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Spreading the word : fan translations of manga in a global context

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University of Iowa

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SPREADING THE WORD:
FAN TRANSLATIONS OF MANGA
IN A GLOBAL CONTEXT

by

Kristin Anderson Terpstra

An Abstract

Of a thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the
Doctor of Philosophy degree in Communication Studies in
the Graduate College of
The University of Iowa

July 2012

Thesis Supervisor: Associate Professor Kembrew McLeod

ABSTRACT

Manga, or Japanese comic books, are one of the newest popular media imports from Japan to garner a sizable following in the U.S. Shortly before the establishment of an American manga publishing industry and the investment in resources to publish manga legally, fans calling themselves scanslators (*scan + translators*) began translating Japanese manga themselves and distributing it to other fans through the Internet. This dissertation focuses on the manga importation process from several different angles, comparing within each the struggles and similarities between the actions and motives of scanslators and publishers. Comparing and contrasting the practices and norms of scanslators with those of the American manga publishing industry, this case study provides insight into the ways that fans of transnational texts are involved in a system of global media flows whose paths are determined by legal, cultural, economic, and political forces.

This work focuses on three stages in the manga importation process: selection, translation, and distribution. This study is based on the textual analysis of trade journal articles and web sites, informed by interviews with scanslators and manga industry workers. I conducted interviews over a six-month period in 2008, focusing on two groups, the publishing company Tokyopop and the scanslation group "Paradise." I carried out follow-up interviews a year later. I supplemented these interviews with interviews from freelance manga translators. I demonstrate principles influencing the flow of other kinds of media across borders. Manga serves as a prime example of the rise and transformation of a sector of the book market, and more broadly as a form of media. This case also serves as a snapshot of a moment of change within the publishing

industries as they move towards increased digitization.

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Graduate College
The University of Iowa
Iowa City, Iowa

CERTIFICATE OF APPROVAL

PH.D. THESIS

This is to certify that the Ph.D. thesis of

Kristin Anderson Terpstra

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CHAPTER 1 MANGA IN THE U.S.: SOME THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL BACKGROUND

Manga are one of the newest popular media imports from Japan to garner a sizable following in the U.S. Manga—meaning at root “irresponsible pictures”—are black-and-white, graphical narratives often initially published in serial chapters and later collected into volumes. Available not only in specialty shops across the country but also in freestanding and mall bookstores and mass retailers such as Wal-Mart, manga have popularized the graphic novel format for a broader American audience. The 2009 market for manga books in Japan was worth ¥418.7 billion (about \$4.5 billion); manga magazine sales represented another ¥191.3 billion (\$2.12 billion) (“Manga Sales,” 2010). Manga exports from Japan are valued at more than \$429 million a year (Yadao, 2009). In 2009, the American manga market earned \$140 million, representing a 35% share of all graphic novels sales in the U.S. (“2009 graphic novel,” 2010). Shortly before the establishment of an American manga publishing industry and the investment in resources to publish manga legally, fans calling themselves scanslators (*scan + translators*) began translating Japanese manga themselves and distributing it to other fans through the Internet. (Other authors, such as Lee [2009], have used the alternate spelling, “scanlators.” I chose to use the spelling “scanslators” because both spellings are regularly used by fans. “Scanslators” has a closer link to the original word “translators.”) Scholars have credited the work of scanslators and other fans for building the foundation for a thriving market of Japanese popular cultural goods (Leonard, 2005; Napier, 2007).

Manga has entered the U.S. for English speaking audiences through two primary methods: First, publishing companies have licensed, or paid for rights, to translate and

publish manga. These books are now available all over the United States at comic book stores, ordinary bookstores, and Internet booksellers. Second, scanslators have obtained Japanese-language versions of manga books and magazines, scanned the pages, and replaced the Japanese text with English. They have provided these through online download sites, web sites, peer-to-peer download sites, and Internet Relay Chat channels—primarily for free. While scanslators translate without permission from the authors or original publishers, many scansion groups also attempt to limit any damage that the violation of copyright may cause.

Publishers used to maintain an ambivalent relationship with scanslators, monitoring their activities for signs of market trends, while maintaining an official stance against them. More recently, manga publishers have banded together to act against scanslators, protecting their interests in a much more conventional early-21st century manner. Scanslators still operate today despite the widespread availability and recognition of legally-published manga.

Manga has become a cultural form with considerable cultural influence in countries other than Japan. The case of manga in the United States is notable in that the United States has an established comic book industry. Having spread through the United States, manga have posed enough of a threat in the marketplace to cause decades-old American comics publishers to adopt similar stylistic conventions, or even license manga themselves in addition to the American comics they usually publish. The mainstreaming of manga is in large part due to its large fan base. To better examine the rise of manga, it is important to examine the practices of the fans and audiences intended to buy manga. Many English-language studies of manga have focused on the consumption of manga by

both American readers and Japanese readers. Scholars have often focused on the narrative, textual and graphic qualities of manga, but the means by which manga enter the United States has been understudied. This is especially true of the industries responsible for bringing manga to the U.S. While the U.S. has a well-established comics industry, manga has entered and affected the comics industry, the book industry, and popular culture in general. Nonetheless, retailers and publishers have blamed the late-2000's decline in manga sales on scanslators. It is necessary to study these industries as they go through a time of change, because it marks a time in which the "old ways" are still remembered, but "new ways" are being incorporated into everyday practices.

My aim in this dissertation is to focus on the manga importation process from several different angles, comparing within each the struggles and similarities between the actions and motives of scanslators and publishers. I explore the dynamics of fans translating shoujo manga without permission from authors or publishers. (Shoujo manga is, in essence, manga marketed to young women.) Compared with the practices and norms of the American manga publishing industry, this example provides insight into the ways that fans of transnational texts are involved in a system of global media flows whose paths are determined by legal, cultural, economic, and political forces. Some studies have already focused on active, female manga fans, but I focus on how shoujo manga translators take part in the global industrial system through their activities.

While shoujo manga are highly successful in Japan, a neatly corresponding category of American comics does not exist. The success of shoujo manga in the United States has demonstrated that a market exists in the United States despite a lack of comics marketed to women since the last half of the 20th century. The situation is unique in that

the manga industry is an example of an industry built on foundations of piracy. Because a profitable market for manga did not exist in the U.S. before piracy, the pirates in essence helped pre-establish a market that investors could back.

While producers and productive consumers in many media industries work together, their differing goals pit them against one another. While translators and publishers work in tandem, their goals and means of achieving them are different enough to cause conflict.

This chapter provides an overview of key theories, methods, and literatures to be used in the dissertation, and also introduces the dissertation as a whole. I situate the study within fan and audience studies today, and the study of the globalization of media and translation within a global context. I also provide an overview of previous studies concerning manga, and historical background for shoujo manga and translation. In my study, I outline the decision-making process involved in the translation of manga as a relationship involving both audiences and industries. I also explore the nature of this relationship, and its implications to broader issues about the movement of transnational media. The manga translation process involves many steps, from choosing what to translate to publication and distribution. Along the way, however, each step depends on decisions made by individuals based on their knowledge of the market, of legal matters, and of the cultural environment.

The study of popular culture is important to understanding processes of globalization. Studies of globalization have tended to focus on the ways in which industries move media around the globe, and the unevenly distributed nature of this movement. The study of popular culture, on the other hand, has mostly focused on

popular texts and audience practices, and the role that structures of law, technology, and industries play in respect to popular culture would benefit from even further study. The study of manga would benefit greatly from an approach that combines different perspectives, such as critical media industry studies (Havens, Lotz, & Tinic, 2009). While studying the manga industries and manga readers are both important in their own right, both are understood better by taking the context of one another into consideration. The American manga industry is one that has benefited from fan practices (Schodt, 1996), much as the anime industry has (Leonard, 2005b).

The literature review of this work explores previous scholarship in three areas. First, I discuss previous work written about the globalization of media in general. Second, I discuss trends in audience and fan studies. Third, I give an overview of previous studies involving manga. Exploration of the existing work done in these areas is necessary to understand the advancements that my research provides. In addition, existing work provides the theoretical lenses needed to help understand the importation of manga into the United States.

Globalization and Systems of Cultural Flow

Current globalization scholars are concerned with what happens when texts cross national and cultural borders. The uptake of cultural texts, the reception and transformation of texts, and the promotion of texts to specific areas of the world are all factors important to the study of the global movement of media. Historically scholars have been concerned with the homogenizing effects of media hailing from a global media system dominated by industries based in the United States. More recent scholars, however, believe these systems to be more complex than previously theorized. While

media industries from the United States have undeniably had an impact on the world, from dominating local markets, to influencing the standards and practices of industries, to coloring local audience preferences, discussions of United States media industries as a dominant force in the world must take many factors into account. In this section, I outline the scholarship to present about globalization and cultural flows, in order to better situate my study.

Early works about international communication characterized transcultural media flows as dominance of western or American media over poorer or less powerful countries. Schiller (1969) argued that the structure and policy of United States media are directly related to economic and political power in the world. Tomlinson (2002) later revised the imperialist thesis to take into account changing political climates of the world, saying that Western nation-states no longer try to establish colonial empires across the globe, imposing language, culture, religion, and economic practices such as slavery. Instead, he posits a less intentional spread of culture around the world resulting from economic and cultural practices that are part of the globalization process.

Scholars have pointed to increasing media ownership and conglomeration on the part of rich and powerful countries that leads to cultural imperialism (see Herman and McChesney, 1997; McPhail, 2002). Miller et al. (2005) further extend the imperialism thesis in their study of how Hollywood not only spreads its products to other countries, but also depends on the labor of film and other workers in non-American countries. Thus, American companies not only use the broadcast time and movie screens of other countries, but also employ their media workforce to spend time and money on American productions instead of domestic productions. More recent literature has continued in this

vein. Scholars warn against uncritical celebrations of globalization (especially as hybridity) that obscure the increasing power imbalances between nation-states and that normalize the establishment of global consumer culture in countries too poor to be advantaged by its establishment locally (see Bamyeth, 2000; Burnham, 2002; Isaak, 2005; Woods, 2000; Kraidy, 2005).

The idea of Western or American dominance has been questioned on many fronts, however. The idea that the presence of American media in non-American countries leads to homogenization or Americanization of culture has been the focus of many critiques. Audience studies scholars called for a more complicated understanding of media uptake that takes local culture and media reception into account. For instance, Ang (1985) found that viewers from different cultures interpreted the program *Dallas* in ways that aligned with their belief systems. Likewise, other scholars have questioned the premise that there is a direct correlation between the presence of media from another culture and the loss of local culture and tradition (Fejes, 1981; Penacchoni 1984). Further, theorists have complicated notions about global flows to account for the increasing complexity and decentralization of media flows. Scholars such as Ang (1991), Appadurai (1990), Caughie (1990), and Robertson (1994) developed more sophisticated accounts for transnational cultural flows that consider factors such as reception and cultural proximity. In these cases, audience interpretation and cultural context figures into what happens when media texts travel.

Iwabuchi (2002) notes that the experience of “cultural domination” may be a discursive construct rather than the receiving audience’s perceived experience. As Tomlinson (1999) states, experience of globalization is local and embodied. Individuals

understand the world surrounding them through the communicative practices in which they take part. The popular culture of a society reflects the society itself in some ways: in certain ways, it reflects the prevailing norms of a culture, and in other ways, it acts as a site of contestation and struggle. For many authors, the idea of globalization has come to take the place of cultural imperialism: “If cultural imperialism means cultural imposition, globalisation means cultural exchange” (Downey, 2006). In the cultural globalization literature, the state and the nation tend to be associated with hierarchy, monolithic structures, historically contingent identities, repressive cultures, competition over geography, and war. Cultural globalization is viewed as positive because it is thought to weaken the nation (Kraidy, 2005). Iwabuchi (2002) and Curtin (2007) provide revisions to the cultural imperialism thesis by showing that the United States is not necessarily the center from which media flows. Japan dominates much of eastern Asia’s media market, and Hong Kong’s movies have been very successful both regionally and worldwide. In both of these works, however, the United States still looms as a powerful force in relation to the Asian countries.

Globalization is not only apparent in mainstream cultures, but also in subcultures. Roberts (2005) notes that subcultures increasingly incorporate transnational elements. Further, the subculture industry is an integral part of the global cultural industry today, causing a shift where increasingly, subcultural capital must be found in cultures other than one’s own. As a result, what is considered mainstream popular culture in one place might be considered subcultural in another. This tends to complicate ideas about the direction of cultural flows and notions of cultural proximity, frustrating ideas that cultural flow can be predicted by how culturally proximate an artifact is, or that flows occur in

one direction or another. Through the study of industry practices and audience activities, I illustrate how the cultural imperialist thesis can further be revised and amended. The ways in which industry and audience are mutually constitutive have not been widely discussed, and the imperialist thesis will benefit from such an examination.

Research that combines both a global and a local perspective of the movement of media further helps to complicate ideas about cultural flows and the dynamics between audience and industry. Fan Studies has a history of exploring the ways in which cultural exchange and meaning-making takes place on a local level (Sandvoss, 2005). I extend this line of inquiry to consider the ways in which fans are involved in the industry, in that industrial and fan practices reciprocally shape one another. As devoted consumers of media texts, the activities of fans should be considered more in terms of industrial practices and norms.

Audience and Fan Studies

Audience studies in recent years has become more oriented toward the ways in which audiences take part in media creation with a high level of interactivity. Fans and non-fans alike have been said to have created a “participatory culture” in which non-professionals create widely disseminated media content, such as remixes, mashups, fan videos, and other forms of user-generated content (Jenkins, 2006). This has been celebrated as an instance of people gaining power within the media system. Scanslation activity cannot automatically be categorized as empowerment, however. Also, these translations are neither simply creations based on desire, nor new, hybrid texts. The activity of scanslators is involved in a complex transnational system of media flows.

The research area of Fan Studies has been critiqued for overemphasizing the potentially liberatory and empowering nature of fan activities. Instead, this dissertation explores the ways in which fan activities are entangled within global systems of power. This case is especially rich, in that manga crosses cultural and national borders and requires translation. This means that manga is subject to regulations of popular media within the marketplace, including determinations of the right to translate popular media. In short, this study looks at power dynamics created by gender, copyright legislation, and cultural boundary-crossing. In it, I argue that the activity of fan translators (and other fans of transcultural media) needs to be considered within a global media system shaped by law, culture, and economy.

The activity of fans is potentially liberatory and potentially not. In this specific case, the activity of shoujo manga fans has demonstrated and created interest in female-oriented graphic novels and comics. This could be seen as a liberatory niche-making of the kind demonstrated by Baym (2000), Radway (1987), and Jenkins (1992). However, the translation work that manga fans do operates within parameters perceived by fans as compatible with the publishing industries and copyright law. In other words, fans characterize their work in terms of creating a new form of popular culture that does not replace the industry, but as one that works with the industry.

Studies of popular media set the precedent for anime and manga studies. While early scholarship on popular culture focused on analysis of the text, later scholars tried to complicate further the relationship between audiences and media texts. The sociocultural context in which media consumption occurs was added to the equation, thus complicating the interpretive process to include the producers, audience members, and any relevant

contextual matters. Researchers might begin from the micro view, where the everyday lives, social environment, and individual experience of audience members are taken into consideration. This is typically referred to as the Cultural Studies approach. The macro view includes as context the machinations of global media industries that figure into the production, availability, etc. of media texts and power relations that arise from these factors. This has been called the Political Economy approach. Mankekar (1999) and Abu-Lughod (2005) both advocate a triangulated or multi-method approach that integrates industrial and audience practices. Their studies show the interrelatedness of television with everyday lives, communities, cultures, nation-states, and industrial goals.

Cultural studies scholars such as Hebdige (1979), Hall (2001), and McRobbie (2001) set the groundwork for the validation of the study of popular culture. Popular culture, they argued, was important to study since it reflected, affected, and was part of the discourse of society. As such, it was just as, if not more, important to study popular culture as classic literature and other high cultural forms. These scholars tended to focus on studying popular culture (street fashion, TV shows, etc.) as *texts* to be analyzed. Later scholars argued that researchers should study *audiences* of popular culture, to understand better how texts are part of society. One movement that grew out of this turn towards the audience is known as *Fan Studies*. Fan studies focuses on showing the ways that fans, previously thought to be mindlessly devoted to one or several popular cultural texts, actively create a space of agency in their lives through their interactions with the texts. Examples of fan studies include works by Jenkins (1992), Bacon-Smith (2000), and Hills (2002).

Early Fan Studies scholars were concerned with a lack of attention to the cultural practices constituted by audiences. The study of audiences up until this time was mainly concerned with why audiences preferred some media over others and what psychological effects media had on audiences (for an overview of this literature, see Lewis [1991]). Coinciding with the rise of critical and cultural studies as important approaches to the study of communication, early audience studies scholars called for a better perspective of audiences. Radway (1987) called for a turn away from the statistical models generally employed by sociology and advocated an approach to studying audiences that uses textual analysis in concert with interviews and surveys completed by fans. Ang (1991), meanwhile, questioned the presuppositions about audiences that scholars have. She argued that the construct “audience” is often based on industrial norms and conventions, and called for the study of audiences contextualized within the culture, history, and experience of audience members.

Jenkins’ work *Textual Poachers* (1992), has been held up as the landmark work within Fan Studies. Throughout this work, Jenkins refutes earlier assumptions that fans are atypical of the media audience because of their seeming obsessiveness and passivity. *Textual Poachers* asserts that fans are not abnormal but are part of an enduring cultural phenomenon that demonstrates the possibility of an active—not passive—audience. The active audience thus became a distinguishing feature of Fan Studies. Bacon-Smith (1992) follows a similar vein by describing how fans of *Star Trek* take part in a “media fandom,” writing fiction and poetry and creating works of art based on their favorite television shows. The result of this new way of thinking about audiences was an emphasis on audience activity and meaning-making, turning away from industrial standards for

studying audiences (e.g., ratings, audience response). By extension, many of the early fan studies incorporate industrial methods into their studies to a much lesser extent.

Ultimately, turning towards the audience caused a turn away from industrial practices in general.

One critique of early fan studies is that the authors tend to validate fan activities without critical consideration—any fan activity was thought to lend fans agency and power against repressive societal norms (Hills, 2002; Seiter, 1999). Researchers have also been called out for the unquestioned validations of fans' devotions (Hills, 2002). Additionally, they have been critiqued for focusing too much on the outspoken, publicly active fans, as opposed to less outspoken, less visible fans (Hills, 2002; Seiter, 1999). On the other hand, Fan Studies scholars also reevaluated popular texts such as sci-fi television series, soap operas, and romance novels, previously reviled by academics (e.g., Ang, 1985; Bacon-Smith, 1992; Fiske, 1994; Jenkins, 1992; Radway, 1987). Many of the popular texts were considered "feminine" texts by nature and thought best suited for young and/or female audiences. Scholars' validation of fan activities associated with these shows refigured fans not as social misfits with a misplaced, blind devotion to specific media texts, but as media consumers whose involvement with popular texts was just as important as society's involvement with other cultural practices. Fan studies thus grew to be an area where scholars could study underrepresented audience groups such as women and youth, and largely remains this way.

Also, Fiske (2006) underscores the importance of considering the audience when considering any popular culture phenomenon. For something to be popular, it must fulfill the needs of both audience *and* producers. While the motives of audiences and producers

may be at odds with one another at times, they may be met in one cultural commodity because popular culture has both financial and cultural value.

More recent studies of fans have focused on topics such as online fan groups. Whereas early Fan Studies scholars focused on the activities of fans meeting at conventions or through the postal service, many contemporary fan studies turn to the Internet as the place where fans with common interests can meet one another, so much so that some fan studies have transformed into textual analyses of fan-created texts (e.g., Gregson, 2005). Online media are the focus of early online studies by Kendall (2002), Turkle (1997), and Hills (2001). Kendall (2002) and Turkle (1997) explore the ways in which online environments function as virtual social spaces and how identity-formation and notions of gender, race, and class are socially constructed online.

Hills (2001) focuses more on online fan groups, to explore the ways in which fan activities differ because of the online medium. Community-building is the focus of key studies by Baym (2000) and Bacon-Smith (2000). Baym's (2000) study is a virtual ethnography of an online fan community, and argues that soap operas provide a social space for women to build communities that honor traditionally female concerns and values. She characterizes the soaps communities (USENET newsgroups) as social worlds in which people who never meet face-to-face are able to build and successfully support their world through their online practices. By looking at the community in three ways (as an online community, as an audience community, and a community of practice), she reiterates and explores the important fact that the way in which academics characterize their subject of study ultimately affects the outcome of the study and the way in which the study reflects life as the participants understand it.

Bacon-Smith's (2000) study focuses on the community-building aspects of sci-fi fan groups as well, but proposes that they are communities of both creators and audience in which those roles are frequently interchanged. Further, she suggests that science fiction fandom is a possible prototype of the world as it will be in coming decades; it is a culture that has been chosen, not determined geographically. Her conclusions predate those that follow years later, such as found in Jenkins. Current fan and audience studies literature continues to be dominated by studies that explore the relationship between audiences and media producers. Currently, this dichotomy is questioned because "professional" media content is increasingly more comprised of audience-generated texts (e.g., Jenkins, 2006).

Critical Media Industry Studies

Due to the continued blurring of the line between consumer and producer, one should take a midlevel perspective of the agents involved in producing media texts—not simply a close-up view of the texts themselves or a wide view of global industries. Scholars concerned with media have identified a need for this midlevel perspective, particularly in dealing with cultural artifacts generated by industries. On one hand, media texts (and audiences) are not the products of monolithic industries concerned only with turning a profit, nor are they solely the result of hegemonic organizations. On the other hand, no matter how profound the cultural importance of media texts, many are the products of industries concerned with making money, and there are limitations placed on agents within these organizations. The majority of critical media studies have focused on text or audience, without considering the industries from which they came.

Sensing the need for midlevel study, a wide array of scholars have applied the concepts and methods of cultural studies to the study of media industry practices, giving

each approach new names despite their interrelatedness. Some key examples of these methodological and conceptual approaches: critical production studies (Caldwell, 2008), creative industry studies (Hartley, 2005), cultural economy (du Gay & Pryke, 2002), the circuit of cultural production (du Gay, 1997), and middle-range theory (Cunningham and Jacka, 1996).

These and other approaches have tracked the organizational details of how media texts are produced while being concerned with a wider perspective of the industry and culture in which the texts are produced. However, “much of the key critical research on media production in Anglo-American media studies has tended to be based on a mixture of such approaches, combining political economy theory with organizational studies, much of it largely compatible with hegemony theory” (Hesmondhalgh, 2006a, p. 228).

The critical media industry studies approach seeks to synthesize the best aspects of these approaches, offering “a general framework for the nascent yet growing body of work that locates industry research on particular organizations, agents, and practices *within* what have become vast media conglomerates operating at a global level” (Havens, Lotz, & Tinic, 2009, p. 236). Key features of this approach include the midlevel, “helicopter” view so badly needed, a focus on the decisions made by staff within the media industries, and an idea that the power relations within global industries are able to be negotiated by these staff because they are not completely dominated by them (Havens, Lotz, & Tinic, 2009). “Power” in the critical media industry studies approach concerns more the ability of agents responsible for the creation of media texts to negotiate the assumptions and constraints constructed with their industry through discourse (Havens).

As new content windows proliferate and audiences continue to fragment (locally and globally), members of the industry are negotiating ways to simultaneously

apply old rules to a new game while exploiting the potential to revolutionize both content and economic gain. The type of research we are advocating is integral to analyzing an industry in flux and the struggles among competing social actors and institutions to stabilize new discourses to their own specific interests and advantages” (Havens, Lotz, & Tinic, 2009, p. 250).

Critical media industry studies provides this perspective through the combination of ethnographic/interview methods and the analysis of trade publications and other macro-level discourses, thus combining techniques native to Cultural Studies with those from Political Economy approaches.

Precedents for and Trends within the Study of Manga

Around the time that audience and fan studies gained popularity, anime entered the United States and became an object of fans’ attention. Manga has long been recognized as being directly related to anime, with neither the derivative of the other (LeDoux & Ranney, 1997; Levi, 1996; Napier, 2001). The artistic conventions of the two are very similar, and often a series in one medium is reproduced in the other. Schodt (1996) traces the original popularity of manga in the United States back to the spread of anime.

Manga Texts

The study of manga has so far been dominated by the study of manga texts . Studies so far have discussed the way the stories are constructed: representations of character types, themes, visual codes, parallels between cinema and manga (e.g., Berndt, 2001, 2004, 2007; Brau, 2004; Bryce, 2004; Couch, 2000; Hahn Aquila, 2007; Hand, 2004; Krebs, 2006; Nakar, 2003; Natsume, 2006; Pandey, 2000; Phillipps, 2001; Rommens, 2000; Toku, 2001; Tsuji, 2001). Others have discussed genres of manga (Ito, 2002a, 2002b; Pandey, 2008), the collected works of specific authors and/or artists

(MacWilliams, 2000, 2002; Onoda, 2003; Pandey, 2001; Phillipps, 2008; Shamoon, 2003), the history of manga (Ito, 2002, 2005; Kinsella, 1999, 2006), and the dynamics of sexuality and gender within manga (e.g., Ogi, 2000, 2001, 2003; Thorn, 2001; Tsurumi, 1997, 2000). This last subject is one that has generated the most studies in which manga fans and manga texts are studied in concert. Fans and creators of yaoi, erotic manga whose main characters are always male and that are most often created by women, have been studied for the ways in which fan creators experiment with conventions of romantic love, sexuality, and gender (e.g., McHarry, 2003; McLelland, 2000a, 2000b, 2001b, 2001c, 2003, 2005; Noh, 1998; Suzuki, 1998; Thorn, 2001; Welker, 2006; Wood, 2006).

