority of the school was. What was lacking for Kawakami was a central authority (formerly the school) that would guide its students. In her personal interviews with Kawakami, Arai notes, "Declining respect for a once revered national institution—he referred to the school as "holy ground," because of its role in the inculcation of values and training of the body—was a serious problem for Japanese social order (*chitsujo*)" (80-81).

Fictional representations of youths in Japanese popular media reveal a nation in crisis when "the child as a metaphor for modernity" (Arai 6) was challenged in the lost generation. While the media focused on juvenile murders and cases of bullying, which seemed to have signaled a loss of childhood innocence, images of youth-in-crisis were common in Japanese popular culture. In her commentary on Ōhba Tsugumi's *Death Note*, Susan Napier explains that while themes and tropes of death and murder are not uncommon in Japanese literature, youth as perpetrators of violence seems to have flourished in the twenty-first century, arguing that "It seems likely that this epidemic of fictional murders is related to what seems to be the increasing number of bizarre and grotesque murder incidents, often involving juveniles, that have been occurring in Japan over the past decade" ("Death Note: The" 358). Arai's close reading of the films *Battle Royale* (2000), *Bright Future* (2003), and *Tokyo Sonata* (2008) draws a connection between the "child problem and education reform deliberations" (149) of the time to the films' underlying cynicism represented in the theme of the survival of the fittest. From the physical bloody battles between middle-school students to battles that are waged within the Self, these films illustrate what is at stake in a world that "discredits the standardized postwar past of homogeneous identification and replaces it with independence and endless self-development" (171). From the classroom to the home, "the work hard and things will get better" (146) narrative that haunts the protagonists in these films is in fact recuperated in other popular films of the time, such as *Spirited Away* (2001), and through characters such as Chihiro, the film's female heroine, who Arai describes as "the picture-girl of the latent strength" (78) that supports ideas of neoliberalist reforms.[71] By virtue, a detective works alone. He is both alien to and part of his

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[71] For Arai's full analysis of Miyazaki's film, see 78-99. Specifically, Arai refers to Hayao Kawai, who worked closely with the Ministry of Education and, who by the late 1990s, had gained "prominence as psychological expert on Japanese education and national identity" (Arai 61). The idea of independence, in the sense that we are all

society, but the boy detective manga narratives work to underscore the importance of justice and social order while negotiating the individuality of the detective. Unlike Light, both Hajime and Konan operate according to their moral codes to right wrongs in their society. As agents of productive change, Kanari's and Amagi's Hajime and Aoyama's Konan subvert the dominant image of youth of their time by portraying them not as perpetrators of violence, but as the right kind of supporters of middle-class sensibilities.

This is not to say that the society represented in the Kanari's works and Aoyama's manga is idealized. The works of Kanari, in particular, make blatant references to the economic crisis and to the flailing school system. The school as a popular setting in manga has received little critical attention. On the one hand, the school setting in manga dramatizes the daily life of students as it sets the stage for romantic comedies such as in *shōjo* manga. On the other hand, the harsh realities of school life depicted in media, such as youth suicide, bullying, and school refusal syndrome, provide a striking contrast to the idealized representations of school life in other manga. At a time when reported cases of bullying reached their height in the mid-1980s, it was not unusual to hear of tragic stories of young boys and girls, committing suicide due to bullying. [72] However, violence in Japanese schools not only occurred amongst students, but a number of violent confrontations between teachers and students have also been reported. Field recounts one such tragic incident in June 1990, in which "a junior-high-school girl was crushed to death by a teacher closing a steel gate in an effort to prevent tardy students from entering"

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responsible for discovering our own potential and that our own individual stories are connected to broader cultural myths, was central to Kawai's beliefs.

[72] According to Lewis's presentation of data from the Ministry of Education in 1991, bullying was a serious incident among students in grade seven and eight with 5,127 incidents reported in grade seven and 4,992 incidents reported in grade eight.

(57). Although corporal punishment was illegal, Field's interviews with teachers revealed that beatings were common.

In what ways are high school realities represented in detective manga? Kanari's and Amagi's manga reflect and respond to school-related youth problems of the time, representing the school as a dreadful place for students. Several stories in the Case Files Series discussed here take place within the school, deal with issues of bullying, and depict the breakdown of the nuclear family. In these stories, the family and school are sites of dysfunction and chaos, in response to sociopolitical anxieties about the future of Japanese youth.

The "Rebel" *Shōnen* Detective in *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo*

Kanari's manga begins, not with the young Kindaichi, but with Miyuki's high school friends, who are shocked to learn that she had turned down Kase *senpai* in favour of Hajime. [73] This preface, which consists of seven pages, is told from the perspective of Miyuki and the school teachers. Readers first see Hajime lying on the school's *okujō* (rooftop), casually listening to his Walkman, which is juxtaposed to the scene of Miyuki's friends laughing at her for her taste in guys. This scene is then interrupted by Miyuki's narration: "Uh.. nice to meet you, my name is Nanase Miyuki. Currently, I'm a second-year student at Fudō Private High school and I'm part of the Drama Club...this slightly unreliable guy has been my childhood friend since kindergarten, his name...Hajime Kindaichi" (vol. 1, ch. 1, n.pag.). A series of panels supplement the text, showing Hajime climbing back into the classroom through the window with the help of Miyuki and his homeroom teacher. Following this incident, two teachers sitting in their office comment on Hajime, describing him as dumb (*aho*) and express their disbelief that Miyuki, the class

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[73] A Japanese word used to describe someone of seniority. The opposite of *senpai* is *kōhai* (junior).

president who gets the top scores, is his friend. Miyuki serves as a kind of foil to Hajime in order to highlight his flaws, which sets him up as a figure of failure. This image is further reinforced by his teachers, who comment that "he always leaves class early, but comes to class late. He skips half of classes. He fails his tests and to top it all off, he's terrible at sports" (vol. 1, ch. 1, n.pag.). Indeed, when compared to Dupin, Holmes, and Poirot, Kanari's Hajime seems to fall short in terms of his role as a mastermind detective. However, despite Hajime's reputation as an unpopular and troubled youth, the drama teacher points out that he "possesses something special that other students don't [. . .] He's blood related to that man who was said to be a genius," (vol. 1, ch. 1, n.pag.) alluding to none other than Kōsuke Kindaichi. According to Cawelti, the hardboiled detective's "life may look like a failure, but actually it is a form of rebellion, a rejection of the ordinary concepts of success and respectability" (*Adventure, Mystery, and Romance* 144), which is a point to which I will return.

Although Hajime appears to be a class clown, he also demonstrates wit and intelligence. The first story of the volume following the preface, "Murder at the Opera House" ("Operazakan Satsujin Jiken," 1992) begins with the Drama club travelling to an isolated island, where they conduct rehearsals for their upcoming performance of *The Phantom of the Opera*. On the train, Miyuki and Hajime are invited to play a game of cards by a senior club member, Fuse Mitsuhiko. Hajime initially declines the invitation, but is prompted to join when he overhears Mitsuhiko calling him "a lazy, dumb, good-for-nothing guy" (vol. 1, ch. 1, n.pag.). While Mitsuhiko is busy showing off his magic tricks to the girls, Hajime interrupts them, reveals the trick, and even goes as far to "deduce" the exact location and cost of the set of cards that Mitsuhiko has purchased. This is revealed to be a hoax, since Hajime grabbed a receipt from Mitsuhiko's pants pocket that indicated where and how much he paid for the deck of cards.

Hajime then turns the magic trick on Mitsuhiko, stuffing Mitsuhiko's flies with a deck of cards and embarrassing him. Kanari's rhetorical strategy of presenting different perspectives of Hajime at the beginning of the series, all pointing to his role as a failure, works to construct an image of Hajime as a less-than-ordinary youth, while emphasizing his skill at detection all the more. In other words, Hajime represents the underdog hero from whom readers can expect the unexpected.

In *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo*, the past signals a kind of backwardness and irrationality that is typified in the works of Yokomizo. By "using the character of Kindaichi Kōsuke as his literary mouthpiece, Yokomizo criticizes the stubborn tradition and rigid conservatism that were still prevalent in rural Japan" (Kawana 189). In the same way that "the novel calls upon fears that point to a certain event in the past to imply the present instability" (Nakagawa 41), Kanari and Amagi draw on the irrational past in their manga, but unlike Yokomizo, whose stories are set in rural Japan, Kanari employs the school as the backdrop from which he probes questions of identity and trauma to revitalize the detective story for a contemporary youth audience.

The "monolithic postwar Japanese middle-class goals of good diploma, good job at a big company" (Yoda, "A Roadmap" 39) haunt the young characters, and readers, of the manga. Volume 9, "Kubitsuri Gakuen Satsujinjiken," troubles this middle-class vision by demonstrating the negative effects of state exams and cram-school culture on the well-being of youths. The story begins as Kindaichi's mother tells him to contribute to pay off the mortgage of their home (which was built in the 1940s), followed by a scene in which he imagines his childhood friend Miyuki taken away by his rival, Akechi Kengo, as a consequence of being unable to pay off his debt.[74] "The only way out of this," according to Kindaichi's mother, is "to work at a top

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[74] In fact, money or the lack thereof is a constant source of anxiety for Hajime Kindaichi. Volume 5, *Hihōtō Satsujin Jiken,* begins with a scene in which Hajime is informed by his mother that he will not be receiving the motorcycle
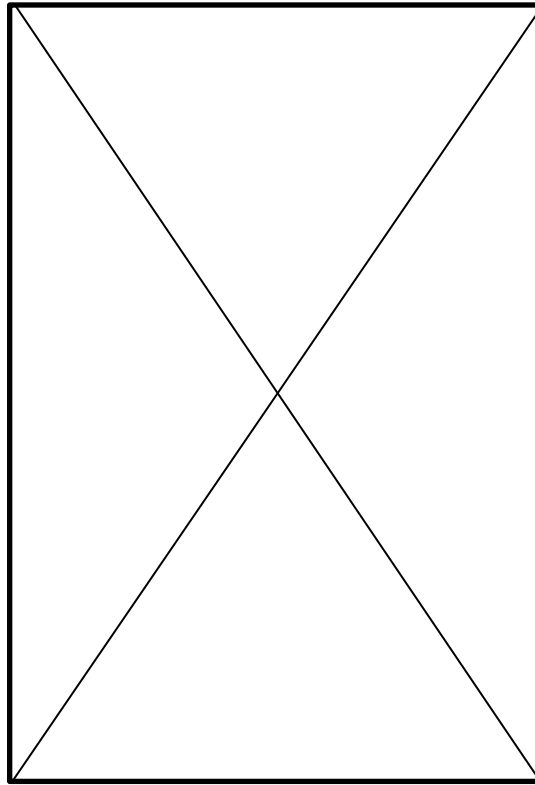
Figure 8. Read from right to left. Hajime's mother (middle panel) encourages him to attend the prestigious Shinokura cram school in vol. 9, ch.1, "Kubitsuri Satsujin Jiken."

company, get a good salary and become elite," (vol. 9, ch. 1, n.pag.) an idea that is premised on

an inherent belief that what worked in the past will work for today's youth. He is encouraged to

attend Shinokura Cram School, which "guarantees placement in the country's top colleges." The

light-hearted tone of this scene, however, is undercut when a student at Shinokura attempts to

commit suicide, to which the rest of the student body seems indifferent. This is because, as

Hajime learns, "everyone is used to it" (vol. 9, ch. 1, n.pag.). The bleak image of the school

setting, which Miyuki describes as "stale and terrible, almost like a prison," (vol. 9, ch. 1, n.pag.)

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that was promised to him, because his father will not get his annual bonus. To add to Hajime's dismay, his mother tells him that "at this rate they are unsure if they can pay back their loans," prompting Hajime to imagine a scenario in which Miyuki rides off in a fancy car with Akechi Kengo, who is Hajime's rival. When he regains himself from the nightmare, Hajime's mother encourages him to find employment as the solution to his problem. She presents him with a newspaper ad about a treasure hunt that will take place on a small island in the Hyūga Sea. The reward for finding the treasure is 2 million yen (approximately one-tenth of the value of the treasure), but still enough to "pay off the family debt and purchase Hajime's bike." Motivated by the prospect of winning the money, Hajime successfully passes the test and is invited to the island, where he becomes embroiled in a series of gruesome murders, which he must solve.

undercuts the grandeur of Shinokura presented at the beginning of the narrative. The irony of her statement comes to light when Hajime discovers that the cram school was, in fact, a prison built "fifty years ago by allied soldiers to imprison Japanese prisoners of war after the Second World War" (vol. 9, ch. 4, n.pag.). It was during that time that the POWs planned a mass suicide to "meet death with open arms than to remain a prisoner of the enemy" (vol. 9, ch. 4, n.pag.). As legend has it, moments before their deaths, and in an act of "nostalgic pathos" (Hutcheon, "Irony" n.p.), the soldiers began chanting an Edo lullaby (*komori uta*), so that their deaths appear to be "no different than going back to sleep on their mother's lap" (vol. 9, ch. 4, n.pag.). This historical incident is believed to be the source of a curse that is responsible for a series of locked-room murders committed at Shinokura by a mysterious figure known as "Hell's Lullaby" (*jikoku no komori uta*).

Through his use of logic and reasoning, Hajime debunks the curse, uncovers the true motives behind the murders, and ultimately exposes the weakness of an education system that has failed its students in more ways than one. The murderer is revealed to be the homeroom teacher, Asano Yōko, who discovers that her former lover and student at Shinokura, who was believed to have committed suicide, was in fact murdered by Naoki and his gang of bullies. Asano takes the law into her own hands, killing the school bullies while disguised as "Hell's Lullaby," named after the song that is played at the scene of the crime. Like the soldiers who escaped their dread through a kind of nostalgic reminiscing, the *komori uta* for Asano serves as a sad reminder of an unattainable past. A central theme of Kanari's work is the school as a locus of crime and corruption, with bullying, the pressure of state exams, and the failure of the school to protect students as central issues in the narrative. For example, although Shinokura is notorious for the high suicide rate among its students, the school turned a blind eye to this problem.

According to Akira, a student at Shinokura, seven students who succumbed to exam pressure had committed suicide within the past two years at Shinokura, earning it the title "the school of the hanging necks." Yet the violence committed against the student body perhaps "alert[s] us not so much to a problem with children but to the societal notions, national narratives, and identity structures child ideas are asked to support" (Arai, *The Strange Child* 6).

As Hajime states at the end of the story, "the cutting-edge competitive school life is not the way to go to live as a respected human. I don't have to force myself to do something that I don't want to just to pay my family's debt, so please attend the first hour in my place. I'm off to play games" (vol. 10, ch. 12, n.pag.). With characteristically tongue-in-cheek humor, Hajime addresses the burdens placed on the lives of young people during a time of recession and hardship. Subscribing to the older generation's way, as Kindaichi's mother suggests, is not a solution, since "the older generations are at a loss to understand this world of recessionary effects and the child that is its representational form" (Arai, *The Strange Child* 15).

"The School's Seven Mysteries Murder Case" ("Gakuen Nanafushigi Satsujin Jiken," 1993), which appears in volumes 4 and 5, provides a powerful example of the power of storytelling and the dangers of rewriting the past for personal gain. The story begins with a reference to the disappearance of Chihiro Aoyama that occurred a decade ago at Fudō High School, which is juxtaposed with a scene set in the present day that shows students preparing for the twenty-first annual high school festival. Behind the school's festive façade, however, rumors swarm about the menacing Afterschool Magician, who threatens to unleash seven maledictions upon the school if the demolition plan for the old school building is not stopped. In response, the mystery club of Fudo High, including Kindaichi, work together to investigate the seven mysteries and to uncover the identity of the so-called Afterschool Magician, but in their pursuit

of answers, two members of the club are killed for discovering the truth. Kindaichi's investigation leads him to the discovery that Dr. Jinbō, a mad scientist who tried to create the perfect soldier using black magic, and whose spirit is believed to exist in the physical form of the Afterschool Magician, used the school building as a research facility during the Second World War. This story, however, turns out to be a cover-up for a medical experiment gone wrong, invented by scientists who worked for Takahata Pharmaceuticals in the 1960s. The company, which was allegedly responsible for producing drugs that had severe side effects, tried in vain to restore its reputation by creating new drugs at the expense of six human guinea pigs who all died from medical complications. In order to prevent the company from falling into bankruptcy, the scientists agreed to conceal the corpses in what was then a research facility that was under construction. When the research facility was donated to Fudō High, Matoba, the school's caretaker and one of the former scientists of Takahata, spread rumors about the building to keep the students at bay, but when Aoyama Chihiro discovered that the six mysteries were a reference to the location of the six corpses in 1983, she became the seventh victim, and thus the seventh mystery of Fudō High was born. The tragedy of this story does not necessarily lie with the victims, but rather with Matoba, whom Hajime describes as "a pathetic man who committed sin after sin because he was haunted by his past" (vol. 5, ch.10, n. pag.). The image of Matoba begging Hajime to save him after being stabbed by Chihiro's father depicts him as a broken man. However, Matoba's inability to cope with the past and atone for his sins makes him a tragic character with whom readers are not meant to sympathize.

The memory of war is revived in several other cases that connect to schools in Kanari's manga series. The school represents a bridge that links the past to the present, the old to the new, and the national to the personal. In "The Graveyard Island Murder Case" ("Hakabajima Satsujin

Jiken," 1996), memories of the battlefield haunt Hajime and his group of friends who are trapped on a remote island in a game of survival. The story begins at school, where Hajime is invited by Miyuki and her friends to travel to an island in the south of Japan, where they plan to stay at their friend's inn. However, their plans are spoiled when upon their arrival at their destination, they find both the inn and the beach in an abandoned state. Thankfully, a local travel agent provides an ultimatum, proposing an all-inclusive trip to a campsite on a remote island for a cheap price. Hajime and his friends take the offer and are escorted to island where they are later told by Chie that it was "a war zone during the Pacific War where thousands of Japanese soldiers died and that there are rumours about a ghost that lingers on the island who brings on disasters to those who see it" (vol. 19, ch. 2, n.pag.). This piece of history becomes the backdrop for the series of murders that occur on the island, which is used to cover up Hiayama Tatsuki and Morishita Remi's true motives for their crimes. They carefully plotted their revenge against the Tokyo University students who were responsible for, but got away with, burning down their village two years prior.

