

Signs in International Media: The Image of the Journalist in Anime

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SASSI Presentation 16 March 2020



Introduction: What is anime?

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In Japan, manga and anime are a basic transmission of culture through media spanning the past three generations. Anime is either an original or more often than not adapted from a popular manga, more easily understood as comic books or graphic novels.

This medium will likely be seen by many viewers of younger generations as audiences become increasingly international and transglobal. Because of this, it feels important to examine the symbolic impact the mediated culture could have on individual and social lives.

Introduction: How can popular culture be used to represent journalists and their subjects, and why does this matter?

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Research on the topic of anime has largely been focused on education and teaching methods but is lacking in other areas, such as journalism.

The ultimate purpose of this research is to explore mediated messages, visual and textual, within anime through a journalistic lens.

Considering the rising influence of current transnational media, the artistic representation and real-world connotation within such works can be explored to expand an understanding of how global relationships and cultures interact.

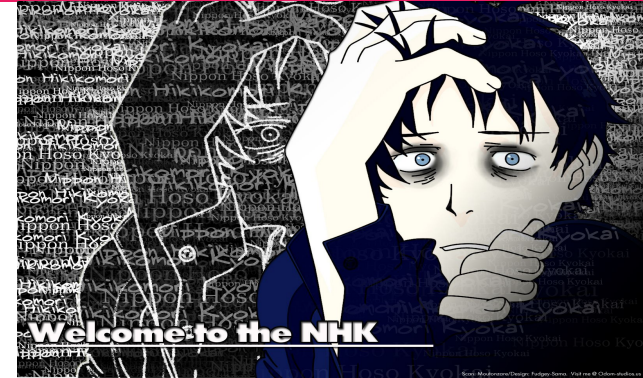
Background/Review of the Literature

Some History about Anime

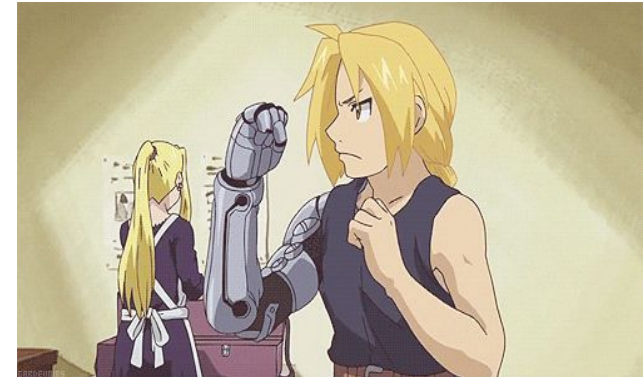
Amy Shiron Lu (2008)

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Amy Shiron Lu (2008) argues that “de-politicized internationalization has made anime more ‘open’, allowing for more participation.... What audiences see is not any specific cultural characteristics but a blend of different cultures” (p. 173).

In her interviews, “one fan even said that it was the racially ambivalent anime characters that propelled him to see more anime” (p. 173).



Edward Elrich from *Fullmetal Alchemist*



Lu (2008): Continued

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Anime “remediates classical Hollywood films’ continuity editing styles, paintings, video games, comics, and multicultural elements and turns itself into a product without cultural boundaries” (2008, p. 175).



Background/Review of the Literature

How the Media Views Anime and Japan

Kaichiro and Washburn (2013):

Anime itself has often been a target of media attention. Kaichiro's work is translated by Washburn and notes that the term otaku (or nerd) gained wide usage in a discriminatory sense in August 1989.

Between 1988 and 1989, the police discovered that four small girls who had been murdered, and the perpetrator of these crimes was a plump, timid-looking 26-year-old man named Miyazaki Tsutomu. The mass media searched for an image to explain this criminal as well as his motives and thus turned their cameras on Miyazaki's room (2013, p. 60).