Manga Fans

Manga fans have by and large not yet been widely studied, apart from fans of yaoi (McLelland, 2001a). There are many instances where studies of anime fans implicitly assume that anime fans are also manga fans and thus the two groups are in fact one. This assumption conceals the ways in which the practices of fans of a televisual text may be different from the practices of fans of a print text. For instance, group consumption of texts as a group is very different when the text concerned is print and not audiovisual. Anime and movie viewing can be a public act, whereas manga reading is a private act, albeit one that fosters the formation of social bonds. Anime conventions are more common than manga conventions in the United States. I believe it is for this reason that studies have focused mostly on anime fans so far. Fan studies has already called attention to the need to study low-profile fans as well as high-profile, visible fans.

A number of studies have explored the educational capacity and reading habits of manga fans. Allen and Ingulsrud (2003; 2005) have studied reading habits of adolescents

and college students in Japan, in order to challenge the assumption that manga has detrimental effects on students. They found that manga reading fosters a set of reading skills beneficial in the learning process, and encourages memorization of kanji. Other scholars have likewise discussed the importance of manga to Japanese readers (Ito, 2003, 2004, 2005; Nakazawa, 2006; Natsume, 2000, 2004; Schiffrin, 2004).

The majority of studies of manga fans in the United States so far has focused on those who create doujinshi, focusing on legal aspects of this sort of fan activity. (Doujinshi [doh-jin-shee] are fan-produced comic books featuring characters from other comic books, TV programs, and movies in situations that they do not encounter in the “official” stories. They are analogous to fan fiction, but are distributed at “comic markets,” conventions for the buying and selling of doujinshi.) As such, these studies have not focused as much on the practices and norms among these fans to create doujinshi, but the implications of the resulting creations for copyright.

One notable exception to the scarcity of studies of manga fans is Rich’s (2011) study of young adults who identify as fans of anime, manga, and video games. She argues that many young Americans use their practices of consuming and circulating these international popular cultures to transform their immediate social landscapes, and therefore, their social and national identities as well.

Manga, Law, and Industry

Prior work pertaining to this study has focused on ways that the industry established new norms for manga through the way they marketed and published the books. Brienza’s (2009a, 2009b) works are notable because of their pioneering focus on the marketing practices of the American manga industry. Focusing on the same manga

company treated here (the American-based manga publisher Tokyopop), she discusses how Tokyopop pioneered the book trim size that distinguishes most American manga from other books, and how Tokyopop was successful in generating discourses about their manga that caused booksellers to consider manga less as “graphic novels” and more as “books.” Goldberg (2010) has also explained the ways in which American manga publishers have constructed the manga publishing field, shaping the expectations of readers and booksellers. My work focuses mainly on manga within an electronic environment, which these articles do not address.

Lee (2009) stands as one of the first to research the reasons and motivations given by the translators themselves, and gives a cursory look at the position of publishers towards them. Her research of the publishers’ position indicates that publishers acknowledge fan work as illegal while also recognizing the benefits it brings to the industry. My research indicates, however, a growing public hostility in the trade journals towards translators. My work focuses in part on the struggles that publishers have had to face to protect their copyright, and the precedents that have made fan-based copyright violation seemingly acceptable in many instances.

Most often, manga has been used as a case study for applications of fair use and copyright enforcement. Doujinshi are one example of how Japanese copyright law reacts (or does not react) to the unauthorized use of copyrighted materials. Mehra (2002) notes that the doujinshi phenomenon indicates that, in some contexts, the allowance of fair use creates an environment where collective action leads to benefits to a market. Mehra (2003) later adds that the case of doujinshi in Japan demonstrates that a greater control over content does not necessarily translate to an increase in creativity. While Japanese

copyright law looks a lot like American copyright law on paper, the Japanese manga market flourishes because of the creative energies generated by the doujinshi community (Lessig, 2004).

Other authors continue in this vein, focusing on the ways in which fan-based reproduction or alteration of anime and/or manga demonstrates the benefits of fair use or copyright infringement to the market. The case of doujinshi has demonstrated that widespread copying can augment the sales of copyrighted works (Duhl, 2004). Widespread, unauthorized copying can lead to widespread growth in interest in a popular media product, such as anime (Hatcher, 2005). Moreover, in the public's understanding of fair use, "a person who copies for personal use, without any intention of profiting from it, especially a person who has actually paid for the copied work, is not harming the copyright holder and should be left alone" (Trombley, 2007, p. 684).

While past studies focused on liberatory practices, legality of practices, and textual features of manga, more work needs to be done on the manga industry's practices, and how they are related to fan practices. Conversely, the industry having been established for some time, fan practices have been shaped by and have shaped industrial practices. Within my study, I explore how the practices and norms of fans translating shoujo manga have been shaped by and have shaped the practices and norms of industry, law, and culture. Within this system, fans operate in an environment potentially both exploitative and liberatory. While fans have had a hand in shaping the flow of manga into the United States, scanlators work in a system that is aligned and intertwined with the manga industry. This not only blurs the boundary between fan and professional, but also diminishes the *idea* of industry as being a structure of dominance and power. My

paper extends prior work done to examine the interrelationship between fan practices and manga industry practices, and how they have shaped each other, particularly in the area of copyright and distribution. While past studies have looked at fan practices through the lens of copyright, these studies have not delved into these practices as being part of a system, but treat it as rather a cause-and-effect relationship. Additionally, other studies have tended to focus on one party as agents of change, whereas I argue that there are mutual agents of change at work—albeit ones with different power. This study will focus on the time period of 2005-2010, a time of uncertainty and change in the American manga industry. The time before can be marked as an era of establishment and rapid growth for both the industry and translators. To better understand the state of shoujo manga and the U.S. industry, I will give a brief overview of the history of shoujo manga.

A Brief History of Shoujo Manga

Shoujo manga of the 1940's and 1950's was created by male authors and artists. During the 1950's especially, male artists worked on shoujo manga in order to establish their careers before moving on to shounen manga (boys' manga) (Toku, 2007). The heroines of these early manga were “generic vision[s] of tidiness and self-sufficiency that [were] pretty or cute (*kawaii*) but did not have the natural grace or stunning glamour that accompanied the idea of womanly beauty” (Petersen, 2011, p. 180). These female characters tended to focus more on emotional issues while the male characters were able to take action.

Osamu Tezuka, heralded as the father of modern manga and creator of many genres of manga, established the most enduring female character able to seize her own destiny. Princess Sapphire of the series *Princess Knight* (1953-1956) often dispatched

villains on her own—albeit while in disguise as a masked hero. Tezuka made sure that he maintained the customary gender distinctions, but Princess Sapphire was allowed more latitude because she was a child born with both a boy and a girl soul whose father, the king, had raised her as a boy to enable her to inherit his throne.

While Princess Sapphire certainly made her mark on shoujo manga, it wasn't until more than a decade after the end of *Princess Knight* that shoujo manga really transformed into something like current shoujo manga. The Magnificent Forty-Niners (“*Hana-no Nijuyonen-gumi*,” literally, the Floral Showa-Era Year 24 Corps) were the first group of women to create the manga that girls were reading. The list of creators varies, but includes luminaries such as Moto Hagio (*The Poe Clan, They were Eleven, A,A'*), Riyoko Ikeda (*The Rose of Versailles*), and Keiko Takemiya (*Poems Composed by Wind and Trees, To Terra...*). As an exhibit at the Kyoto International Manga Museum put it, “Portraying the subtle psyche of girls, these artists have made manga into a type of literature” (“History of Manga,” 2009).

In the 1970's, the Magnificent Forty-Niners began publishing works that dealt with the transformation of Japanese society by examining new gender roles that obscured clear boundaries between the masculine and feminine, explored a greater range of relationships involving sexuality and intimacy, and gave the female characters a more active role in defining their goals and determining their own fates. They also developed a style that helped further distinguish shoujo manga from shounen manga:

Shoujo manga expanded the literary and visual vocabulary of manga, quoting classical Japanese poetry, and employing a distinctive visual quality that broke out of the use of evenly spaced boxes and began to use the whole page with overlapping moments in panels without borders or scenes that bled all the way to the edge of the page. Unlike boys' manga (shounen manga), which often renders realistic details in complex environments, shoujo manga depends more on

evocative designs to render the characters' interior worlds" (Petersen, 2011, p. 181).

During the 1980's the trend was for "amateur" authors to make the jump from writing doujinshi sold at comic markets (places for amateur artists to sell their original and parody manga) to writing for the major publishers. CLAMP, a group of four female manga artists writing as one author, may be the most successful author to cross over from amateur to professional status. CLAMP's works are written for many different demographics and are usually runaway bestsellers in both Japan and the United States.

One more major influence of the comic markets on mainstream commercial manga was the increasing importance of the genre of "boys' love" (shounen-ai) to shoujo manga. Boys' love manga are "where androgynous and fashionable young men develop powerful emotional bonds" (Petersen, 2011, p. 183). (Yaoi [roughly, yow-ee] is a more explicitly erotic version of the boys' love genre.) Once an occasional genre within shoujo manga magazines, boys' love has acquired its own magazines and store sections in Japan.

I will now turn to a brief outline of scanslation in the United States.

A Brief History of Scanslation

The earliest fan translations of manga were not shared on the Internet at all, being passed from fan to fan through the mail or by hand, similar to the science fiction and anime video tapes passed around in the early days of "fandom" (gum, n.d.-b; Jenkins, 1992). The first recorded fan translation occurred as early as 1977, that of Osamu Tezuka's *Phoenix*, by fan translation group Dadakai (Palmer & Deskins, n.d.). The earliest scanslations on the Internet were probably titles such as *Ranma ½* and *Kimagure*

Orange Road, which were shared in the late 1980's and early 1990's on Usenet groups like rec.arts.manga and alt.manga and other, now-defunct newsgroups (gum, n.d.-b). In the late 1990's, scanslation groups became more organized and began to resemble the myriad of scanslation groups that exists today (gum, n.d.-b). The scanslation group I'm calling "Paradise" began in 2002, amid the beginning of the major manga wave in the United States.

After manga became more widespread in the U.S. during the mid-2000's, the number of scanslation groups dramatically increased, and the relatively tight-knit community transformed into a diverse field of groups with different motives. As gum writes, "The community's spirit of 'scanslating to spread the love of manga' was slowly shifting to 'scanslating to get free manga,' which resulted in increased debates on the legality of scanslation" (gum, n.d.-a, ¶3). In addition, this period saw the rise of release trackers, which centralized information about the release of new translations to the public (gum, n.d.-c). While some of these trackers served mainly as announcement boards for scanslation groups (e.g., Manga Jouhou, Baka-Updates), other trackers both announced and *provided* the translations to anyone who wanted to download them (e.g., Manga-Addicts, Manga Fox, OneManga). Scanslation groups today could be categorized in two groups: unlicensed-only scanners, characterized by their willingness to "drop" translations after the copyright has been obtained by an American publisher, and all-encompassing scanners, who choose manga titles to translate regardless of their availability in the U.S. market.

Context and Methods

In this section, I describe what distinguishes shoujo manga from other types of manga. I also outline methods necessary to complete the dissertation.

Shoujo Manga's Characteristics

Shoujo manga is distinctive from other types of manga because of its characters, visual style, and plot conventions. Shounen manga—manga marketed to young males—is most notably the category that shoujo manga might be compared to. Subject matter and settings vary within shoujo manga, but I will also outline which are common.

Throughout this section, I will use examples from the shoujo manga series *Fruits Basket* as illustration.

Current shoujo manga features young female heroines who are often socially awkward or out of place in some way, because of their life situation or behavior. The heroine rarely considers herself as such, instead considering herself a plain and ordinary person. Her personality is often kind, giving, and self-sacrificing. Despite not fitting in, shoujo manga heroines tend to overcome obstacles while being true to themselves and not trying to fit the model of a “proper” young woman, as noted by Ogi (2000).

For instance, at the beginning of *Fruits Basket*, the heroine Tohru Honda lives in a tent by herself after the recent death of her mother and attempts to maintain the appearance of a normal high-schooler. While maintaining a sense of self-sufficiency and toughness in the face of adversity learned from her late mother (we later learn that the mother was a high school gangster), she uses her domestic talents to secure room and board with classmates who are members of a large and wealthy old family, the Sohmas. (Incidentally, the name *Tohru* is typically a boys' name, chosen by her mother because it

sounded cool and tough.) She discovers that the Sohma family is haunted by a curse that she sets out to break, in which certain family members are the human embodiment of the animals of the Chinese zodiac (plus cat). Tohru's cheerful perseverance in the face of hardship pervades the series, so that a story that could be marked by overwhelming tragedy and depression remains rather light-hearted despite setbacks and revelations. Notably, the curse that binds the family takes on a jokey appearance in that it manifests when a cursed person embraces someone of the opposite sex; if this happens, they transform into their respective zodiac animal (e.g., Yuki is the Rat, Shigure is the Dog), lending itself to numerous gags throughout.

There is often an attractive male love interest, and possibly multiple interests (e.g., Yuki and Kyo), who are often somewhat androgynous in appearance (Yuki more so than Kyo). Supporting stock characters can include the stoic male, the energetic boy next door, the artistic male (who may speak French or German), the gangster/tough guy type, the rich (bad) girl, and the popular girl (also bad). (e.g., loosely, Hatori, Momiji, Ayame, Hatsuharu, and Isuzu Sohma, and Motoko Minagawa).

The visual style of shoujo manga is characterized first by the use of motifs such as flowers, feathers, and lace. These appear as part of the story and are often used symbolically. For instance, the sudden appearance of a loved one is often accompanied by a background of blossoming flowers. The heroine is often depicted as "cute" rather than "sexy," sophisticated, or mature. Big eyes and a rounder face are used to characterize this. Attractive males and "bad girls," and most adults are often depicted as "sexy" or mature. These characters are often drawn with almond-shaped eyes, an angular face with high cheekbones, and long lashes. (like Tohru's best friends, Arisa Uotani and

Saki Hanajima). Additionally, one feature that distinguishes shoujo manga from shounen manga is the way in which the female body is portrayed to the reader. Shounen manga often depicts female bodies as slim with large breasts, whereas shoujo manga tends to display a wider range of female body types. Also, shounen manga often includes what is known as “fan service” in the United States: gratuitous depiction of females with no or very little clothing, or glimpses of a female character’s underwear. Shoujo manga tends to emphasize the male body as an object of desire when it fits into the storyline, particularly athletic torsos with broad shoulders.

The setting of shoujo manga is most often school. The focus of shoujo manga is often communication, friendship, and achieving goals with the support of others. Romance often figures in stories to a large extent, and the plot relies on delayed gratification—the consummation of the romance (most often a kiss or a confession of love) is delayed, often until the end of the series. The subject matter varies widely, but many manga storylines are based on conflict. While some shounen manga series are based on battles or organized tournaments where each opponent is battled and defeated one by one, shoujo manga’s conflict is often based on interpersonal conflict at school or home, overcoming personal obstacles, or achieving romance. In the case of *Fruits Basket*, the plot intertwines all three, with additional intrigue and a supernatural element.

The characteristics I’ve outlined here are definitely not universal to all shoujo manga series—indeed, I’ve used broad strokes to depict it—but they are recognizable enough to readers to allow manga artists to parody or subvert these conventions.

Research Methods and Precedents

In order to better understand how institutions (media producers, advertisers, governments) affect the content of media texts, how these texts play an important role in the lives of audiences, and how audience activity in turn informs industrial practices and texts, I have chosen a critical media industry studies approach, described in previous sections. Critical media industry studies scholars employ methods such as interviews with industry workers, textual analysis of popular media, and ethnographic study of television viewers toward this end. This multi-method approach also tries to look at media systems at different levels: globally, regionally, and locally. While a researcher must decide what limits to set in order to make such a project manageable, this type of approach provides a multifaceted look at media systems.

Since my project deals with the interconnectedness of industries, legislation, audiences, technology, and the texts themselves, I have chosen a critical media studies approach. My study relies on two primary types of research methods: interview methods and content and textual analysis of manga, trade journals, and organizational web sites. To uncover the most current practices and trends, I spoke to contacts in the manga publishing industries—specifically those who worked at Tokyopop. These contacts were selected using a snowball approach, where each interviewee identified other subjects who could provide insight into other aspects of the project.

This study is based on the textual analysis of trade journal articles and web sites, informed by interviews with scanslators and manga industry workers. I conducted interviews over a six-month period in 2008, focusing on two groups, the publishing company Tokyopop and the scanslation group “Paradise.” I carried out follow-up

interviews a year later. Additionally, I interviewed several freelance manga translators, because translators are generally only contract workers for publishers, as opposed to being employed by a publisher.

Tokyopop was a company whose bestsellers consisted especially of shoujo manga, which allowed me to focus on this category of manga, which can be one of the major categories employed by manga publishers in the U.S. While I could not have foreseen the fact at the beginning of the project, Tokyopop closed its publishing offices in the U.S. in 2011. The closing followed announcements that the senior editor had been laid off, which was received with much dismay. After such a major act, its closing was not unexpected, but happened rather suddenly, about 2-3 weeks after press releases had been issued. I selected Tokyopop because it was one of the pioneering manga-only publishers—this same fact caused its closing to rock the industry.

Tokyopop—then called Mixx—was founded by Stuart Levy in 1997, as a venue to publish several titles he had licensed (*Sailor Moon* and *Magic Knight Rayearth*, as well as *Parasyte* and *Ice Blade*). Levy at first had a difficult time convincing investors that manga could be popular in the U.S. However, by 2002, he had pioneered several new marketing strategies that helped manga, especially shoujo manga, enter the U.S. market. These include point-of-purchase displays for Tokyopop titles, availability in mall chain stores, and a standardized, right-to-left format.

Selecting one company as opposed to multiple ones made the scope of the project more manageable. I discovered from contacts at Tokyopop the way the companies acquire the publication rights for manga, why they choose certain titles over others, and how translators are viewed by their company, among other questions. Additionally, the

selection of Tokyopop allowed me to focus on a key moment of change within the industry, as it happened. It allowed me to focus on a key organization within the industry and its employees, and how they negotiated industry-wide shifts from their positions as employees.

The interviewing methods were guided interview techniques employed by researchers such as Mankekar (1999), Seiter (1999), and Abu-Lughod (2005). In addition to interviewing industry contacts, I interviewed scaslators. Scaslators “circles” tend to focus on a self-defined and -selected genre of manga. The group I chose, “Paradise,” focused primarily on translating “supernatural shoujo manga.” At least one of their projects was licensed by Tokyopop, and others were picked up by other publishers.

Guiding questions outlined their motivations for translation, and their attitudes towards copyright and the publishing industries. Whereas the scope of this project did not allow for the ethnographic study of the day-to-day workings of manga publishing, my research on scaslators benefitted from the inclusion of online observation methods. Since I am focusing on shoujo manga as a way to observe popular culture that has gained success despite the prevalent environment, I also paid attention to fans’ constructions of gender. I could not presume upfront, however, that these fan groups were solely groups of young women working for self-empowerment. To do so would be to fall into the exclusionary trap for which Bacon-Smith (1992) was critiqued because of her inattention to male fans participating in predominantly female groups. Because translation groups convene on the Internet in places such as web pages, chat rooms, and message boards, online interview methods gained insight into the practices of fan translation, and the everyday discourse about manga and the structures behind manga. The near-constant

availability of these virtual communities because of the Internet medium is similar to that outlined in Hills (2001).

I followed the examples set out by online ethnographers such as Baym (2000), Clerc (1996), Gregson (2005), Hills (2001), and Seiter (1999). These authors treat the entire online environment as the “local” situation of their participants. For example, the chat rooms themselves, web pages, message boards, etc., are all part of the situated context in which the ethnography is conducted. As in Gregson’s (2005) study of online anime fans, I analyzed web site content, but I additionally interviewed and observed participants as well. Napier (2001, 2007) used questionnaire and interview techniques in her studies of fans attending conventions and club meetings. While using intensive and long-term ethnography helps us learn more about audience viewing practices and the ways in which media figure into the everyday lives of audiences, this is not the primary focus of my project. Thus, short-term interview techniques have sufficed and have enhanced the interactive interviewing techniques with fan translators. I have checked my interpretations against the interpretations of participants, in order to better understand their groups.

Chapters 2 and 3 focus on what titles are chosen for translation and the decision process behind these selections from the perspective of publishers and fans. I compare official market decisions against fan decisions of what to distribute. The translation process ultimately begins with decisions about what texts to translate. These decisions may be affected by market demands, precedent in the market, demands for similar types of media (e.g., anime). Do publishers “scout” illegally translated titles? How do fans choose what to translate? Are their decisions related to what is already on the market,

what is not available in the market, top sellers in the Japanese market, or fan requests or fan demands? I take Leonard's (2005a; 2005b) examples of anime fans developing a market in the United States as an exemplary case for directions to take. I also compare and contrast the fan activity here with the cases of media interactivity that Jenkins describes as the current state of fan activity. I also explore the choices of distribution methods available (e.g., electronic, paper, rights-managed), and the reasons these were chosen. Within this chapter, I also discuss generic expectations for shoujo manga, as constructed by publishers and fans, and find out how these expectations affect the decision-making process. Since my study focuses on translations of shoujo manga, this chapter addresses translation processes as situated in a media system that is dominantly oriented towards young men.

Chapter 4 focuses on the translation process, how manga is translated legally and illegally. Included in this chapter's discussion are issues of cultural translation and the willingness of fans to learn the cultural context of manga. Whereas in previous situations where popular media has crossed cultural borders, cultural proximity has been one determinant of success for popular media. Manga fans, however, have demonstrated an eagerness to learn the cultural context necessary to understand manga fully. I discuss the process of translation, and the decision process involved in translation—how translators choose to translate some things and not others—and the cultural and legal implications of this process. I also examine issues that arise in the translation process itself, such as authenticity of translation and the role that translation could play for authors and/or fans as a “service.” The case of fan translators differs from the traditional idea of the translator in that the translators are not a single author, but a collective of individuals linked only by

a web site or a USENET chat room. I investigate the ways in which fans position themselves in relation to the publishers, and the ways in which publishers view fan translations.

Chapter 5 focuses on the status of the audience work that happens through informal translation practices. While Chapter 3 focuses closely on the norms and practices of fan translation groups, this chapter discusses these practices and norms within a broader social, cultural, and legal context, focusing specifically on the ways that fans negotiate their position within this broader context. Is fan labor a form of exploitation? Another form of “participatory culture?” Is it a reflection of the resources of an elite group? Does it reflect a specific cultural moment for fans? Why does fan labor often have a blind eye turned toward it? I also discuss how copyright infringement has helped the manga market. One possible reason for the relatively unchecked proliferation of fan translations might be their contribution to the market, and this chapter addresses this question directly. I discuss the nature of the status division between professional and fan translators, and the permeability of the boundary between the two. The boundary, in large part, seems determined by the endorsement of legal systems.

The concluding chapter brings the four previous chapters together. I discuss the ways in which the study of audiences and fans overlaps with the study of authorship and copyright in a global context. If Fan Studies’ orientation tends towards one that endorses the creation of a participatory media culture, then this must be taken into account. Does the case described in this study fit as an example of “participatory culture?” If so, how is this problematized by the fans themselves, and the broader context of the fans’ activity? Matters of authenticity, faithfulness within culturally determined boundaries, and respect

towards authorship have been important to the both the study of fans and translation, and I further draw out these parallels. While textual poaching documented by other scholars takes materials out of their context and uses them as the texts for new texts, fans also maintain a respect for the traditional author figure. I explore how the notion of the singular author is upheld by fans operating in systems. Also, I discuss the implications of this study towards considerations about fan agency in a global context. Is it possible to think about fans and fan groups in a global context?

CHAPTER 2
CAN'T CHOOSE 'EM ALL:
MATTERS OF SELECTION
FOR THE INDUSTRY

While American independent comics cover some of the same subject matter as shoujo manga, the community of readers, particularly female fans, tends to be less visible. Since the spaces created for comics in the U.S. are typically male-oriented, exclusive-seeming enclaves, the creation of spaces for female-oriented comics have typically been female-oriented, repurposing space already geared toward females. This is one way in which shoujo manga has positioned itself as female-friendly.

This chapter's aim is to discuss the ways that shoujo manga becomes the form of comics for young women in the U.S. in a market filled with male-oriented comics. The American comic book market is dominated by the superhero genre, which is generally geared to a male audience. Also, the industry itself is dominantly made up of male artists and producers, and prevailing American cultural standards continue to articulate comics as masculine—despite attempts to pursue the young female demographic (Alverson, 2007; Carlson, 2007; Moeller, 2008). Particularly troublesome to publishers and booksellers is the “double standard” at work where young males feel socially pressured to *not* read comics for young women (often actively concealing their interest in shoujo manga), whereas young women who read “boys” comics are praised. Publishers must negotiate taking risks in an already established market with forays into new territory—and both these aspects are tempered by cultural norms regarding gendered media use. Scanslators, on the other hand, are not constrained by profit and loss, but nonetheless construct themselves as an audience through their selections.

This chapter includes analysis of research pertaining specifically to the selection process. I first provide some background on the American comics industry, which is required for understanding the selection process. Following that, I discuss publishers' selection strategies and factors they must consider during the selection process. Translators also deal with a set of factors that determine what titles they choose to translate, and I discuss these factors next.

Decision-Making in Media Industries

The manga selection process is a form of gatekeeping that determines how the United States understands manga and the Japanese culture that it represents. While manga in Japan are comparatively diverse and are created to serve many purposes and many members of the population, the cultural climate for comic books and the expectations of the American industry act as a filter for which manga titles are accessible to Americans. Hesmondhalgh (2006b) argues that workers in media industries should be understood not as cogs in an industrial machine, but as agents with the ability to forge relationships and make decisions that enable media products to be produced and imported. Moreover, he argues that these agents are influenced by value systems into which they have been indoctrinated and of which they are often unaware. These value systems act as a filter for what does and does not show up in the circulation of media.

Before translation—before a translated book can be placed in the hands of a reader—someone must decide what to translate. Translation studies often focuses on the process of translation itself. The translation process usually entails attempting to convey the meaning of the original source text by converting it to words intelligible to the destination audience. Someone initially must decide that another's words and voice are

worthy of the translator's attention, however. I would argue that translation begins first with the selection, or gatekeeping, process.