Remnants of the war are scattered throughout the island, from tanks covered in moss, to an abandoned airport, and to skeletal remains of soldiers. To his surprise, Hajime finds that this former battleground is being used as a site for a survival game organized by Iwano Wataru and his friends from Tokyo University who are preparing to join the National Survival Game. What begins as what Shōhei calls a playful "war game" turns violent as members of the survival game club are killed one after another, blurring the violence of the past and present through images of war and combat. The island becomes a microcosm of society in which personal and individual survival is, ironically, conflated to the failure of the national project. The reality of the past is twisted to suit the needs of the present in what results in a series of senseless murders committed

in the name of revenge. However, in his last words, the murderer Tatsuyuki himself expresses the senselessness of revenge: "Revenge is not satisfying. If someone ever has that idea, I just want to tell them this, just put an end to it already. You ought to care about your own life more, l-live on" (vol. 19, ch. 10, n.pag.).

Kanari and Amagi often depict the middle-class elite in an unfavourable light. Throughout the manga series, the respectable characters are represented as corrupt and detached from humanity, and are portrayed as victims of their own folly. In both "Head Hanging School Murder Case" ("Kubitsuri Gakuen Satsujin Jiken) and "The Graveyard Island Murder Case" ("Hakabajima Satsujin Jiken"), those who are partially to blame for the crimes committed usually occupy positions of prestige and therefore power. The middle-class elites such as the Shinokura cram school students and the Tokyo University students, who by their academic pedigree are esteemed as model citizens, are in fact regarded as problems and not solutions to society's concerns. In "Kubitsuri Gakuen Satsujin Jiken," the bullies seem more concerned about their own future, but show no signs of remorse for killing Mitsuru, blaming him for his own death and calling him "a dog who died a dog's death" (vol. 10, ch. 12, n.pag.). The image of the *kyōiku mama*, characterized by Nobuyuki's mother who even sharpens her son's pencils for him, ridicules the investment that mothers put into supporting their children's education. [75] While Nobuyuki studies at a prestigious cram school, he lacks the basic education of what it means to be human. Similarly, in "Hakabajima Satsujin Jiken," Wataru and his friends worry about their own reputation while completely discarding their actions that led to the destruction of a village. It is also hinted at that this was not their first accident. These young elites and potential leaders of the nation are represented as nothing but cowards who seem to have lost their humanity in the

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[75] As mentioned above, *kyōiku mama* refer to mothers who devote tremendous effort and time to make sure that their children succeed in attending a prestigious high school or university.

pursuit of living up to the middle-class dream. The parallel drawn between the past and present through the memory of war debunks ideas of progress. Like the soldiers who fought in a senseless war, modern-day youth also compete in a world in which there are never any winners, but only losers.

That the present is no better than the past underlies the manga's cynicism, but the message that Hajime delivers in the manga series is clear: "a modern individual may have a connection to the past but may choose to live free from the past" (Nakagawa 41). Nowhere is this more self-evident than in the conclusions of each story in the series. According to Nakagawa, in Yokomizo's novels, Kindaichi's "explanation of the motives is more significant than the solving of the puzzles themselves" ("Inheriting the Nation" 98). In *Gokumon Island* (*Gokumon-tō*), for example, Nakagawa argues that "[h]is demystifying of the murders gives the reader a sense of catharsis—freedom from the oppressive atmosphere of the countryside and to live as an individual unbound by customs and families" (98). Hajime's trademark motto "jicchan no nani kakete" (in my granddad's name) pays homage to his grandfather who was celebrated for his logic and reason, but he himself draws on the past to make sense of the present, using ratiocinative methods to solve modern crimes. As the moral epicenter of the story, Hajime disapproves of murder, but the psychological depth of the motive that sheds light on the criminal's tragic past invokes readers' sympathy, and on some occasions, readers are asked to identify with the murderer whom Hajime tries desperately to save.

Governed by a kind of hardboiled code of conduct, Hajime "remains unfulfilled until he has taken a personal moral stance toward the criminal" (Cawelti, *Adventure, Mystery and Romance* 143). For Hajime, detective work does not end with the solving of a crime, and he is often shown visiting the criminals in prison. In "*Kubitsuri Gakuen Satsujin Jiken*," for example,

Hajime is called upon by Inspector Kenmochi to visit his former cram school teacher Asano in prison, where he learns she is under suicide surveillance. It is there that he solves the final mystery involving Mitsuru's painting of a woman whose hair is rumored to show signs of growth. In a shocking twist of events, as he scrapes away at the surface of the canvas, Hajime reveals a nude portrait of Asano, explaining that the watercolor paint that Mitsuru used to cover the original image had started to fade, creating the illusion of the woman's hair growing in the painting. The painting becomes symbolic of Asano's salvation as she is encouraged "for her to continue to live" (vol. 10, ch. 12, n. pag) in memory of Mitsuru. Hajime's visit ends with Asano tearfully thanking him, which signals her change of heart. Even though murder is never a justifiable means to an end, what is equally unforgivable in Hajime's eyes is failing to confront one's past, as is the case with Matoba. In "Hakabajima Satsujin Jiken," Hajime visits Rumi in prison, where she confesses her involvement in plotting the murders of the Tokyo University students. Rumi also reveals to Hajime that she is pregnant with Tatsuyuki's child and for this sole reason has decided to reveal the "whole truth" (vol. 20, ch. 11, n.pag.). She states, "But now things are different. I will tell this child everything to atone for my sins. I will raise this baby born from our union (Tatsuyuki's) . . . I hope I can live the right way . . . as a mother" (vol. 20, ch. 11, n.pag.). In this confession scene, a white glow surrounds Rumi, symbolizing her change of heart as she prepares to take on her new role as a mother-to-be. Though the idea of motherhood as a woman's saving grace can be read as potentially problematic, Rumi chooses to move forward in life, however uncertain it may be. Her choice to take responsibility for her past sparks a glimmer of hope in Hajime's eyes, in both a literal and figurative sense. Unlike typical noir fiction or hardboiled detective stories that are defined by a degree of fatalism, nihilism, and a sense of inevitability both "Kubitsuri Satsujin Jiken" and "Hakabajima Satsujin Jiken" give

readers a sense of hope at the end of the narrative. Moreover, in other stories such as in "Hidden Isle Treasure Murder Case" ("Hihōtō Satsujin Jiken," 1994), for example, Hajime himself remarks:

> Even if you hit rock bottom and even if your life is enveloped in utter darkness, you have the chance to make it right…you're in control of your own life. Even if you find yourself struggling in the darkness, so as long as you never give up, there's no doubt that you'll find the light. (vol 5. ch. 10, n. pag.)

Here, Hajime drives home the importance of free will, which defines his own moral code as a detective. His firm belief that the road to salvation lies within the individual seems to reinforce values central to the discourse of neoliberal patriotism. At the same time, the type of schooling that Hajime emphasizes is one that requires the individual to pave a path that is unbound by history. The idea of breaking away from the past is reinforced throughout the manga series. In many of the cases that Hajime solves, the crimes committed are initially believed to have been caused by a mysterious phantom, angry spirits, or a curse. Hajime's discovery of the truth behind the crimes is an implicit critique of the frivolity of urban legends and folklore with their ties to traditional Japanese ways of understanding the world, and thus of the impossibility of understanding the present in relation to an irrational past. According to critics such as Kawana, "Yokomizo is neither irresponsibly frivolous nor stiflingly didactic in his call for a reevaluation of the past; rather, he veils it as escapist entertainment and catches his readers off guard" (142). Kanari's and Amagi's manga is a harsh reminder of how much society has progressed since Yokomizo's time.

Hajime is a rebel who rejects social norms that define success. In the first volume of the series, he appears as a clumsy and incompetent individual who lacks motivation to do well in

school, but he emerges as the underdog hero whose life cannot be defined by conventional means. Although Hajime stands out in the crowd for all the wrong reasons, he earns the respect of some of his teachers and detectives. Asano, for example, validates the kind of knowledge that Hajime possesses, telling him that he is the "one student who can think freely without being agitated and influenced by their surroundings" (vol. 10, ch. 12, n. pag.). Kindaichi's way of understanding the world transcends conventional ways of knowing, and he can be seen as an exceptional student in this regard. In the fictional world that Kanari depicts, *ochikobore*, a term Arai defines as "those who fell through the cracks" (62), like Hajime are given a second chance to prove their worth as suggested in his name, which means "to begin" (something new). In fact, it is precisely because he is an *ochikobore* that he succeeds as a detective. Becoming a respectable member of society by enrolling in the country's top universities and companies is not part of Hajime's agenda. Rather, he addresses the limitations of such single- minded pursuits. Although Hajime alone cannot change the structures of his world, he paves an alternative route from which he can view those structures at a critical distance, reminding us that the realities of the contemporary world must be combatted through the use of logic and reason, instead of a nostalgic yearning for the past.

Chapter 4

The Boy Detectives of the Lost Decade Part II: The Ideal Boy Detective

Detectives themselves are rather "strange." For example, Sherlock Holmes is terrible at alphabetizing things, keeps tobacco in a Persian slipper, and keeps his bills affixed to his mantle with a knife. Watson even remarks that there is something inhuman about Holmes, describing him as an "automaton" and "calculating machine" in the *Sign of Four*. Yokomizo's detective, Kōsuke Kindaichi, has a terrible habit of scratching his head, and tends to stutter when he becomes excited. Yet, these detectives' quirks are often overlooked due to their roles as heroic figures who possess traits that defy the ordinary and mundane. Detectives often stand at the periphery of society and transcend the law in some way. For both Hajime and Konan, their strangeness is ultimately defined by their roles as extraordinary beings who are gifted with reason to counter irrational fears. This quality is a staple in other *shōnen tantei* narratives, but this very power becomes a threat if used with malicious intent as seen in the case with Light. In 1997, several years after the publication of the *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* and *Konan* manga, a series of child murders were committed in Kobe by a fourteen-year-old junior high student, in what became known as the *Shōnen A* Incident. The motive of the crime, as stated in a letter written by *Shōnen A* himself, revealed "the killing as a game and revealed his 'love' to kill" (Arai 50). Furthermore, as Arai notes, "in a follow-up letter to the local newspaper, he wrote of the revenge he planned on the school system for making him into a 'transparent existence' (*tômeina sonzai*)" (50). In addition to the actual horror of the crime committed, what was even more horrifying was that *Shōnen A* came from an ordinary middle-class family like many other boys in his neighbourhood. Consequently, this incident solidified cultural fears of the strange child in the late 1990s, rebranding the child as a site of fascinating horror.

At the same time, discourses of the child also carry with them nuances of Japan's supposed relationship with the West as it was once understood in a child/parent or little brother/older brother paradigm. General Douglas McArthur's patronizing description of the Japanese as "a boy of twelve" in 1951, was one example of the Western perception of Japan at the time as "childlike," "immature," and as mere "juniors" in contrast to the grownup America (Gravett 8). It may not be surprising to have seen the Japanese adopt such self-deprecating ideas of themselves in relation to the West as a result of the socioeconomic crisis of the 1990s. As products of the Lost Decade, both Hajime and Konan can be seen as haunted by the recession and its effects, particularly on young people, who embodied cultural fears of an unstable present and a questionable future. These young detectives can be seen as tasked with the responsibility to restore the status quo. Through their detective characters, Kanari and Aoyama draw on the past to make sense of the present, but to different ends. Whereas the former is critical of how the past haunts the present, suggesting the limitations of Japan's traditional ways, the latter validates a nostalgic past that bolsters hope for a new national imaginary through the construction of an ideal *shōnen*. This chapter specifically focuses on Aoyama's *Meitantei Konan* and revisits my published work on the series by fleshing out my analysis in relation to the text's broader socioeconomic and political contexts of 1990s Japan to show how Aoyama's construction of the ideal *shōnen* might work to counter assumptions about youth as mere delinquents.[76] My reading of *Meitantei Konan* identifies its differences from *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* by exploring the revival of the Tezuka-esque tradition of the boy detective, and by pointing out how underlying themes of friendship, community, and teamwork in Aoyama's manga series work to reify an

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[76] See Okabe, Tsugumi. "From Sherlock Holmes to 'Heisei' Holmes: Counter Orientalism and Postmodern Parody in Gosho Aoyama's *Detective Conan* Manga Series." *International Journal of Comic Art*, vol. 15, no. 1, 2013, pp. 230-50.

image of idealized boyhood. I also re-contextualize my finding within the wider theoretical frameworks of Occidentalism to better situate a reading of how *Meitantei Konan* negotiates questions of national identity through the role of the hybrid detective, Konan.

Unlike Kanari's warning to the readers against a nostalgic past, the past that haunts Aoyama's manga is that of the literal and metaphorical transformation of Japan regressing into its pre-modern state of a "child." I have argued in an earlier work on *Meitantei Konan* that Kudō Shin'ichi's valorization of Sherlock Holmes in Volume 1 of the manga is implicated with the idea of forgetting his cultural roots manifest in the idea of *deru kugi wa utareru* (see Okabe). For this reason, Shin'ichi undergoes a punishment of sorts by being regressed to the state of the child Konan in order to re-learn what it means to be a "great" detective. However, when read within the context of the Lost Decade, Shin'ichi's transformation might signal Japan's de-evolution from a state of financial prosperity and growth, during the bubble economy of the 1980s, to its decline by the 1990s. Shin'ichi's state as a child can be read as a metaphor for how the Japanese saw themselves in relation to the West in terms of their stance within the global economy. In other words, caught in between the old and new, the hybrid detective also confronted "Japan's temporal position as a child--measured in civilizational and social evolutionary terms--against the 'adult,' civilized, full-in-time, West" (21). However, Aoyama's nostalgic view of Sherlock Holmes and the text's imperialist connotations is an equally critical one. For example, Shin'ichi's transformation into Konan articulates hope for a new national imaginary by favouring the productivity of teamwork over the egotistical individuality that Holmes represents. At the start of the series, Shin'ichi imitates Holmes's egotistical inclinations, but over the course of the series, he functions as a bridge that connects a global network of crime stoppers. Therefore, unlike Kanari, Aoyama envisions a way out of economic stagnation by encouraging youth to

become global citizens. However, as with most works that invoke an imperial past, Aoyama's

vision is limited by its purposeful overlooking of Japan's colonial history in his strategic move to

realign Shin'ichi/Konan to Doyle's and Rampo's detective figures, which I explore in detail

through an Occidentalist reading of the series in the last section of this chapter.

Imitating the Peculiar Sherlock Holmes

The first installment of the series, "Heisei Hōmuzu" (vol. 1, files 1-3, 1994) begins *in medias res*

with Kudō Shin'ichi, who later turns into Edogawa Konan, solving a case of murder. The

preface, featuring a superimposed image of Shin'ichi, serves to reinforce his role as the

focalizing agent of the narrative. The title invokes the name Holmes, but the word *Heisei*

indicates a cultural appropriation of the Western detective. The first three pages demonstrate the

sixteen-year old Shin'ichi's super-rational skills and athletic ability in order to establish his role

as the 'new' Holmes of the Heisei era.

This idea is reinforced in the scene when Shin'ichi prevents a criminal from running

away as he kicks a globe, rather skillfully, into the criminal's head. In the top panel, the image of

the globe is positioned off to the right, making Japan visible as the centre of the of the world,

which is suggestive of Shin'ichi's seemingly promising role and emergence on a global stage as

the next Holmes, as his name *Shin* (new) *ichi* (one) indicates. The following panels feature

Inspector Megure, who pats Shin'ichi on the back for successfully solving the case and says,

"Your help is always appreciated" (9), to which Shin'ichi replies "[i]f there's ever a difficult

case, please consult me, the famous detective, Kudō Shin'ichi!!" (9). The dialogue between

Inspector Megure and Shin'ichi, although brief, suggests the incompetence of the Japanese

police force as the adverb "always" indicates Megure's constant reliance on Shin'ichi to solve

crimes. Clearly, he is something of a boy wonder, and Shin'ichi goes on to demonstrate egotistical inclinations that are reminiscent of those of Holmes himself by referring to himself as "the famous detective." The exclamation marks emphasize Shin'ichi's conceit and pride, as he speaks with a degree of boastful exaggeration that renders him closer to a Sherlockian caricature.