Kaichiro and Washburn (2013):

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Galbraith cites “that otaku came to represent in the media everything that was wrong with Japanese society in the 1990s” and “in Japan, NHK and Asahi Shimbun deemed otaku a discriminatory word and banned it” (p. 217).

Galbraith states that in spite of tension regarding the otaku image within Japan, “it was flourishing overseas as a way to describe fans of the burgeoning supply of import anime and Japanese popular culture” (p. 217).



Translation:
Otsukare-sama-desu “Good work”

Background/Review of the Literature

Journalism in Popular Culture: Portrayals of Reporting

Foss (Spring 2016-Spring 2018, IJPC Journal)

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Katherine Foss notes that, though “they are not always portrayed as superheroes, comic narratives often feature reporters, publishers, and editors” (Spring 2016-Spring 2018, p. 1).

It is well-known that “Superman (Clark Kent) and Spider-Man (Peter Parker) serve dual roles as heroes and journalists.”

In spite of this “celebration of journalism in comic books and their adaptations, public confidence in the profession has been steadily declining since the heyday of journalism in the 1970s” (p. 2).



Stevens (2009)

Stevens says that “comics have presented portrayals of working journalists from every era since 1938” and though they have been “historically marginalized, the increase in recent scholarship should continue to open a relatively accessible but largely untapped resource of cultural significance” (p. 63).

Methodology

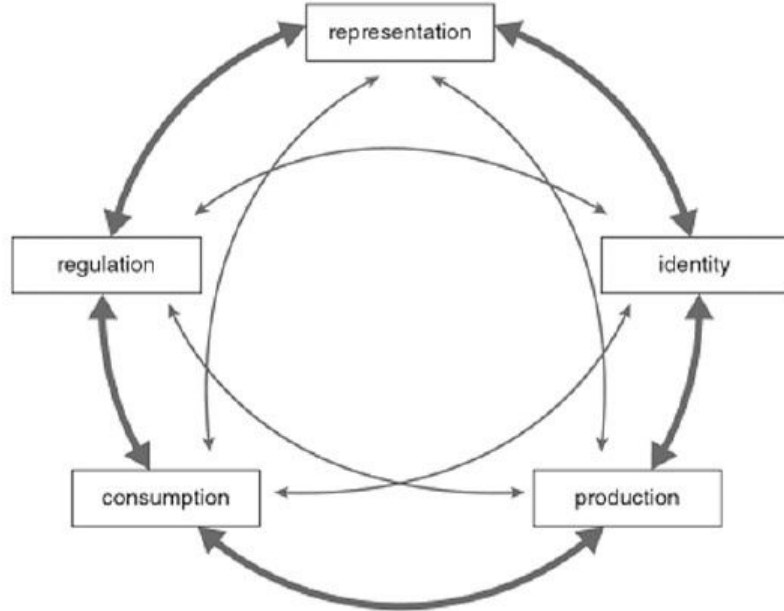
The plan for analysis will include a comparison and description of how papers in the U.S. have researched journalism in popular culture.

To further and honor semiotic research, analysis of ideas will relate to “Representation” by Stuart Hall, Jessica Evans, and Sean Nixon, as well as Hall’s work on encoding/decoding.

Yoshiko Okuyama’s Semiotic Approach to Reading Japanese Film and Anime will be used to supplement research. Gillian Rose’s Discourse Analysis 1 also has many overlapping themes worth integrating into this work.

Methodology: Continued

The circuit of culture in “Representation”



Representation: connects to	Consumption	Production
Regulation: connects to	Production	Identity
Consumption: connects to	Representation	Identity
Production: connects to	Representation	Regulation
Identity: connects to	Regulation	Consumption

Discussion



Limitations: Too much personal knowledge about the topic. Time constraints. Semiology has methodological drawbacks, according to Rose (2006), as its preference for detailed readings of individual images raises questions about the representativeness and replicability of its analysis.

Topics for further research: *Journalism in popular culture *Animated depiction of sports, education, fan culture, disability, & LGBTQ representation