This chapter focuses on the decision-making process that occurs before translation can begin. The selection process may be affected by many factors, such as cultural proximity, exoticism, and market availability and market conditions. The gatekeeping processes in global media systems are regarded as integral to these systems. Individuals working within the system determine the circulation of media through their choices, which are made according to industry standards, market forecasts, and individual and organizational choices.

Gatekeeping is often regarded primarily as a feature of the news industry. The tenets of the gatekeeping theory are applicable to the circulation of media around the world as well, however. Gatekeeping theory proposes that the content of the news and the emphasis placed on issues is determined by those possessing decision-making power within news corporations. Since perceptions of the world are constructed communicatively, and news-viewing functions as a communicative act through which one learns about events and what is “important” (i.e., agenda setting), news is one communicative act through which one’s perception of the world is shaped. Gatekeeping states that the choices made by those with decision-making power thus directly affect an individual’s view of the world and their place within it. Gatekeeping occurs within all media industries, however, not just the news industry. A similar filtering system occurs in industries such as the television industry, the music industry, and the film industry. In each case, decision-making processes unique to each industry determine what is released to the public.

One factor central to all media industries is the uncertainty of the success of media texts released into the market. The decision-making processes of each industry function to minimize the risk associated with the uncertainty of a profitable return on investment in a media property. Fiske (2006) writes that, in order for a cultural producer to turn a profit, they must use a shotgun approach to production. “This is one reason why the cultural industries produce what Garnham (1987) calls ‘repertoires’ of products; they cannot predict which of their commodities will be chosen by which sectors of the market to serve *their* interests as well as those of the producers” (Fiske, 2006, p. 541). He argues that this is because audience members’ consumption process is where meaning and pleasure are created, which moves the production process away from the production companies.

Gatekeeping theory, however, traditionally assumes a one-way flow of media products, where industry workers determine what audience members will consume. Those who make industry decisions do have agency to determine what audiences consume. Moreover, while media industries may provide a wide array of media texts for consumption, in many media industries, the seeming freedom of choice is an illusion caused by the multiplicity of media products (Meehan, 1990). Although gatekeeping theory places agency wholly with industry workers, the media selection process now involves a great deal of input from potential audience members. Given the proliferation of interactive media forms facilitated by the Internet, media companies have the ability to listen more closely to audience demands and incorporate more audience participation. One of the ways that media industries try at the institutional level to minimize the risks associated with the business of media creation and distribution is to increasingly more

closely follow audience members' tastes, opinions, and behavior. Interactive media that allows for a two-way transmission of content has allowed media corporations to continuously monitor the audience for trends. Also, the audience is being tapped not only passively, but actively, using audience-created content in place of or in tandem with "professionally" created, conventional content. While some audience-created content may be interpreted as a cost-cutting measure, it could also be seen as a broadening of the media industries' voices to include the voice of the audience.

Regardless of the level of interactivity or agency seeming to come from the audience, in most established media industries the decision makers filter what shows up in stores, on screens, and on the air. Thus, the selection process becomes especially important to examining the ways in which media travel from one part of the world to another. The factors that determine what texts are chosen for importation are based on industry understandings and assumptions about what the audience will choose to consume, and the prevailing cultural climate that determines what audience members are likely to choose. These forecasts and assumptions differ for every industry, and sometimes between companies within one industry. The use of industry-specific knowledge is common among all industries, however.

Choice has not generally been considered in past fan studies. It has been previously critiqued that Fan Studies celebrates fans' affection for a media text without considering the power imbalances embodied by the text (Condit, 1989). Past studies have considered that fans often have discursively generated criteria for quality of both media texts and fan-produced texts. These criteria generally dictate what fan projects are "well-done" as fan texts, and which are not, or which texts are higher quality than other

texts (Bacon-Smith, 1992; Jenkins, 1992). Past fan studies have also focused on what fan practices are discursively valued as fan practices, and which are not. What fan communities value is in a constant state of flux due to their discursive nature. As such, most studies of fan activity, this study included, offer only a snapshot of fan practices and beliefs. Likewise, since what fan communities value is constantly being contested, fan studies must take a position that one can only represent a small portion of phenomena. Therefore, the values given by scholarly studies can be merely representative of types of factors that fans consider when choosing texts.

Chapters 2 and 3 focus on the values expressed by individuals with Tokyopop and within the scanslation group Paradise. By examining what they have to say, I will uncover what kinds of assumptions shape the spread of manga across the globe. Fan translation and commercial translation operate within differing, but parallel, systems. Fan translation serves its own purposes in many ways, operating in a system of decentralized distribution, while commercial translations are created to be sold on the market as entertainment. As such, the purpose of the translations helps inform the selection process. Whereas publishers generally follow assumptions that are common among workers in their own industry, and to a certain extent workers in most media industries, fan translators generally set their own requirements and follow their own guidelines. Although fan translation groups are not ruled by any overarching body, each group has a set of rules or requirements for its members and its audience. Part of these rules deal with what manga is chosen for translation.

The American Comics Industry in a Global Context

Shoujo manga have been very popular in South Korea and across the East Asian region since the 1980's, inspiring new regional traditions of graphic storytelling, such as manhwa (Korean comic books). This may be an example of cultural proximity. The United States, on the other hand, has imported manga into an environment with a graphic storytelling tradition and well-established comics industry. Manga has influenced the style of graphic storytelling to a profound extent, in everything from narrative style, to subject matter, to art style (McCloud, 2006), but manga-affected American comics also owe a great deal to American comics history as well. Manga is available throughout the United States thanks to national bookstore chains. The bookstores sell manga alphabetized by title, so all genres and categories are mixed together. Comic book specialist shops also sell manga, but their inventory tends to be dominated by American comic books and graphic novels.

Additionally, the cultural climate in the U.S. is that comics are mostly for younger people or nonconformists—this has changed a great deal, but comics still have a stigma attached to them. A preference for comic books is generally not a mainstream preference, despite the popularization of comic book *heroes* in many recent movies. Also, comics are generally viewed as “dangerous” or “marginal,” needing constant patrolling to ensure the moral and mental well-being of youth who are interested in them, whereas non-graphic works seem to attract less attention. The variety of comic books available in specialty stores may support this position; although separated into distinct sections—sometimes using physical barriers such as curtains—one store might stock both easy-reader comics and graphically erotic or violent comics. The moral police often posit

that it is difficult to tell the difference because both kinds of books are “cartoony” in style.

The popularity of shoujo manga is remarkable because of the foothold it has gained in the very difficult American market climate. Fan culture-related industries in the U.S., such as video game companies and comics publishers, are dominantly male-oriented, and have not figured out how to consistently attract and keep a market of female fans. Since the comics and graphic novels industry is still male dominant, both in audience and in workforce, comics tend to be selected to serve a niche market of males. Additionally, whereas the globalization of books and other kinds of documents has been happening for centuries (Ghosh, 1992), the newer forms of graphic novels and comics have taken longer to start establishing markets in other countries. Comics’ success depends in part on cultural discount, the qualities that make a product so culturally specific that the home country is liable to be the most successful market.

Cultural discount applies only to media that require a mass audience, however. The comics and graphic novels industry in recent decades in the United States could be considered a niche industry. This is a change from comics’ previous status in the U.S. as a mass medium, serving much of the public, girls and women included. Today, comics are sold mainly in specialty stores, with chain bookstores offering mainly collected volumes. The conventional format of comics in the United States—individual chapters of one story line sold in slim, softcover issues like small magazines—differs from the majority of periodicals sold in chain bookstores. A continuing problem with comics sales remains the premium on shelf space and how best to market titles to buyers.

The advent of electronic book technologies has allowed for an increase in the ease of distribution of all books, comics included. Devices such as e-book readers, smart phones, and tablet computers allow books to be retrieved instantly—thus avoiding the shelf space dilemma entirely. Internet warehouse stores like Amazon.com also offer a very wide selection of titles, but must still cope with the physical storage of books. By offering content rather than the physical medium, booksellers circumvent some of the problems of selecting titles to sell.

Focusing on the content rather than the physical book also gets around the problem of returns to the publisher. Bookstores buy an inventory of books they think will sell, and then later return the unsold books to the publisher. This causes problems for publishing companies for several reasons. Book sales statistics usually don't include information about numbers of titles returned—only the information about how many copies were purchased by booksellers initially. Shipping involves great consumption of time and resources that publishers must absorb, first in shipping the books to booksellers, then in receiving and processing returns. The returns process is resource-consuming, but has been an expected process within the publishing industry for decades. HarperCollins announced in April 2008 that it was going to change the bookselling model they used, beginning with a new, web-promoted imprint. Instead of selling books on a returnable basis, they would only allow booksellers to purchase quantities of nonreturnable books ("Harper Wants to Change the Paradigm," 2008). Shipping books is less of a problem between overseas countries, especially today, because the document can be transmitted digitally, printed locally, and then distributed nationally. One company has even experimented with the promotional aspects of books-on-demand by installing the

Espresso Book Machine in bookstores and libraries around North America. A customer chooses a book, inserts payment, and receives a freshly printed-and-bound paperback of his or her choice, in the span of less than 4 ½ minutes.

Comics and graphics novels outside the U.S. have largely spread around the world and key titles are popular worldwide. In the United States' case, the comics available reflect a relatively insular system where American comics bring in much more revenue than imported comics. For example, the *Tintin* series is very popular worldwide, except for in the United States where it has a smaller cult following. The United States' insularity may be changing, however. The *Tintin* series has been made into a movie directed by Stephen Spielberg. This decision may better reflect the prosperity of the American film industry in a global context.

Major Players in the U.S. Comics Industry

The United States' comics industry remains relatively slow to change thanks to decades of established practices and assumptions. After World War II, the comics industry reestablished itself by marketing itself to young demographics, both male and female.. During the late 1940's, more serious, romance-themed series emerged and ultimately peaked in popularity in the mid-1950's:

Romance comics were among the most commercially successful comics produced in the era before comic book specialty stores began to bloom in the 1970's. Aspects of fantasy and super heroics assumed almost total domination of the mainstream field, leaving behind other genres, including romance. There were times, however, in the 1950's when one in every four or five issues sold on the newsstands of America was a romance comic (Nolan, 2008, p. 1).

The advent of the Comics Code for decency meant that romance comics could not deal with real-life issues surrounding relationships in a way that was permitted more in literature, TV, and film of the 1960's and 1970's. Girls who read romance comics in the

1950's were maturing more than their comics were, and moved to other media. Additionally, most fans of comics in the 1960's and 1970's were males, who "tended to dismiss romance comics as repetitious, banal and generally less than interesting. To some degree, it must be admitted, they were correct" (Nolan, 2008, p. 4). The major comics corporations dominate a market still understood to be made up mostly of young men.

The comics market in the U.S. remains dominated by two American publishers: Marvel and D.C. The major corporations in the United States, Marvel and D.C., make up 45.63 percent and 32.22 percent respectively of the American comics market as of 2009, as reported by Diamond Comics Distributors (distributor to comics specialty stores). The three next players in the overall American comics industry include Dark Horse, Image, and IDW Comics. Their total market share, however, represents only 10.79 percent.

Licensing Models

The licensing model used by Marvel and D.C. differs from those used by other comics publishing companies. They directly own the properties that they license in publications, movies, and other media texts. Their stable of authors is commissioned to write stories using their properties. For example, Brian Michael Bendis, a writer for Marvel, was assigned to write new story arcs for *Ultimate Spider-Man* and *Daredevil*. While Bendis wrote the stories for Marvel and has the credit for doing so, the rights to the Spider-Man and Daredevil properties and the publications themselves are retained by Marvel. Due to Marvel's diversification as a corporation, they can also produce retail items and movies without relying on an out-of-company licensee. For example, the

recent spate of Marvel movies (*Spider-Man*, *Iron Man*, *X-Men*, *Wolverine: Origins*, *Thor*, *Captain America*, *The Avengers*, etc.) have all been produced by Marvel's movie division.

Many of the other comics publishers work on a somewhat different model. Most of them do not own the properties they publish. Instead, the authors or original owners of the properties retain the right to publication and licensing. For example, the American web comic *Megatokyo*, written by Fred Gallagher, was first licensed for print publication to Dark Horse. Gallagher was not pleased with the way that Dark Horse handled the publication, and licensed later volumes to CMX (which later shifted to D.C. Comics itself). Dark Horse retains the right to publish reprints of the first three volumes of the *Megatokyo* series, but not the later volumes. Gallagher has also licensed *Megatokyo* to be translated and published in Japan, making it among the first American manga-format works to be exported from the U.S. A few years later, Svetlana Chmakova's *Dramacon* was also published in Japan in a partnership between Tokyopop and Japanese corporation SoftBank (manry, 2009).

The Japanese manga publishers operate on a third model that combines elements of the two. Many times, publishers will buy the rights for publication from the Japanese manga authors, meaning that the publishers hold the rights to determine when and where a title is published. This is not always the case; some authors retain copyright of their own works. The model is generally one where the publishing company controls the copyright, however. In exchange, the author gets money upfront for future stories or simply gets money for submitted manuscripts, in the case of serial manga. When the serial manga are collected into books, the author receives royalties from this publication

(Japan External Trade Organization, 2008). This model is slowly changing, with more new manga authors seeking ways to retain personal copyright for their own works.

The American Manga Industry

Within the market, most of the publishers who publish manga specialize in manga alone. However, Marvel and D.C. have both attempted to cash in on the “manga surge” that began in the early 2000’s by starting their own manga imprints.

Marvel’s manga imprint, Tsunami, focused on publishing English-language original manga that was “manga-sized” (5.5” x 7.5”) rather than digest-sized (6.75” x 10.25”) like most American periodical comics. In their press release published by *Publisher’s Weekly*, they noted that, by publishing more manga-style comics, they were hoping to “capture some of the teenage audience that has made books by U.S. manga publishers Tokyopop and Viz hits in the graphic novel market” (MacDonald, 2003). They specifically cited a focus on “romance and relationships” as being the traits that they were going to emphasize for this end (MacDonald, 2003). Marvel COO Bill Jemas spoke of the qualities that Japanese popular culture had that caused a “reversal” in the flow of popular culture, saying, “These books are all written by people that understand the storytelling style, they’re all very accessible to new readers, there’s a lot of human interaction, there’s a lot of love stories, there are female heroines, there’s teenage angst and love, that’s what this is all about” (“Marvel 'Manga Style',” 2003). The popularity of manga caused a change in the buying patterns of teenaged females, says Jemas. Six monthly titles were published under the Tsunami imprint, two of which featured storylines revolving around established Marvel characters. They announced in October 2003 that the monthly, conventionally American formatted comics (thin,

pamphlet-style monthly issues) would be collected into full-color, manga-sized paperbacks, at a price point below that of many of Viz's and Tokyopop's titles (\$7.99-8.99 as opposed to \$9.99) ("Manga-Size Trades From Marvel?," 2003).

The qualities that make manga attractive to U.S. audiences continued to elude publishers such as Marvel. "Marvel acknowledged that it wasn't sure what key elements were causing the manga books from Japan to sell so well in the States, pointing to art style, character development, relationships in the books, and format as factors they were looking at" ("Marvel 'Manga Style'," 2003). Despite a flurry of press attention to its beginning, Marvel quietly closed Tsunami late in 2003. Marvel also published several volumes of manga-style versions of stories featuring Marvel properties, dubbed Marvel Mangaverse, which were not very successful. Most recently, Marvel turned to manga and science fiction publisher Del Rey to publish "mangafied" (manga-style) stories about several character properties. In 2009, *Wolverine: Prodigal Son* debuted, followed by *X-Men: Misfits* (a shoujo manga version of the story of the X-Men). Both *Wolverine: Prodigal Son* and *X-Men: Misfits* peaked at #59 on the April 2009 and September 2009 (respectively) on the Diamond bestsellers lists for graphic novel sales ("Top 300 Graphic Novels Actual--April 2009," 2009; Top 300 Graphic Novels Actual--September 2009," 2009). Despite this, spots on the *New York Times* Graphic Books bestseller list, and critical acclaim about the quality of the two series, both were cancelled after their first volume ("Del Rey Deep Sixes 'X-Men Manga'," 2010).

CMX was D.C. Comic's manga imprint, started in 2004. A division of Wildstorm Productions, owned by D.C. (which is in turn owned by Time-Warner), the imprint had an inauspicious beginning thanks to one of its first publications. CMX licensed cult-

favorite manga series *Tenjho Tenge* and obtained author permission to alter some of its more sexually explicit artwork to make it easier to sell on chain bookstore shelves. The result was a widely publicized fan backlash against the imprint (e.g., "CMX Bowdlerizes Tenjho Tenge Manga," 2005). Their focus over the years has been to license a wide variety of titles without focusing on demographics, according to editor Jim Chadwick: "I like good stories and strong characters rather than focusing on whether a title is shounen or shoujo" (as quoted in Chavez, 2007). The resulting catalog was a mix of old and current series of many different genres. Despite its success, however, in 2010, CMX announced that it would be closing (Reid, 2010).

Overall, however, neither Marvel's nor DC's attempts to crack the manga market have been successful. They have both jettisoned imprints deemed to be "unprofitable" despite repeated attempts to capture part of the manga audience. While they dominate the overall graphic novel bestseller list, Viz, Tokyopop, and other manga-specific publishers continue to dominate the manga bestseller list in terms of number of titles. Moreover, while Marvel and D.C. dominate the overall graphic novel bestseller list as reported by Diamond Distributors, Viz and Tokyopop by far outsell Marvel and D.C. within the chain bookstore as reported by BookScan.

Dark Horse publishes both American-style comics and manga, and is notable for being an early competitor with Viz and Tokyopop. The publication of *Oh! My Goddess* and *Berserk*'s new volumes continue to make the lists of top-selling manga. While Dark Horse was an early investor in the importation of manga, they were not responsible for manga's mainstreaming. They did, however, successfully sell manga as "comic books"

until 2007, selling them through the American format of slick-covered periodical comics sold in specialty shops (Goldberg, 2010).

Nonetheless, there are several companies that publish only manga in the U.S. Viz is the largest of these companies, holding about 1% of the comics publishing market in the U.S. Viz is owned by Shogakukan Publishing, Shueisha Publishing, and Shogakukan-Shueisha Production, three of the largest creators and licensors of manga and animation in Japan. Tokyopop, the company I studied for my project, is the second largest manga company in the United States, holding .24% of the market, according to Diamond Distributors.

Yen Press is a relative newcomer to the manga market, having been founded in 2006 by former Borders Group Buyer Kurt Hassler and former D.C. Comics Vice President Rich Johnson ("Publishing Group: Yen Press - Hachette Book Group," 2006). Owned by Hachette Livre, they publish manga and graphic novels as well as a monthly manga magazine that was first sold July 2008 ("Monthly manga anthology magazine coming in Summer 2008!," 2007). Their first major acquisition was that of the manga and light novels for the animation property *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya*. Due to widespread manga and anime fan appeal in both Japan and the U.S., their success at securing *Haruhi* guarantees that they will reap good sales. They have also been successful at securing the rights to manga versions of Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* series, a coup that allows them to "print money," according to the editors of ICv2 ("'Twilight' Graphic Novels: To Be Printed at Denver Mint," 2009). Yen Press, due to its ability to secure major licenses over older, established companies, poses a formidable challenge to established companies in today's manga market.

While Viz and Tokyopop only hold 1.05% of the United States market, they are doing well by publishing for a niche audience in the United States. Although there are other publishers who publish manga in the U.S., Viz and Tokyopop continue to dominate the manga best sellers list. As of 2009, they continue to outstrip other manga publishers in terms of units sold, as reported in the BookScan charts. The numbers represented by Marvel and D.C. are also vastly disproportionate from the other companies because of the dominance they have held in the U.S. market since the 1950's. Additionally, while Viz and Tokyopop hold a small fraction of the market, at bookstores manga holds at least half the shelf space allotted to comics and graphic novels. Since shelf space is increasingly more at a premium in bookstores, this allotment means that bookstores still value these sections.

The manga market in the U.S. has actually declined thanks to the downturn in the economy, but is expected to improve when the economy improves. The manga market has faced competition from several fronts in addition to the suffering economy as well, which greatly affected sales: Stephanie Meyer's *Twilight* series is thought to have captured a sizable portion of the young female demographic, an important demographic for the manga market. Also, the Borders bookseller group has faced a number of different economic troubles, leading ultimately to its collapse. Since the Borders Group was one of the primary advocates for manga's entry into the U.S., the credit crunch at first forced stores to close and the company to downsize, thus reducing manga's availability across the U.S. Despite this, Borders made a new push for manga in its stores, establishing new in-store teen boutiques to promote graphic novels, fantasy, and young adult fiction in one place, due to young adult fiction being up 13 percent in 2009

("Borders Creating In-Store Teen Boutiques," 2009). Finally, in 2011, the Borders Group closed.

Tokyopop's demise has been attributed, in part, to the Borders Group closing. Borders, as mentioned before, was a constant champion of manga in the U.S. Some speculated that 50% of manga sales in the country could be attributed to Borders. Borders' demise was expected, after years of layoffs, bankruptcies, and store closings. When the economy took a downturn, Borders filed for assistance under the condition that they'd find a buyer to take over the corporation. They failed to find an investor, so began a multi-stage process of closing stores and liquidating merchandise. More recently, the chain Books-a-million has put an offer on Borders's remaining assets. Former Borders stores stand to be replaced by Books-a-million stores.

Borders' demise was a long time coming. One of the signs that Borders was reaching the end, though, was Diamond Distributors' withdrawal from supplying Borders with graphic novels and comics. Many people attributed this to Borders' inability to repay Diamond for previous shipments of books.

As such, the manga publishing companies remain the primary holders of the young female demographic for graphic books. Tokyopop was the first to really focus on a catalog of shoujo titles, but Viz has rapidly caught up to them. Viz now dominates the market in terms of sales of shoujo titles, but has more releases in general thanks to its catalog of titles from its owning companies and its ability to cross-promote across its media channels. Additionally, Tokyopop holds the property that still sells the most shoujo manga in bookstores, *Fruits Basket*. Given this, it made sense to choose

Tokyopop as representative of publishers of shoujo manga. Their choices have shaped the field of shoujo manga as it exists in the U.S.

Publishers

In many respects, the publishers choose shoujo manga that clearly differentiates itself from American comics. More so than shounen titles, shoujo titles must focus on capturing a demographic not captured by American comics. Whereas manga is mainstream in Japan, meaning that publishers may market broadly to young women, manga is still more of a niche or subcultural medium in the U.S., which positions young women as a niche or subculture. However, the fact remains that female audiences are still regarded as niche markets in most media industries in the U.S. For Tokyopop, young females are their core audience—meaning that Tokyopop seeks a mainstream following within that niche.

The group who selects manga for Tokyopop tends to be a rather small, informal one. A small committee is in charge of selecting manga to consider. Subject Amy reported that when it is time for a meeting, a few people circulate around the office and gather whatever senior members of the staff are available. That said, the people who must attend these meetings are the senior editor, the associate publisher, representatives from the sales department, and the marketing manager. The committee holds a meeting once a month (as of January 2008), but when the publication schedule was more prolific, they would meet weekly or biweekly. The primary function of this meeting is to present new possible licenses, review the forecasts on these licenses, and ultimately select which titles will be brought to the legal department for preparation.

It is telling to hear the accounts of the selection process as it occurred in the past, compared to today: subject Michael reports that a few years ago, Tokyopop could publish any manga at all, and it would sell. From other research, this seems to be largely because of the fact that manga was a budding market a few years ago; there really wasn't any competition against Viz or Tokyopop amidst the audience being established. The employees of Tokyopop would often select manga based on personal interest or personal appeal—what the employees call “prestige” or “vanity” series. Today, given the competition in the market and the state of the economy, they are much more careful with what they select for licensing and publication. Their current primary objective is to survive in today's market, which makes their selection process much more conservative than it was in the past and distills the selection process to its most basic elements. Their current strategy is to focus all their resources on publishing for their core audience.

Tokyopop's Core Demographic

The audience, for Tokyopop, is key to acquiring a new license. The employees of Tokyopop all spoke of a “core demographic” that consisted of readers who were the main purchasers of Tokyopop's manga. Also, my interview subjects all reported the importance of an established audience in considering a new license for publication. Subjects Amy and Tanya reported the importance of not only knowing that there was a rabid fan base who loved the manga, but also knowing that that fan base was willing to buy the manga. Amy gave the example of one series, *Beck*, that had a very large online following, but did not sell well after licensing. The Tokyopop acquisitions team began relying on past sales of manga to predict the future performance of manga. Thus began the present repertoire of current Tokyopop titles, which, while diverse, are somewhat

similar to one another despite coming from different publishers and different Japanese magazines.

More often than not, Tokyopop's employees characterized their core demographic in the negative—that is, in terms of attributes their core demographic did *not* have. They distinguished their core audience both from a mainstream audience and from an overly specialized audience. Michael noted that “we’ve kind of become sort of a boutique publisher.” Nonetheless, the employees emphasized that audience size was a big factor. Amy emphasized it most often, saying, “if we know that there’s no audience for it, that’s, I mean, that’s like the fundamental question.” She went on to say that she doesn’t vote for things that are too “niche-y” because it’s necessary to sell a minimum amount to make it profitable, and if an audience is too small for a title, it’s not worth licensing. Anticipating the size of the audience is one way that Tokyopop tries to keep their business afloat. Michael mentioned that one of the major reasons a title is rejected for licensing was if the staff doesn’t think there’s an audience for it in the U.S.

The primary way that Tokyopop's employees characterized their audience is in terms of gender. Whereas other publishers mostly focus on comics for males, Tokyopop tends to focus on comics written for a female audience. The main members of their core demographic, then, are teens who read shoujo. Each employee I spoke to emphasized that their audience were readers of shoujo manga. While there are many age levels of manga marketed to females in Japan, in the U.S. the general trend is to lump everything into one “shoujo genre,” and supply readers with subtle age ratings on the back cover.