Aoyama's emphasis on the figure of the Victorian consulting detective, Holmes, seems at first to reinforce the idea of the superiority of the Western detective, suggesting the inferiority of the Japanese by comparison. This is seen particularly in "Heisei Hōmuzu," during Shin'ichi's walk home from school when he coincidentally runs into his childhood friend Ran, who, unlike Shin'ichi, has not the slightest interest in becoming a detective, or in detective fiction in general. She inquires as to why he quit the high school soccer team and queries his interest in detective fiction. Shin'ichi replies:

> I only played soccer because it is important for detectives to stay physically
> fit…you know Holmes even did fencing. Everyone knows about Holmes!! He's
> amazing!! Always cool and rational, brimming with intellect and sophistication!!
> His skills of observation and deduction are world class!! On top of all this, he's a
> professional violinist!! Writer, Conan Doyle created Sherlock Holmes, the
> world's best detective!! (13-14)

Shin'ichi's idolization of Holmes is made blatant as he places Holmes on a pedestal, and celebrates his genius as if he were god-like. Shin'ichi gives a very practical explanation for (once) having played soccer by associating himself with Holmes who practiced fencing. Using superlatives such as "world class" (*tenkaippin*) "world's best" (*sekai saikō*) Shin'ichi emphasizes Holmes' superiority in order to justify following in his footsteps. While Shin'ichi professes his admiration for Holmes, images of the Victorian detective are shown in the background. A

shadow, however, is cast on the image of Holmes, erasing his racial specificity, making it easier for Shin'ichi to be seen as being in the image of Holmes (see Figure 9). Aoyama, himself, has mentioned in an interview that his favorite character from Doyle's stories is none other than Holmes.[77] Aoyama is also a self-proclaimed soccer fanatic and he cheers on his local team, Gaināre Tottori. If Aoyama writes aspects of himself in the representation of Shin'ichi, then perhaps Shin'ichi's devolution to Konan also signals how Aoyama sees himself in relation to the world's most famous writer of detective fiction, Conan Doyle. At the same time, Edogawa Konan signifies Aoyama's ways of both aligning himself with and building on the works of Doyle and Rampo to create a new kind of detective fiction in manga.

A total of three pages in this foundational episode of the series is dedicated to recounting Holmes' "greatness," which epitomizes the valorization of Holmes at the start of the series. Shin'ichi's performance of Sherlock Holmes appears to validate the role of the Western detective and serves to undermine the prowess of Japanese detectives such as Inspector Megure, whose skills in detection are outmatched when compared to Shin'ichi's. Significantly, though, Shin'ichi's desire to be like Holmes is made clearer when he states, "I don't want to write detective fiction… I want to be one!! The Heisei Sherlock Holmes!!" (14-15). Aoyama thus aligns Shin'ichi at the beginning of his manga series with the Western canon of detective fiction by remodelling his character after Holmes; in doing so, he apparently feeds into the discourse of Euro-narcissism that Shohat and Stam characterize as "the West think[ing of] itself in terms of its noblest achievements—science, progress, humanism—but of the non-West in terms of its deficiencies, real or imagined" (3).

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[77] This reference occurs in the special-edition manga *Meitantei Konan Super Digest Book*. See pages 152-55 for the interview.

Even later in the narrative, when Shin'ichi has already become Konan, Professor Agase, a famous inventor and scientist and a trusted family friend and mentor to Shin'ichi who knows Konan's real identity, continues to invoke Holmes' words to restrain him from making hasty decisions. In Volume 2, file 6, Professor Agase reminds Konan to "be rational, cool-headed and with utmost precaution. These are the words of your favorite Holmes, are they not?" (96). Here, Professor Agase acts as Konan's guide by suggesting that he impersonate Holmes as it will lead him to find the man who Konan believes is responsible for murder. At other moments in the series, Konan imitates Sherlock Holmes' mannerisms, such as curling up in a chair in *The Phantom of Baker Street* in a manner reminiscent of how Holmes once sat in "The Red Headed
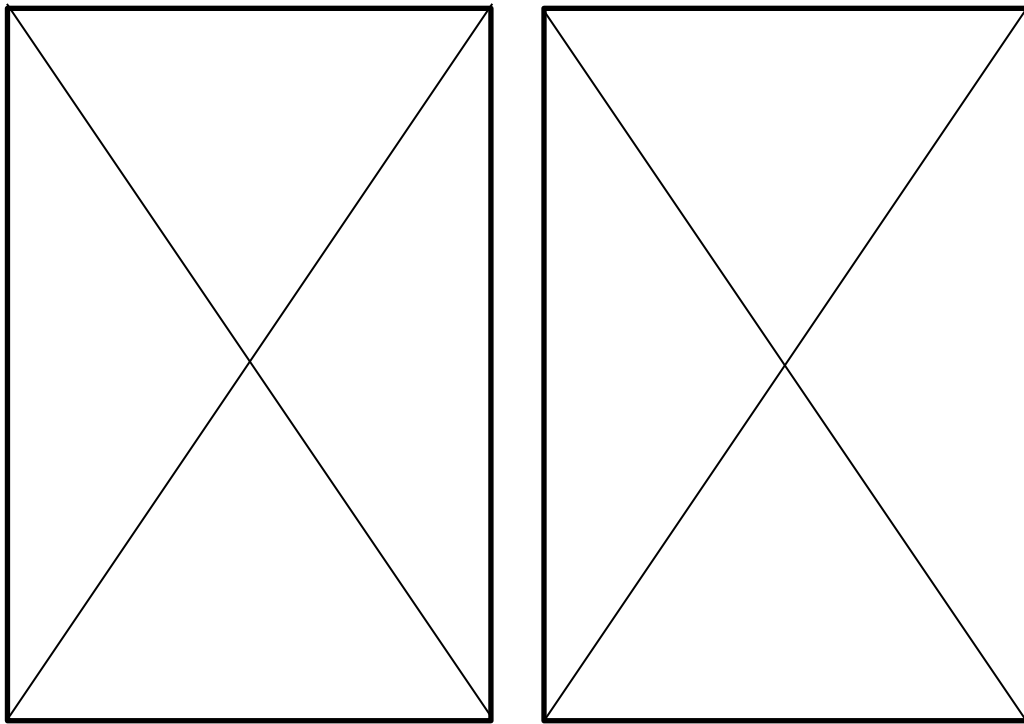

Figure 9. Read from right to left. Shin'ichi reveals his admiration of Holmes, and his dream to one day become Heisei Holmes in vol. 1, "Heisei Hōmuzu."

League."[78] Such examples demonstrate how Konan continues to embody Sherlockian models in his role as a detective.

Throughout the early episodes of Volume 1, Shin'ichi's role as a Japanese detective is diminished by his own self-deprecating ideas that he must be like Holmes in order to attain the status as the "world's best" detective. While Shin'ichi, too, possesses keen observation skills that are equal to those of Holmes, he is seen in the early stages of *Meitantei Konan* as merely performing a Sherlockian style of detection. One prominent example of such episode occurs while on a date with Ran at an amusement park, Shin'ichi tells her a story about Holmes's first encounter with Watson and dramatizes the scene by deducing the hobby of a complete stranger.

Shin'ichi identifies the woman as a gymnast and proudly explains, "when I saw that lady's skirt fly up from the wind, I saw it! The bruise on her thigh that is unique to gymnasts who use the parallel bars" (17). Here, his method of deduction is parallel to how Holmes deduced Watson's involvement in the Afghan War from a simple handshake in *A Study in Scarlet*. There are political implications to such parallels to Holmes in Aoyama's manga series: Shin'ichi's imitation of Holmes would seem to point to Western "cultural supremacy" and its affiliation with institutionalized forms of power. In other words, having Shin'ichi position himself as Holmes' pupil suggests an apparent allegiance to a hierarchy that reflects Japan's subordinate relation to the West during its post-war recovery period and its period of economic recession.

Even the settings of these two discourses are made parallel. Although Aoyama's and Doyle's stories take place in different cultural settings, Aoyama reimagines the city of London

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[78] This is the English title of the Japanese animated film *Meitantei Konan Beika Sutorī to no Bōrei* (2002). The film, in brief, stars Konan and the boys' detective club who go on an adventure to the virtual world where they must uncover the true identity of the dangerous, Jack the Ripper murderer.

by naming the district where Konan resides as Baker district (*Beika-chō*), which is named after Baker Street where Holmes resides, and also by adding a Hyde Park to the metropolitan city of Tokyo. In doing so, Aoyama looks back to the prosperous era of the Victorians, bringing it into a Japanese context to suggest how Japan can escape from the toils of the Lost Decade by positioning itself as an imperial nation equal to that of the West. This is not to argue that the manga series promotes a nationalist agenda, but that the theme of identity is central to the narrative as evidenced by Konan's quest to regain his identity and new knowledge about himself. Therefore, the narrative explores the intersection of Self/Other, which defines the detective's role within his community, a point to which I will later return.

From Zero to Hero: Konan as *Kawatteru Shōnen* (Strange Child)

In a sense, Aoyama is both participating in the western tradition typified by Holmes and reappropriating Britain's iconic detective for his own purposes. The latter becomes evident when Shin'ichi is catapulted back into childhood and in the process, is reborn as Konan. We begin to see a more complex relationship to Holmes in *Meitantei Konan*. Through an appropriation of Sherlock Holmes in the characterization of Konan, the story's protagonist and a Holmes reincarnated, Aoyama demonstrates the pervasiveness of the role of the Western detective and its influence on the Japanese popular imagination, challenging the individualistic approach to solving crimes as exemplified by Holmes by demonstrating the productive outcome of collective activity and teamwork and the dangers of working alone.[79] For example, unlike Sherlock Holmes, who as the sole detective is almost always credited with solving the cases himself, the fame and glory of Konan's crime solving are assigned to detective Mōri Kogorō, a rather clumsy

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[79] See Okabe, "From Sherlock Holmes to "*Heisei*" Holmes: Counter Orientalism and Post Modern Parody in Aoyama Gōshō's *Detective Conan* Manga Series."

and incompetent private senior detective, in order to deflect recognition to a senior member of an implied team. Aoyama challenges, and to some extent parodies, the authoritative role of the Victorian detective by embedding a less individualistic means of crime solving as often exemplified by Holmes.

Aoyama's representation of Mōri is quite different from the competent and reliable detective Rampo portrays in Akechi Kogorō, whose "fame in his native Japan rivals that of Sherlock Holmes in the English-speaking world" (Varteresian xii). This distortion, or alteration can be seen as Aoyama's way of breaking away from canonical material as he transfers qualities of the "great detective" to his boy sleuth Konan, asking us to reconsider questions of identity from the perspective of youth instead of adults. In Aoyama's manga, Mōri functions as Konan's foil. He is loud and boisterous and at times overconfident. Numerous references are made throughout the manga to his love of *sake*, beautiful women, and mah-jong. Mōri embodies many of the characteristics of a lousy adult, and perhaps this is Aoyama's way of pointing a finger at the generation of conspicuous spenders who led Japan through its economic bubble and inevitable recession. But the fact that Konan must work undercover alongside Akechi suggests that both older and younger generations must work together for change to happen. Such a vision is in line with the texts' broader thematic concerns of the value of teamwork.

Almost all the cases solved by Konan throughout the series are credited to Mōri, with the exception of "Kogorō's Class Reunion" ("Kogoro no Dōsōkai Satsujin Jiken," vol. 9, files 4-6, 1996) and a few others.[80] Konan's partnership with Mōri especially, marks a significant turning point in Konan's character as he learns to modulate his identity, and learns to develop a new model of agency that is less of an embodiment of Holmes. In this story, Konan's personal code

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[80] To date, these include stories in Volumes 37, 45, 51, 62, 68, 70 and 78. In these cases, Konan acts as Mōri's aid by giving him hints that lead Mōri to solve the crime on his own.

of *giri* is demonstrated in his effort to avoid identifying the criminal before Mōri, so that Mōri

can have the benefit of the doubt of having solved the murder of his high school companion.[81]

Although the reader can readily identify Konan as the 'real' mastermind, his thoughtful act

makes him a hero. This thematic inversion in which Mōri is glorified for the work that Konan did

solving the crime is unlike what occurs in Conan Doyle's stories, in which Holmes alone

discovers and discloses the identity of the criminal, and thus restores social and moral order.

Despite his contribution being overlooked, Konan helps to establish Mōri's reputation as Japan's

most celebrated private detective (indeed, he later becomes famously known as *Nemuri no*

Kogorō or "sleeping Kogorō") because he solves crimes whilst "asleep," which becomes his

trademark. Konan's mode of detection also works to bring together a fragmented community. He

gradually rekindles Mōri's relationship with his estranged wife in the "Scuba Diving Murder

Case" ("Sukyūba Daibingu Satsujin Jiken," vol. 17, files 3-5, 1998), and brings together a

community through his involvement with the metropolitan Tokyo police department in the

memorable case of the "March in Malice" ("Akui no Naka no Parēdo," vol. 36, files 5-11 to vol.

37, file 2, 2002). His work also involves other regional police forces, the FBI, and later on, the

CIA and Japanese Intelligence agencies such as the Security Bureau of the National Police

Agency (NPA SB). Through his collaborative efforts, Konan demonstrates the productivity of

partnership and teamwork, by which he upholds an image of the idealized *shōnen*.

Such emphasis on teamwork is not unique to the *Meitantei Konan* series, but is apparent

in other *shōnen tantei* narratives. However, "the most powerful shift that is evident in the

Meitantei Konan series relates to the paramount characteristic of 'great' detectives in the

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[81] Previously, I described Konan's actions towards his friends and Detective Mori as a sign of *enryo*, which can be translated to reserve or diffidence. However, Doi's idea of *giri* works better to situate how themes of dependence and partnership are highlighted in his relationship with Mori and others. According to Takeo Doi, "whereas *enryo* is an inverted form of *amae*," (39) "*giri* binds human beings in a dependent relationship" (35).

Western tradition: their hyper individualism" (Okabe 241). Furthermore, in the North American

tradition, Cornelius has pointed out that "sociality is an important construct to both boys' and

girls' series books" (145). In his critical analysis of the Christopher Cool Series, Cornelius states:

> the fact that the sleuth has friends—and, indeed, is often the leader amongst his or
>
> her friends, the proverbial most popular kid in school—reassures the reader not
>
> only of his or her relative normativity, but in fact argues that their sleuthing
>
> actions render them ultranormative, creating a model for both other characters in
>
> the tale and readers. (145)

One such way in which *Meitantei Konan* underscores the theme of friendship and teamwork is

through the representation of the Boys Detectives' Club, which is inspired by Rampo's *shōnen*

tantei series. In Aoyama's manga, members of the team refer to themselves as the Detective

Boys (DBs). Currently, the DBs consist of the original trio (Ayumi, Genta, and Mitsuhiko) who

made their debut in Volume 4, with Konan as their leader, Haibara (who underwent a similar

transformation to Konan to escape from the Black Organization), and two adults: Professor

Agase, who invents gadgets for the group, and their homeroom teacher Kobayashi Sumiko, a

mystery novel enthusiast who proclaims herself the manager of the DBs.[82] Values of teamwork,

specifically within a Japanese context, are demonstrated in the idea of group (*han*), team

(*nakama*) or team spirit (*nakamaishiki*), as Konan's relationship with his friends and community

at large further illustrate. Together the DBs solve crimes ranging from missing cats to cases of

gruesome murder, but many of the cases that they undertake are led and supervised by Konan

himself. Throughout the series, however, Ayumi, Genta, and Mitsuhiko demonstrate their

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[82] Her name is a reference to Kobayashi in Rampo's *shōnen tantei* series.

potential as skilled investigators in several cases.[83] Although Konan assumes the role of leader within the group because he is often the first to find clues and solve difficult riddles that ultimately help solve mysteries, his choices and needs demonstrate a crucial development within his character when we think of his "evolution" from the egocentric Shin'ichi whom he used to be. Through his role as a child detective, Konan can be seen as rediscovering the value of patience and Japanese social values.

As an example of this style of teamwork, the story "An Answer and Another Answer" ("Kotae to Mō Hitotsu no Kotae," vol. 4, file 9) follows the adventures of Konan and the DBs as they decipher a coded treasure map and scavenge the streets of Tokyo to find a mountain of gold. Throughout their expedition, however, Konan notices that they are being followed by a trio of Italian mobsters who are also looking for the gold. Seeing the dangers involved in pursuing their treasure hunt, Konan pretends to go home and calls it a day, but when the DBs discover that Konan has in fact lied, they give him the look of disapproval and call him a "cheater," (153) labelling him as "unfair" (153). Here, Konan has violated the unwritten code of what it means to be a member of a *nakama* or a group, and he is reminded of the importance of teamwork and continues the search with the help of the DBs. Indeed, it is through their collaborative effort that Konan and his friends find the treasure, capture the Italian mobsters, and gain the respect of Inspector Megure. The moral of the story is that teamwork brings endless rewards. At the end of this story, in response to Genta and Mitsuhiko boasting of their accomplishment, Ayumi interrupts the boys, reminding them that "we were only able to decipher the codes, and defeat the thieves, all thanks to Konan!! He was so cool!!" (174). Konan's sense of honour and his desire to protect the integrity of the group, and he is rewarded with a kiss on the cheek from Ayumi. In

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[83] Files 251-253, "Dangerous Cave Case"; files 548-549, "Kobayashi-sensei's Mystery"; files 712-715, "Kaitō Kid and the Kirin's Horn"; files 753-755: "Two-Five-Two"; and files 759-76: "Wolf-Crier" to name a few examples.

fact, the dangers of working alone are underscored throughout several other installments in which Konan encounters multiple perilous situations: he is pinned against the wall and almost stabbed to death in "Mansion of Horror" ("Kyōfu no Yakata," vol. 2, files 8-10, 1994); he is nearly strangled to death in "Pictures Speak the Truth" ("Shashin wa Kataru," vol. 2, file 3, 1994); and attacked with a golf club in "The Mystery of the Moving Dead Body" ("Ugoku Shitai no Nazo," vol. 6. File 8, 1995). Konan's near-death experiences undermine the idea of solo detectives as heroes as Konan is punished in many different ways for pursuing criminals alone. Thanks to his involvement with his friends, he learns to be less pompous and less egocentric, and more modest and sociable, and rediscovers what it means to be a "good" Japanese citizen.

The concept of inclusivity is further highlighted in Volume 53, file 5, "The Fiend with Two-hundred Faces" ("Kaijin Nihyaku Mensō"). The story's title, which is an allusion to Rampo's *Kaijin Nijū-mensō*, is the name given to the phantom who has abducted the homeroom teacher Ms. Kobayashi. It is up to the students in class 1-B to solve a series of riddles in order to find her. The students work together to solve a series of riddles that will lead them to the whereabouts of their homeroom teacher. The scheme, however, is initiated and designed by Kobayashi or two students in particular: Takuma Sakamoto, a boy who was absent from school for a prolonged period due to an injury, and Higashio Maria, a new transfer student. The riddle, which integrates the names of the two students, was Kobayashi's way of acknowledging their existence by having the entire class work together with them to solve a mystery, which ultimately results in both Maria and Takuma making new friends, something that real-life children such as *Shōnen A* did not seem to have.

The theme of friendship helps to counterbalance Konan's strangeness. Another defining quality of boy sleuths is that they occupy a liminal space. According to Cornelius:

the boy sleuth must still balance boyhood and manhood, pleasing parents and embracing patriarchy, scheduling sleuthing/spying activities and first dates, balancing government spy work with harmless soda shop romances. Ultimately, the boy sleuth is neither man or boy, and yet, he must enact both roles on varying occasions, and thus be able to successfully navigate both temporal subjectivities while truly never belonging to either one. (14)

Konan is not only able to transform into a child, but he is able to temporarily revert to his near-adult state by consuming Chinese wine (*Paikaru*). The peculiarity of Konan's identity and his position at the intersections of West and East, child and adult, outsider and insider add to his uncanniness. While Hajime is described as possessing something "special," hinting at his connection to his belated grandfather Kindaichi Kōsuke, Konan is described as *henna ko* (a strange child) or *fushigi na ko* (a mysterious child) by adults throughout the series, invoking the discourse relating to the problems of 1990s Japanese youth. Konan's strangeness stems from the fact that he finds clues that the (adult) detectives overlook, which are vital to the solving of a crime. In Volume 2 File 3, for example, Konan aids Mōri in cracking a suspect's alibi. In this particular scene, Mōri acknowledges that "whenever I've been stuck, he [Konan] gives some kind of hint. He's not a normal kid. Who are you? What are you?" Furthermore, Konan's role as a detective, unlike Kindaichi's, is undermined by adults because of his status a child. In the denouement of Volume 2 File 3, Konan boldly confronts the murderer, Abe Yutaka, alone; however, because he is a child, Konan is not taken seriously, and is condescendingly described as an "Amazing little boy" (47) with "Superb sleuthing" (47) skills. In addition, Abe Yutaka willingly confesses his crime to Konan because, as Abe points out, "no one will believe the words of a child" (47). However, the irony of these statements is revealed when Konan single-

handedly apprehends the criminal, with the help of his gadgets. Abe's last words, "I was beaten by a kid" (52), speak to his disbelief that a child could outsmart an adult. The last three panels of the volume emphasize Konan's role as an underdog hero, a child from whom we can expect the unexpected for all the right reasons (see Figure 10).

Certainly, a child who investigates a homicide, or one who personally works alongside detectives from the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Force, is unheard of. However, Konan, who is not quite a child, is able to maneuver across various boundaries because he occupies a liminal space. Strangeness, thus, becomes a site of empowerment rather than one that perpetuates fear. Belonging to a team or group "works to contain and curtail adolescent male behavior; by remaining part of the group, the text can ensure that no one member goes too far astray"
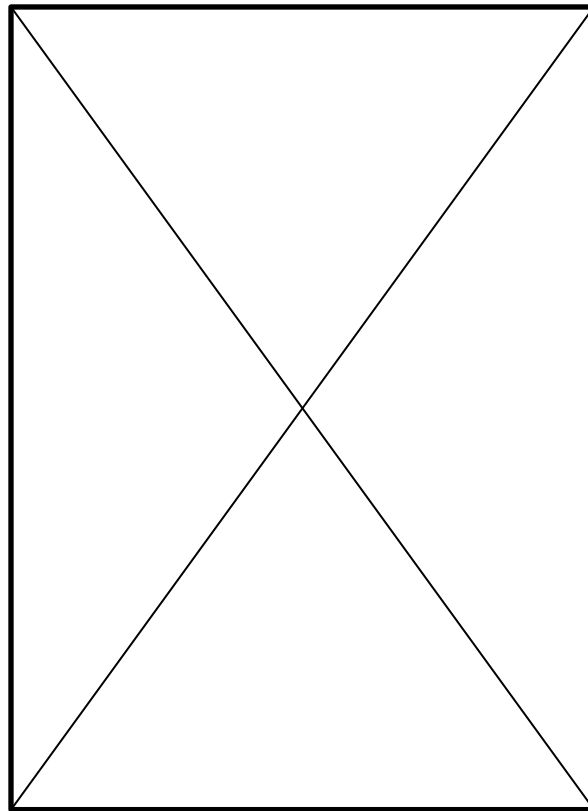

Figure 10. Konan falls asleep peacefully after apprehending the criminal single handedly in vol. 2, file 3, "Shashin wa Kataru."

(Andrew 147). In other words, Konan's strangeness, as long as it can be identified to benefit the wider group or community, becomes a marker of the ordinary.

Examining the series after Shin'ichi's transformation into Konan foregrounds themes such as teamwork and an emphasis on community. The concept of collectivism materializes in the character of Konan, who unifies a community of people who are all unique, but work in unison to complete their work. Konan not only works as part of the local police agency, but also crosses regional boundaries. Many of the stories in *Meitantei Konan* are set in Tokyo. However, as the series progresses, we see crimes occurring in the prefectures of Gunma, Nagano, Shizuoka, Osaka, and Kyoto, decentering Tokyo as the locus of crime and introducing a network of regional investigators and detectives who work alongside Konan to stamp out crime in Japan.

Although Konan may appear to foster a pan-Japanese identity, which some would argue involves anti-individualist assimilation, *Meitantei Konan* shows the importance of navigating Japan's regional differences through an integration of regional dialects and regional police forces. The study of discourse reveals the power-dynamics that underpins the story, as Nash has observed in her study of the Hardy Boys and Nancy Drew series that "grammatical errors and regional dialects usually signal undesirable traits: working-class, unsophisticated, and uneducated. The teen protagonists and their circle speak standardized and grammatically correct English, modern but not slangy, which marks them as culturally superior" (81). In the manga series, Aoyama mostly employs the Tokyo and Kansai dialects, amongst many others, perhaps as a way to signal the need to ease regional tensions, particularly between western and eastern Japan, which are negotiated in Konan's relationship with his best friend Hattori Heiji. [84] Unlike Konan, who speaks the standard Tokyo dialect and represents the detective of the East, Heiji is

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[84] A dialect spoken in Osaka.

form Osaka and has earned his reputation as the famous high school detective of the West. Through these two characters, Aoyama deconstructs spatial and regional distinctions by showing how Konan and Heiji are compatible as detectives. For instance, in the "The High School Detectives of the East" ("Higashi no Kōkōsei Tantei," vol. 54, file 9 to vol. 55, file 2, 2006), the country's top detectives are invited to an isolated island to compete in a "battle of the wits" to achieve the title of Japan's best detective. Konan, who represents the east, and Heiji, who represents the west, are two of the five contestants who participate in the event. The remaining detectives represent the regions of southern and northern Japan. The island becomes a metaphor of Japan on a micro-level, inhabited as it is by the detectives who represent the regional boundaries and identities within it. Despite their differences, however, the detectives work together toward a collective goal of finding the killer. Although Heiji is at times criticized by the other detectives for being "too rash" (72) and even chastised as a "failed detective" (72) in response to his spontaneous reactions, such as when he compromises evidence by breaking open a door to save a member of the group, his methods of crime-solving reflect his unique code as a detective. Ironically, it is this alternative manner of solving crimes that proves effective in the end, since Heiji is the one who ultimately discloses the identity of the murderer. Significantly, however, when the other detectives label Heiji as a "failed detective" (72), Konan defends him. Here, Konan seems to be speaking from a privileged stance since he is a detective from *the* metropolitan city, Tokyo, and appears to have the 'final word.' In detective fiction, the city is arguably as vital as detectives themselves as it informs their method of detection and defines their roles as detectives in unique ways. Tokyo remains at the centre of Aoyama's series because the city represents the epitome of knowledge and civilization, which is exemplified through Konan's ability as a detective to crack the city's most difficult cases, leaving behind no mystery

unsolved. Similar to how in Conan Doyle's stories, Holmes's London keeps hold on cultural power, in Aoyama's manga, Konan's Tokyo never completely moves out to the periphery.

Konan does unify detectives across the domestic borders, seemingly challenging the domination of Tokyo over other regions of Japan in matters of regional and classroom politics. What Konan accomplishes in dispersing his team's activities across Japan is, in miniature, what the series seems to be arguing more generally: even within nations, a kind of mini-imperialism often exists. In his evolved role, Konan sets out to use his individual talents and those of his team to undo some of the divisive mystique that will dominate Japan until all regions are seen as equal, or at least not as separate entities divided by levels of power dictated by the country's largest metropolitan centre.

As indicated earlier, Aoyama may be paying homage to another subgenre in western detective fiction, the police procedural in which detective work is performed by teams. However, he seems to be reworking this genre too, in that there seems to be no hierarchical team: the "leader" is a young boy, and the solutions to crimes are not reliant on team expertise, but individual efforts and clever improvisation on the part of Konan at crucial points in the narrative. The distribution of "power" in *Meitantei Konan*, then, is not attached to a single authoritarian figure such as Holmes, who also transcends state law, but rather is shared amongst people within a community. By virtue of his state as a child, Konan, whether he likes it or not, is to some extent dependent on those around him. In other words, the boy sleuth in *Meitantei Konan* is defined by a kind of detection that involves a team. Teamwork is not exclusive to the genre of detective fiction, and it is in fact a common trope in other *shōnen* genres. One of the defining characteristics of a team is that it represents "a united whole" (Pickrell 134). In other words, while individual members of a team may exhibit different personalities and strengths, "the group

dynamics remain relatively harmonious amongst a group of people with similar interests, who also possess abilities that are complementary one to another" (Pickrell 136). In relation to *Meitantei Konan*, while themes of sociality and community underscore the narrative, and although Shin'ichi is re-educated about what it means to be a great detective through his teamwork, the text tends to defend a conservative, patriarchal order, which may be in line with how the genre, broadly speaking, tends to re-establish social norms.

Schooling, Gender, and the Role of the Detective

If boy sleuths model normative behaviours through their sleuthing, what kind of behaviours do they model? In her comparative analysis of the Nancy Drew series and the Hardy Boys series, C.M. Gill points out an inherent paradox in the genre's presentation of gender roles. In other words, whereas Nancy Drew is often defined by her autonomy, the Hardy Boys are defined by their brotherhood. According to Gill, sociality among boys provides an alternative framework for understanding gendered roles: it "illustrates the ways the writers expose the limits—and dangers—of the solitary male ideal" (46), which "points to the deep-seated anxiety over the changing gender order within twentieth-century America" (47). Gill stresses, however, that while, through their team efforts, the Hardy Boys challenge the "autonomous male ideal, the books do not overall, attempt to debunk or subvert the idea of male supremacy. The stories cast boys and men exclusively as primary actors, thinkers and rulers of their communities and societies, and women remain mere secondary accompaniments" (48). Although it belongs to a different literary and manga tradition, *Meitantei Konan* adheres to the conservatism set up in the Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys stories. The manga series, which invokes the works of Edogawa Rampo, includes both boys and girls as part of the detecting team, but they are coded according

to normative gender roles. A closer examination of the original DBs (Genta, Mitsuhiko and Ayumi) reveals that detection is inherently gendered, but in different ways across cultures.

Originally, the word *shōnen* referred to both boys and girls under the broader category of youth. Prior to the Meiji Era, *shōnen* was not seen as a category distinguished by gender, but by age. Nowadays, the category *shōnen* often refers exclusively to young boys, in contrast to *shōjo*, which refers to young girls. According to Imada Erika, the shift from *shōnen* to *shōjo* can be traced to magazines such as *Eisaishinshi*, which was used to promote educational reforms that initiated gender-specific learning. While the initial aim of such magazines promoted the idea of *shōnen* (both boys and girls) as having the same opportunities in society based on a meritocratic system, by 1882, with the enforcement of a gender-specific curriculum, education for boys and girls was divided on the premise that boys were intellectually superior to girls. The category of *shōjo* thus emerged from educational reforms that sought to teach girls how to be good mothers.

Such discourses of schooling for boys and girls are evident in the relationships between the members of the *shōnen tanteidan,* particularly in the characterization of Genta, Mitsuhiko, and Ayumi, who are all coded with stereotypical masculine and feminine qualities.[85] Genta, for example, is represented as the group's "clown," and is used at times for comic relief. He has difficulty reading *kanji* (Chinese characters) and his mind is always preoccupied by thoughts of eating. In particular, his name is telling of his gluttonous (*kuishinbō*) personality; in Japanese, the name "Genta" is written with the *kanji* character for "origin" or "energetic" and "plump." Genta is brash and outspoken, but has a kind heart. As is the case with some boy sleuths, Genta's name is emblematic of the characteristics he embodies. The second member, Mitsuhiko, functions as Genta's foil. Mistuhiko is smarter, thinner, and speaks with a degree of formality (*keigo*).[86] With

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[85] Genta's name alludes to the mystery writer Hajime Komine.
[86] Mitsuhiko's name comes from novelist Yasuo Uchida's Asami Mitsuhiko.

teachers for parents, he professes that he enjoys reading science books and takes a scientific approach to problem solving, similar to Konan's. He is often the first in the group to solve riddles, and his display of knowledge at times earns him the spotlight, unlike Genta. The third member, Ayumi, is characterized by her cheerfulness and her open crush on Konan after he saves her in Volume 4.[87] Ayumi is the sole female member of the DBs until Ai Haibara joins their group, and while Ayumi plays an active role within the group, the manga tends to focus mainly on her feelings for Konan, such as in "A Dangerous Game Of Hide-and-Seek" ("Abunai Kakurenbo," vol. 9, file 1), in which she states that she and Konan are destined to be together; "The Old Picture" ("Igai na Otakara," vol. 38, files 2-4), in which she wants to take a photo next to Konan; and "Vermilion Bird" ("Suzaku," vol. 68, file 6), in which she tearfully attempts to wake up an unconscious Konan.

In her study of the *shōjo* manga *Yūkan Club*, serialized in *Ribbon* Magazine between 1982 and 1992, Tsurumi Maia has argued that while teamwork between female and male characters conveys "the sort of ideals one would typically expect among young people in Japan: the glorifying of an elite young urbanite Tokyo existence and an emphasis on group cooperation to solve problems. When it comes to gender roles, however, the message is less clear" (185). The gender dynamics in *Meitantei Konan* work in a similar way. Although they have different personalities, the boys are mutually jealous of Konan, whom Ayumi favours in the group. Thus, while Ayumi is included as part of the club, her role as the boys' love interest is suggestive of how she is simultaneously included and excluded from an "all boys club" because she is a girl. Indeed, the crime-fighting trio share a similar code of justice and they each have a clear sense of

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[87] Ayumi's name is an allusion to the mystery writer Ayumi Kitagawa.

right and wrong, but their interactions with the members of the opposite sex set up

(hetero)normative gendered roles, which are in-line with the genre's conservatism.[88]

With respect to how manga shape perceptions of gendered discourses, Giancarla Unser-Schutz's quantitative analysis of speech patterns in the ten of the most commercially successful *shōjo* and *shōnen* manga offer some insights on gender representation in manga. According to Unser-Schutz, *shōnen* manga is characterized by a high ratio of male to female characters, with male characters ultimately accounting for nearly 80% of the text (134).[89] In contrast, *shōjo* narratives tend to cast "a more balanced ratio of male and female characters" (142) with a focus on female characters' interpersonal relationships with male characters. In *shōnen* manga, the gender imbalance becomes more evident when comparing the number of lines spoken by male characters and by female characters. In detective manga, in which the plot is driven mainly by speech bubbles, discourse analysis may prove useful in determining some unique qualities of the genre. Both *Meitantei Konan* and *Death Note*, two of the five *shōnen tantei* manga in Unser Schutz's study, contain more male characters than female ones. More specifically, whereas *Meitantei Konan* contains 61 male characters in comparison to 31 female characters (12 of whom are labelled as identifiable), *Death Note* reveals a large cast of 119 male characters in comparison to a staggering 19 female characters.[90] With specific reference to *Meitantei Konan*, Unser-Schutz's data reveal that while Konan speaks a total of 13,846 lines, Ran speaks 6,455 lines (144, Table 6). Furthermore, although within the *shōnen* genre, *Meitantei Konan* contains the largest cast of female characters, some of whom take on strong leadership roles, since

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[88] It has been said that the DBs were influenced by another commercially successful manga franchise, Fujiko F. Fujio's *Doraemon*, which features a group of three friends (Jaiyan, Suneo, and Shizuka) in stereotypical gender roles. Jaiyan is large, like Genta; Suneo is the rich, smart one of the group, like Mitsuhiko; and Shizuka (meaning *quiet*) is the gentle and kind member of the group, like Ayumi.

[89] Unser-Schultz's study specifically examines the first three volumes of each series she investigated.

[90] Refer to Table 5 page 142 of Unser-Schutz's data.

Aoyama alludes to women detectives such as V.I. Warshawski and Cordelia Grey, women

characters exist on the periphery. A critical examination of the role of women detectives in

Aoyama's manga series is beyond the scope of this thesis. Nonetheless, with respect to both

Meitantei Konan and *Death Note*, the data from Unser-Schutz's study points to the texts' implicit

claim that the world of crimefighting is predominantly male-oriented.