The employees were careful not to mention that their audience was composed of females, but instead implied that their catalog was geared towards females. Michael

characterized Tokyopop's catalog as one that "leans a little more shoujo than shounen." In general, in the manga market, shoujo and shounen are considered two ends of a continuum, with little overlap in terms of marketing. ICv2, for example, breaks down series into essentially three categories, shoujo, shounen, and yaoi, with yaoi being a less-mainstream category as compared to shounen and shoujo. Amy was careful to point out, however, that there are some titles that have appeal to both readers of shoujo and readers of shounen. Amy described a "general otaku group" of titles consisting of manga that would appeal to both boys and girls, like *Future Diary*. She implies that readers of shoujo manga are female, then—and that shoujo manga does not appeal to male readers. The use of the term "otaku" is telling, as it is generally used in the United States as a term describing a rabid fan of Japanese popular culture. The core audience here is differentiated from the "general otaku group," but overlaps with it.

Their audience tends to be "Japan-centric" in their media use, but Tokyopop differentiates it from the mass anime audience. The key factor here is whether new licenses seem similar enough to past successes in terms of artwork, storytelling, and format. Here are some examples provided by employees: the title *Gakuen Alice* was selected for licensing due to its cute artwork, humor, school setting, pathos, and magic, which are all qualities found in the highly successful *Fruits Basket*. The current success *Trinity Blood* features gothic-style characters, action, and supernatural content, all of which appear in other successful titles such as Viz's *Vampire Knight* and Tokyopop's *Chibi Vampire*.

Michael also characterized their core audience as one that is focused on Japanese popular culture in general, and centering on specific titles as well. He characterizes the

core audience as one that has an active, vocal online presence. The core audience also has a strong connection to the fan following in Japan, being linked with it through the Internet. Many times, my interviewees mentioned that what's popular in Japan will often be flagged as something that's liable to be popular here. As Tanya put it, "We're keeping an eye on what seems to be really popular, what's getting a lot of traction in the Japanese market."

Their audience tends to be "Japan-centric," focusing more specifically on Japanese manga than on Korean manhwa, European comics, or American comics. The employees further distinguish their core demographic from a mass audience of Japanese popular culture users. The "general otaku group" Amy mentions above is different, but may overlap with Tokyopop's core audience. Nonetheless, according to employees, the core audience tends to be "Japan-centric."

Despite this Japan-centricism, Tokyopop uses sources other than Japan for a number of their manga series—brands or entertainment properties such as TV programs, movies, and other media, as well as manga- and non-manga-style comics from other countries, are considered good sources of new licenses. As Michael put it:

Yeah, that said, we—we're not just focused on Japan, now Korea, Europe, China, you know, there's plenty of great content coming out all over the world. It just so happens that there's—our core fan base is very passionate and often sort of Japan-centric.

One employee related to me that the Japan-centricism combined with the proliferation of American manga publishers means that although there are hundreds of Japanese-published titles to choose from, there are more companies competing to snatch them up. Tokyopop has also been one of the primary publishers of original English-language (OEL) manga. Many of their currently best-selling series are OEL. Original

content created by Tokyopop often takes its cue from Japanese manga, in terms of art style and narrative conventions. For example, the original English manga *Dramacon* takes place at several American anime conventions and focuses on the relationships between fans who attend the convention, recalling titles such as Del Rey's *Genshiken* and Tokyopop's *Comic Party* that portray fan culture similar to that of their readers.

Tokyopop's bestselling manga for May 2009 was *Return to Labyrinth Volume 3* (based on the Jim Henson property). Titles based on the Warcraft games and properties have also sold very well.

Members of the acquisitions team must negotiate their desire to create a diverse catalog of quality titles with a need to turn a profit in a competitive marketplace that is saturated with content. As a result, they have tended to fall back on manga, which while excellent in quality, tend to follow established shoujo manga guidelines. Romance figures in many of the titles chosen. Romances tend to be gendered as female-oriented in the U.S. As a result, there are a great number of shoujo romances available in English, but not as many shounen romances marketed to young men. Many of the shoujo titles that end up on the bestseller list feature a romantic storyline. This management of innovation means that in order to minimize the risk of licensing a new title, the manga titles considered are very similar to old ones without being identical. They are also similar to other young adult fiction on the market today.

Management of innovation extends also to the format of manga itself. While Tokyopop's employees pride themselves in their success with a variety of types of shoujo manga, Tokyopop's comics all retain the manga format regardless of their origin in the U.S. or elsewhere. It is Tokyopop's established standard. Since Tokyopop has

dominated the market in terms of shoujo manga, and Tokyopop specializes in and pioneered the U.S. manga format, essentially shoujo manga is the female audience's form of comics in the U.S.

The employees of Tokyopop all expressed a desire to extend beyond the established successful series to import more experimental manga as well as manga that they deemed of good quality, but that had nothing in common with manga currently on the market. They all expressed a desire to expand the diversity of the U.S. shoujo category, although their current catalog is fairly diverse. One area in particular that they wished to expand was content for older audiences.

Manga Rating Systems and Booksellers: The Mature Rating

The employees were careful to mention that mature titles—titles that, because of content, would be awarded an “M” rating—were outside of their core demographic. The content that was awarded the M rating at Tokyopop is very particular but subjective. Tokyopop's rating system says that “excessive profanity and language; intense violence; excessive gore; explicit sexual language, themes and violence; and explicit fanservice” can appear in an M-rated, 18 and up book. (Fanservice can be defined as gratuitous provocative content geared toward heterosexual males: implied or explicit female nudity, panty shots, etc. Fanservice generally does not contribute to a plot.) The next youngest rating, OT (Older Teen), for 16 and up, “may contain profanity and strong language, moderate violence and gore, moderate sexual themes and sexual violence, nudity, moderate fanservice, and alcohol and illegal drug use”—essentially less of the same in terms of explicitness and frequency (“Corporate: Booksellers,” 2009).

The main criterion they identified as reducing the size of their audience was a differentiation in age: their core demographic tends to be younger than titles with “mature” themes.

Michael underscored this, saying:

We’re very careful, with the mature rated books, just because, it’s nothing about the content, if we think it’s a good story and great art, you know, we would publish it, but it’s a little beyond our core.

Likewise, Amy pointed out that mature content was directly connected with sales performance: “If it’s just too out there, and we can’t make any money on it, then that—there’s just not enough of an audience out there that—that certainly effects what we get to publish.” On one hand, the mature rating was characterized as not having a pre-established audience. For example, Amy spoke about the audience for josei manga in the U.S. (josei manga being manga with mature content, marketed to college-aged and older females):

Our margins are much tighter than they used to be, so, you know, we know that Viz has done a lot of work to kind of build the josei audience and kind of help to move some of those manga fans into older content, but right now the audience isn’t big enough—it’s just not there.

On the other hand, they have and do publish some titles that receive a mature rating, but as Michael observes, their selection focus is changing away from that: “We publish yaoi, we do publish some mature-rated, you know, action, horror titles, but those are fewer and fewer—we’re really trying to focus on what will really be appropriate for our core demographic.”

However, in large part, employees attribute a lack of sales due to mature content to the booksellers’ policies about stocking mature titles in their stores, not with a lack of audience. The booksellers’ preferences were mentioned repeatedly as a major factor in

the selection process, especially where adult material was concerned. Manga became popular in the United States in large part thanks to Tokyopop's core audience, young women, and the new comics-selling strategies that enabled young women to find out about and easily buy manga in chain bookstores. Because of this dependence on chain stores, manga publishers must heed their policies and consider them when thinking about series to invest in.

Amy noted the difficulties of getting "mature" manga into brick-and-mortar bookstores:

Our various channels react differently to different types of titles and so we've started to back off of some things that we know we can't get any channel support from, you know, for example, something that's really mature, the things that are really mature will never get picked up by Barnes and Noble and that's a major factor for us.

Michael linked the lack of bookseller support directly with a lack of audience support. If a chain store refuses to stock a mature-rated title, the ability of Tokyopop to reach as big an audience as possible is severely limited, he said. The age rating system is one key way that manga publishers try to get past the preconception that "comics" are "for children." Tokyopop pioneered the manga rating system, which other manga publishers then instated for their own publications. Tokyopop updated their original ratings system in 2007, and now includes specifics of what might appear in the manga along with the rating on the back cover. As their press release about the update said:

One of the greatest challenges that retailers and librarians face in incorporating manga onto their shelves is explicit content. No one wants to see a 10-year-old child leafing through a book meant for someone that is at least 18 years old! Nearly ten years ago, TOKYOPOP helped remedy this potential problem by creating the first full-scale ratings system that was applied not just to mature manga but to every series the company published. TOKYOPOP implemented this program voluntarily, and most other manga publishers quickly followed suit,

making an age rating on every manga published an industry standard ("Corporate: Booksellers," 2009).

Although every publisher still has their own proprietary rating system with different criteria, in many ways it has encouraged booksellers to stock what might otherwise be viewed as risky merchandise. The booksellers depend on it enough that in the Tokyopop offices, the rating a publication receives is a vitally important point in the pre-licensing selection process. If a title displays unforeseen content after it has been licensed, it is problematic for Tokyopop because the booksellers might choose to stop stocking that title. Tanya explains:

Fake is a good example of that too, where you sort of have seven volumes, six volumes of, you know, older teen rated, so 16 and up in terms of sexual content, and then they get it on in volume 7. It's M rated. And bookstores hate that even more if they have to change the rating halfway through.

Part of the reason for the dependence of these rating systems and assessing manga before it's licensed is the manner in which manga is sold in the U.S.

In Japan, manga is grouped first by publisher and then by imprint, so in many cases (not all) manga that was marketed in the manga magazines to a specific demographic is then grouped on the bookshelf with other manga that had been published in the same magazine:

This is a sort of phenomenon of Japanese publishing that I'm not sure many American fans are aware of, you know, we tend to go with marketing designations like shoujo and shounen, things like that, but each magazine, you know, each manga magazine coming out Japan has a pretty specific editorial mandate, and so you know that if you pick up a copy of ... Kodansha's *Morning*, that you're going to get a certain kind of content, than you know that if you pick up a copy of *Hana to Yume*, a Hokusensha shoujo book, that you're going to get a really different kind of editorial content. (Tanya)

In the United States, manga is shelved by title. The shelves are a jumble of age ratings, authors, genres, and publishers, resulting in some notable juxtapositions. Tanya observed

that she always finds *Battle Royale* (mature-rated for excessive, graphic violence) shelved next to *Card Captor Sakura* (rated for elementary school students). She went on to say that a system of manga sorted by age group would not only help booksellers, but it would enable the publisher to get their books in the hands of those who would be most interested in them:

The best suggestion I've heard fairly recently is—I don't know if bookstores had ever considered doing this, but I've certainly talked to other industry people about it – is at least separating things by age rating, you have all of the youth titles in one place, all of the teen, all of the older teen, I mean our categories don't track exactly with our competitors', but we all have more or less the same rating system... It would be easier for kind of a grown-up to go into the section and pick things out, versus you know, if I'm an elementary schooler, you can find the content that's aimed at you a little more easily.

Deciding if a title should be rated M or OT is one that the employees of Tokyopop struggle with, especially when they err on the side of caution, expecting the rest of the series to continue with the same level of explicitness. Tanya told me about one title, *Wild Adapter*, that is moderately violent but only had one instance of graphic sexual content in the first volume. This forced Tokyopop to award it a mature rating, although the rest of the series is comparatively tame. The decision to create a rating for something is one that will not only affect the distribution of a series in bookstores, but also will attract or repel certain audience members. Likewise, a few Tokyopop series have received older ratings than they perhaps deserved. One employee commented on the difficulties in selecting a title, because of content, and then selecting a rating for that title:

One of the worst things is, actually sort of just general T and A, and one problem that we've had is that a series that otherwise would be kind of teen rated, like 13 and up, if you have a little too much nipple or a little too much something or other, it'll end up with an M rating, which for a long time it meant that certain bookstores wouldn't take it in. So it meant that certain bookstores wouldn't take it in, so it would destroy your distribution, if you had something that should otherwise be more teen-friendly, suddenly only part of its market is able to get to

it, and the part of the market that really wants to buy M rated titles, they would buy it and then be disappointed. So it's not really mature enough. It's kind of a weird line that we have to walk but it's something we tend to be fairly conservative about so it's like, if it's totally mature, not a problem, if it's totally tame, not a problem. The things that are kind of skirting that borderline, yeah, we've had a couple of series that ended up with an M rating kind of at the last minute and I really think that hurt their sales. (Tanya)

This example demonstrates how much of a promotional tool the rating system is for Tokyopop. Having developed the system to improve their chances of bookstores stocking their merchandise, it also works as a tool for readers to select what's best for themselves. Bookstores and readers can feel more confident about the contents of a book, and by consequence are more likely to pick up something based on their preferences or limits. At the same time, this system has proved to be limiting for Tokyopop. Their selection process has become constrained by their rating system in some ways, and they must select manga that aligns with both their core audience's rating preferences, and booksellers' limitations on mature ratings.

In order to get around this, and to expand their pool of selectable titles, they used to alter artwork. Tanya relayed to me how Tokyopop used to edit the artwork in order to change the potential rating of a series. She said that it wasn't worth the trouble because of the fan reaction they'd have to deal with afterwards: "Every time we'd do it, we'd get this fan reaction, even if we, like, spelled it out on the cover, got author permission, it was always just sort of this firestorm. Yeah, it wasn't worth it." This sort of audience reaction is not unique to Tokyopop's early years, and they are not the only example of this happening in the comics publishing market. CMX also faced a "firestorm" of fan criticism after heavily altering the artwork in the cult favorite manga series ("CMX Bowdlerizes Tenjho Tenge Manga," 2005).

Other than booksellers' selection, the requirements for M rated manga in bookstores is also a hindrance to Tokyopop in terms of the promotional capacity of being able to preview a book before buying it. The system of shrink-wrapping M- or some OT-rated titles is a common one that booksellers require in order to stock these titles.

Michael noted that it is challenging to license and publish mature rated manga precisely because of this requirement. The consumer can't look at a volume of manga and see that the art is good or read the first few pages to see if the story is something that would be interesting. That coupled with the refusal of many booksellers to stock M-rated titles limits the exposure the audience will get to a series in a bookstore.

Bookstores and Manga

The brick-and-mortar bookseller plays a vital role in the American manga market. While manga is also sold in comic shops and online stores, most manga is sold in the brick-and-mortar booksellers. One writer cites the statistic of "80-90%" of manga being sold in brick-and-mortar, mainstream bookstores. A comparison of the BookScan and Diamond Distributor lists seems to confirm this; Diamond Distributor statistics only reflect sales in comics specialty shops, where sales of manga are small in comparison to periodical American comics. Indeed, collaboration between booksellers and publishers has been one of the factors leading to a rise in the popularity of manga in the United States and changes in consumer habits for Tokyopop's core audience.

Underscoring their motive as one of profit-generating is the employees' characterization of the core audience as not just readers who enjoy Tokyopop's catalog, but readers who *purchase* Tokyopop's releases. As Michael put it, "we don't have the luxury to publish something that's not really going to sell well." In the past, as I

mentioned before, companies were less selective in terms of what would sell well. Given the less competitive environment, companies would license properties based on personal preference. As Michael recalls, Tokyopop used to be able to “publish something that wouldn’t sell but it’s more a prestige piece for their list,” but that it wasn’t smart to do that in today’s environment. While some titles would give a publisher “prestige” for having it in their catalog, today’s Tokyopop focuses on titles that are predicted to sell well. Even if a fan base is passionate about a series, that does not necessarily guarantee a license attempt. Tanya recalled one past license they obtained that did not work out as predicted: *Beck* had performed really well in Japan and seemed to have a strong fan base in the U.S., so Tokyopop obtained the license. *Beck* turned out to have a very strong, but very *small*, fan base. “You can have a few very strong voices advocating a series, but that doesn’t necessarily translate into sort of widespread popularity,” she told me. Michael agreed that “there’ll always be some sort of audience, but a big enough audience to really support the series” is necessary for a license to be considered. He differentiated between readers who read versus readers who purchase, saying that there is as many or even more manga and graphic novel readers out there, but fewer buyers of content.

The employees were quick to point out that fans putting their content up for free, beyond Tokyopop’s distributive control, was one of the reasons for a downturn in sales. The series *Beck* that Tanya mentions above was one example of a manga series with a thriving online readership that did not translate into sales for the company. Michael said that there was a direct link between uncontrolled, free content and downturns in sales.

While the need to make a profit was important, the employees negotiated their roles as members of a profit-motivated company and as appreciators, if not fans, of the

books they were assigned to select and sell. Amy spoke of great titles that she knew of that were worthy of licensing, but that did not already have a big enough audience to support a publishing program. Likewise, Michael explained that a long-running series with a small, steady following can be as beneficial as a really popular series, but that a series without an audience is one that will cost the company.

Thus, the goal is to choose a series that is predicted to gain a large amount of momentum and a large audience of consumers. Tokyopop's current selection strategy is to be very cautious, which means that during the time of my research, profit is the top motivator, over any other factor:

Just because the focus is really to be profitable, at this point, and to stay around. So vanity projects are a thing of the past at the moment. ...[Vanity projects are ones where] you're just like, "oh this is really pretty, I think it's cool," you know, or even things like things that are a little ahead of their time, you know, while we'd love to have the luxury to invest in some of that stuff, it's just more difficult now. (Amy)

The fact that Tokyopop has to focus on their "core demographic," a construct representing the people who buy their publications most often, means that they select books for that imaginary group. That group of people is mostly female, in their teens, and interested in Japanese culture, especially manga.

Booksellers have a great deal of effect on what manga is selected. Since several of the large bookseller chains will not stock manga that is above a certain age rating, it does not appear on the shelf even though it may be readily available online. The female demographic for comics and graphic novels buys mostly manga, and almost 80% of their manga purchases happen in a brick-and-mortar bookseller. A buying model has been created where this coveted demographic is used to going into their local bookstore and buying new manga. If something does not appear on the shelves, in essence it does not

exist unless an individual is well informed. This discourages publishers from selecting new titles that would, in essence, be relegated to an off-the-radar position.

As far as the public's perception of manga goes, the presence of specific titles on the shelf is, in essence, the manga that exists to American readers. As Tomlinson (1999) writes, experience of global culture is local. A reader interested in manga would easily be able to browse the books available locally, and this would make up their experience of manga. If all the manga for sale demonstrates a level of sophistication in story and content appropriate for a younger audience, then this cross-section of all manga in existence makes it seem as if manga tends to be for younger audiences. Likewise, the marketing designations of manga into roughly mainly the categories of shoujo and shounen manga in the United States means that readers might only understand shoujo and shounen manga in terms of the limited materials that appear on bookshelves.

At the same time, however, neither shoujo nor shounen manga are separated by marketing designations such as gender or age ratings in stores. This creates a seeming "mass" of manga within bookstores, differentiated only by title. Contrast this with Japanese booksellers, who rely on readers' interest and knowledge of a particular magazine or publishing imprint. Because books are sorted first by publishing imprint, with all of the shounen imprints, shoujo imprints, and boys' love imprints grouped together, a reader can browse the shelves based on their love of a certain title (and their knowledge that a title is found under a certain imprint), and be guaranteed that other titles with similar editorial mandates behind them will be grouped nearby.

The global experience of manga in bookstores in the United States, then, is that of "manga" as a whole, as opposed to "comics and graphic novels." The smaller format in

some ways dictates that putting all manga together, as opposed to mixing it with the larger digest-format trade paperbacks, means that the shelves can be physically arranged to best hold manga. The overwhelming presence of Japanese manga means that other nations' larger-format works are lumped together with everything else, just as the titles are lumped together based on any sorting criteria other than title.

These factors all mean that the selection of manga on the part of publishers is restrained in certain ways (by public expectations of manga genres, of age ratings and content, etc.). On the other hand, the generation of a public expectation based on format, rather than on material, means that Tokyopop is freer to expand their repertoire to include new types of formats having not yet been pursued by American publishers.

CHAPTER 3 SCANSLATORS NEGOTIATING THE CURRENTS: TROUBLE IN PARADISE?

Media are thought to have become increasingly more interactive in nature and dependent on audiences' involvement with the Internet. In the case of the general American population, manga is experienced locally and in a physical form through the representative sample provided by booksellers. If it were true that the Internet would be the place causing a widespread popularity of manga, manga sales might be different and more based on the vagaries of online trends. Since manga gained popularity because of the distribution by national bookseller chains, however, the primary place that manga tends to be experienced is locally. The experience of scanslators differs from that of the average fan, in that their experience and choice of manga has more to do with preference and less with local availability.

As I explained in Chapter 1, the number of scanslation groups dramatically increased after manga became more widespread in the U.S. during the mid-2000's. The relatively tight-knit community transformed into a diverse field of groups with different motives. Scanslation groups today could be categorized in two groups: unlicensed-only scanners, characterized by their willingness to "drop" translations after the copyright has been obtained by an American publisher, and all-encompassing scanners, who choose manga titles to translate regardless of their availability in the U.S. market.

The scanslation group I studied, Paradise, is an unlicensed-only scanslation group made up of an informal network of about 20-30 people. An exact count of members is difficult to make due to the informal nature of the group—members tend to come and go depending on what's going on in "real life." Most of the members I spoke with reported

that they lived in the United States or were an American studying in Japan. About three-quarters of the members I spoke with reported their sex as female. Diverging from other types of online groups who participate in arguably illegal activities, the group is anchored to a central point on the Internet. (Other groups such as DVD pirates and BitTorrent streamers are connected through a loose, decentralized network.)

Despite the comings-and-goings of Paradise's staff, there is a core group of staffers who do the work needed to produce a scanslation. Most members perform more than one task in the scanslation process, and some perform one task exclusively. Some of the staffers perform tasks for multiple scanslation groups, especially those who scan. As of April 2009, ten staffers scan, one staffer cleans, seven staffers translate, three staffers proofread, and fifteen staffers edit. (I will talk more about these tasks in Chapter 4.)

Additionally, Paradise has a group leader, Courtney, who coordinates all of the group's scanslation projects. In addition to acting like a senior editor for the group, helping select projects and assigning tasks to staffers, she also performs all of the tasks that other staffers do, and quality-checks the scanslations before they are released to the public for download. Courtney's role as group leader also means that she enforces the group's "editorial mandate." While the staffers in the group have a large amount of choice over what projects they work on, Courtney is regarded as the person who ultimately makes the decision about what to scanslate. (Courtney herself credits the whole group with making the decisions, and not herself.) Anyone, including people from outside the group, can suggest new titles to consider for scanslation. These suggestions are posted on a forum connected to Paradise's web site, or emailed directly to Courtney.

While Courtney, the group's leader has a lot of say in what is translated, the group members and staffers who do the work get to choose what becomes a Paradise project. As Tan-Tam told me, "recently, we have a forum for 'Storm in Heaven staff'. Scanners toss some pages of new projects there. Translators & editors will reply what manga he/she loves and receive the project." This sampling has become the primary way that staffers decide what projects they would like to join. The translators particularly have a great deal of influence over what is chosen, since translators are the staffers requiring the most expertise in order to do their work. Fox attests to the power of the translator in the process: "If a translator takes interest in a manga...it'll become a project."

Sometimes a staffer will provide more work to get a project scanned, particularly if that project is one that he or she really wants translated into English. While Paradise has a general "editorial mandate" that dictates what types of projects end up being chosen for scanslation, when someone is willing to put a larger share of work into a project than usual, the project might show up on Paradise's downloads page. Fox relates how this usually happens:

Sometimes we get projects outside of our usual categories; however, this frequently occurs when a single member can provide for the project in multiple ways. For example, I will provide the raws and translate for a future project that's outside our usual strike range, and we've released a few doujinshi that were scanned, translated and edited by a single member.

This is an example of personal preference taken to an extreme in terms of getting scanslations out to the public. Doujinshi—fan-produced comics that feature characters from mainstream published manga or video games—are usually only about a dozen pages long and would not require as much work as a multi-volume series. Likewise, providing

“raws”—untranslated, uncleaned scans of manga pages—would not take as much work as performing all steps of the translation process for a multi-volume manga series.

The members of Paradise I interviewed all liked licensed manga (most of their favorite series are licensed) but felt like the selection available had room for improvement. They set out to promote more “obscure” manga and authors that weren’t getting as much exposure from English-speaking audiences. Throughout their interviews, they express a set of rules that I’ve called a “code of honor” with which they take control to promote their favorite authors while also protecting any benefit those authors can receive from a license in the U.S.

Their self-avowed primary criterion for selection is whether a title has been licensed in English or not. Their secondary criterion might be how different a series might be from what’s already available on the market. Each fan I spoke to expressed a disconnect between “what kind of shoujo manga sells in English” and what kind of manga they thought was the very best. However, an unspoken criterion seems to be the fact that manga is from Japan. They were all very aware of manga’s link to Japanese culture, and many translated manga because it helps them learn more about culture and language. For some members, an interest in Japanese culture piqued their interest in manga, while for others, an interest in the Japanese language prompted an interest in Japanese-language works.

Fulfilling a Lack

They were outspoken about their desire to bring less conventional manga to the U.S., describing their most desired manga as “less typical” and “more unusual.” In elaborating on this, they mentioned qualities that the manga they wanted to bring to the

U.S.: “deep stories,” “compelling” and having life lessons, “serious or tragic”, “intelligent and mature,” and perhaps most tellingly, “not romantic.”

Several other factors are at play that determine what manga they decide to scanlate. These factors have to do with the manga themselves and their content, and second, the system in which manga is bought and sold. The first factor that determines what manga is selected for scanlation (aside from the code of honor and the values it carries) is personal preference. Whereas Tokyopop’s employees are bound by company priorities and values to select manga based on what will sell well, Paradise’s staffers are not bound by a profit-making goal. Personal preference remains a primary criterion among staffers who receive no financial compensation for their time. As Tani related, “I think we mostly select based on our own personal tastes. No one really wants to spend so much time and effort on something that they don't like.”