Female characters in *shōnen* manga often speak in gender-stereotypical ways. According

to Unser-Schutz, this is demonstrated in what is called *yakuwari-go*, which refers to "speech

patterns which are aligned to the images of their speakers" (147). Unser-Schutz further notes that

"[b]ecause they clearly label speakers as being male or female, gendered language is a common

site of yakuwari-go" (147). She gives the example of Professor Agase in *Meitantei Konan*,

noting that his "use of non-standard forms such as the first personal pronoun 'washi', the copula

'ja', and the verb of existence 'oru' matches his professorial image" (147). The use of *yakuwari-

go* as a kind of performance in *Meitantei Konan* is highlighted particularly by Konan's use of the

voice-changing bowtie, a device that allows him to imitate the voices of the elderly, children,

women and men in order to take on different persons to successfully solve a crime. The device,

which works to disguise Konan's real voice, reveals how characters are inherently gendered

through their speech. On the rare occasion that he has relied on Professor Agase and Sonoko to

solve a case, Konan adjusts his tone and manner of speech in ways that are in line with the

character's image. In Volume 5, File 5 Konan upholds Sonoko's ultrafeminine image by using

the expressions "*fufufu*" and the copula "*yo*."

From her data, Unser-Schutz concludes, "One can hypothesize that *shōnen* manga, with

their larger cast of secondary characters, are more susceptible to yakuwari-go, especially

amongst female characters, who have minimum roles" (147). In the case of the *shōnen tanteidan*,

Ayumi is still characterized in a stereotypically feminine manner that defines her role as a detective in different ways than Mitsuhiko and Genta. For example, her speech balloons include hearts at the end of her lines, indicating a kind of gendered speech at work, which is in line with the text's privileging of a particular kind of *shōnen* identity. Thus, while sociality is emphasized among *shōnen* sleuths, the manner in which they are socialized conforms to hegemonic norms of their respective genders.

Several critics have discussed the role of the *shōnen* character type in commercially successful manga such as *One Piece* and *Naruto*, but none have explored the *shōnen* figure within the genre of mystery or detective manga.[91] While it can be argued that manga for boys and men often depict "hypermasculine figures who are highly competitive and aggressive" (McLelland 80), definitions of *shōnen* have been widened to encompass the various ways in which *shōnen* narratives construct various *shōnen* identities. Megan Harrell's comparative analysis of representations of masculinity in *dōjin* and *shōnen* epics suggest that the *shōnen* figure depicted in these manga "convey the desire felt by both women and men to change Japanese society's status quo for masculinity" (1). In mainstream manga, for example, this is evident in how *shōnen* masculinity can be read as a reaction against the salaryman ideal. An understanding of the *shōnen* hero as a figure who challenges an image of the Japanese salaryman is useful within the context of the 1990s. At a time when the question of the salaryman ideal was under threat during the Lost Decade, it might come as no surprise that Japanese popular culture reflected alternative modes of masculinity as seen in the figure of the boy detective, and in other *shōnen* heroes. As Harrell notes, ". . . images of salary men as 'forever cogs in someone else's

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[91] For critical work on *Naruto*, see section titled "'Naruto' as Cultural Crossroads" in Manga's *Cultural Crossroads* edited by Jaqueline Berndt and Bettina Kümmerling-Meibauer.

wheel'" (2) were thematically dealt within *shōnen* epic narratives by celebrating the autonomy of the *shōnen* (boy) hero in pursuit of his own dream.

For critics such as Sasada Hiroko, *shōnen* heroes are defined by their otherness. Unlike Harrell, Sasada draws a connection between Japan's more traditional values of *otokodate* (champions of justice), in contextualizing *shōnen* masculinity, which comes from her analysis of Oda Eiichirō's popular manga series, *One Piece*. Sasada argues that Oda's work invokes qualities of traditional Japanese heroes as seen in period films such as in Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* (1954). She relates the otherness of *shōnen* heroes to the concept of *otokodate* or "righteous outsiders" (199), who are defined by their willingness to risk one's own life for the sake of justice. In addition, Luffy, the manga's central hero, displays qualities such as discipline, effort, charisma and freedom, but Sasada cautions us that such qualities are not inherently "masculine" since "having the courage to do what is right—or even righteous—is a principle shared by all the main characters" (203) in the manga.

Although the *shōnen* hero has been characterized in several ways, where the boy detectives of the Lost Decade are concerned, Hajime, Konan and Light are all justice-oriented, but they live by different moral codes that define their role as detectives in different ways. Both Hajime and Light, for example, are vigilantes who challenge society's laws in favor of a personal code of justice, but whereas Hajime is driven by his sense of justice to restore a fragmented society, Light is the source of destruction. Konan, on the other hand, is the protector of law and order as he represents the model boy detective. In other words, *shōnen* heroes of mystery manga navigate their role as detectives between the poles of lawfulness and criminality and between order and chaos.

Furthermore, Hajime and Konan can be seen as embodying the qualities of *otokodate* and the salaryman ideal. Detectives operate on the periphery of society, and they uphold their own code of chivalry, justice and morality. Their otherness is defined by their ability to transcend the law, and in the case of Konan, his otherness is marked, as noted above, by the nature of the liminal space he occupies.[92] Moreover, Konan's mode of detection, which is underscored by teamwork, draws a strong correlation to the salaryman ideal. Unlike Shin'ichi, whose masculinity was defined by the lone wolf ideal and the detective as all-knowing, authoritative and therefore powerful, Shin'ichi learns alternative modes of crime solving through Konan, breaking himself free from following too closely in Holmes's shadow, or being a "cog in someone else's' wheel." Symbolically speaking, Shin'ichi's transformation into Konan marks a kind of "castration" per se. In volume 1, file 4 of the series, Konan searches for the kidnapped Akiko and discovers a tall chimney that becomes a vital clue in locating her whereabouts. The scene invokes a kind of phallic imagery, perhaps hinting at Konan's emasculated state. Konan's inability to apprehend the criminal followed by his rescue by Ran (who holds a black belt in Karate) points to the inversion of gender roles, drawing further attention to Konan's vulnerability. At the same time, Aoyama is careful to not depict his detective hero as too vulnerable. For this reason, as Aoyama once said in an interview, Konan does not cry. He expresses a range of emotions, but in all 95 volumes to date, he has never shed a single tear. This stoicism, which invokes a kind of hardboiled masculinity, marks Konan in ways that are different from Kanari's Hajime Kindaichi. In addition, Konan's use of tools and gadgets of his trade, like Kobayashi in Rampo's stories, to compensate for his lack of strength and agility is another way in which his vulnerability is mediated in the text.

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[92] Unlike Konan and Hajime, Light shows the risks and consequences of breaking too far away from society's norms and expectations.

The *Shōnen Tantei* as Cultural Hero

An Occidentalist re-reading of Aoyama's manga series puts into perspective how he bolsters a sense of patriotism by aligning his boy detective, Konan, to the "great" detective, Sherlock Holmes, and by creating a cultural icon that is equally popular in Japan. In doing so, this section explores how Aoyama validates a nostalgic past that bolsters hope for a new national imaginary through the construction of an ideal *shōnen* (boy), though not unproblematically.

In his landmark work *Orientalism*, Edward Said argues that the "Oriental world emerged, first according to general ideas about who or what was an Oriental, then according to a detailed logic governed not simply by empirical reality but by a battery of desires, repressions, investments and projections" (8). In Said's view, the Orient is rendered powerless within an ontological and discursive system of oppressive practices perpetuated through centuries of Western domination. However, Said's assertion of the object/subject and the essentialist binary of West/Japan is not a perfect analogy, since Japan has long existed as an empire and employed similar imperialist tactics within its eastern sphere of influence. According to Hutchinson, "Although Said is a useful starting point [. . .] he has based his theory on Michel Foucault while ignoring one of Foucault's fundamental ideas—the possibility of a counter-discourse, from the margins of even the most seemingly 'monolithic' discursive structures" (9). Critics of ritics of Said's theories of Orientalism thus emphasize the importance of understanding Occidentalism "as a counter discourse, a counter memory, and a counter –'other' to Said's orientalism" (Chen 9). As evidenced in the classic detective stories, criminals are often rendered or coded as the cultural Other, from Edgar Allan Poe's racially-coded ape that kills, Madame L'Espanaye and her daughter Mademoiselle Camille in "The Murders in the Rue Morgue," to Doyle's Dr.

Roylott, a former British medical doctor, whose stay in Calcutta is described to have led to "a terrible change" (Doyle 267) in character that ultimately leads him to kill one of his step-daughters to obtain her inheritance. Abe Slanely in "The Dancing Men" is described as a man "with a Panama hat, a bristling black beard, and a great, aggressive hooked nose" (Doyle 647) who stands in striking opposition to Hilton, whose Englishness is defined by his "blue eyes and comely face and his devotion to his wife," who is killed at the hands of the American other. The other is an outsider whose questionable upbringing and barbarous manners and deeds stands in polar opposition to middle-class Victorian sensibilities. Resistance through counter-discourses plays a crucial role in destabilizing dominant hegemonic values that render cultural minorities powerless. The appropriation of Sherlock Holmes across cultures, not only in Japan, may reveal different ways in which the vestiges of the British Empire are undone. For example, Sharadindu
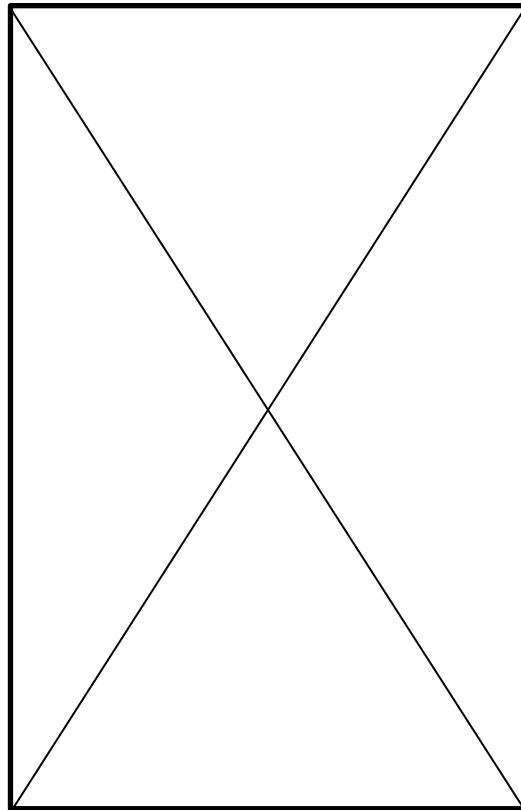

Figure 11. Jodī drawing a crowd as she plays a shooting game at an arcade in Aoyama's *Meitantei Konan*, vol. 27, "Gēmu no Sutāto" (The Game Begins).

Bandyopadhyay's creation of the Bengali/Sherlockian detective Bomkesh Bakshi, who prefers to be called *Satyanweshi* (truth seeker), can be seen as a powerful example of a text that writes against the orientalizing discourses found in Doyle's original.

One of the ways in which Aoyama writes against the orientalizing tendencies of detective fiction as seen in Doyle's stories is in the manga's portrayal of non-Japanese and "Western" characters who emerge throughout the series. Typically, the largest cast of non-Japanese characters are American FBI agents. It is curious to note that, while *Meitantei Konan* casts Japanese and mostly American characters as the narrative's central characters, there are fewer other cultural minorities, such as Chinese, Korean and Brazilian characters. Stories that feature "American" characters are most notable because of the integration of English into the text, adding a hint of exoticism and highlighting the characters' outsider status. In the anime adaptations of the manga series, foreignness is made more obvious through the use of *yakuwari-go*, in which voice actors deliberately pronounce Japanese words with an exaggerated accent to emphasize foreignness. The following examples from the manga demonstrate how Aoyama constructs otherness in defining the Japanese Self.

Volume 27 is the first installment in the series to feature an English-speaking character, Jodie Starling (Jodī Sutāringu), an English high school teacher who is later revealed to be an undercover agent for the FBI. The story begins with Ran and Sonoko talking about the popularity of their teacher, Jodī, but according to Sonoko, Jodī is popular only amongst the boys in school. Sonoko further expresses that Jodī "wears revealing clothes and is too womanly as if *that gaijin* (foreigner, or outside person) woman is playing with us Japanese girls…She's too serious, and it's lame. She's so solemn and wouldn't even have tea with us after school…we finally get an American in school and she doesn't even like to make jokes" (112). Sonoko's complaint reveals

a tension between reality and expectations; her disappointment may also come from feeling somewhat threatened by Jodī's femininity that is more "womanly" than her own. This description of Jodī, however, is undercut in the pages that follow, which shows her drawing a crowd as she plays a shooting game at an arcade (see Figure 11). In these panels, Jodī is seen in different poses as she wields a gun in a black minidress. Her appearance and her speaking Japanese with an American accent, as indicated through the use of *katakana* when she speaks, and her occasional interjections of "uh uh" and "oh" in English, point to her role as the cultural outsider and add to her mysterious appeal.

Volume 29 also features a cast of foreigners, particularly Ray Curtis, a former soccer champion, referred to as "Europe's Metal Wall," of whom Shin'ichi/Konan is a fan. The case involves the murder of Ed McCay, a journalist who was once responsible for spreading fake news about the famous goalkeeper, claiming that he took drugs, which ultimately led to Curtis' wife taking her own life due to the unbearable pressure the media caused her. Through McCay's murder, Curtis avenged his wife's suicide, but Konan discovers the truth, and though he is disappointed that his hero would resolve to murder, Konan sets Curtis on a road to redemption by prompting him to confess his crime. This case stands out from the rest because it is the first one in which the detective confronts the criminal in English. In other words, Konan's ability to converse in English aligns him with that of the foreign other. In stories such as this one, English text is presented on the page with Japanese subtitles, which is meant for the Japanese reader who can not read English. Situated within a cosmopolitan world, Konan can be seen to represent the "'semicolonized' Self that uses the discourse of the colonialist Other for its own political agenda within its own cultural milieu" (Chen 13). The irony, however, is that both Curtis and Jodī are capable of speaking Japanese fluently, but Aoyama mediates the Occidental construction of the

stereotypical (American) other by setting up expectations of their foreignness and debunking those stereotypes at the same time, perhaps arguing against the essentializing of any cultural discourse.

Even so, Occidentalist themes come to light in "Hōmuzu no Deshi" (Holmes's Apprentice, Vol. 71, File 3, 2011), set in London, England. The story demonstrates Aoyama's engagement with counter-orientalizing themes that serve to renegotiate cultural binarisms and to give a voice to the non-Western other, while at the same time celebrating a non-Western culture.

"Hōmuzu no Deshi" begins as Mōri is invited to London to visit Diana Kingston, whom Mōri helped find her cat while she was on vacation in Japan. As a self-professed "fan of crime novels" (78), Diana invites Mōri to a dinner party to share his stories of detection. While Mōri tells his story to Diana and her acquaintances at the dinner table, he shows off his skills in Judo, which Diana mistakes as *baritsu,* a form of martial arts used by Sherlock Holmes. Impressed by Mōri's performance, Diana exclaims, "[h]ow appropriate for a Great detective to know *baritsu*!" This reference, however brief, reveals Mōri's 'otherness,' as he is seen as a spectacle for a Western audience, and also adds to the Asian stereotype of a "martial arts fighter." However, the fact that martial arts is lauded as the marker of a great detective demonstrates the importance of comparing Mōri to Sherlock Holmes, whose mastery of *baritsu*, fencing, and boxing are parallel, and is therefore a nod to the imperial standard in detective fiction. Yet, the English woman recognizing this art as appropriate for a great detective provides a counterimperialistic note that suggests Aoyama is undercutting the notion of British imperial dominance.

As the story develops, we begin to see how Mōri's view of England further counters colonial stereotypes about the Far Orient. Konan, now accustomed to his child status, travels with Mōri to London and stumbles upon a mystery that requires him to solve a series of puzzles

that are based on characters, titles, and names of places that are found in Sherlockian Canon such as *A Study in Scarlet*, "A Scandal in Bohemia," "The Valley of Fear," "Mazarin Stone," and "Dancing Men." As he anticipates his trip to England for the first time, Konan informs Professor Agase of the places he plans to visit. Konan's mental checklist illustrates a vision of London according to Conan Doyle's depiction of the city in the *Sherlock Holmes* series:

> First, I'll go to Baker Street. Next, I'll go to Hyde Park where Holmes and Watson went for a stroll. Then I'll visit the British Museum where Holmes did some of his research! If I have the time, I want to visit Dartmoor where the *Hound of the Baskervilles* was set…and Reichenbach Falls where Holmes and his archenemy, Moriarty fell…Ohh!! There are so many places I want to visit, I can't decide!! (40)

Combined with the sequences of images that show Konan brimming with enthusiasm, this series of simple sentences emphasizes the fast pace of the monologue and reflects Konan's state of utter joy and excitement. The representation of London as a city full of mystery and suspense reveals the Japanese perception of the West as an adventurous place. However, by inverting the orientalizing practices of British imperialism, Aoyama deconstructs Western ideas of "power political," "power intellectual," "power cultural" and "power moral" (Said 12). Konan's imagined vision of London blends fact and fiction and appears to be an inversion of the Western orientalist fantasies of the East. Although places such as the moorlands of Devonshire, Hyde Park, and Reichenbach Falls do exist in the "real" world, Konan's vision is of nineteenth-century London as a fantastical place in which he can relive the adventures of Sherlock Holmes.[93] The

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[93] Reichenbach Falls is not in London, but in Switzerland.

repetition of the name "Holmes" further marks the detective as a central figure who defines an imaginary London that resides in Konan's imagination.

In this episode, Konan's (mis)conception of the West reverses the colonial discourses that typically marginalize the Orient by dealing with mythology rather than reality. By turning back the orientalizing gaze on the West, *Meitantei Konan* decentralizes what Shohat and Stam call "a cultural heterogeneity into a single paradigmatic perspective in which Europe is seen as the unique source of meaning, as the world's centre of gravity, as ontological 'reality' to the rest of the world's shadow" (1-2). Konan's idea of England as a tourist destination for fans of Sherlock Holmes sheds an ironic light on how the construction of cultural imaginaries serves to misconstrue the "Other." The assumptions Konan makes about London destabilize notions of the city as signifying "a unique source of meaning" by showing how the West is susceptible to the same orientalizing practices it imposes onto the Orient. By making visible the existence and agency of other non-Western nations, *Meitantei Konan* ultimately challenges notions of authority and stability by writing against the Western Empire.

A further exploration of this chapter reveals how England is represented as an exotic and foreign place from the point of view of Mōri who works together with Konan to solve a complex riddle that corresponds to famous landmarks such as Big Ben, Elephant and Castle Station, City Hall, the Gherkin, St. Bride's Church, and a Meissen Porcelain boutique in central London. The representation of the city as a 'playground' in which Japanese detectives unravel clues while they tour the city inverts Shohat and Stam's notion of a "grand oriental tour" (104), since in *Meitantei Konan,* the image of London is reduced to spectacle, as seen by the detecting agents from the Far East.

Mōri's visit to London estranges him from his familiar cultural setting, and through his experiences we see an inversion of the discursive practices of colonial discourse. For instance, when looking for a building that appears in the shape of a pickle, as it corresponds to the fourth line of the riddle, Mōri is convinced that "there's no such thing" (9). But to his disbelief, when he sees the Gherkin building, he remarks, "it...it actually exists…wha…what is up with London?" The rhetorical question reveals Mōri's confusion as he struggles to make sense of his foreign experience. Also, when he stumbles upon St. Bride's Church and learns that the tiers of the building were made to resemble a wedding cake, he nonchalantly comments, "sounds like an absurd story."[94] Ultimately, Mōri's description of the familiar in unfamiliar terms demonstrate how his Far Eastern gaze reduces the city's grandeur to silliness.

It can be argued that Mōri's thoughts can be related to the notion of the uncanny, as David Huddart sees it: "[t]he uncanny, in other words, opens a space for us to reconsider how we have come to be who we are" (83), and thus invites us to re-evaluate our identities from the point of view of the cultural other in order to reassess our own cultural prejudice. In *Meitantei Konan*, Mōri's observation fosters a discourse that renders Western civilization as "other" and "strange." In doing so, Mōri contests a "white desire" (Young 142) as exemplified in Shin'ichi's idolization of Holmes; Mōri represents the "voice of the other" (160) that speaks against the marginalization of the Far East by revealing the "fantasmatics of colonial discourse" (Young 160). These Occidental elements in *Meitantei Konan* exemplify what Ed Christian asserts in his discussion of postcolonial detective fiction:

> They have appropriated what is useful from the empire, but transformed it. As
>
> with post-coloniality in general, the post-colonial detective is a work in progress.

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[94] The Japanese word "*jōdan*" used in the original text can be translated into English as "unbelievable" or "joke," emphasizing Mōri's tone of ridicule.

These detectives are in process, they are not heroes of the resistance, out to

destroy the oppressor. (13)

The idea of the postmodern detective being "in progress," although Christian does not go so far

as to make this point, relates to the hybridity of Konan and even to some extent to Mōri as they

are both Japanese and Occidental in certain ways. More importantly, the idea of "in progress" is

in line with what Sasada claims is essential to the *shōnen* archetype: "The focus on individual

development in *shōnen* might also connote the possibility of development of the immature and

the unskilled, who in the early phases of life, or of a narrative, lack life experience" (193).

Konan's role as a Japanese detective in England seems to underline the incompetence of the

Western police force (i.e. Scotland Yard), but it is also Konan's association with the Western

detective Holmes that enables him to gain the trust of others in order to successfully solve the

case. In other words, Konan does not replace Holmes *per se*, but builds upon the tradition he

represents without acknowledging its absoluteness or superiority. As Christian notes, the

postcolonial detective is not one who "destroys the oppressor," but rather one who attains agency

by bridging the original dichotomy of power between the colonizer and colonized. It is within

this ambivalent space that the non-hegemonic detective is empowered. Aoyama certainly

employs the rhetoric of Occidental writers to demystify ideas of Western imperialism in stories

such as this one by subverting the London once dominated by the figure of Sherlock Holmes

through the eyes and the detecting activities of the child detective Konan. The use of

Occidentalism as a rhetorical framework for understanding how Aoyama constructs an

exoticized image of London, England is reminiscent of how Rampo and his contemporaries

thematically dealt with the construction of the Western "Other" in their own works. This link

between the past and present draws attention to the timelessness of Occidentalist rhetoric,

suggesting that it remains a powerful tool for identity formation in the popular imagination of the Japanese people.

Given the Meiji antecedents to *Meitantei Konan*, it is not surprising to see how Aoyama succeeds at positioning himself in a space of in-between-ness through the use of a rhetorical process that was employed by Meiji writers. Konan's hybridity is significant given the importance of this concept when considered within the framework of postmodern thought. The in-between position that Konan occupies, for example reflects Homi K. Bhabha's definition of hybridity:

> agencies [who] find their voice in a dialectic [. . .] They deploy the partial culture from which they emerge to construct visions of community, and versions of historic memory, that give narrative form to the minority positions they occupy: the outside of the inside: the part of the whole. (34)

Although the word *hybrid* may suggest a fragmented or partial nature, Bhabha's definition indicates that the ambivalent "space between" is a site in which hybrid subjects write themselves into grand narratives, linking their own experience to that of a larger whole, which is then, implicitly, altered by these acts of symbiosis. The notion of "wholeness" can be seen in how *Meitantei Konan* deconstructs cultural binarisms, creating a narrative that harbors a utopian ideal of a global community. However, critics such as Sakamoto Rumi have noted the shortcoming of Bhabha's concept of hybridity within the context of Japanese political history because it functions to validate the construction of another Other, which "may reproduce the same relation of domination between itself and this new Other" (122). Sakamoto warns that "'[h]ybrid' identity may not automatically lead to a politics of free domination" (122). She applies her theory to a study of Fukuzawa Yukuichi's work to understand the discursive formation of a national identity

during the Meiji Period, and finds that Fukuzawa succeeds in neutralizing the boundary between

the West and Japan, distorting the European discourse of civilization and progress, in a discourse

of domination with which he ends up fixing the boundary between 'Asia" and Japan. Although

Meitantei Konan provides no overt examples of such cultural domination, and instead seems to

even celebrate Asian intelligentsia by alluding to Zhuge Liang, a master strategist to whom

Konan himself is compared, the sheer absence of other cultural minorities in the manga series

draws attention to a gap that may be more or less reflective of the genre as a vehicle for

dominant hegemonic and middle-class interests. This is not to say that through Konan, Aoyama

resolves regional cultural differences he encounters and negotiates, but rather that the narrative

draws attention to how we think about the "other" to promote a greater awareness of the ways we

think about cultural difference.[95]

One of the ways in which communities bond in the *Meitantei Konan* series is through a

collective effort to abolish crime, which suggests that the fight against evil speaks the same

language, and that Konan's efforts transcend both cultural and literary barriers. However, this

message is conveyed at the cost of bolstering hope for a new national imaginary through the

construction of an ideal *shōnen* (boy) whose ideals of progress cannot be separated from its

imperialist connotations, as well as its hegemonic constructs of gender, race and region.

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[95] In recent volumes, questions of *hāfu* identity is addressed in the characterization of Zero in vol. 95, files 1-9.

Chapter 5

The Boy Detectives of the Lost Decade Part III: The Criminal Boy Detective

The boy detective as a rebel figure appears in Ohba Tsugumi's and Obata Takeshi's manga

series *Death Note* in the guise of the main character, Light. His relentless pursuit of justice at any

cost, even human lives, provides an interesting point of comparison to Hajime and Konan. In

their individual ways, both Hajime and Konan represent "good" boys performing "good" deeds.

Although they do not share the same worldview, they are both morally conscious and subscribe

to hegemonic values of law and order. However, not all boy detectives within the manga

tradition work for the greater good and turn out to be boy-heroes. Published between May 2003

and December 2006, *Death Note* redefined the role of the boy "detective" in interesting ways.

First, *Death Note* exhibits a sharp contrast to the trope of childhood represented in the boy

detective tradition by positioning a boy criminal as the focalizing agent of the story. Second, the

construction of the generic world in *Death Note* defies conventions of the classic detective

fiction formula and transgresses cultural verisimilitude as it encompasses the realm of the

supernatural. This chapter brings together critical work on the manga series to explore these two

points in detail to argue that *Death Note* marks a sharp turning point in the manga tradition of the

boy detective, and that the series, unlike Kanari's and Aoyama's works, belongs to another

subgenre under the umbrella of mystery manga.

I will begin by situating *Death Note* within the detective boy tradition to show how the

manga subverts the basic tenets of the boy detective tradition. Having modelled their stories on

classic tales of ratiocination, locked-room and puzzle mysteries, Kanari, Amagi, and Aoyama are

responsible for pioneering the revival of the classic genre of detective fiction in manga. To this

day, both series remain popular, and *Meitantei Konan* particularly continues to dominate the

current scene of the boy detective tradition. Since Hajime and Konan, the boy detective has

survived thanks to a kind of symbiosis with other genres. From stories with boy detectives who

possess occult or supernatural powers such as Neuro Nōgami, a demon detective in Matsui

Yūsei's *Neuro: Supernatural Detective* (*Majin Tantei Nōgami Neuro*, 2005-09) and Saitō

Yakumo, a college student and detective who possess the power to see ghosts and spirits through

his red left eye in *Physic Detective Yakumo* (*Shinerei Tantei Yakumo,* 2009-16), to detectives

who can talk to animals such as in *Sherlock Bones* (*Tantei inu Shādokku,* 2011-13), to magical

girls who fight against crime such as in *Milky Opera Holmes* (*Tantei Opera Mirukī Hōmuzu,*

2010-11) the boy detective tradition uses elements of fantasy, horror, suspense, and other genres

to reinvent the detective and his or her role in significantly different ways. [96] While some stories

incorporate one or more of these elements, for most, mystery lies at the core of the narrative.

However, in no way do these stories adhere to the formulaic conventions of classic detective

fiction codified by Ronald Knox and S.S. Van Dine, or outlined by Cawelti, because the mere

presence of magic or the supernatural, which are qualities of fantasy fiction, is counterintuitive to

the world of probability, logic, and reason in which the boy detective is immersed. Although the

supernatural is invoked in classic detective stories such as Doyle's *Hound of the Baskervilles* and

"The Vampyre of Sussex," for example, Sherlock Holmes always finds a logical explanation that

thwarts the threat of "beasts" and/or "monsters." The same rule of thumb applies to the boy

detective tradition, in which boys combat "real" criminals and threats and not imaginary ones

such as ghosts or spirits. Even so, a growing number of *shōnen* manga that feature boy (and girl)

detectives are marked by a kind of generic tension as the stories transgress cultural verisimilitude

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[96] First published as a novel series by Manabu Kaminaga and illustrated by Katō Akasuki in 2004.

in the playful construction of a generic world conventionally defined in terms of logic and order, to encompass the realm of the speculative.

Indeed, as briefly mentioned in Chapter Two, detective fiction can be characterized by its hybridity. The boy detective tradition since Tezuka's time has blurred generic tropes and conventions by incorporating elements of adventure and suspense. Although the presence of the supernatural is invoked in *Meitantei Konan*, particularly in regard to Shin'ichi's transformation, it is justified in a pseudoscientific way and functions merely as a plot device. Also, in the *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* series, Hajime relies on both his intelligence and intuition to solve crimes, such as in "Kubitsuri Gakuen Satsujin Jiken." Unreal or irrational elements in these manga series thus serve to bolster the importance of the detective's role as a rational agent in a chaotic world. Gifted with his intellectual prowess, the boy detective leaves no mystery unsolved. However, the power to uncover hidden knowledge makes the boy detective an uncanny figure. A supernatural reading of classical detective stories is not new; Michael Cook posits "that the ghost story was not merely to be held up as an antithesis, but was actually a building block of the detective fiction narrative itself" (2). Critics such as James Carney further claim that "[f]or all that detective advertises his stunning deductions as the product of minute observation and cerebral prowess, the fact remains that his achievements in reading the thoughts of others are functionally indistinguishable from magic" (204). According to Carney, the role of the detective in classical detective stories can be read as a medium of sorts who "talks to the dead." However, it makes more sense to discuss the detective's role as a "magician," "medium," and/or a "supernatural punisher" within the generic context of occult detective fiction in which elements of magic, the paranormal, and the supernatural materialize.

Ohba Tsugumi's manga series *Death Note* is one such example of a text that combines elements of the psychological thriller, gothic, horror, and mystery. Although it has been said that the character L in *Death N*ote is modelled after Sherlock Holmes (to the extent that L imitates how Holmes sits in a chair), the presence of death gods and the supernatural are clear signs that the manga series belongs to a different tradition than that of Amagi's and Aoyama's series, which are heavily influenced by literary detectives. Moreover, *Death Note* was published almost a decade after *Kindaichi* and *Meitantei Konan*. Serialized between December 2003 and May 2006 in *Weekly Shōnen Jump Magazine* and collected into 12 volumes, the story of *Death Note* follows the life of a high school student named Yagami Light, who upon discovering the death note, a notebook that kills anyone whose name is written in it, uses it to create a *shinsekai* (New World) in line with his own skewed vision of an utopian society. Using the pseudonym Kira (or killer), Light plays the role of God by "murder[ing] criminals and evildoers and thereby forc[ing] the world to recognize his impeccable moral authority" (Thomas 140). Thematically, *Death Note* troubles the idealized and "sanitized" image of the middle-class boy detective as seen in *Meitantei Konan* and *Kindaichi* who, in many ways, exemplify characteristics designed to uphold the status quo as listed by Cornelius: hardworking, socially conscious, and justice-oriented. In contrast, Light plays the dual role of the mastermind criminal and detective, challenging the Japanese middle-class visions of stability and social cohesion that are underscored in Kanari's and Aoyama's manga series. In other words, Ohba Tsugumi's Light is an exception to the rule as he embodies the "strange child" in the worst way imaginable.

Background on *Death Note*

Death Note has been widely read both within and outside of Japan. Like *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* and *Meitantei Konan*, *Death Note* also has an extensive media mix franchise, testifying to its success. According to Alisa Freedman, "As of April 2015, around 30 million copies of the *Death Note* manga has been in circulation world wide (Mantan-web 2015)" (36). In Japan, the manga series has been adapted into light novels, anime, film, video games, musicals, and a live-action series. In 2016, Shunsuke Satō directed the live-action web series *Death Note: New Generation*, which bridged the decade-long gap between its sequel film *Death Note 2: The Last Name* (2006) and its prequel film *Death Note: Light Up the New World* (2016). The 2006 feature film *Death Note,* directed by Shūsuke Kaneko, "had a theatre release in more than 28 countries." In 2017, Adam Wingard directed the loosely adapted Hollywood version of *Death Note*, which was released on Netflix on August 25

    Death Note's fame on an international scale is noteworthy and deserves critical attention. In most cases, murder functions as a plot device. Without a murder, there is no mystery to solve for the detective. For this reason, Hajime and Konan rarely prevent murders from happening because their primary role is to investigate a crime scene. Furthermore, because the boy detective serves his community and upholds the status quo, he will never be seen committing a crime, especially murder. *Death Note*, however, "makes killing a means toward power and includes characters that can be read as either heroes or villains [which] raises moral questions" (Freedman 37), especially concerning its effect on youth. Outside of Japan, everything from government-issued warnings about the perceived negative influence of the manga on youth to bans and/or attempted bans of the series demonstrate that *Death Note* has been a source of cultural anxiety

and fear of the rise of juvenile delinquency. Freedman provides a list of events that highlight this fear:

> Most notoriously, on September 28, 2007, a male corpse was found in Brussels with a note reading "Watashi wa kira dess" (or "I am Kira," the incorrect romanization of a phrase used in Japanese manga), a crime nicknamed the "manga murder" (de mangamoord). [. . .] School bullying involving writing names in "death notes" has been reported worldwide, including at least eight cases in the United States. Perhaps more humorously, a 14-year-old eighth grader was suspended in Pennsylvania in May 2010 for writing names of her classmates along with that of Canadian singer, Justin Bieber. (38)

On February 28, 2017, an unnamed boy at Grahamwood Elementary School in Memphis, Tennessee was suspended for having written a young girl's name on his so-called "death list," something he claimed that he learned from watching television. In his analysis of the anime series, Dennis Owen Frohlich has even claimed that *Death Note* advocates apocalyptic religion and that Ohba's unclear ethical stance about the manga series is an indication that

> The implication in both the manga and the anime, then, is: killing bad people makes the world a better place. The world is better off without those people, and if somebody had the power to eliminate bad people, then it is imperative that s/he use that power for the betterment of humanity. This theory is expressed in such black-and-white terms that it is impossible, in the world of *Death Note*, to see morality any differently. (150)

Kyle A. Hammond and Garret Hammond offer a sound counter-argument to this limited and negative reading of the series.[97] Drawing on social constructivist theory and linguistic modes of interpretation, Hammond and Hammond draw a link between language and identity to argue that "Light used language to actualize his form of justice" (104). However, his failure to do so implies that "[t]he moral pedagogy of the series, then, may be in the series of examples and allegories that communicate that the way we talk about things influences the way we think about things […] and that both our present and future identities depend on how we talk about ourselves and others" (102). *Death Note* thus functions as a cautionary tale "to use language transparently and responsibly" (106).

The impact of *Death Note* around the globe may seem troubling, and though it may be tempting to link these incidents as a direct consequence of the negative influence of the manga, the core concerns of *Death Note* are fundamentally no different from those of *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* and *Meitantei Konan*. The difference lies in how they arrive at same conclusion. In other words, the boy detectives in these manga series have shown in their own ways how "conflict and deviance in Japan is no less part of human relations than harmony" (Yoder 1). *Death Note* takes this idea one step further and "darkly suggests that the will to security can come at the expense of conventional morality, and that people will perpetually find ways to sanctify and legitimize horrific acts of violence [. . .] The price of peace is death" (Thomas 140).