Their assessment of their favorite manga was intimately linked with the factors that they expressed quality manga as having. The shoujo manga my subjects prefer was contrasted by almost all of the group members as atypical shoujo manga: not a school setting, not romance, not shallow, not a predictable storyline, and not of an old-fashioned manga art style like that found in *Sailor Moon* or *Magic Knight Rayearth* (both two of the first manga that Tokyopop imported to the U.S.).

Significantly, my subjects preferred more mature material. A few of my subjects preferred sexually explicit content, but more just preferred what they perceived as more mature story lines. At the same time, the manga that my subjects preferred was strongly gendered towards the feminine. While they liked shoujo manga of different genres, they preferred manga with attractive male characters and beautifully drawn artwork.

Two main factors were repeatedly cited as being important in a manga: the plot or story and the artwork. The plot tends to matter more to Paradise's staffers than the art. For example, Fox mentioned that a staffer will choose a manga series "based on some balance between art and story, with story having priority." As with the Tokyopop employees, "a good plot or story" was cited as a factor many times in talking about what makes a manga series favorable for selection. Many of the scanslators I spoke with cited a "strong story" or an "appealing story" as an important factor in selecting a series to read or scanlate, but were unable to qualify exactly what made a story "strong." They were, however, able to cite specific generic types or plot features that they usually enjoyed in manga.

Most of the group members enjoy manga with a certain amount of fantasy in it. Some members preferred stories with "a fantasy setting, demons" and "supernatural" elements, while others preferred a less straightforward type of fantasy: "things with fairly heavy fantasy tinges (as in reality-skewing, not as in elves and fairies)" (Meredeth). Fox wants "to see more fantasy/sci-fi shoujo in English, especially if the focus is not romance." This isn't too surprising, given the group's focus or editorial mandate, as reported by Fox. The vast majority of Paradise's projects have some kind of supernatural, science fiction, or fantasy aspect. Courtney notes specifically on the group's forum that a title without a supernatural element will probably not get selected. Paradise does scanlate a few series without supernatural elements, but these are in the overwhelming minority.

Many members preferred serious manga; members wanted to see "more tragic or serious ones," manga with "angst," "non-light-hearted" manga, or "heart-wrenching"

manga published in the U.S. Others preferred manga with “zany humor and amusing twists in the storyline” or “lots of humor and things that experiment a little with gender roles.” Some members defined their preferences in the negative. The most disliked plot type was romantic in nature. As Courtney said, “I personally don't find romantic or fluffy manga interesting.” Fox also agrees with her, saying, “The shoujo I translate usually isn't focused on romance – if there's romance at all, which there often enough isn't.” While there was an overall dislike of romantic plots, Courtney contrasted “romantic manga” with emotional manga: “Anything that will move me emotionally is a keeper in my book, while supernatural shoujo manga tend to have lots of action, which is at least interesting.”

This general dislike of romantic manga may seem unusual for a group that focuses on translating shoujo manga in particular. The great majority of shoujo titles, especially shoujo titles that show up on the U.S. bestseller lists, are romantic in focus. Fox characterizes the “typical” shoujo manga plot: “girl meets hot boy, boy and girl fall in love, some semblance of a plot, then boy and girl live happily ever after.” Additionally, given the popularity of shounen manga in the U.S., romantic shounen manga series in English are quite rare. The group members recognize a certain bias in the types of shoujo manga that get published in English, and dislike this trend. Fox perceives romance as one feature required of shoujo manga in order to get published:

There are so many great shoujo manga out there that are skipped over because there's no overwhelming romance, and while Paradise does its part to get these manga out to the English-speaking world, there's only so much that one group can do.

One can see the importance of translation to this group in this comment: translation is seen as a means to promote shoujo manga to English-speaking audiences. Part of

Paradise's mandate is thus to promote aspects of shoujo manga they perceive as under-represented by formal publishing channels. This demonstrates a level of recognition that the titles available for publication shape the perceptions of those who are aware of them. Courtney commented on audience perception, and how Paradise was hoping to alter it. She said that many of the manga she has seen in English are romances set in a high school, and that many people she's spoken with equate "shoujo manga" with "high school romances." Meredith elaborated that the tendency of shoujo manga in the U.S. to be geared towards younger women may be perpetuating the stereotype of manga being for younger audiences. She thought that having more manga for older audiences would help dispel this misconception.

"High school romance" does seem to be a defining characteristic of shoujo manga in the U.S., especially considering the bestseller lists. These romances tend to lack a great deal of sexual or other mature content, even though allusions to sexual situations or mature content might appear.

Contrast this with some of the shoujo manga selected by Paradise. Overall, the group's focus was on promoting more shoujo manga written for slightly older audiences, not just sexually explicit manga. Courtney characterized the manga the group scanslates as falling into two camps, which the group focused on: "[titles] that fit into neither the 'supernatural' group nor the 'intelligent and mature' group are usually the ones we have difficulty finishing." Meredith reported that she would like to see "more of every kind, but especially more of the deep story-lined, adult-g geared type" of shoujo manga published in English. Again, the fact that fewer titles seemed to be geared for a slightly older age group than what's available was evident in what Courtney related to me:

From a business point of view, companies should license popular manga (usually romances and fluffy ones) - that's what will sell. But, it'd be nice if companies could take some of the profit from that and license works that won't make as much of a profit, but are more compelling (have more of a plot or life lesson). Manga by Fujiwara Kaoru, for instance (they're more mature, however).

The language used by the scanslators in distinguishing preferred manga from what is typically available on the market is telling. On one hand, manga on the market is “fluffy,” while the manga they prefer to select is “intelligent and mature,” “compelling,” having “more of a plot or life lesson,” or having a “deep” storyline. Interestingly, shoujo manga geared for a slightly older audience is assumed to have these desirable qualities, while that marketed to younger audiences is presumed to lack them. Although this might lead one to believe that these scanslators would avoid reading English-published manga at all, that is not the case. Many of the scanslators listed licensed and published manga as their favorite series, although some of them also preferred reading manga in Japanese.

Paradise also selects many titles from authors who are underrepresented in the United States. Several of these authors have not had any works licensed in the United States at all. For instance, the group has intentionally picked Yumeka Sumomo (*The Day I Became a Butterfly*) and Minekura Kazuya (*Saiyuki, Wild Adapter*) in order to spread their works to new, English-speaking fans. Whereas Tokyopop must manage risk by selecting authors who have proven to produce works that are popular with fans, scanslation groups are able to take more risks on titles that could prove to be unpopular among readers.

Additionally, since particular authors are liable to write in a specific style or about similar subject matter, they may face bars to licensing as well. For example, Tokyopop makes it clear that the number one obstruction to a work being licensed in the United

States is the amount and kind of sexual content in it. If a particular author tends to write sexually explicit stories, or stories featuring teacher-student or stepsibling relationships, that author will probably not be published in the United States because of the thematic trends she prefers.

Paradise's Code of Honor: Scanslation as Promotion

Although it requires a good deal of knowhow to gain access, scanslation groups welcome people to download their translations, and publicly help people with the knowledge necessary to do so, as long as interested people follow etiquette set by each scanslation group. One thing that many of the group rules have in common is a kind of "code of honor." Scanslation groups' perception is that by abiding by these rules and codes, it allows the scanslators groups to work in parallel with the manga industry. Since scanslators believe that they abide by a set of rules that works in the best interests of authors, this allows them to make selections based on them. The code of honor is a set of policies and values that reflect the group's attitude towards scanslation and their orientation towards the practice. As Paradise's web site states on their frequently asked questions page:

We will only scanslate manga that aren't licensed, and aren't being done by another group. If it isn't, and you have the manga to scan, read over the scanner requirements on the join us page and send us an email (or post in the forum). Honestly, we absolutely love being offered manga scans, and we'll check around to see if anyone's interested in translating it.

The decision to implement a code of honor is one to which not all scanslation groups adhere. Other scanslation groups follow similar codes of honor; the earliest scanslation groups followed codes of honor, seeking to promote rather than pirate (gum, n.d.). Since

the group leader or group members write each group's code of honor, they make each group unique.

Titles are often selected to fill a lack within the market that American manga publishers have not yet filled. Through stating explicitly that the group will not translate or distribute licensed manga, they differentiate themselves from media pirates. Media pirates provide alternate ways to acquire media texts, through unsanctioned channels, often cheaply or for free, while sanctioned media exist within that same market. While some scanslators do translate and distribute licensed titles, the scanslation group I spoke with insisted this was a bad practice, because it undercuts the success of the very manga they would be translating because of their love of it. By translating unlicensed manga, and then ceasing translation and distribution upon finding out about a newly acquired license, scanslators avoid providing content in which a publisher has already staked a claim and from which they hope to profit.

Tokyopop acknowledges that scanslation hurts their market—to what degree, however, they don't know. In March 2008, Tokyopop sent a letter—not the usual cease-and-desist letter—to scanslators and manga distribution sites. The letter acted as a preemptive warning to scanslators. Usually, lists such as this are not sent to scanslators. The usual way to find out about a newly acquired license is through press releases sent to anime and manga news sites, or through more roundabout channels such as listings on Amazon.com's web site. After a scanslator finds that a title has been licensed, however, the title usually immediately is pulled from their rotation, thus ensuring that when the newly licensed manga is finally released for sale in the United States, there is not a way to easily acquire it online. I will address this issue more in Chapter 5.

One of the main motives of Paradise, furthermore, is to promote unlicensed manga to new audiences. As Fox fervently proclaimed, when a title he worked on is licensed, “I’m thrilled. ...I would be ecstatic if all the projects I work on could be licensed.” Providing unlicensed titles to non-Japanese speaking audiences is one of the motivating factors many scanners said they had for doing labor without any compensation other than kudos from fans of the group. They linked their own fan base of downloaders with the promotion of unknown titles. As Meredith put it, manga publishers should have “a greater, or at least more obvious, appreciation of the fervor that certain groups can whip up.”

In order to accomplish their goal of promotion, Paradise works only on unlicensed manga in the hopes that a title will become licensed. Their code of honor creates a selection filter for incoming projects that aligns with this goal. Fox expands on how the code of honor affects Paradise’s behavior:

Our group is one of the most publisher-friendly ones out there. We drop projects once a publisher officially announces a licensing and remove all releases of the manga in question. We do not work on projects that are already licensed or have had volumes published in English, even if they have been subsequently dropped by the publisher. Nor do we joint with groups that work on licensed projects, even if the joint project in question is unlicensed and we have nothing to do with the projects that are licensed. As a result, we tend to avoid the wrath of publishers, who tend to focus on groups that are not as obliging as we are.

In essence, the group focuses on unlicensed works as the initial filter for selection. Even if someone wants something translated, if a license has been announced for that title, Paradise will not pick it up, regardless of publication status. (Sometimes a publisher will license a title and it will not be published for a long time after the license has been obtained.) Since they claim promotion of Japanese-language titles to English-speaking audiences as a goal, their code of honor allows them to do this without attracting negative

attention from publishers. Paradise hopes that people will become just as interested in a series as they are, and that their mutual interest will “whip up a fervor” over a title.

Their code of honor and their interest in promotion also links up with their awareness of authorship. While booksellers in the United States sort manga series based on title, Paradise’s members demonstrate an awareness of the promotion of series being linked to the promotion of specific authors’ work. Some members confessed a dedication to the works of a particular author, saying that they would translate anything written by them, while others just wanted to do a service for the author of each work they enjoyed.

Scanslation could be viewed as the kind of consumer-produced work co-opted by the media industries that Andrejivic and Jenkins have discussed in their writings. It has been frequently noted that media companies will now use user-generated content and viewer-submitted content as a free or inexpensive way to generate new content. But the actual sourcing of scanslations by publishers is much less direct than what I had expected when I embarked on this project. The publishers tend to rely on first-level knowledge of current projects being published in magazines in Japan, and relying on scanslations as a source for materials would in effect be a second-hand source of new licensing possibilities. Additionally, it would be slightly more behind the curve in terms of how much time a project has been in the public. While a scanslated project may build a fan base during its time online, the more time that passes, the more likely a publisher might acquire the license to that project. First, it takes time to secure a license for a project, even if the project is noticed in its early stages. The Japanese publisher will want to ensure that the American publisher who gets the contract will treat the property as well as possible, while ensuring that the Japanese publisher obtains a contract of an adequate cost

from the American publisher. Second, as I discussed above, a company must gamble on the number of people who will be willing to buy a title after it's published—the longer one waits, the more time an audience may gather or start to pay attention to a particular title.

Additionally, the more time that passes, the more likely a fan will be liable to not purchase a project. Some of the subcultural appeal of exclusivity—knowing about a project before that project gets an American license—fades once a project is licensed. While shoujo manga still remain texts for a niche market in the U.S., the subcultural capital found in manga loses appeal for fans when it is “unearthed” from the underground (Roberts, 2005; Vaidhyanathan, 2004). This is not uncommon for scanslation groups; most groups have a web site from which they can promote their translations and their policies. Scanslators also use more decentralized ways to connect, including BitTorrent and Internet Relay Chat (IRC), but most groups will have a web site in addition to BitTorrent streams or IRC channels.

The fan translation activities represent actions that socially distinguish fan translators from non- through their consumer choices (Roberts, 2005). However, these fans have found the choices available in bookstores unsatisfactory. While they do not disassociate themselves from the manga on the market (much of their favorite manga is available in English), they consume while wishing the market to change. Although they would be considered a subculture by mainstream society, since they assert their identity through “conspicuously cosmopolitan consumerism,” or consumption that demonstrates difference through knowledge of other cultures, they seek to directly alter the flow of manga into the U.S., emphasizing their own preferences as superior (Roberts, 2005, p.

583). By employing a code of honor that allows them to exist in parallel with the publishing industry, they situate themselves within the global marketplace, not against it. Understanding their work to be free promotion for authors and series, they select manga that are most appealing to them to translate. Their participation in this section of the global subcultural economy is not one that marks a new form of participatory culture, even one couched in a commercial and commodified context (Carpentier & De Cleen, 2008; Jenkins, 2006). Instead, it marks a form of fan culture that works in tandem with the mainstream industry, producing content very much like its commercial counterpart.

At the same time, in some ways, their choice of text marks a sense of agency, a voice for one's own identity in the world. The audience for shoujo manga, as constructed by the manga publication market, differs from scanslators' understanding of themselves. Manga publishers find themselves needing to ensure book sales by "playing it safe" with series types that have proved to be successful among young females. Employees of these companies recognize that many Japanese titles exist that they do not feel confident releasing in the market. A precedent has not been set that would guarantee their success. Fan translators seek to promote works that they greatly identify with, and in doing so, labor to have a voice directly with their own subculture and the global culture industry. Their decision to respect the licenses is a marker of non-resistance to commercialized culture. They implicitly rank the publishing industry over fans, describing it as professional (vs. amateur), which is endorsed and seconded by copyright law. Their activities mark an attempt, however, to reshape the identity they have been conferred by supplementing the works that have been chosen by the industry employees as representative of the culture.

The characterization of the shoujo manga audience is implicitly embedded in Tokyopop's selection of manga for publication, and in response fans attempt to reframe themselves as different from that constructed audience. While industry employees must negotiate norms and expectations, fan translators are slightly freer to construct the shoujo manga audience. Both groups share in common an understanding of manga as something valuable to an audience that sets itself apart from others.

The group Paradise, in essence, is creating a supplemental environment wherein the manga available reflects their own conception of shoujo manga and a "good" cross-section. Since Paradise is not limited by marketing designations or the forecasts of profit and loss reports, they are free to create their own "library" of manga for those who cannot read Japanese or do not have access to the physical Japanese manga. At the same time, however, Paradise has placed a limiter on themselves, selecting only manga that has not been licensed for future publication. On one hand, Paradise is complementing the current manga environment by broadening the horizons of fans who have the know-how to find and download their free content. Their goal of promotion for their favorite titles and their favorite authors is put in action through their code of honor, which avoids any duplication of content to avoid the possibility of creating a secondary source for the same material in the U.S. Because of this, Paradise is not completely going against the publishing companies and their imperatives. They are not resisting the companies that publish manga in the United States. By establishing a code of honor that compliments the publications put out by publishers, they have in essence established a system that works in parallel to the American publishers. They use their own unpaid labor as promotional

material for the series and authors in order to potentially create an audience that would encourage a publisher such as Tokyopop to pursue a license.

Conclusions

One downside to Paradise's careful selection and distribution process has to do with the ways that publishers, exemplified by Tokyopop, scout for new titles to license. While Paradise has the idea of creating buzz around a title within an audience who would not otherwise know about it, at the same time their titles remain relatively more off the radar compared to those that are widely and more publicly downloaded on web sites such as Manga Fox.

Tokyopop's policy of catering to a constructed core audience means that they are catering to an audience that may not best reflect readers. In some ways, their core audience reflects publishing industry assumptions about marketing to a young, female demographic. More often than not, the stories tend towards romantic storylines and works that are conventional manga in terms of reinforcing standards of gender in the way that much shoujo manga does (Radway, 1987). While shoujo manga often experiments with and examines gender standards (Ogi, 2000, 2001; Thorn, 2004), in many cases shoujo manga, especially shoujo manga imported into the U.S., fulfills stereotypical expectations of "what girls like." Tokyopop must do this, in many ways, in order to manage the uncertainty of releasing a cultural product in a tenuous and oversaturated market. At the same time, however, Tokyopop has helped establish shoujo manga as a form of graphic literature with a positive female market, in an environment where many similar products are assumed to have a male demographic.

Tokyopop tends to listen to the more vocal readers on online sites and on their web page forums, while quieter readers are not heard. While Paradise works to assure that new and interesting manga enters potential readers' consciousness, the same code of honor that allows them to pass relatively unnoticed past American license holders also prevents their work from being noticed by employees scouting for new manga. Because of this, their ultimate goal of encouraging the licensing of new and underrepresented genres and authors is somewhat thwarted. While they have created a space where they share these works with those who cannot enjoy them, their space works in parallel with the publishing market, and affords them little attention from publishers. Other publishers may have a different approach to fan-generated publicity, however, and actively scout sites such as this. Regardless of the attention paid to Paradise by publishers, if one of Paradise's titles is licensed for publication, the fans who read Paradise's translation would be a pre-established market of potential buyers.

At some level, Paradise's members are cognizant of the interests of publishers. They expressed an awareness of publishing being a business that cannot only serve the interests of fans. They expressed an awareness that profit must be an overarching motive for publishing companies, regardless of any other interests those at the company might have. This awareness places them in a position of tension between their desires as fans of specific manga titles and their desires as fans working to promote these titles within the industrial structures of the international manga industries. While Paradise as a group would like to bring as many of their favorite shoujo manga titles to the U.S. as possible, they recognize that, as a business, publishers such as Tokyopop must be extremely selective about which titles they choose to pursue as a licensed property. Paradise

expressed an understanding that certain types of manga might appeal more to the group of people who actually purchase manga, as opposed to the wider group who might read manga without purchasing it.

The employees of Tokyopop, on the other hand, keenly feel the way the profit motive affects their decision-making process. Their role may be a dual one: if a given employee also considers him/herself a fan as well as an employee, he/she must negotiate these dual roles in order to maintain the company's goals as well as whatever titles he/she feels strongly about bringing to the U.S.

CHAPTER 4 THE PARADOX OF TRANSLATION

The process of translation is often obscured by its own methods of production. The translator, as a mediator of foreign-language texts, has a primary duty of allowing an author to express him or herself in a way that allows the author's voice to emerge. The translator, in other words, must disappear and defer to the source text. This expectation conceals the conditions under which translators work, however.

Translation is often not regarded as an original, creative activity, but instead translations are treated as a kind of derivative work based closely on the original text. Copyright law reinforces this idea, saying that only authors have the right to determine where and when their works will be translated. Translations are not regarded as creative works. Translators, thus, work completely as servants to the source text, despite the knowledge needed to undertake a translation and the creativity required to adapt a translation into something that is easily readable as something that seems to be a source text and not a translation. Spivak (2000) describes this process as surrendering to the text, in that the translator must respond to the text's language in an intimate way.

Additionally, the process of writing is often attributed to a single author's creativity, despite the tendency in the media industries to combine the talents of many different creators. Producers must also weigh the benefits of deferring to one person's genius, versus attempting to cater to an audience's needs or an editor's advice. The translator's task, however, is viewed as a means to an end, rather than a creative undertaking in and of itself.

This chapter examines the process that manga must undergo in order to be translated, and the differences and similarities between translators' and professional

translators' practices. Not only do I examine the procedure and division of work that manga translators use, I also look at the translation choices that translators must make in order to cater to the audience reading the translations. I also delve into the meaning of the choices translators must make when they undergo a translation. The process of translation is very similar between scanslators and professional translators. In this chapter, I will first compare and contrast the process used by scanslators and professionals. Then I will examine the possessiveness of translators and scanslators for their own translation decisions and ideals. Next, I will explore the ways the act of translation are characterized by scanslators and professionals. I specifically discuss cultural notes and "authenticity" in translation.

The Work of Translation

Translation Procedures

Scanslators

The first step of scanslation is obtaining unedited scans of the source manga, or *raws*. Paradise's leader, Courtney, insists on a high standard of quality for raws even before she will distribute them to other group members. Her guide to scanning manga recommends a minimum dots-per-inch (dpi) of 300 for black-and-white images, and a minimum of 600 dpi for color images. In one discussion thread on Paradise's forum, she also explains why she generally rejects publically available raws: "We tend not to use public raws because they're too LQ [low quality]; we've only done two series from public raws, and in both cases they were saved at high quality and a decent resolution (at least 900 pixels wide)." Often, there are members of Paradise designated as trusted Scanners,

who create raws of the source manga. (Note that scans of source manga are regarded *not* as end products in themselves, but as something needing work to consume.)

After the Scanners have created graphic files to work with, the raws are sent to the Cleaners, who clean up a scan by erasing any dust spots, adjusting the whiteness of the backgrounds, erasing any shadows, leveling the pages, and editing two-page spreads into one cohesive image.

For one example they provided, they described the cleaning process for one two-page spread thus:

Separated them. For the right side, used the measure tool on the horizontal lines to rotate .26 counterclockwise. Cropped, resized to 690. Leveled the entire image 3 black, 247 white. Selectively leveled gutter & upper right area with the soft brush/gutter trick (size 45). (right side) For the left side, I rotated .57 clockwise, cropped, resized to 690. Leveled 235 white. Gutter shadow: on a large shadow like this, I used a size 300px soft brush. I had to nudge the selection and level the gutter in 3 steps. Finally, I manually cloned in the cut off black line to the bottom right. (left side). (Note that I didn't straighten the bent lines ~ I'm lazy.)

With practice, they said, this kind of work takes little thinking—you just do it.

Translators take cleaned graphics and create a script of each page, translating each speech bubble, thought, and sound effect. The script follows a standard format for denoting sound effects, dialogue, etc., to allow the Typesetter to follow it easily. In Paradise, the general script style guide is as follows:

[sfxs in brackets]
handwritten text in * *
Text preceded by speaker and a :

Each page gets a new script, so that the Typesetters can put the translation into the image.

An example, from *Innocent Bird*:

Sa: Oh!
Sa: You're Shirasagi!
What are you doing here?

Shi: What are you doing he...

Ah!

[grab]

Sa: I haven't seen you in so long!

[squeeze]

Sa: Praise God for letting me see you again!

Sa: Have you been taking care of yourself? Eating right?

[hug]

[pat pat]

Sa: Hrm, haven't you lost weight?

Shi: Ah, well...

Typesetters are responsible for replacing the Japanese text with the translated, English text. Paradise also has a style guide that Typesetters must follow that dictate which fonts are required for each specific kind of text (spoken dialogue, inner monologue, sound effects, etc.). Paradise provides Typesetters with a couple of font packs to use. Here are a few of the style guidelines for font use:

The standard main font: Wildwords, font size generally between 12-13px.

Thoughts/narration: Manga Temple, ditto on the font size.

For small-text: Most of our editors use Augie, but you may choose any font that's easy to read. ...

The scanslation then passes to a Proofreader, who copy edits the scanslation for things such as spelling and grammatical errors. After proofreading, the scanslation is passed on to Quality Control, who checks a scanslation for errors missed by the Proofreader and cleans up any stray blemishes left by the Cleaner. Finally, the new scanslation passes on to the Editor, who double-checks everything for errors of image and text, and releases the scanslation to the public. The Editor of a project is also responsible for delegating the tasks to different people, and for overseeing the workflow of the project.

For some projects, each step is performed by a different person, in order to distribute the work load so that each member only has a smaller portion to do. Often, jobs that use the same type of skills are performed by one person; for example, scanning and cleaning may be done by one person before they pass the graphic on to a Translator. Also, quality checking and editing are closely related and sometimes performed by one person.

When we look at the person whose role is Translator proper, we can see that only one person deals directly in the conversion or interpretation of the Japanese text into English text. Courtney explained that she prefers to keep one translator for each title the group scanslates, to make the word and stylistic choices more consistent from chapter to chapter. The roles of Translator and Editor for a project are vital to the completion of a scanslation. As Courtney told me, if no one is willing to volunteer to translate a certain project, the project is unable to get off the ground. Translators, thanks to their special knowledge and skills, have a higher level of cultural capital that makes them necessary. Even Translators who scanslate in order to improve their Japanese have a greater toolset than those who do not have any knowledge of the Japanese language. The other positions, however, allow those with no Japanese-language skills to contribute to the scanslation process.

Professionals

While Translators are vital to a scanslation happening or not happening, the contract nature of professional translation means that professional translators are interchangeable. Novice professional Translators or those who do not complete their assignments to their editors' satisfaction risk being replaced. The appeal of making a

living translating manga means that there is a surplus of novice Translators willing to take on assignments for low wages and contract work.

The professional translation process passes through far fewer hands than the scanslation process. The entire process at Tokyopop is supervised by the Senior Editor and a Managing Editor. The position of group leader/Editor among scanslators is roughly similar to these positions. The Managing Editor handles the workflow of an individual project, making sure that Translators submit their translated scripts on time and Rewriters submit their drafts on time as well. Translators receive copies of the source manga in Japanese. The Managing Editor also schedules due dates for upcoming publications and coordinates with the rest of senior management to ensure that the right steps of the publication process are ready when they are needed.

The Senior Editor oversees all the in-progress projects. Senior Editors handle a good number of duties related to getting manga into print. They receive scripts every month from the Managing Editor, make sure that the Rewriters have adapted the new scripts, copy edit scripts, select fonts for a given property, make sure everything ends up in the right place when the manga goes into layout and to the printers every month, copy edit the proof copies, design the covers, and perform liaison work with the marketing and sales departments.

The translation process that scanslators perform is somewhat different from the mainstream way that professional translation generally happens. The professional translation process is broken into two stages in order to produce the “best” script possible for the intended audience. The first stage is performed by a Translator, who creates a new script from the original Japanese books. At the second stage, the translated script is

sent to a Rewriter or Adaptor, who rewords and revises the script in terms of style. Many publishers will instruct their Translators to produce a “literal translation;” in other words, to translate the meaning as closely as possible without regard to style, flow, or transparency (I will discuss this more below). The Rewriter/Adaptor then takes this script along with any notes the translator has provided and produces a script that flows well, while trying to preserve the meaning conveyed by the Translator’s script and the source text.

The Translators and Adaptors I interviewed all regarded the two job titles as two distinct jobs during the translation process, requiring two very different skill sets. Translation, they said, requires a good working knowledge of Japanese, both in terms of grammar and vocabulary and knowledge of its use in everyday life and classical literature. Sometimes a translator will also need to find obscure references in research materials (depending on the title being translated). Adaptation, on the other hand, requires composition and storytelling skills, along with the literary mastery of the English language needed to create colorful prose. The Translators and Adaptors I spoke with regarded the Adaptor/Rewriter as the “professional writer” of the two.

The two skill sets required does not exclude one person from performing both jobs; it just reflects two sets of tasks that the one person will have to perform. Many Translators and Adaptors do specialize in one task or the other. As translator/adaptor Will Flanagan told me, however, “at the moment, nearly all of the companies are looking for translators who can do both as a cost-saving measure. So odds are, even if it may not be best for the book, there will be more translator/adaptor combos as the economy wallows.” It entirely depends on the company concerned, as well. As

translators/adaptors Alethea and Athena Nibley told me, “We do our own adaptations for Del Rey and CMX, but mostly everything we do for TOKYOPOP goes through an English adaptation writer.”

Division of Labor

The division of labor for professional manga translation suggests that the nature of professional translation and scanslation are not too different from one another. In a sense, professional translation appears to be another kind of distributed creativity, one that is commonly used in media industries. Is there a parallel between this type of contract work and distributed creativity? In the case of contract work in the media industries, it has been viewed as a form of labor exploitation. Rather than media producers needing to keep workers on salary, each project is contracted to those chosen to work on it. This means the media producers are not obligated to provide health insurance or raises to workers, and can change to contractors who are willing to work every job for starting wages.

Venuti (2008) wrote at length about the disparity between the importance of the role of English-language translators and their sub-par, contracted wages for translations. He attributed part of this to the fact that effective translators must efface themselves, acting as a conduit through which the author can “express him or herself” in an “unmediated” fashion. Because of this self-effacement, the translator establishes him or herself as invisible, and the author receives the credit for a well-written work. Publishers and copyright law relegates the translator to a subordinate status, viewing translation as derivative work based on an original. Even reviewers will complement a work for a “good” translation, without acknowledging how the translation came to be—the

translator usually goes unnamed. Thanks to these and other factors, the conditions of labor under which translators work are concealed. In spite of their importance for allowing other countries' translations to be converted to the globally dominant lingua franca of international business, English-language translators are limited to a sub-author, freelance status.

The situation for translators of American-published manga translations is no different from the picture Venuti (2008) paints about the historical labor conditions for translators globally. Everyone with whom I spoke talked about the uncertainty of getting work in the first place, and the difficulty of getting sufficient work from only one company. Will Flanagan advises new translators to seek multiple translation jobs or keep a second, "day" job because "a 180-page graphic novel will get you less than \$1000 (and in some cases, even less than \$500)" (journeyman). The Nibleys concurred: "it's actually not easy to make a living off of translating alone, especially with the industry the way it is right now." All of the translators I spoke with talked about their concerns with maintaining steady work throughout the year in order to make a living. Flanagan, for instance, wrote that he had taken a large number of jobs one October, and while October would be very stressful, the increased pay from that month would tide him over if he were unable to find any work in December.

Despite the low pay and uncertainty of work, all the translators I spoke with expressed gratitude for being able to earn money for doing something that they loved. For instance, as the Nibleys said, "We think of it as getting paid to do something we're doing all the time anyway." This suggests that, at least for English-language translators of manga, love for the act of translating manga is a major motivator that leads them to

this career and sustains them. Like other contract workers in media industries, the appeal of the job title outweighs the lack of security or compensation.

Interest and love for the work is something that motivates scanslators as well. Lee (2009) also found that personal interest was a great motivator for scanslators. My interviews with scanslators found personal interest as a primary motivator for starting to scanslate, whether personal interest for learning Japanese, or personal love for shoujo manga. While professional translators translate for a salary, scanslators scanslate for free. As Fox told me, scanslators work for “no compensation whatsoever aside from some words of thanks.”

Both types of work, professional translation and the “decentralized and nonmarket-based production” of scanslation, challenge the notion that copyright ensures that productivity is based on monetary compensation (Benkler, 2006). Usually, scanslators do not work for monetary gain. They benefit from the cultural capital they accrue from contributing their resources to the community. The continual under-compensation for professional translation work begs the question of the purpose of copyright for *translators*. While copyright protects the rights of authors to determine when and where their work should be translated in order to strategize the best way to profit from their work, translators translate for less compensation and less direct benefit than original authors. Instead, translators’ work is regarded as derivative and their greatest compensation is that of reputation. Social compensation is a currency that both professional translation and scanslation have in common.

Differences and Similarities

How different are professional and amateur translation work, then? Scanslation work is split up according to different job duties—mainly those who have a language skill set and those who do not. Professional work is split up based on stages of production, and one person involved in one stage of production will most likely not be involved in another, unless they are the senior editor or another centralized position. Compensation for translation is far less than that given to authors. Scanslators expect some level of recognition—credit for what they’ve done or some measure of thanks from fans who enjoy the fruits of their labor. Professional translators get some monetary compensation and a credit in the printed work. They also establish a reputation that will later get them even more work. They learn not to expect fame or even popularity of their translations, instead getting satisfaction from the work itself and their continued work in the field.

While their translation activities are similar, each group characterizes itself in comparison to the other. During my interviews, members of the two groups would refer to one another frequently. They often characterized themselves in opposition to the other group. Amateurs viewed their work as high-quality “because they care” about the translations. This was true regardless of how members characterized their own skill level, or whether the scanslations were “peer-reviewed” by others with greater skill. At the same time, scanslators viewed professionals as having a higher status *because* they are professionals. The difference between an amateur and a professional at the beginning of a career is often simply monetary compensation. The professional translators described the difference between the two groups in terms of professionals’ ability to be “flexible” in

their translation and to “act like a professional.” They characterized flexibility as a maturity to recognize their own limitations and to learn that there is no one “right way” to translate a text. They characterized being a translator as many different things: as acting, as being an ambassador, as practicing martial arts, as solving a puzzle, as creating understanding, etc. What these roles have in common is subjectivity, here in regards to the translation task and the situational flexibility required of the translator.

While fans can take liberties, professional translators have been selected by a publisher to do a job. As Will Flanagan put it, “officially, you don't represent the publishing company, but you do anyway.” So speaking against the publisher who hired you could spread a negative impression about the publisher to others—which could eventually get back to the publishers themselves and sully your reputation as a translator. The fact is that, thanks to the rise in interest in Japanese popular culture, many more amateur translators are available to become manga translators professionally. As such, the issue of reputation and trust is a key part of the economy of translation work.

Trust and the Economy of Translation

Trust becomes an exceedingly important factor to the security of work and the guarantee of securing work in the future. Part of the social currency used by publishers, as well as other media industries, is the importance of reputation. Previous work is the only way that translators are able to move up in a field governed only by freelance contract work. Additionally, part of the professionalization process of professional manga translators is learning to make one's own motivations and desires subservient to the needs and wishes of the publishers. All manga publishers have their own set of stylistic guidelines that take precedence over the opinions of the translator. For instance,

Del Rey makes use of extensive cultural endnotes, as well as translations in-text of sound effects. Tokyopop, on the other hand, stays away from extensive cultural endnotes and sometimes alters artwork to translate sound effects. (The use of end notes and other metatext is a topic that I discuss elsewhere.)

Translators must suit the style guidelines of a publisher in addition to completing their manuscript in a timely fashion and cooperating with their editor. Ways to translate are a major concern of manga scanslators and fans, and a manga translator who starts out as a fan will carry some of these opinions on translation with her when she starts translating professionally.

Scanslators often expressed to me that there was a *correct* way to translate, and an *inferior* way to translate. This sense of black and white is one major difference between scanslators and professionals. While professionals did have their own opinion about the way they preferred to translate, and expressed that some translations were better than others, they emphasized the importance of following a publisher's style guide and suppressing one's own translation preferences in order to conform to those of the publisher.

The conclusion may be that scanslators have power that the professional translators do not. They can choose their own way of translation, the one they believe is best for shoujo manga. In action, this is true. Scanslators do apply translation practices to shoujo manga that professional publications avoid, or use temperately.

For instance, by and large scanslators make use of cultural notes and view cultural notes as part of the process of preserving the original text so that fans may enjoy as close to the original as possible. Cultural notes are notes that appear at the end of a volume of

manga. They provide page number references to cultural artifacts found in the source text, whether it be a piece of legend, a reference to pop culture, a play on words, a type of food, etc. For example, as the Nibleys related to me, *My Heavenly Hockey Club* featured lots of regional Japanese foods. They said, “That being the case, almost every dish they mention is new to us, and, since we need an explanation, we go ahead and provide the explanation for everybody else, too.”

While professional translators spoke about the benefits of cultural notes, they also had different ways of achieving the same goal that did not involve cultural notes. While scanslators seem to have more freedom than professionals, in practice they operate according to another set of rules, one that is self- and community-imposed. Differences in community standards do not necessarily mean that more liberties are taken in practice. In other words, just because scanslators get to follow their own standards when translating does not mean that they can translate more freely than professionals can.

‘Proprietariness’

One aspect of translation that repeatedly arose during my interviews was the issue of what I’m calling “proprietaryness” in terms of who has the right to translate a given title of manga. A hierarchy of fans exists—the idea that some fans are “more worthy” than others to be fans, and therefore to manipulate the texts that are the object of fandom. I have informally observed this in many kinds of fandom, and it serves as an illustration that fans are not communities united by consent, but often divided by meaning articulated to different things given cultural currency by the group. Additionally, fan groups are often represented by those who are most vocal in the group. The vocal minority does not necessarily represent the rest of the group.

In the case of manga translation, “worthiness” is linked to a number of factors. Scanslators expressed the idea that an ideal scanslator does not seek to profit from their work, but instead should strive to use their skills and talents to help manga reach an even wider audience than that of Japanese speakers. The codes of honor that I have written about in Chapter 3 aligns with these values, and is meant to “spread the love” as widely as possible while attempting to avoid damaging the market for an author’s work in the U.S. (In Chapter 5, I discuss the approach the publishers have taken in respect to these codes of honor, and how their viewpoint has changed toward them.)

The scanslators also expressed that the translations made by scanslators were in some ways superior to published translations. They often attributed a disliked translated manuscript to the translator rather than the author (similar to what is found in the translation literature), but even more frequently spoke of the *publishers* as being at fault for the disliked translation. In the case of manga readers, there may be a greater awareness in the means by which a title appears in English. Instead of attributing a well-written translated title to the translator, the tendency is to attribute the qualities of a translated work solely to the author. Manga fans, however, tend to recognize the mediator who allows them to read their favorite titles. To manga fans, a “good” or “bad” translation is the work of the translator and/or publisher. Generally, the original Japanese authors are given the benefit of the doubt in terms of the quality of their writing. Original authors of manga chosen for publication are assumed to create quality works. Also, fans who are able to and have read the original Japanese versions can “confirm” whether the translation matches their idea of how they would translate it into English. Many

scanslators described this to me as the “right way” to translate. The professional translators, by contrast, stressed the nonexistence of one true translation.

Scanslators also emphasized the worthiness of fans to translate based on their conduct as scanslators and their “dedication” to the cause. They painted a picture of a kind of hierarchy within the world of scanslation. At the “top” would be the veteran scanslators who started scanslating during the 1990’s or early 2000’s, when the Internet allowed scans to be shared, and scanslation moved from creating translated scripts, to producing graphical translations that were analogous to contemporary commercial digital comics. This group of scanslators would also be characterized by a stance against profiting from their scanslation activities. Paradise would fall under this umbrella, since they have been around since 2002 and have an outspoken stance against profiting from their work. The members of Paradise told me that the only compensation they expect, if any, is some kind of recognition for introducing the English-speaking world to the titles they scanslate. This type of scanslator can also be characterized by a belief that love ensures a level of quality not possible for those who profit from scanslation in more material ways. There is also a belief that those who emphasize a greater level of speed at the sacrifice of quality (e.g., speed scanners, whose goal is to release a scanslation as soon as possible after a chapter’s Japanese release) also produce lower-quality work.

At the “bottom” of the hierarchy would be scanslators who sell their scanslations in addition to scanslating licensed material and speed scanning. Therefore, the hierarchy rests on an array of factors determined by the scanslators and fans themselves: profiting or not profiting from scanslations, serving licensed titles or dropping licensed titles,

scanslating licensed titles or avoiding scanslating licensed titles, working for publishers or working for fan groups, being an early adopter or being a later adopter.

Scanslators are not the only ones who uphold a hierarchy of fan worthiness, however. The professional translators I spoke with also spoke of the idea that some people are “more worthy” to translate a given series than others. For instance, the Nibleys expressed some anxiety at having to translate a specific title that they had never read before getting the job. They mentioned that they were nervous about translating something that so many people were fans of and that they had learned to love later. But, as they put it, “just because you start loving something later than someone else doesn't mean you love it any less.” So their new-found interest in the series they were assigned enables them to take care with the way the series is translated. The Nibleys illustrate the fallacy that professional translators love their work any less than scanslators who do the same activity for free, as a hobby. All of the translators I spoke with were the same way—they started translating professionally because of their great love for the work and the texts they were already translating on their own.

The notion that fans have more of a “right” to a text because of their love for it reflects one aspect that pervades fan culture. Although manga reflect the output of a large, corporate system designed to serve consumer demand in Japan, they are still regarded with a high level of fervency by fans in Japan. Additionally, there is a broader range of interest, from fervent fans to casual or occasional readers. In the U.S., manga still reflect a niche audience of fervent fans who must take a more active approach to their manga consumption—in other words, whereas Japanese fans might be able to obtain their favorite titles easily, it is relatively more difficult for American fans to read their

favorite series, and thus takes a high level of dedication or work in order to make it happen. Even if an American fan wishes to read a best-selling series that can be found in chain bookstores, many times the particular volume he or she needs will not be found on the shelf due to the need of the bookseller to optimize shelf space. (For example, a Barnes & Noble location might stock only the first volume or two of a series, and purchase only a few copies of a newly released volume.)

Therefore, the work done by fans acts as a kind of currency, creating a hierarchy of those who have the skills to perform the work necessary to make series available in the U.S. Those who use their skills for their own gain or in ways that conflict with the goals of other fan groups are placed lower in the hierarchy than those who use their skills without compensation for the benefit of other fans who lack the skills to earn currency within the fan group and must simply consume. Sharing openly is regarded as the optimal behavior within the group, whether it means lending skills to create translations, or serving files, or simply making oneself known by posting comments on the site's forum.

This attitude of sharing can be aligned with historical trust systems of copyright (as seen in Benkler [2006]), and in many ways the rise of the manga market in the U.S. reflects these trust systems. While recent actions against scanslation aggregators and other scanslation sites reflects a return to the comfort zone of proprietary copyright enforcement, for a time the trust system seemed to work. Indeed, many people credit the work of scanslators as a part of the spread of manga in the U.S. Part of manga fandom (i.e., being a manga fanatic with more than a casual interest) seems to be reading and sharing scanslations (Rich, 2011). While other forms of fan activity (e.g., fan art, fan

fiction) can be found among manga fans, the exchange of scanslations also acts as a major part in their fandom.

The circulation of scanslations functions as a way for fans to share knowledge with one another, and as a form of cultural currency: the exchange of scanslations is a resource that fans can use with one another; someone who shares scanslations gets more “credit” than someone who “leeches” without sharing; knowledge of manga through scanslations marks a fan as more or less of a fan, based on his or her level of knowledge beyond the mainstream or easy-to-learn. It also maintains that a fan is ahead of the curve in terms of what becomes the “next big thing.”

Professionalism and Status

While scanslators have this freedom, scanslators spoke of professional translators in a way that indicated that they were accorded a special status. The work of professional translators was validated by scanslators in a way that scanslations were not. In some cases, scanslators expressed that professionals’ work is the *official* translation (which could be considered true)—but not because it is the only commercial translation, but simply by virtue of the fact that their work is *published*. Additionally, there is recognition that professionals receive money for doing their work, which grants them another layer of officiality. Their professional work is regarded with respect thanks to their officially endorsed status.

At the same time that scanslators accorded professionals measures of officiality and respect, professionals were viewed with a degree of suspicion not accorded to other scanslators. The scanslators I spoke with did not speak of other scanslators in this way, although some people spoke of scanslators with different goals (i.e., the “speed

scanslators” who “value a quick turnaround over quality”). The fact that professional scanslators were paid to do their work diminishes the affect of their work in the eyes of scanslators, whereas scanslators work for no money, and therefore receive credit within the community. Despite the fact that professionals may have been scanslators before going pro, the move into a career where the same activity earns money is viewed as a move towards “impure” motives—towards a lesser affect received on the part of professionals.

In other words, although the work performed by professionals is held in high regard by scanslators, professionals’ work is viewed as lesser compared to scanslators’ work, in part because the motives for translating are “impure.” On the part of all of the professionals with whom I spoke, they began translating *because* they loved doing it and wanted to see their favorite manga titles in English, and share them with others. At the same time that fans respect the ability to directly work on the manga importation process, fans are suspicious of those who cross the line and start being paid. However, as Gentzler (2002) notes, “Translating for a powerful institution or having power is not progressive or regressive in and of itself” (p. 197).

Fan Ambivalence towards Professional Translation

Many scanslators I spoke to for this study and fans I spoke to outside of the study expressed apprehension about the translation of a newly licensed favorite series. The default position for fans seemed to be one of suspicion towards a new translation. Fans would report approaching newly published manga in three different ways: they would avoid reading the professional translation altogether, to avoid seeing their favorite manga “butchered” in its new form. They would read it, and have their suspicions confirmed

about the new translation being “inferior” to the translation they had loved. They would read it, and be “pleasantly surprised” about the professional translation, that it was a “good” translation.

Therefore, while professionals are accorded respect because of their status as professional translators, their work is regarded as suspicious regardless of status. Editorial decisions that allow publishers to market the books to bookstores sometimes involve changing artwork, etc., which fans tend to view as unwarranted alteration of the original text. Publishers are regarded in a similar way to the way that jazz fans regarded record labels in the 1940’s: the labels were viewed as having a responsibility to preserve and maintain the archive, and by letting records go out of print, they were betraying this responsibility (Johns, 2009). Fans want to read “the original text,” or something “as close to it” as possible. The publishers, who have the ability to bring new titles to the widespread American audience, are in essence performing a similar role by making the “archive” accessible to English speakers.

So far, I’ve been talking about the practices and expectations surrounding the act of translation, or the work of translation, and who gets to translate, according to whom. What I have only touched on, however, is the ways in which the source text is translated. The translation process is one that requires the translator to be a flexible instrument, creating a translation to suit the audience for which the translation is intended. Thus, the translator must craft a translation that best suits the goals the translation will achieve.

The Act of Translation

The Case of Cultural Notes

Translation decisions are affected by a number of forces. The first I'd like to examine is one that has been a salient issue for a long time among American manga fans: cultural notes and textual notes. Cultural notes are endnotes that explain cultural artifacts within the source text, and textual notes are footnotes or asterisked terms that explain something on the same page as an instance of a cultural artifact. Professional Translators will often write cultural notes for Rewriters, but these are only in-house documents that could *possibly* be turned into published cultural notes.

Fans consider artwork and dialogue alteration as straying from the source text, while publishers believe they choose from an array of translation decisions when making editorial decisions. For instance, many fans love cultural notes. Some publishers and professional translators regard cultural notes as a distraction from the main text, or as muddying up an otherwise smoothly translated work. Publishers who prefer omitting cultural notes would rather alter dialogue to incorporate cultural artifacts, in order to keep the reader educated of cultural artifacts. Alternatively, translators can localize a narrative, to create an analogous experience for the reader (i.e., as close an experience for the translation reader to the experience of the source reader). (Localization refers to the process of changing source-text cultural references to receiving-cultural references.) So while cultural notes are regarded by translators as preserving the dialogue of the source text, in a way the *experience* of reading the translated text diverges from the hypothetical experience of reading the source text. A reader from the source culture would not have to flip to the back of a volume in order to understand everything in the text.

Translators occupy a privileged position in that they embody two cultures at the same time. It isn't enough to simply be fluent in a language—as a student of language can tell you, it's important to understand the pragmatic rules of a language as well as the grammatical rules. As Cronin (2003) writes, translators are nomads who journey between different cultures. Likewise, Bassnett (1998) emphasizes the importance of culture to a translation:

There are still occasional dissenting voices who argue that translation, surely, is primarily about language, not culture, and that the proper business of translation studies is to focus on the linguistic aspects of the translation process. ...Language is embedded in culture, linguistic acts take place in a context and texts are created in a continuum not in a vacuum. (p. 23).

It is true that publishers regard translations as having different purposes for different audiences. This can be thought of as part of a text's continuum, however. As Tanya from Tokyopop told me, publishers must choose between the *function* of a title of manga—should the series entertain or educate? What would the audience expect or understand? Other employees I spoke to at Tokyopop believed that most titles should serve to entertain—that manga were not textbooks. They also mentioned that they understood many fans liked cultural notes, but that a more general audience benefitted less from them. A general audience would prefer no or few in-text notes, rather than extensive endnotes. Publishers will often assess whether the audience would be one of fans who had been reading the series through scanslations, or one of casual manga fans. Based on their surveys of the projected audience, they will often determine what kind of notes, if any, to use. Tokyopop does tend towards not using cultural notes, however.

The fan culture that surrounds manga thrives on “understanding” Japanese culture, or at least being current on cultural elements that frequently show up in manga

(Rich, 2011). A common belief about translation is that the receiving audience must not be able to detect attempts to explain cultural references in a text. Explanations should be minimized, even if the translation seeks to place the reader in a foreign environment. In translations where the goal is to bring the source text “to the reader” (in that cultural references to the source culture are minimized or changed to analogous references from the receiving culture), the need to know about the source culture is minimized even more. Anime and manga fan culture in the U.S. centers, in many ways, on the cultural currency afforded by knowing about Japanese cultural references.

The equation of cultural notes with “a more faithful translation” is one that divides scanslators and professional translators. Whereas scanslators view extensive cultural notes as the epitome of maintaining a translation as close to the source text as possible, as “literal” as possible, professional translators recognize different ways of doing translation without cultural notes that need not give up faithfulness to the source text. Scanslators regard cultural notes as superior, since it allows a translator to use the original term in the text, while preserving the intended meaning through the meta-text. Many professionals try to avoid using cultural notes, since their goal is to create a fluid, readable manuscript approximating the original experience of reading the source text. Including cultural notes means that the reader must take a detour while reading the text, read the cultural notes *before* reading the text (and risk finding out plot points before they happen), or read the text first (without understanding all cultural references) and read the cultural notes afterwards. Not only is there an imagined reader in mind during the translation process, there is an imagined reading experience.

Both translators and professionals recognized the absurdity of a completely “literal” translation that is easily readable. Given the differences between both the cultural use of Japanese, as a language that depends on a high level of context to fill in ambiguities, and the grammar of Japanese, as a language that acceptably omits parts of “full” sentences, a fully “literal” translation would not make sense or read well in English. For instance, as the Nibleys related to me, a fully literal translation would have no pronouns, because the pronouns in many sentences in Japanese are construed from context. Another example they provided was a passage from the series *Saiyuki*:

Priest: Some sort of business!?
 Hakkai: We are travelling persons, but...
 Hakkai: Even for only this night, couldn't we humbly partake of being lodged in this direction?
 Priest: --Hmph.
 Priest: As for this place, due to it being a sacred temple...
 Priest: ...it will not go to the reason of inviting in persons of unknowable lineage!
 Goku: Wha--...!?
 Gojyo: (Feces!) Because of this, as for me, guys called priests are hated!!
 Sanzo: Hmm, first ear.
 Hakkai: We are bothered, yes? (Hmm)
 Goku: Hey, my stomach is diminished! Sanzo!!

Which then could be adapted into English as:

Priest: Do you need something?
 Hakkai: We are travelers!
 Hakkai: Could you let us stay a night at this place?
 Priest: --Hmph.
 Priest: Because this is a holy temple...
 Priest: ... We cannot allow foreigners to stay with us.
 Goku: What?
 Gojyo: (Shit!) This is why I hate monks!
 Sanzo: Oh really? That's the first time I've heard about it!
 Hakkai: What should we do?
 Goku: Hey! I'm hungry! Sanzo!!