Ohba Tsugumi's *Death Note* illustrates a more cynical worldview than that depicted in the world of *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* and *Meitantei Konan,* as the story reflects and responds to cultural discourses of the strange child in Japan in drastically different ways.

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[97] In response to Frohlich's essay, Hammond and Hammond pointed out, "Even though Frohlich provided a convincing case that elements of apocalyptic religion are a major feature of *Death Note*, we believe he fails to justify his conclusions that the story essentially supports and reifies utilitarian murder" (99).

Although *Death Note* was first published several years after the Aum Shinrikyō incident and the

Kobe earthquake of 1995 and the Shōnen A Incident of 1997, critics such as Thomas and

Jacobsen have contextualized their reading of the manga and anime series in the aftermath of

these events. Thomas examines the "evil cult trope" in the manga, suggesting that it reveals

"general human tendencies" (130) to express itself through "horrific 'cults'" (127). Arguing that

Death Note is driven by its "impulse to relativize good and evil" (266), Jacobsen analyzes the

characterization of Light and his nemesis L in relation to the discursive formation of the

monstrous and alien child, pointing out that *Death Note* "reveal[s] a morbid fascination with the

teenage monster" (266). [98]

Indeed, the magnitude of both events clearly haunts the popular imagination of the

Japanese people in the millennial era. In her commentary on *Death Note* in 2010, Susan Napier

suggests that "[i]t seems likely that this epidemic of fictional murders is related to what seems to

be the increasing number of bizarre and grotesque murder incidents, often involving juveniles,

that have been occurring in Japan over the past decade" (*Death Note: The Killer* 358). In 2006,

Anne Allison noted that "[s]ince the 1990s, Japan has once again been under attack, but this time

the assault comes from inside rather than outside the country [. . .] Japan is being eaten up now

by inner demons, a situation epitomized by a new phenomenon in *shōnen hanzai* (youth crime),

widely depicted both in the news and in imaginary venues" (76) such as the film *Battle Royale*.

In her ethnographic study of Japanese youth, Allison recounts several cases in which ordinary

Japanese youths were reported to have committed brutal acts of violence. Of the many examples

she provides, one particularly stands out as it draws a peculiar connection to the characterization

of Light. On May 1, 2000, a seventeen-year-old, third-year male high-school student was

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[98] Jacobsen's analysis are based on the anime version of *Death Note*.

arrested for fatally stabbing a senior woman in her home. This crime was reported to have been prompted by "his desire to experience subjectively the act of killing and to observe, in another person, the 'natural' process of death" (79). Like the *Shōnen A* incident, what was unsettling about this case was that the boy came from a "normal" home. As Allison explains, he "was universally described as a "good child" (*iiko*)*. A student at a private high school, he had test scores that were always among the highest in his class; on mock college entrance exams, he ranked sixteenth out of two thousand students. Aiming to enter a high ranked private university (such as Waseda)" (79). In other words, the boy killer was a textbook example of a successful *gakureki shōnen*.[99]

To situate a reading of the "monstrous" *shōnen* and its variations in *Death Note*, I return briefly to an examination of discourses perpetuated by the moral panic over the strange child, as discussed by Andrea Arai. According to Yoneyama Shōko, "The sociological significance of the Kobe murder lies not so much in the case itself, but rather in the fact that many students found these 'extraordinary' crimes not so surprising" (3). Drawing on media coverage of the incident, Yoneyama has observed that "many students, especially junior high school students, expressed strong empathy with the 'school killer'" (3). Though these students were aware that Shōnen A's actions were wrong, their ability to empathize with him, especially in relation to how he described himself as a *tōmei na sonzai* (invisible existence), "bridged the 'ordinary' to the 'extraordinary', the 'normal' to the 'abnormal'" (Yoneyama 3). This unsettling revelation fed into parental anxieties about the well-being of their own children and seemed to suggest a widening gap between what parents *think* they know about their children and what their children actually are.

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[99] A student who has achieved top grades and attended top schools throughout his/her life course.

The Model *Gakureki Shōnen*

The story of *Death Note* centres around the seventeen-year-old Yagami Light, who is a high school student at Daikoku Private Academy. The twelve-volume series follows Light as he advances to university and at the age of twenty-three is assigned a position within the Intelligence and Information Bureau by the National Police Agency to investigate Kira.[100] Light's smooth transition from high school to university and to a career clearly marks him as an accomplished youth who has followed the Japanese life course to the letter. At school, teachers rely on him, he seems to have friends, and throughout his high school and university career, he is popular with the ladies.[101] He is, in every sense of the word, *futsū* (normal). Volume 1 of the series serves to set up Light as the ideal son. His mother boasts of his outstanding academic performance as he has placed first (yet again) in the nationwide mock college exams. Like most students preparing to write college entrance exams (*jukensei*), Light attends cram school at Gamō Prep Academy. His sister also believes that he is studying hard to become a detective, just like their father. Their father, Yagami Sōichiro, is the Chief of the National Police Agency, who later leads the investigation of Kira. The chapter "Family" offers a glimpse into Light's life at home, where he seems to live comfortably with his stay-at-home-mother, sister, and workaholic father, which captures the typical dynamic of the Japanese household. In a scene following his father's return home, the Yagami family is shown sitting at the dinner table, which

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[100] The story itself is contained in twelve volumes. The thirteenth volume, "How to Read," was published on October 13, 2006; it contained production notes and commentaries about the manga, interviews with the creators, and detailed facts about the characters. A bonus pilot story of the manga was also included.
[101] Later in the series, L dates Kiyomi Takada, a former university friend/girlfriend, who had a reputable status herself as "Miss Tō-Ōh" for her beauty and brains. Kiyomi becomes the spokesperson for Kira, but she is eventually killed by Light.

is set in an orderly fashion, though the spotless living/dining and the sombre silence conveyed in the panel invokes something uncanny about the picturesque image of this nuclear household. Later in the series, Light is enrolled in the prestigious Tō-Ōh University, a phonetic play on Tokyo University, or *Tōdai* as it is abbreviated in Japanese, where he delivers a speech during the entrance ceremony for achieving the highest score. Dressed in a suit, he represents the ideal image of a successful student with a promising future (see Figure 13). However, the superficiality of Light's appearance is exposed when, in a conversation with Ryūk, the death god, Light reveals his acute awareness of how he is perceived in society. With confidence, he states, "I'm someone who can be described as Japan's number one diligent honors student and I will reign as god over the new world" (Vol. 1: 48-49). In other words, what shields him from suspicion are the very qualities that society praises as admirable and "good." According to Jacobsen, "*Death Note's shōnen* depictions articulate the misleading nature of surface appearance, and the perils of assuming the social values and ideological leanings of an individual based on superficial criteria" (140). *Death Note*'s criticism of Japanese middle-prestige-class, achieved through the use of dramatic irony, functions to expose the hypocrisy of Japanese society in a different way than Kanari and Amagi do in their series. Hajme and Light are polar opposites: the former is represented as a loser with few expectations from his family and peers, whereas the latter epitomizes the idealized image of boyhood, similarly to how Shin'ichi is represented at the beginning of Aoyama's series.

In a genre in which crime is conventionally attributed to adults and/or to lower working-class members of society, *Death Note* specifically feeds into cultural fears and anxieties about youth delinquents by presenting Light as the story's anti-hero. Although crimes are committed by elite high schoolers in Kanari's stories, Hajime combats cultural fears of youth criminals by
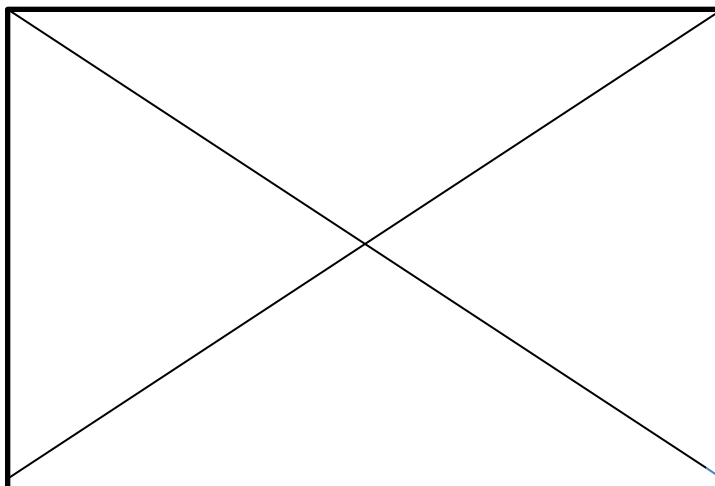
Figure 12. A picturesque image of a typical nuclear household in vo1. 1, "Kazoku" (Family).

outsmarting them and restoring order to a chaotic world. Although Hajime himself belongs to the

middle class, much of his appeal comes from the fact that he does not identify with the elite

members of his school community. Light, on the other hand, uses his social position and

popularity to deceive members of his community to create a crime-free world at any cost.

Similarly, Konan, in Aoyama's manga series, stands in polar opposition to Light as he represents
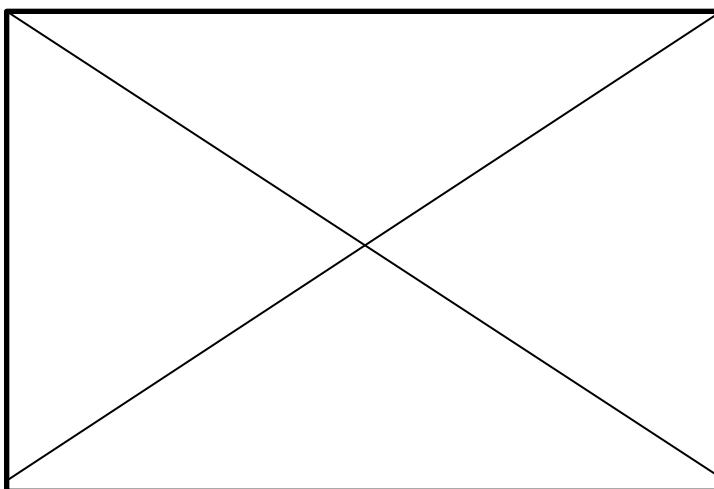

Figure 13. Dressed in a suit, Light represents the ideal image of a successful student with a
promising future in contrast to L who follows behind him in vol. 1, "Kutsujoku" (Humiliation).

idealized notions of boyhood whereas Light is the antithesis of the "*iiko*," or good child

(Simmons 102); Konan helps restore a fragmented society, which is often achieved through

teamwork, whereas Light, who is a master manipulator, is the source of chaos and destruction. In other words, Light's actions are more in line with youth criminals of his time; as Jacobsen points out, "Light's empowerment with quasi-divine, retributive power through the notebook resonates with the extreme cultural effect on perception of the adolescent boy after the circulation of *Shōnen A*'s delusional self-aggrandisement, and is a potent embodiment of the terms within which the boy killer conceived of his actions" (140).

Although many boy sleuths featured in *shōnen misuterī* manga are gifted with reason, which they use to combat irrational fears and to present a knowable and detectable world, in *Death Note* Light's intelligence enables him to weave complex schemes to commit perfect crimes and to avoid capture, a far cry from what is normally expected of boy sleuths.[102] Light is represented as the antithesis of the genius detective, taking on a role closer to Doyle's villain, Moriarty, than that of Sherlock Holmes. However, as Thomas points out, "no amount of planning can prepare Light for all eventualities, and even the Killer has an Achilles' heel. The unsustainable moral order that shapes the 'Killer society 'comes to its inevitable end" (140). Light's punishment at the end of the manga series is death, suggesting the limitations and the consequence of pursuing, as Nash might say, the wrong kind of knowledge.

Organized Chaos: Form, Content, and Theme

Death Note reveals a world wrought by organized chaos, which informs the manga both in its form and content. At the level of narrative, Hammonds and Hammonds have observed that "Ohba and Obata utilized post-modern methods of telling and resisted clear meta-narrative

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[102] Here, I refer to mystery manga, more broadly, to encompass narratives that do not strictly adapt the tradition of classic detective fiction as is the case with *Death Note*. See the introduction of chapter 5 and chapter 2, pp. 83-84 for brief explanations of the differences between mystery (*misuterī*) manga and detective (*tantei*) manga.

structures. Their narrative cannot accurately be understood as a single story or as having a single

major plot" (100). This is an important point as the manga employs frame narratives to tie

together twists and turns under two main story arcs, which are the focus of this chapter and

which include the "battles" between Light and L, and L and Near. With respect to the manga's

form, the story is organized in neat rectangular and square panels, and while the number of

panels that appear on a single page vary, there are few pages that contain fourth-wall breaks.[103]

Speech balloons, motion lines and sound effects are, for the most part, neatly contained within

the panel—almost nothing "bleeds" outside of them—which gives the impression of control,

structure, and order. In contrast, the images depicted in the panels illustrate a world of disorder

and chaos. This tension that results from the simultaneous representation of order and disorder

can be felt, for example, in the scene in which Light laughs hysterically following his encounter

with L in person for the first time. His laughter is contained within the borders of the panel, in

the privacy of his bedroom where he secretly operates as Kira, while, on the surface, he pretends

to be a normal teenager.[104] Perhaps one of the most obvious ways in which the breakdown of

order is conveyed is in the characterization of Light. His mental breakdown is aesthetically

conveyed in a series of closeup images of his facial expressions, especially his eyes, evoking the

oft-repeated phrase "The eyes are the windows to the soul." As Light succumbs to his role as

Kira, his eyes undergo a significant change in appearance from the wide-eyed innocence

depicted at the beginning of the series to a narrow, sinister-looking set of eyes by Volume 2.

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[103] There are several exceptions. For example, in Chapter 20, prior to the tennis match between Light and L, Light appears embossed on the page as if to foreshadow his victory in the game (70). Similarly, in Chapter 52, the image of Yagami Sōichirō, who is shot in the arm, bleeds outside the panel.

[104] See, for example, Chapter 17, "Trash." Under suspicion of being Kira, L has 64 surveillance cameras installed in Light's bedroom to monitor him. Realizing that he is being watched, Light carefully performs his role as "the average teenager" by engaging in activities such as looking at adult magazines (*gurabiya*). However, Light operates as Kira in secret, by, for instance, concealing a scrap of the death note and a monitor inside a potato chip bag while he is "studying."

Light's physical "transformation" mirrors his psychological breakdown as he relishes in the power of the death note.

The middle class in *Death Note* is represented as a site of fear and instability rather than of familiarity and order. From his private life to his public life, Light exudes perfection, but his sense of justice shows a discord between his elitist status in society and the maintenance of social order. Simply put, not all boys from "good" families who receive a "good" education turn out to be "good," as was the case with *Shōnen A* and several members of the *Aum Shinrikyō* who held esteemed positions in society as doctors and/or were graduates of prestigious universities such as the University of Tokyo. Ultimately, Light shows his detachment from society, revealing the illusion of middle-class homogeneity and stability.

Diagnosing the Boy Detective

In a world in which nothing is as it seems and nobody is who they say they are, the detective is tasked with an even greater challenge understanding the enigma of the human condition in a deceptively chaotic world. To combat strange criminals requires equally strange detectives. The character L, the detective who leads the investigation on Kira, is of equal importance to the narrative, but seldom critically analyzed. According to Thomas, "Much of the appeal of *Death Note* derives from the cat-and-mouse game played by the brilliant Killer and his nemesis, an equally perspicacious teenaged detective who is known only as 'L'" (140). In the manga series, little is revealed about L. He is first introduced to readers in Chapter 2 as the voice behind a computer screen. L takes extra precautions to conceal his identity, only allowing his trusted agent Watari to correspond with him directly. While readers get a glimpse of L at the beginning of the series, it is not until Chapter 11 in which L, having no choice but to cooperate with the police, is

shown in full. With both hands tucked inside his pockets, L introduces himself to Sōichirō in a casual manner. Dressed in baggy clothes and appearing barefoot, L presents a sloppy image reminiscent of that of Hajime in *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo*. The difference between Light's and L's physical appearances is made apparent in Figure 13. Aside from their notable height difference, L's image is characterized by his dishevelled hair and the bags under his eyes. In addition, like most detectives, L has strange habits such as having a sweet tooth and a dislike for wearing socks. Aside from these quirks, L is regarded as the sleuth who "has solved countless unsolved cases" and is Interpol's "trump card."

There are two "boy detectives" in addition to L whom I will briefly discuss. Mello and Near are orphan boys who were raised in Wammy's House, an orphanage for gifted children in Winchester, England. Although both compete to be L's successor following his death, it is Near who attains the title at the end of the manga series. Near, who is younger than L, proves himself a first-rate detective, as he is appointed to the position of leader of the Special Provision Kira (a special unit consisting of CIA and FBI members) and eventually solves the case with the help of his team.[105] Despite his superior deductive skills, Near, like L, has very few social skills. Dressed similarly to L, Near always appears unkempt in his oversized shirt and pants. He is also fixated with toys and puzzles and is seen playing with small figurines throughout the investigation. Despite these "childish" tendencies that cast doubt on his intellectual and leadership abilities, it is his utter strangeness that enables him to be a great detective, much like other boy detectives such as Hajime and Konan.