The most skilled translator has at his or her disposal, an understanding of an array of ways to translate any given passage. While there can be more skilled, or better, translations, there is not a one “best” way to translate anything. Even if there were one mode of translation that works the best, that “one best” way would change depending on the context of the time in which it was translated and contemporary translation norms. The key cultural expectation of translation is the ability to play the author. Through this, a translator creates the illusion of an authorial presence through the concealed act of translation (Venuti, 2008). Thus, the goal of the contemporary translator becomes that of trying to reveal the inner meaning of the source text through literary sleight of hand. The ways this is accomplished, however, tend to vary. The most skilled translators, in fact, will be able to employ a level of flexibility that enables them to change their own strategies to suit the translation situation.

Scanslators seem to adhere to the idea that the original meaning and the author’s intentions of the source text cannot be conveyed by the translated text itself. Instead, there must be some kind of co-text or meta-text to convey the original meaning to readers in the most “literal” way possible. Some of the scanslators I spoke with regarded their intended audience as having the same expectations as themselves. For instance, Fox told me that he learned Japanese in order to read manga. Thus, in order for readers to share the same experience as himself, the translation should be as close to the original Japanese as possible. The professional translators disputed the notion that it was even possible to accomplish this. Their belief is that there is no “one, true” translation, only better and worse translations. The professionals held that a belief in one right way to translate was

an unsophisticated view that one must “grow out of” in order to succeed as a professional translator.

Another way to view the scanslators’ position, however, is to view it as wishing the good experience of the original version to be conveyed as well as possible. Since monolingual English speakers can only enjoy the translation, keeping the elements that *make* a translation fun to read is vitally important to scanslators. For instance, word play, jokes, and parody are all very difficult to transmit through translation without becoming stilted.

As Venuti (2008) writes, the more transparent a work is, in terms of its not seeming translated, the more work it took behind the scenes to make it that way. In other words, it takes a great deal of work to make a translation not seem like a translation and to make it seem like what the author “would have written.” If anything is oversimplified, the translation seems to be further away from the original text. This is due to translation being what Cronin (2003) describes as a “system of mediation:” “The principal aim of systems of mediation is to make themselves transparent and the greater simplicity of use the more complex the system of delivery” (Cronin, 2003, p. 124).

Both scanslators and professionals are united in believing in the translator as the ultimate reader, who can read, understand, and experience an original text, and then relay that experience to others. In some cases, scanslators project their own expectations of what they would want from a translation onto their readers, translating not for their readers, but with a specific agenda that aligns with their own desires for what a translation should have.

At the same time, fans continue to speak of “faithful” or “literal” translation. The biggest tendency is to regard localized translations as inferior or bad when compared to unlocalized translations (for example, the infamous localization of *Pokémon* to refer to onigiri/rice balls as jelly doughnuts). However, localization can take on different forms, on a spectrum from referring to onigiri as jelly doughnuts, to referring to them within the translated text as “rice balls.” While the former tactic changes the original meaning to something that roughly looks like the image found in the anime and manga, the latter translates the word itself into a more direct translation, as onigiri are balls of rice with fillings and/or edible wrappers. A more analogous translation might be “sandwich,” but the visual would not then match up to the translation.

One factor to keep in mind in this example, however, is the source audience for which series such as *Pokémon* are intended. *Pokémon* and other titles are intended to be read by an elementary school audience, whereas many fans I spoke with fall into older age groups—high school- or college-aged. There seems to be a correlation between types of translation strategies (e.g., localization versus extensive cultural notes) and the age level for which a title is destined. This begs a question about whether younger audiences would also respond well to the incorporation of cultural notes, or whether it would be beyond their level of comprehension or perceived level of reading (e.g., the idea that “chapter books” or books above 100 pages are for more advanced grade-school readers).

This reiterates the idea that translations are best made when they are tailored to the intended audience—in other words, considering the translation decisions that need to be made and choosing tactics that best suit the audience. However, any decisions made by translators make assumptions about audience members’ desires and capabilities. To

some degree, in doing so, the translator or publisher effectively constructs an audience for which the translation is destined. In the case of manga, fans expect the use of translation notes or else a “literal” translation, where “little is altered.” However, the vocal minority is small compared to the larger general market, who Tokyopop would like to attract as well as established fans of a given title.

In some ways, scanslators translate for themselves, rather than for an audience. Professional translators must translate for an audience, or for others, following the guidelines set by those for whom they work. Scanslators, on the other hand, who translate for themselves and a select audience, can dictate what choices are made during the translation process. Thus, the scanslator can translate in a way that pleases him or herself. While the scanslations are created for an intended audience, the choices made during the translation process are ones designed to please the scanslator him or herself, not the receiving audience. Or otherwise, the intended audience is assumed to have the same preference as the scanslator. In some cases this may be true, but is not automatically a given.

Authenticity in Translation

In translation literature, the concept of a translation’s authenticity is not generally called into question. A translation can be better than another, but generally both are held to be “translations” as such—their status is not called into question. Occasionally a translation, which had been translated according to contemporary standards, will later be questioned. For example, some translations of ancient Roman narratives were translated in a way that completely transports the entire narrative to a contemporary local setting by changing characters and events into analogues. In other examples, ancient Roman

narratives were translated in such a way that contemporary mores affected the translator's choice of words, thus creating a narrative charged with evaluative statements about the sexual activities of its main character. In the contemporary mores of the source text, the main character would not have been disparaged for commonplace sexual activities in which he participated. The word choice in the source text indicated no such judgment. (Gutt, 2000).

Sometimes, contemporary or local elements which are analogous may be included to foster a similar feeling, idea, or cultural memory to that in the source text. For instance, *Ooku* is written in archaic Japanese, and its translation uses Shakespearean-style English to evoke past eras for English readers. All of my interview subjects spoke of the tendency of American manga translators to default to translating the Osaka-region dialect as a Southern-U.S. accent. Depending on the reviewer reading a translation, added features can enhance or detract from the translation—especially if they are obvious.

Thus, the primary way in which translations are generally considered “non-authentic” based on the contemporary standards of proper conduct towards translating texts. Manga fans, however, have different ideas about what constitutes an authentic translation. In general, the goal of translators is to generate a translation that is as “transparent” as possible—one that seems as if the translator is merely a conduit through which the original author's thoughts and feelings can be conveyed. The translator disappears through the effectiveness of his or her own work. For manga fans, the authenticity of a translation is contingent on *non-transparency*. The factors that translators and fans count as making a translation a “good” one are ones that translators

and publishers try to eradicate through more complicated mechanisms. Scanslators list as desirable the following: original artwork (without altered sound effects), cultural end notes, original terms used in text. All of these things require extra-textual elements to be introduced into the published work. While reading these extra-textual elements can educate the reader in order to create a better understanding of what the original text was trying to do, these elements underscore the fact that a translation *is* a translation.

Moreover, they require an experience of the reader that is not completely concurrent with the reading experience—in other words, the reader cannot completely enjoy the experience of immersion in the text the first time, as a reader of the original could. Instead, the reader must move back and forth between the meta-text and the text in order to “fully appreciate” it.

Of course, this presupposes that in order to fully appreciate a text, one can be educated in all the factors that affect the meaning of a text. This can exclude the cultural environment that lends meaning to a text—the experiences that the writer would assume readers would have in common with themselves. So the nuances of a scene will probably not cause a sympathetic response in a reader from a different background. This is true for any writer-reader relationship—but may be amplified between writers and readers from different cultural backgrounds. The total immersion that comes from reading a text where the background is fully understood is not a given for a translated text.

However, is “full understanding” or “full appreciation” the goal of a translation? The text—original or translated—may be enjoyed on *many* levels, some of which do not require “full understanding.” A text can be quite entertaining on one level, even if other levels of meaning are lost in the translation. Some believe that full understanding is an

impossibility, anyway. Japanese-reading fans, however, wish that the experience they can get from reading the original text can be conveyed in the translation—including all the levels of humor in a joke, for instance.

Conclusion

While manga can and does serve an educational function for English readers (Fukunaga Anderson, 2006; Kasa, 2005; Moeller, 2008), the publishers with whom I spoke view its primary purpose as entertainment. Professionals translate based on the assumption that in order for a work to be entertaining, it should be as transparent as possible. At the same time, however, manga remain educational despite a varied range of types of localization used for them. So while some publishers, and even certain series, do not depend heavily on cultural notes, manga still have the capacity to educate as well as entertain, because of source elements that remain even after translation.

Although translators view localized manga without cultural notes as less authentic than translated manga with many cultural elements or Japanese terms retained and explained in cultural notes, in some ways the reading experience itself is inauthentic. Because the reader lacks both the cultural background and the linguistic knowledge necessary to understand elements of the source text, he or she must disrupt the uninterrupted flow of reading that the source reader would enjoy in order to consult the cultural notes.

At the same time, a hallmark of manga fandom is a working knowledge of elements that show up frequently in manga. Knowing “untranslated” cultural elements marks an English-language reader as a member of the in-crowd. Thus, the adaptation of cultural elements in a translation in some ways cuts out a pleasurable component of the

reading experience for English-language fans—that of recognition of obscure knowledge unknown by outsiders.

CHAPTER 5 DEFENDING THE CASTLE: DISTRIBUTION AND COPYRIGHT

One key way to understand what it means for manga to move into the U.S. is to understand their means of distribution. The distribution of manga is one that must be carefully controlled by the companies, because the entire market for manga is relatively new. Also, manga does not neatly fit into a pre-existing niche; the manga publishing industry has had to build a niche. As a niche market, it would take far less for it to fail than other, better-established markets. Thus understanding the ways in which manga enters the U.S. requires an understanding of the means by which publishers attempt to maintain the market and minimize risk through their distribution practices.

Another strategy for minimizing risk is the diversification of a publisher's repertoire. One lower-cost way companies are accomplishing this is by tapping the market for user-based content. One of the characteristics of fan culture is that it generates a good amount of content. Tapping into this pre-existing supply of content provides a company with low-cost content that is lower-risk because of the minimized resources needed to tap into it.

User-Based Content

User-based content from venues such as YouTube, Twitter, and blogs are now ubiquitously appropriated by mainstream media outlets and embedded in mass media of all kinds. By promoting such content as a sort of grassroots expression and as opportunities for creating participatory culture, companies in essence use the unpaid labor of audiences to generate content for promotional campaigns (Deuze, 2008). The attraction of viewing and participating in user-created media is undeniable, and having

one's corporate brand associated with such a campaign associates that brand with participatory culture, which carries with it connotations of participatory democracy. On the other hand, Benkler (2006) argues for the increased decentralization that participatory culture of any stripe brings about, causing cultural production to redistribute away from media conglomerates and other localized forms of authorship. Various kinds of participation are integral to online fan cultures, and publishers like Tokyopop have tapped into them as a way to better connect with fans. Moreover, these practices (e.g., fan art) set a relaxed precedent for the way in which copyright is applied to manga *in practice*.

Tokyopop directly harnesses the power of fans through its web site's forum. Fans can discuss current and upcoming Tokyopop series. A section for fan art allows fans to share their own interpretations of Tokyopop-licensed characters. Polls coordinated by Tokyopop themselves provide an opportunity to find out what their fans care about and think about manga. Especially active forum participants have been invited to form the core of Tokyopop's new street team, or promotional team of "superfans" who are especially active and well connected.

The success of campaigns such as Tokyopop's web forums is based on an idea that the fans taking part in the forums are creating a community through their actions. Beyond simply creating an "imagined community" of Tokyopop fans, the forum allows fans to meet as an online community. While Tokyopop's marketing department undeniably takes part in beginning discussions of certain topics and monitoring fans' discussions and work, fan activity is the engine powering the forums. Jenkins (2006) argues that the organizational context of such user-produced media should always be

taken into account when thinking about what users produce—and contemporary organizational contexts are largely commercial and commodified ones, combining “top-down business processes with bottom-up consumption and production processes” (Carpentier & De Cleen, 2008, p. 8). While Tokyopop places high importance on connecting with, learning from, and marketing to fans, viewing the forum simply as a site of surveillance diminishes its experience in the everyday lives of its members. Carpentier and De Cleen (2008) note that the importance of media user-producers and users should not be disregarded in favor of emphasizing the commercial power of technologies that rely on user-produced media.

The use of Tokyopop’s forum is one example of the ways in which companies have established a precedent for the fan manipulation of licensed properties. The user-based content and discussions generated by fans on the Tokyopop forum are largely original content. While fan art generally uses characters and other devices found in the licensed content, fan art is a practice accepted and encouraged by both the fan communities who generate such art, and by both American and Japanese publishers.

Fan communities have long expressed themselves through fan art, refiguring favorite characters in ways that the media in which they appear do not portray them. For instance, Jenkins (Jenkins, 1992, 2006) and Bacon-Smith (1992, 2000) have long noted the importance of fan art and fan fiction to fan communities. Others have pointed out the importance of fan videos that manipulate video footage of one or more text (Duhl, 2004; Hatcher, 2005; Trombley, 2007).

Fan Art, Fair Use, and Scanslation

When compared with cases that more immediately come to mind when thinking about legal action taken against user-produced or -distributed media, legal suits against scanslators have been few. Tokyopop and other manga publishers have encouraged fan participation by providing outlets for fan expression. This is something that American and Japanese manga fan cultures have in common, and the American outlets may trace their origins in the Japanese precedents. Manga volumes often include an address at which the author and publisher can be reached. Fans send in drawings of the characters, which are then selected by the editor and published in the backs of future volumes, or in the pages of the magazine they originally appeared. This in turn encourages other fans to submit their artwork. Tokyopop encourages fans to not only send in artwork for publication, but also submit artwork on the fan art section of their forum.

Fan art, then, is articulated as an acceptable way to outlet creative urges centering on manga. Characters, while they can be licensed properties in their own right, can be manipulated without harming the marketplace. Especially in situations where fan works are carefully moderated for manipulations that could harm a property or brand (e.g., characters portrayed with another publisher's characters, characters in violent or sexually explicit situations), fan art is a prescribed way for fans to "get involved" with the manga they love.

Fan art differs from scanslation in the important respect that scanslation resembles something that could be bought and sold in the marketplace. Fan art makes use of recognizable characters in ways that cause them to be considered a derivative work. U.S. Code Title 17 Section 101 defines a derivative work thus:

a work based upon one or more preexisting works, such as a translation, musical arrangement, dramatization, fictionalization, motion picture version, sound recording, art reproduction, abridgment, condensation, or any other form in which a work may be recast, transformed, or adapted. A work consisting of editorial revisions, annotations, elaborations, or other modifications which, as a whole, represent an original work of authorship, is a “derivative work”.

While fan art is derivative and has little resemblance to items on the market, scanslations bear little difference to manga available in a bookstore, especially considering that some publishers actually use images scanned from the Japanese edition of the same volume (Brienza, 2009a). The considerations for fair use are as follows:

(1) the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes; (2) the nature of the copyrighted work; (3) the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and (4) the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work (17 U.S.C §107, 2009, July).

Many of those with whom I spoke gave bettering their Japanese skills as a reason for scanslating. For example, one scanslator said,

After spending a semester in Japan during college, I was looking for a way to use the Japanese skills that I had acquired. I had always enjoyed reading manga, so it seemed logical that I should try out translating. I found that I really enjoyed translating, so I've continued doing it.

While some might argue that scanslations are actually an educational exercise, given many scanslators' initial motivation, fair use law in the United States indicates that scanslations could have the potential to adversely affect the market for specific titles. Lee's (2009) preliminary findings in interviews with publishers indicate that publishers appreciate scanslations' promotional capacity, and indicate that publishers allow scanslators to use unlicensed materials as long as they do not distribute or translate licensed materials. (As discussed in Chapter 3, Paradise uses a “code of honor” that dictates that only unlicensed titles can be scanslated. Titles that become licensed must be

removed from download servers. This is a rule that many, but not all, scanslation groups follow.) My findings indicate a much different stance than this, however. The actions on the part of publishing companies and press statements made by them indicate that scanslators are being blamed for the fall in sales of manga in recent years. (Alternative causes include: an overall drop in graphic novel sales, not just manga sales; the overwhelming success of the *Twilight* franchise, which has attracted many young women from the same demographic sought by shoujo manga publishers; aging of the target demographic, who have abandoned shoujo manga in search of reading perceived as more mature).

Just as people over a century ago would borrow poems and songs from one another to make new songs, fans appropriate characters from their favorite manga as raw material for new adventures or art, allowing them to play and directly interact with the world they love. Scanslators also use manga as their raw material, but the end product looks a lot like the original product. The activity in and of itself constitutes an example of educational fair use. The distribution of these files is where the situation gets stickier. People have been offering translations of manga on the Internet for years. Translations that do not displease publishers are essentially a translated script of the dialogue in a Japanese volume, with page numbers and other annotations to guide the reader. This kind of translation is a lot of trouble to read, however, since the reader must move back and forth between the translated script and the original manga. One of the primary criteria of a good translation is its transparency to the reader: a reader should not be able to detect that a translation has occurred. The script form of translation does not permit this transparency, given the multiple media needed to read even a single page.

Scanslations offer readers a chance to read translations of untranslated works without needing to learn Japanese. The vast majority of scanslators expects no monetary reimbursement from readers, and do not receive any income. The potential is there, however, for readers to keep scanslated chapters after a title becomes licensed. Readers without the cash to purchase a new volume of manga may not buy their favorite title after it is published. Some scanslation groups encourage their readers to delete scanslated chapters and to purchase published manga, but there is no way for scanslators to enforce this. This is the crux of the situation: while scanslations promote manga titles for free, allowing publishers to use their resources elsewhere, the scans can take the place of books in the marketplace. Lee (2009) and others (e.g., Muscar, 2006) argue that fans prefer physical paper manga to online scans. All but one of the scanslators and fans I interviewed also confirmed this. As one of the pro-paper scanslators told me, “I prefer books, hands down. There's nothing quite like having a hard copy of a manga in your hands.” Nonetheless, workers in the manga publishing industry, including my contacts at Tokyopop, believe that scans harm the potential sales of paper books because fans who are introduced to a story online do not necessarily purchase the book after publication:

I think in general sales, book sales have been decreasing, but I don't think that means there's not the audience, I think there's as many or even more manga and graphic novel readers out there, but it's just, fewer buyers of the content out there. I think that's partly due to the free content that available online...I think it obviously eats into sales when you have manga online for free.

While scanslators could use a sort of digital rights management that caused files to lock after a certain amount of time, this causes two problems. First, scanslators lack the resources to protect each volume with rights protection. As it stands now, scanslators also depend on readers to *also* adhere to their codes of honor, relying on an honor system

to maintain the symbiotic balance between scanslation groups and publishers. The difference in codes of honor between groups also means that there is no consistency between scanslation group practices. For example, while Paradise carefully maintains its site to only include completely unlicensed works, OneManga's code of honor dictates that the scans provided on the site are "official scanslated versions" as opposed to "rip-off scans from English volumes" (Shinsou, 2010). Rights management is generally used by those who legally have licensed the right to manage how and when something is viewed or read. Also, digital rights management would result in a decrease in the promotional capacity of scanslations, their very reason for existing. Part of the appeal and popularity of scanslations is their capacity to be passed from one reader to another and read as a collective. As Rodman (2005) has noted, consumers create culture through affect—it is the texts themselves that influence and make up culture, not the exchange of money that occurs with the purchase of texts. Smaller companies can be harmed by not buying texts, but they still feel the effects of affective culture and networks created by fans. Digital rights management is flawed, disrupting consumers' rights to read or view a text they have paid for, in the way they wish (Rodman, 2005).

Manga publishing companies have a great need to build up a context for how audiences read manga. Part of Tokyopop's success was due to the perceptive marketing used in its early days by founder Stuart Levy. The successful agreement between Waldenbooks/Borders and Tokyopop ensured that manga was placed in high-traffic areas in malls. They also campaigned to get the concept of manga in the minds of the public, and largely succeeded (Anderson-Terpstra, 2009, July; Brienza, 2009b). The management of distribution is largely responsible for the success of manga in the U.S.,

and this owes a lot to Tokyopop's defense of its properties. Tokyopop's success depends on the maintenance of scarcity, i.e., the availability of its manga only in sales outlets.

Resources and Copyright Enforcement

Issues remaining at the forefront of the conflict over manga were salient decades—even centuries—ago to those concerned with the book publishing business. The general trend in recent decades has been towards the strengthening of proprietary strategies designed to increase legal control over copyright. Benkler (2006) argues, however, that proprietary strategies are not dominant in the information production systems that govern daily life. He marks the rise in newer forms of “decentralized and nonmarket-based production” as one that requires new strategies to protect information. Strong proprietary control marks the rise in the concentration and commercialization of cultural production. In other words, with increased conglomeration of cultural production corporations and the increased marginalization of non-commercial cultural producers comes increased, centralized control over cultural products.

This wasn't always the state of affairs, however. The trend towards peer production practices has more in common with cultural producers of centuries ago than with media conglomerates of today. The standards of propriety also follow suit.

Before the founding of the coalition, Tokyopop went to lengths within its available resources in order to defend its licenses against those who would overstep the permissions made legitimate by law. As one Tokyopop employee related to me: Because it's so ubiquitous, it's hard to police. ...Obviously we tried, and it's just we just don't have the resources and it's just impossible, if you tell one site to take it down, they

will, and then the next day, it'll be a new site, so we just don't have the resources for someone to just keep going online and trying to find where our manga is online for free.

In March of 2008, Tokyopop issued a letter of warning to many scanslation groups. The letter consisted of a request to stop translating or distributing 230 manga titles. Many had not yet been licensed, although a few were licensed by Tokyopop and other publishers. Since the letter's release, licenses to 207 out of the 230 manga titles have been licensed, mostly by Tokyopop. Tokyopop's preemptive move to assure the controlled distribution of their licensed titles marks one of the strategies the company has taken against scanslators.

Tokyopop's mass warning letter mentioned above is one example of a low-resource effort to stem activity before it starts. The cease-and-desist letter has become an ever-present possible threat to scanslation activities. A few scanslation circles have been sent cease-and-desist orders, and simply deleted the offending scanslations from their web sites and servers. They continued production of other titles, however. Other scanslators folded after being served such a letter, in order to avoid any further attention. (I have omitted the names to protect the groups.)

These instances were relatively few, however, until June 2010. Paradise, for instance, has never been served with such a letter, but tends to follow more conservative protocols than other scanslators. As one member stated:

We drop projects once a publisher officially announces a licensing and remove all releases of the manga in question. We do not work on projects that are already licensed or have had volumes published in English, even if they have been subsequently dropped by the publisher.

It would be difficult to say what aspect of their practices has kept them from escaping attention. They forbid their audience from sharing their scanslations on scanslation download sites such as Manga Fox or OneManga. They also frequently keep track of what titles are being licensed in order to preemptively cease the translation and serving of U.S.-licensed titles. On the other hand, perhaps the nature of the manga chosen for scanslation means that their selections are less likely to become licensed, despite having a wide following online. Titles for which a license is pursued are expected to garner a good following and are expected to easily conform to the booksellers' standards of decency (Anderson-Terpstra, 2009, July). Paradise's director attempts to select manga that she thinks is not viable for U.S. licensing, but could someday be picked up thanks to the following generated by the group's scanslations.

Scanslation circles have traditionally depended on trust to keep doing what they're doing. The unspoken truce that existed between publishers and scanslators ensured that scanslators could continue to do their work while remaining in a semi-symbiotic relationship with publishers. While scanslators benefitted from the *lack* of copyright enforcement and the blind eye turned their way, publishers benefitted from the promotional capacity supplied by the scanslators' "free" work as regulated by the groups' codes of honor that I explore in Chapter 3.

The newer types of groups, who work with motivations derived not from common systems of trust, or codes of honor, have disrupted the delicate balance of trust and social norms that previously maintained the relationship between publishers and scanslators. Publishers of centuries ago could count on reprints of their works to spring up in other countries. Within these other countries, reprinters regulated themselves according to

courtesies very similar to scanslators' codes of honor. These courtesies ensured that reprinters could continue to reprint in their own countries without conflict from one another—a continuance that ensured that works printed legally in one country would spread to other countries.

This took place during a time when copyright only applied within national borders, and an international publishing industry had not yet formed. While books were imported and exported, their printing had largely been for their original country, not for an international audience. While this meant that reprinters needed to skirt any law in place in order to print copies in their home countries, it also meant that new forms of old works came into existence. For instance, one author's works was compiled into a comprehensive, all-encompassing set of volumes. This compilation could not have been printed without the intervention of reprinters, because the author's disparate works were under the jurisdiction of an array of different publishers. Thus, reprinters in a publisher's home country were a threat to the domestic market, while reprinters in other countries often did publishers a service before an international book publishing market had been established.

Tokyopop's stance towards scanslators was a mixed one. Before the founding of the international coalition against scanslators, they rightfully defended their licensed titles from scanslation when they could. Given the decentered nature of the scanslation community, it is difficult to track down every group or individual serving a licensed title. Tokyopop understands scanslations to have a direct, detrimental effect on their sales. This sentiment is one with which the manga publishing industry in general agrees, and the foundation of the new coalition.

Tokyopop and other manga publishers turned to electronic versions of manga chapters or pages as promotional devices, but were slow to turn to this alternative because of the time it took to coordinate with the Japanese publishers. While the distribution of scanslations is difficult to control, distribution of promotional images for a limited time on their own web site is much easier to control. By sending out a preemptive letter to scanslators, Tokyopop attempted to take back the promotional aspects of scanslations and harness this capability in a fashion they could control.

Viz also took a preemptive promotional approach when it starting releasing *Rin-Ne* in the United States. *Rin-Ne* is the newest series by Rumiko Takahashi, author of long-running series such as *Maison Ikkoku*, *Ranma ½*, and *InuYasha*. (Her U.S. appearance in 1994 at San Diego Comic-Con garnered a record-breaking crowd. It was not until *Bleach* manga author Tite Kubo's appearance in 2008 that a crowd of fans exceeded hers.) Instead of allowing a delay between the release in Japan and the release in the United States, as is customary with most manga series in the U.S., each chapter was released on the U.S.-based web site on the same day that the monthly magazine issue featuring a new chapter was released in Japan.