Mello, contrary to what his name might suggest, is aggressive and impulsive. Two years older than Near, but second in line to succeed L, he exhibits an inferiority complex and is driven

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[105] According to his profile, which appears in Volume 13, Near was born August 24, 1991, making him approximately twelve or thirteen years old at the time the story takes place.

to "kill those in my way and become number one" (Vol. 7: 198). In contrast to the laid-back images of L and Near, Mello dresses in tight leather clothes and stands tall and upright. The desperate means by which he works toward this goal, such as by joining the mafia, abducting Light's sister in exchange for the death note, and blackmailing the president about a potential outbreak of war, likens him more to Kira than to L. Blinded by his selfish pursuits, Mello is killed off in the narrative, allowing Near to inherit his new role as L.

In *Death Note*, boy detectives are fictional manifestations of what Allison calls "monstrous millennials […] youth criminals (and other disturbing actors/acts of antisociality)" (76). Jacobsen draws on Allison's works, linking the monstrous millennial to the archetype of the wandering adolescent in anime, and arguing that the recurrence of this figure throughout the 1990s can be "analysed at a discursive conjunction with the problematic 'youth panics' around the figures of the *otaku*, the *hikikomori*, the monstrous teenage killer exemplified by *Shōnen A"* (145). The wanderer, according to Jacobsen, is described in relation to the "varying degrees of autonomy of movement and spatial negotiation afforded to the teenager, usually in conjunction with a relative level of detachment from social institutions (e.g. family or school systems) that allows self-governance and devolves key decision-making responsibilities onto the individual" (26). The boy detective, as an alienated figure who lives both within and outside of his community at large, can be read as a type of wanderer, characterized by emotional and social detachment.

One way that monstrosity manifests itself in *Death Note* is in the form of mental illness and disorders. The youth represented in *Death Note* are marked by their psychological conditions and "strange" habits. According to Jacobsen, "Light and L are linked by their antisocial tendencies and social alienation, but once Light is empowered by possession of the Death Note,

he becomes socially able, charming and manipulative in contrast to L's jarring social quirks and hunched, unkempt appearance" (139). More specifically, with respect to L, Jacobsen proposes that "*Death Note* depicts the corruption of the apparently ordinary *shōnen* from apparently successful student to antisocial monster" (139) whereas "L and Near are, as *hikikomori* types without social grace or sartorial elegance, far less attractive or beguiling as protagonists despite their altruistic agenda" (141). Here, Jacobsen's diagnosis of Light as an asocial and L and Near as *hikikomori* offer an interesting lens from which we can begin to understand the role of the boy detective in the twenty-first century. According to Saitō Tamaki, *hikikomori* is "[a] state that has become a problem by the late twenties, that involves cooping oneself up in one's own home and not participating in society for six months or longer, but that does not seem to have another psychological problem as its principal source" (24). The underlying causes of *hikikomori* are both psychological and physiological, and secondary symptoms range from anthropophobia (37), obsessive-compulsive disorder (41), and insomnia (41). It is a debilitating state of social withdrawal and should be considered more than one's "difficulty interacting with other people" (37). *Hikikomori* in Japanese media are often depicted as unemployed, deranged, lethargic, and single *otaku* men. The Akihabara massacre of 2008, for example, conflated *hikikomori* with criminality, which fed into cultural fears of the unpredictable dangers posed by *hikikomori* in Japanese society. Although the characterization of L and Near do not exactly fit the model of *hikikomori* as outlined by Satō, their tendency to shut themselves away from society combined with their strange habits can be identified as symptoms of social withdrawal. In her essay "Disability in Genre Fiction," Ria Cheyne explores the representation of disability in crime fiction, arguing that "[c]rime, more than any other type of literature, encourages the reader to interpret bodies and behaviors [. . .] The genre is thus ideally suited to problematizing how we

read – and misread – disabled bodies and minds in the wider world" (190). Both L's and Near's methods of detection, if read as symptoms of their "*hikikomori*" tendencies, reassign new meanings to *hikikomori*, similar to how Hajime redefined the boundaries of *ochikobore* as these boy detectives demonstrate how their "disability" becomes a site of empowerment. To some extent, L's and Near's method of detection is reminiscent of how detectives in armchair detective stories solve crimes because they do not physically visit a crime scene, but solve cases from the comfort of their chair.

Redefining Heroism: The Defective Detectives in *Death Note*

What makes a great boy detective? In Kanari's and Amagi's manga series, Hajime lives up to his grandfather's legacy as the grandson of Kindaichi Kōsuke, Japan's greatest detective. Similarly, in Aoyama's manga, Konan defines greatness in relation to Britain's most iconic detective, Sherlock Holmes. *Death Note*, by contrast, attempts to destabilize such hero worship by challenging the heroic status often ascribed to detectives. Ohba calls into question the very existence of heroes in a world that mirrors the underworld, as shown on the first page of the manga, and instead bolsters the image of the detective as anti-hero. The anti-hero trope in contemporary adaptations of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, such as the BBC's *Sherlock*, has been explored by Francesca M. Marinaro and Kayley Thomas who define the anti-hero as follows:

> the anti-hero is characterized by emotional detachment—from family,
>
> community, nationalism or patriotism—the institutions and ideologies on which
>
> social order is founded, because to attach oneself to such notions commits the

anti-hero to subscribing to social mores rather than acting based upon his personal

code of conduct. (74) [106]

This description fits the characterization of L and Near, whose "*hikikomori*" tendencies define

their method and role as boy detectives, but unlike the conventional detective story, *Death Note*

offers no narrative closure. The end of the original twelve-volume series foreshadows a new

generation of Kira followers, presumably led by Light's sister. In the untitled one-shot manga

published two years after the completed series, Kira is believed to have returned after a three-

year hiatus, but this time committing mass murders of (elderly) people who wish to die. The

country is faced with declining life expectancy, and in this new era of crisis, Near chooses not to

intervene. Near does not epitomize the all-encompassing sense of justice and moral behavior that

we have seen in Hajime and Konan. Instead, Near resolves to take the back seat, following in the

footsteps of L, who once said:

> It's not justice. Cracking difficult cases is my hobby. If you measured good and
>
> evil deeds by current laws, I'd be responsible for many crimes. The same way you
>
> all like to solve mysteries and riddles or clear video games quickly…for me, it's
>
> [crime solving] like prolonging something I enjoy doing. That's why I only take
>
> on cases that pique my interest. It's not justice at all. And, when it comes to
>
> solving a case, I don't play fair. I'm just a dishonest human being who hates
>
> losing.

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[106] These critics note a shift in definitions of heroism in contemporary North American adaptations of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes. Notably, they argue that heroism can be understood in relation to two concepts: greatness and goodness, or the head/heart dichotomy. While Sherlock Holmes exemplifies greatness by solving crimes and apprehending criminals because he does not act in the interest of the greater good, his actions, though they are heroic, "cannot be define[d] as absolute heroism" (74). Instead, good (or the heart) is assigned to Watson, who helps "cultivate" the good hero in Sherlock Holmes.

Here, L points out that the role of the detective is not as straightforward as the Wammy schoolchildren would like to think. Rather, the detective is characterized in terms of his contradictory dispositions. At times, he appears to uphold the law, whereas at other times, he simply violates them. Detection and crime-solving are ultimately treated as sport, not necessarily in the name of justice, but for personal entertainment. It is a game of sorts, as Sherlock Holmes once said in "The Adventure of the Abbey Grange."

In fact, L's revelation is nothing new. Throughout the Sherlockian canon, there are several incidents that call into question the great detective's actions. In her essay "Sherlock Holmes and Sociology," Bonnie Menes argues that "Sherlock Holmes is no mere defender of the law. [. . .] Holmes often finds himself an unwitting accomplice in a man's death, or the advocate of deliberate deception or disruption of one kind or another" (101). In "The Speckled Band," for example, Sherlock Holmes admits having indirectly caused the death of Dr. Roylott and states that "I cannot say that it is likely to weigh very heavily upon my conscience" (Doyle 281). In "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle," Holmes does not arrest the thief, James Ryder, for he believes that sending him to jail now will only "make him a goal-bird for life" (Doyle 264). Similarly, in "The Boscombe Valley Mystery" Holmes lets a murder off the hook, and though he tells the criminal that "it is not for me to judge you," (Doyle 221) Holmes ultimately bends the rules of the law to how he sees fit. This unwritten code of conduct is hyperbolized in *Death Note,* as seen in Light's development of a god complex as Kira. Light and Near, on the other hand, draw attention to the dilemma of having to fight crimes in the modern world. If "the London in which Conan Doyle sets Holmes down is a complex place, so complex that Holmes himself, for his own good reasons, must sometimes actually break the law" (Menes 101), then, how sufficient is the law itself? As L points out in the passage above, ideas of criminality and lawfulness are

relative and situational. The boy detectives that emerge in *Death Note* are neither good nor bad. They are fallible and deeply flawed. In a world in which justice is no longer clear cut, *Death Note* shows boy detectives mediating their role in ways that are personally meaningful yet controversial.

At the beginning of this thesis, I took up Kerr's question of whether the *world* has outgrown the classic boy detective. Although the boy detective seems to have lost some popularity and relevance in the American and British imaginations, I have shown how the boy detective remains a culturally relevant figure in the Japanese manga tradition by discussing his role in relation to three archetypes. However, because Light's role as a criminal undercuts and even challenges the figure of the boy detective, it raises the question of whether we are any closer to an answer to critics who suggest that the boy detective tradition is "over." It is important to keep in mind that the boy detective tradition does not end with *Death Note* and that manga series such as *Meitantei Konan* are ongoing. The boy detectives of the Lost Decade signalled the revival of puzzle mysteries and detective stories, popularizing the genre of mystery manga for a contemporary Japanese audience. In doing so, boy detectives in Japan have solved the problem of the disappearance of this figure from Western literature, extending and problematizing the image of the boy detective to not only keep the genre alive but also to reinvigorate it. *Death Note* provides but one way of understanding the development of the boy detective figure in manga and Light's death at the end of the narrative does not signal the death of the boy detective tradition in manga.

Chapter 6

Conclusions

This thesis has sought to accomplish several goals: to draw attention to the literary history that informs the construction of the boy detective tradition in manga; to identify the sociohistorical significance of the Lost Decade in relation to a critical examination of three commercially successful manga series published between the 1990s and early 2000s; and to demonstrate a link between fictional representations of youth criminals and crime to the discursive formation of youth delinquents in Japan. More specifically, I have suggested that the boy detective emerged to address perceived youth problems, but in thematically different ways. Chapter Three explores the representation of Hajime in Kanari's and Amagi's manga series, which reassigned new meaning to the word *ochikobore* by dispelling the myth of out-of-control teens associated with the term. Kanari used the figure of the *ochikobore* as the genius boy detective, whose role as the "loser" and outsider reveals a deeply flawed school system. In contrast to Hajime's image as an *ochikobore*, Chapter Four examines the representation of the ideal *shōnen* in Aoyama's boy protégé Konan, specifically the definition of the boy detective according to Japanese patterns of socialization. In contrast to Konan restoring a patriotic vision of justice, law and order, Chapter Five explores a world in which the strange and unpredictable have become the norm and where boy detectives "embody the confusion of a transforming environment" (Arai 15) in fascinating and horrifying ways. *Death Note* lays bare the superficiality that characterizes the genius boy detective and debunks idealistic standards of justice and morality.

A further contestation of this thesis is that the tradition of detective manga developed from a literary tradition, and it does not exist in a vacuum. Chapter One explores the roots of Japanese detective fiction to uncover the rich but contentious political history of the genre. This

literary history proved useful in contextualizing themes of nation and youth identity in *shōnen*

tantei narratives as *mangaka* turned to the past to address their own national concerns in the

relative present. Chapter Two situates the boy detective tradition in relation to the works of

Osamu Tezuka and the *gekiga* tradition, and identifies key tropes, themes, and aesthetic

conventions of the genre.

From the representation of the *ochikobore* in Hajime, to the puzzle-solving geek (*suiri*

otaku) in Shin'ichi/Konan and to the *hikikomori* in L and Near, the boy detectives discussed in

this thesis are informed by different literary and manga traditions, but all of them have something

strange in common. [107] They redefine markers of criminality by embodying traits and

characteristics of youth criminals, demystifying the false stereotype of youth who have fallen

outside cultural norms. As I argue in a forthcoming publication on *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo*

and *Meitantei Konan*, "The question still exists, however, of whether these narratives are

symptoms of youth problems, correctives to them, or even both. What is certain is that the

pervasive role of the *shônen tantei* in the twenty-first century suggests the durability of the

detective as a fascinating and desirable character, in that the 'Other'—the young, the strange, the

outsider, the loser—is able to make meaning of troubled times in his or her own way."[108]

The Future of Boy Sleuths

On April 8, 2018, Aoyama's detective, Konan, was featured in a special event, "Konan's

Miraculous Day Trip to Shibuya Police Station" ("Edogawa Konan Kiseki no ichi nichi Shibuya

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[107] In Volume I of *Meitantei Konan*, Ran refers to Shin'ichi as a "*suiri otaku*" (literally, reasoning geek). Otaku, which can be used as a Japanese derogatory term to describe a certain group of people (usually men) who are obsessed with anime and manga is applied to Shin'ichi as if to debunk cultural stereotypes about otakus in general. The word "*suiri*" comes from *suiri shōsetsu*, or puzzle mysteries.

[108] "Combatting Youth Violence: The Emergence of Boy Sleuths in Japan's Lost Decade." *Mechademia: Second Arc*, vol 11. (Forthcoming).

Keisatsushō-chō,") as part of its campaign for its twenty-second annual animated film release. In collaboration with the Tokyo Metropolitan Police Department, Konan (the mascot) received a letter of appreciation at the inaugural event that also raised awareness of the importance of road safety. His role as a boy detective goes beyond the realm of fiction and has inspired the Japanese community at large. Konan has gained a reputation that no other fictional boy detective has achieved. Although both *Kindaichi Shōnen no Jikenbo* and *Death Note* remain popular, Aoyama's *Meitantei Konan* series will most likely continue to hold sway among other boy detective narratives for several reasons.[109] Whereas Kanari's stories are marked by a kind of insistence on generic and cultural verisimilitude, and perhaps even limited by that insistence, Aoyama's series is more versatile as it fuses together elements from various subgenres including action, spy, romance, and science fiction, while maintaining the essence of classical detective fiction at its core. Indeed, this might be a result of strategic marketing moves to have the series cater to a wider reading audience, but it is also a contributing factor to its ongoing success. Furthermore, in an interview, Aoyama has hinted at how the series will end, but the end is yet to come.[110] Financial concerns are important in the continuation of the series, which ultimately affects its trajectory.

Aoyama's manga series can be characterized in terms of plurality as it blends and fuses together genres, conventions, and allusions to fictional detectives and their authors. However, this quality of excess, which has contributed to the series' success, might also indicate the limitations of the classical detective fiction mode in the manga tradition of the boy detective. As

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[109] In 2017, Kōdansha celebrated the twenty-fifth anniversary of the *Kindaichi* manga series by hosting a real-life game of detection. The free event invited participants to travel using the railway system to solve the mystery of a cursed letter.

[110] Aoyama himself speculated that the series would reach an end by 100 volumes, but has admitted that it may take longer. Also considering that 2019 marks the twenty-fifth anniversary of the series, it may be safe to predict that the series will continue for, at least, a little more than a year.

the plot thickens and involves a network of international crime fighters and criminals, *Meitantei Konan* begins to take the shape of a spy series. *Death Note*, similarly, has also demonstrated innovative and captivating ways in which the boy detective thrives even as it strays from the framework of classical detective fiction.

Limitations and Further Research

This thesis contributes to the field of Japanese detective fiction criticism as it builds on literary scholarship of the genre, but widens the critical lens to encompass manga narratives. As mentioned earlier, detective manga is a culturally significant genre that addresses a wide range of social issues. Although there is a growing critical interest in the study of *shōnen* detective fiction, it is relatively new. For this reason, I have focused on the figure of the *shōnen* detective over the *shōjo* (girl) detective. More specifically, my own research has been limited to a close textual analysis of carefully selected excerpts from three different *shōnen* manga series. Research that encompasses an entire corpus of detective manga published within the past two decades is certainly beyond the scope of this thesis, but a comprehensive analysis, a time-consuming but a rewarding endeavour, will most likely offer insightful interpretations that I may have overlooked or could have better expanded upon. For example, an analysis of Seimaru Amagi's *Detective Academy Q* (2001-05) would supplement my discussion on the theme of sociality and of the detective manga genre thwarting the threat of the strange child by showing young boys and girls utilizing their powers for the greater good.

There is new theoretical work to be undertaken as well. Having situated this project at several junctions, I have shown that there is no one singular method or approach to the study of detective manga. An interdisciplinary framework allows for deep critical reflection on the moral

panic over youth delinquents in the understanding of the construction of youth identities in

shōnen tantei manga. This project foregrounds themes of nation and youth identity, which are in

turn connected to issues of class, region and gender, areas which can be fruitfully expanded upon

in future research. Although this thesis focuses on *shōnen* narratives, a comparative study of the

literary construction of the *shōjo* detective in manga might also offer compelling feminist

perspectives on the genre.[111]

Much more formative work needs to be done to establish the field of detective manga, but

I hope I have shown that contrary to what has been stated by other critics, the boy detective or

shōnen tantei is ubiquitous in Japanese popular culture. It is difficult to predict what the

landscape of the genre will look like in the future because of its malleability and diversity. For

the purposes of this thesis, the longevity of Aoyama's series and the popularity of Kanari's and

Ohba's works still speak to our inability to comprehend youth who continue to navigate changes

at school and at home in the twenty-first century.

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[111] For example, *Zodiac PI* (2001-03) features a thirteen-year-old girl protagonist who solves mysteries using astrology. The role of young girls and women in the detective genre is common in other media such as anime and TV series. The Japanese TV series *Miss Sherlock*, an adaptation of Doyle's Sherlock Holmes, was released by Hulu and HBO Asia in 2018, starring Yūko Takeuchi as Sherlock Holmes and Shihori Kanijiya as Watson.

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