This kind of large-scale coordination was possible because of Viz's status as an American branch of Japanese publishers Shogakukan and Shueisha. Given the tight schedule many authors have in Japan to release a completely polished new chapter (monthly, bimonthly, or every week, depending on the magazine that releases it), the schedule for a translator would probably be even tighter, since she would be required to wait on the source text before creating a script. Since Viz has a large pool of titles to choose from, without the chanciness of bidding for a license that other, independent

publishers like Tokyopop have to deal with, Viz can plan broad, cross-national campaigns such as *Rin-Ne*'s well ahead of time, preparing resources as needed for the project.

Viz's ability to take this kind of broad-scale preemptive action greatly limits the abilities of scaslators to translate manga in a promotional fashion. The speed would not be an issue for a prepared team of scaslators. A member in Japan would buy the newest issue, scan in the pages, and send them to the editor that same day. The most fluent and quick translator members would translate. The group could release the new chapter the day of release or the next, with well-coordinated teamwork. There are scaslotion circles who regularly accomplish this feat, allowing their audience to follow a storyline at the same pace as readers in Japan. Given Takahashi's wide popularity in the U.S., *Rin-Ne* is a prime candidate for scaslotion and downloading.

Viz's simultaneous release is a means for them to take promotional control back from readers who scaslote. Simultaneous release dates do not prevent scaslators from doing what they do, but if an equivalent online product is already available, it lessens the need to scaslote. While Tokyopop and other American manga publishers must usually wait to obtain a license to promote new chapters, Viz can skip the waiting time and avoid creating a situation where fans wish to consume and cannot without taking matters into their own hands.

This collapse of the windows between releases in different media forms is one that is made possible by the digitization of media. The initial windows are usually the most expensive or difficult to access, and decrease in cost and inaccessibility as time passes. As media is digitized, it becomes easier to make exact copies without

degradation. The longer a media text sits between windows, the more time people have to make copies and distribute them through their own channels. While scanslators and their audiences are not necessarily disadvantaged in terms of being able to afford the legal means of distribution, as Vaidhyanathan (Vaidhyanathan, 2004) describes, many fans are barred from reading manga before U.S. releases because they lack the important resource of language.

This creates a promotional disadvantage for publishers who lack the resources to collapse release windows through horizontal integration. Scanslators will have the time to do their work and distribute it before a title is available for sale in the U.S. Tokyopop is now at a greater disadvantage than it was, thanks to the dissolution of a licensing agreement it held with Japanese publisher Kodansha. Kodansha announced in 2008 that it would be starting an American sister company, Kodansha U.S.A. (very similar to Shogakukan and Shueisha's Viz) ("Kodansha Heading Stateside," 2008). Almost a year after the announcement was made, Tokyopop released a list of 722 titles that would fall out of print on August 31, 2009, the date of Kodansha U.S.A.'s establishment in the U.S. ("No More Kodansha Manga for Tokyopop," 2009, Sept. 1; Tokyopop, 2009).

Booksellers were required to return all copies of these volumes by March 1, 2010.

Tokyopop says that although this arrangement was beneficial, they have since diversified the titles they license, and the change will not affect anything but their back catalog sales.

In June 2010, however, publishers finally pooled their resources and formed an international coalition against scanslation sites. Comprised of the 36 members of Japan's Digital Comic Association and American manga property holders Square Enix, VIZ Media, Tokyopop, Vertical, Inc., the Tuttle-Mori Agency, and Yen Press, the coalition

sent out a press release on June 8, 2010, stating its intention to actively protect properties from unauthorized distribution. The statement also revealed the coalition's intentions to serve 30 specific, undisclosed scanslation sites with cease-and-desist orders, and stressed that member companies hoped that scanslators would voluntarily stop serving scanslations. As July 2010, none of the major manga serving sites have changed or have ceased updating their sites with new scanslations. OneManga, the most popular of the scanslation aggregate sites, later announced that it would take down all scanslations by the beginning of August 2010, although they continued to post new scanslations to the web site up until that date ("One Manga Site Shutting Down," 2010; Read Free Manga Online at One Manga. Online manga scans reader - Home Page," 2010).

The announcement on OneManga was actually a post on the OneManga.com user forums, containing a link and summary of two press releases made by AnimeNewsNetwork and Publisher's Weekly about the formation of the coalition. Fan reaction to the post was mixed, but fervent. Some believed the press releases were some kind of prank or empty threat trying to scare scanslators into folding. Other fans took an attitude of "all good things must come to an end." These fans acknowledged the gray area posed by the scanslations, and opined that it was only a matter of time before scanslators would have to "get caught" or be forced to stop. (Intellectual property exists only insofar as it is enforced or talked about—and its nature depends on *how* it is enforced or talked about. That's what makes intellectual property difficult to define—its nature continually changes depending on the zeitgeist and legal precedent.)

Later, it was apparent that OneManga was one of the 30 undisclosed sites targeted by the coalition. The owners of the site did not go into detail about the contents of the

letter, but announced their decision to take down all scans from the OneManga site and repurpose it for other fan-related activities. They posted their intentions and asked users for ideas of what to use the OneManga.com domain for in the future, including keeping the site's forum intact.

Selectivity, Market Availability, and Distribution Technology

Given the selectivity on the part of U.S. manga publishers, who cannot license all titles released in Japan, scanslation will tend not to overlap with licenses, if the scanslation group uses criteria like Paradise has used. The tendency, however, is for higher-profile titles to get more attention from both readers and potential U.S. publishers. Many scanslation groups pick up titles they have heard of, simply because they seem interesting. While groups like Paradise avoid mainstream or commercially successful titles, they also pride themselves in having found excellent works that have escaped the mainstream. Their desire to see their work get licensed has mixed consequences. Some of the pleasure of scanslation work results from its exclusivity, although the goal of the work is to promote a title enough that it is noticed by an American publisher and gets a license. As Roberts (2005) notes, "The inherent contradiction in this equation is that subcultural capital—like cultural capital *tout court*—is based upon exclusive knowledge theoretically available only to those 'in the know'; once everyone has that knowledge, it is no longer worth having" (p. 578). The contradictory nature of a scanslator's relationship to the licensed text is further reflected in Paradise's overwhelming preference for commercially printed volumes of their favorite scanslated titles.

By overstepping legal bounds put in place to protect the rights of authors to their livelihoods, scanslators in Paradise and other groups strive to create a foothold in the U.S.

among English speaking audiences who lack the resources—time, money, knowledge—to enjoy these authors. Copyright law grants authors the right to choose when and where their work will be translated. This law is in place to protect the livelihood, the income an author would receive for having created the source text to translate. While scanslators overstep this right, they do so in a way that does not collect monetary compensation for their work. The result of their work and the community created by their work is a better awareness of manga titles. While this is generally a contradictory premise for a subculture, scanslators like Paradise are generally thrilled when publishers obtain a license for something they have worked so hard to promote.

The case of Seven Seas is notable, since it reflects an alternative vision of licensing in the American market. Rather than permitting long-established manga publishers (e.g., Tokyopop) or manga publishers with ties to major publishing houses (e.g., Viz, Del Rey Manga) the dominance that allows them to capture all the best licenses, this small, independent publisher was started with the idea in mind to get the best licenses to Japanese and American titles before others could. Started by a group of fans and artists who wanted to go beyond promotion of their favorite authors to direct compensation, Seven Seas stands as one of many newly-formed publishers that compete with Tokyopop for licenses. Seven Seas is remarkable for its success in wooing Japanese manga publishers, but they did have resources to license works that most scanslators lack.

One resource—and edge—that scanslators have over publishers is their means of distribution. American manga publishers must rely in large part on the permissions to sell titles granted by their points of sale. Brick-and-mortar bookstore chains such as Barnes and Noble and Borders gave manga its foothold in the United States by figuring

manga not as comics, but as books (Brienza, 2009a) and also by creating a new selling model for selling manga. Instead of manga being relegated to specialty stores with a select clientele, manga was heavily promoted in mall storefronts in ways that made the books highly visible and accessible to the entire public. This debt to brick-and-mortar stores affects the selection of titles and also affects which titles show up at which points of sale (Anderson-Terpstra, 2009, July).

While online retailers offer the best selection of manga titles, they must rely on what publishers have licensed. Some titles, however, are licensed exclusively for online distribution, since their readers know that most of their favorite titles cannot be found in a brick-and-mortar storefront. For instance, Tokyopop started a line of erotic titles under the imprint BLU, in the knowledge that they would primarily sell them online.

Scanslators, even ones who carefully select titles to avoid scrutiny, distribute manga in ways that range in their accessibility, as well as ability to be tracked. Some scanslation groups' sites offer direct downloads: HTML links to files on their servers, to be downloaded like any other file one would download with a single click. Others use the now-ubiquitous BitTorrent, seeding files in decentralized networks. Manga aggregate sites such as OneManga allow users to upload zipped files of chapter images. Other sites aggregate manga titles, but only allow online viewing, to prevent users from archiving the images on their own computers. Aggregate sites often require a user account, which prevents users from overloading the system by downloading a multitude of files at one time.

Technology makes copying possible and easy. This has been the case throughout history. The advent of the printing press made it possible for publishers and pirates alike

to produce scores of volumes at a time. At the beginning of the 20th century, sheet music copiers produced cheaply made photolithographs of music marketed to the upper class, thus making it possible for the masses to also consume them. Later, jazz and opera fans pressed copies of records to preserve the archives of out-of-print music locked in copyright vaults, and to spread music to new places where it was unavailable. Even later, in the 1970's and 1980's, VCR owners used their new machines to time-shift, archive, and share recordings of live TV (Johns, 2009).

What these technologies have in common is the ability to produce close-to-exact copies of the original material. Digitization increases the fidelity of copies thanks to the fact that copying a digital file produces an identical copy. The fidelity of digital copies troubles arguments of fair use of the peer distribution of media, thanks to the fourth clause that considers the impact the use of a copyrighted item will have on the market for that item.

While other pirates of media rely on the physical marketplace as well as peer-to-peer based file sharing software (Vaidhyathan, 2004), many scaslators rely on a relatively antiquated technology to distribute their work. While not the whole of the situation, the technology is one reason why scaslators are difficult to stop. Even though scaslators are easily found through their web sites, it takes a fair amount of knowledge of the online scaslation environment to understand how and where to download manga they have translated. The primary venues they use to distribute manga, Internet relay chat (IRC), and peer-to-peer streaming, require a certain amount of knowledge to access.

Although IRC is a much-studied online venue (e.g., Kendall, 2002; Turkle, 1997), it is no longer the dominant way that people chat and comingle on the Internet. Social

networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace, and even MMORPGs such as World of Warcraft and Second Life, have made community-building much more user-friendly than in the days when IRC was the only option. That said, accessing the distributed manga takes a level of cultural capital and knowhow not needed for Facebook or web-based forums.

IRC was started in 1988 as a way for people to socialize with one another through the Internet. IRC features chat rooms, or channels, to allow people to “mix” with one another, in a semi-public way that allows people to broadcast instantaneous messages to the people logged in to the channel. While the primary means of communication is through this public forum, invitation-only, private chat rooms are also an option.

One of IRC’s capabilities is the automated serving of files. Users who have the files on their computer enable their IRC client to allow “trigger” commands that allow anyone within the same channel to download files from them. A user sends a trigger command as a private message to the user hosting the files, and the host’s computer replies by sending the file that corresponds to the code sent. This way, hosts can choose what files they want to share, and can easily disconnect by leaving a channel or disconnecting from IRC. In addition, they have no other file hosting presence on the Internet other than their logged-in status within the IRC channel. There is no web site required, no server required, and the files are in one location.

Possibly because of the increased user-friendliness of current forms of instantaneous text communication on the Internet, IRC is not used by a great percentage of Internet users today, and many people do not even know of its existence. This, and the

fact that IRC remains free and flexible to use, especially for the distribution of files, may have been the attracting force for scores of scanslating groups.

To download manga from IRC, one must know how to use IRC client software and how to configure the client to download files. After that, one must know how to join an IRC channel and what commands to enter to find and access files and trigger downloads. Moreover, there is channel-specific etiquette, the violation of which can get one banned, or barred from entering the channel and downloading. Although it requires a good deal of knowhow to gain access, scanslation groups welcome people to download their translations, and publish downloading guides, as long as interested people follow etiquette set by each scanslation group.

Digitization also troubles the ability of copyright owners to control distribution of texts. Media industries use windows of distribution to maximize profits, releasing a text in different media at different times, proceeding from a higher user-cost to the lowest user-cost to consume. Since digitization has become the primary mode by which texts are conveyed, control over distribution remains the one area where media industries can assert some level of control. Digital content is less easily controlled, although content industries keep trying to strengthen control over content protection technology (U.S. Copyright Office, 1998).

The recent actions taken by American manga publishers reflects the resorting to proprietary methods of copyright control when a system of trust seemed to have failed them. It seemed that a system of trust was working in favor of the publishing companies. As in the case of home tapers, copying seemed to have assumed a symbiotic role with the

corporate market (Johns, 2009). The increase in popularity of the scanslation sites is assumed to have correlated with a fall in manga sales, however.

This reflects the common action of many contemporary corporations in the past decade. Other options, other models may come about in the future, but the strong proprietary model is the one many corporations have resorted to as they protect their interests. The American manga publishers have finally secured rights to digital methods of distribution, so scanslations are now analogous to their new form of distribution. Before, when manga was exclusively paper, one might have made the argument that scanslations were not replacing the market share of manga books. Digital manga, however, are closer to scanslations than paper manga.

Ensuring exclusivity through strong-arm proprietary defenses has been the classic means of protection for cultural copyright holders, but the rise in social production has changed market conditions from a concentrated and commercial model. Books are one the last bastions of the analog—they are one of the media that has been slowest to resist wholesale conversion to the digital (Striphas, 2009).

Thanks to DRM (digital rights management) software, publishers are better able to control the paths that e-books take after their purchase. Control over books is thus maintained thanks to publishers' DRM software (Striphas, 2009). Intellectual property law concerns the result of duplicating copyrighted materials, i.e., copies, but not the *process* of duplication, i.e., making copies. DRM software and the DMCA (Digital Millennium Copyright Act) protect a text's terms of use *after* a purchase has been made—terms that have traditionally reverted to the consumer after the transaction occurs.

Digitization thus not only facilitates ease of copying, it also makes it possible to control a text's use. In years past, Fiske (2006) and Hall (2001) both wrote of the lack of control cultural producers have over their products after they are released into the market. The commercial and concentrated mass media industries that Benkler (2006) sketches out had succeeded in developing risk-management strategies that ensured an overall profit on investment in multiple properties (e.g., windowing, niche marketing, tailoring). The nature of mass media artifacts as texts loosely linking the producers and consumers from a wide distance means that once an analog text is released into the world, the producer can only control its distribution or add to the system of texts surrounding the artifact. Striphas (2009) argues that DRM technology allows for the creation of controlled consumption for publishers, and attempts to reshape book culture to suit publishers' own needs. Control of distribution and thus exclusivity becomes difficult to control when books are digitized, but the technology that allows reproduction can also allow for control over end-user consumption, dictating the terms under which the end-user can use a book.

The creation of culture has not only to do with the production of new texts, but also the manner in which texts are circulated and consumed. DRM seeks to control this aspect, and thus reflects a consolidated media system where cultural production is still controlled by corporations.

This reflects a shift away from pre-20th century understandings of piracy as a practice that takes place exclusively in the commercial sphere—as a commercial enterprise, with a profit-motive. The home sphere and the commercial sphere were once thought to be two separate realms. The home sphere was impervious to surveillance thanks to the conventions of copyright policing at the time, which dictated that the

threshold of a home was impervious to surveillance (Johns, 2009). It wasn't until the 1960's and 1970's that a new type of piracy, "home piracy," was recognized and the distinction between piracy and non- (home) piracy dissolved (Johns, 2009). During this time, home taping, or the copying of record albums and radio play onto audio cassettes, was bigger than commercial piracy. Contrary to the music companies' opinions on the subject, home tapers were dependable and loyal music consumers.

In addition to making copying easier, technology makes new forms of production possible. Technologies of mass production and distribution enabled cultural producers to spread texts to widespread mass audiences. Later, technologies allowed corporations to tailor and deliver mass-created messages to targeted niche audiences. Today, new types of cultural production are reversing what had become a one-way model of cultural production. These new kinds of production have been made possible thanks to the market's shift towards human meaning and communication as output and connected personal computers as basic physical capital (Benkler, 2006). The result is a market tending towards delocalized, distributed authorship and peer production. Moreover, Benkler (2006) argues, social production's reshaping of market conditions marks a time where there is no longer a simple acceptance of the dominance of market-based industrial economy.

The shift in the publishing industries has been one towards dealing in e-books instead of paper books. This marks a shift from the publishing industry dealing with information goods, as opposed to physical goods. Increased trade in information—for profit or otherwise—has resulted in increased use of technologies designed to track the flow of information. These tracking technologies are not only used to control the

consumption of books, but also track the way that the books are consumed, by whom they are read, etc. Thus, surveillance of the domestic sphere has become a ubiquitous feature of information dealers, whereas historically the domestic sphere was out of the reach of businesses.

Copyright and Legitimatization of Work

Copyright depends on the basic idea that people will *not* produce if their products are free, or “public goods” that do not require monetary compensation in order to consume (Benkler, 2006). It is designed to protect the livelihoods of authors, with the idea that, in order to keep producing, authors must be guaranteed a monetary return for their work. Peer production, however, relies on social capital for its exchange. Social capital, or social gains received from others, and social norms are in large part responsible for peer production and activity. Trust, moreover, acts as a guiding principle for actors in peer production circles.

Copyright also lends credibility to producers, although to a lesser degree in recent times. Given the spread of user-generated content and the subsequent use of such media by corporations, the fact that a medium started as user-based no longer means that it is a legitimately amateur forum. The monetary compensation guaranteed by copyright acts as a factor that distinguishes “professionals” from “amateurs.” This still carries some weight among the scanslators I spoke with, and freelance manga translators in the U.S. Both groups delineate a difference between scanslators and professional translators—one that generally involves the introduction of monetary compensation for services rendered and an expectation of increased professionalization stemming from this. I discuss this factor more in Chapter 4.

Since the profit-motive was the primary motivation of commercial pirates by-and-large, the rise of home pirates in different fields thanks to the spread of peer production meant that new types of motives must be considered. Benkler (2006) argues that behavior and motivation patterns from social relations have become effective at motivating, informing, and organizing productive behavior. Money is not the only motivator for peer producers, contrary to traditional economic theory. As piracy moved into the domestic sphere, motivations for committing piracy also shifted. On the part of jazz and opera aficionados in the early 20th century, the motive to pirate was to provide and restore access to out-of-reach albums. They viewed the copyright holders, as custodians of the music, as not fulfilling their duty to the public to maintain the archive of music. Home pirates viewed their work as doing the right thing on behalf of others, a service that the record companies were not fulfilling thanks to profit being their primary motivation. Likewise, home tapers and VCR owners made copies in order to archive and share music and audiovisual programs for themselves and others.

While sharing is encouraged by scanlation groups, what implication does sharing have for copyright? Copyright is established to protect the livelihoods of those who create by ruling on who shall receive compensation for a creative work. Recent scholars have argued about the extent to which copyright should control the fate of creative works after they have been disseminated (Hemmungs Wirten, 2004; Lessig, 2004). Increasing conglomeration of global corporations and privatization of many sectors has led to an increase in the strictness of copyright, and the difficulty new creators have to continue threads started by creators with copyrighted works. Establishment and protection of a creative commons has been encouraged in order to promote creativity and progress for

those without the resources demanded by some enforcers of copyright. Copyright is meant to be a temporary, reasonable incentive for creators to continue creating, not a limiter on unlimited creative potential.

Paradise's scanslators do not expect compensation for their work—if anything, they expect appreciation from the group's fans and licensing from an American publisher as compensation. Some of Paradise's members, however, wanted a little more credit from publishers than they were getting. One member expressed his frustration that scanslators were constantly demonized even though they provided a valuable service to publishers. The group operates under self-imposed rules that seem to have worked so far in terms of evading litigation. They are very careful to monitor license announcements, moving newly licensed titles to the "Licensed" section of their web site and making scans unavailable.

The work that they perform is very similar to that of several positions within the manga publishing process. Freelance translators make all of Tokyopop's translations, as well as those of many other publishers. Some of these translators were once scanslators themselves. One employee of Tokyopop noted that translators who started as scanslators are just as good as, if not better than, translators who had never scanned.

Manga publishers' work is legitimized over scanslators', first, because of the legal licensing they are able to use. The legal license is the official endorsement that an author, or the Japanese publisher who owns the rights to use an author's work, has approved an American publisher to take care of a work in a way that would best benefit the Japanese publisher and the author. This endorsement creates a direct link between the publication of an author's work and the reward for having a new audience read it. Scanslators cannot

create this direct link. The concession allowed by copyright licensing is designed to encourage further work by promising monetary gain from it.

While American publishers of Tokyopop remain legitimized in the eyes of both the law and scanslators, publishers and scanslators have historically been joined in an ambivalent relationship with one another. Rather than reflecting a case of piracy due to financial lack (of the kind related by Vaidhyathan [2004] or Yar [2005]), this case reflects a case of cultural lack prompting the mobilization of those with resources to spread this culture. The work of scanslators has promoted and created a place for manga in United States popular culture, but has also created problems for those looking to make money on legally licensed titles. Manga retailers recently faulted scanslations for causing downturns in sales ("Manga Retailers Competing with Free Scanlations Hurting Sales," 2009)—but this could be an argument similar to that of music retailers, who cited peer-to-peer downloads of MP3's for causing a decrease in sales without direct evidence. On the other hand, the manga publishing industry is much smaller than the music industry, and manga publishers without major publisher affiliations such as Tokyopop and niche retailers will feel more stress than those with corporate affiliations.

Regardless, scanslations are finally being formally recognized as a threat to the manga publishing industry in a difficult economic climate. Whereas scanslation started as a means to spread manga to places where there was a lack, scanslators who scanslate licensed manga and mass manga aggregation sites have called attention to themselves by engaging in activities that are outside of the gray area of copyright. Moreover, directly in contrast with the original scanslation sites, newer "scanslation" sites have even started offering scans of the American paper version of manga.

Thanks to the focus shifting more and more from books as physical goods to be bought and sold towards books as conveyances of content or information, publishers have been resorting to increasingly proprietary strategies of copyright protection. Exclusivity ensures a strong market return, but exclusivity is based on the scarcity of a text's availability (Striphas, 2009). Scarcity takes work to produce, and that is the goal of many cases of proprietary copyright enforcement. Thus, the importance of distribution to the success of a work lies not only with the conditions of a work's availability, but also with the conditions of its *unavailability*.

The codes of honor employed by scanslation groups (discussed in Chapter 3) represent new forms of older models of copyright and distribution protection that were in use decades ago, according to Benkler (2006) and Johns (2009). Book markets before the 19th century relied on "courtesies," or mutual agreements among members of the publishing community in a country. Piracy has historically been the custom rather than the exception for the publishing industries (Striphas, 2009). Courtesies guaranteed that only one publisher at a time could *reprint* an original work within a country. No governing body made sure that this could occur—publishers self-regulated to ensure the mutual protection of financial interests.

As Benkler (2006) notes, proprietary strategies are *not* the dominant means of protecting production practices in actual use today. He points out that behavior and motivation patterns from social relations have become effective at motivating, informing, and organizing productive behavior. Peer production practices rely on social norms and social capital, or *trust*, as their governing principles. The entry of business into the fray of online social networking and peer production reflects a disruption in the structure of

peer-oriented systems and proprietary copyright enforcement—there is a blurring of the lines between owners of content and generators of content—businesses become “peers” generating content carefully crafted by companies and defended by proprietary-oriented copyright.

Scanslation groups like Paradise self-regulate because of an idea that the most direct form of benefit to their favorite authors is monetary benefit. Recognizing the possibility of their work harming sales, they strive to prevent downloads of titles that have been licensed.

Conclusion

While the case of scanslation could be compared to music downloading, in that downloads help spread and promote the artists they represent, this case differs because of the scale of the corporations from which the pirated material comes and the availability of the consumable material in the American market. Scanslators continue to do work that influences the American fan base, by providing new, unlicensed titles to those without the language skills or money and time required to import the Japanese volumes. Publishers, while protecting the copyright granted them after their own investment of time, resources, and careful planning, also regard scanslators as both promotional and harmful. Their legal rights are protected while the “buzz” generated by scanslated titles is closely monitored to predict a title’s prospects. Their public position has turned to one of antagonism, but the promotional effect cannot be denied, however much the harm outweighs the benefits today.

While protection of legally licensed titles from publishers such as Tokyopop have allowed the industry to establish itself as publishers serving a large niche audience, the

work of scanslators has also benefitted the market by making the fan base stronger. While the use of fair use is not in evidence in scanslation work, the relatively relaxed enforcement of copyright has allowed this fan base to spread via the Internet and word of mouth. Where major followings of a given title occur, licenses have followed. Other, less economically viable titles have created loyal followings that may eventually lead to licenses and direct compensation.

The manga market has been on a decline in recent years, and analysts are still unsure if the decline is the result of the recession. Future research will have to investigate this factor. Trade periodicals for the manga industry have reported that the decline is due to scanslation (e.g., "Manga Retailers Competing with Free Scanslations Hurting Sales," 2009), but no causal connection has been proven; the overall American graphic novel and comics market has also declined since the recession began ("2009 graphic novel market challenging," 2010). The position of industry spokespeople, however, has turned to one that stresses a direct, causal link between the decline in the industry (from \$210 million in 2007 to \$140 million in sales in 2009) and the ever-increasing popularity of scanslations. For instance, scanslation aggregator OneManga.com achieved the status of appearing on Google's top 1000 most-visited web sites at the beginning of June 2010. One can be sure that they are one of the 30 sites targeted by the new coalition.

The relationship between fans and the industry remains one filled with tension. The place of fans in helping speed the movement of manga across borders is beginning to be noted, but needs even further exploration. A causal link would overemphasize the role of either party, but both publishers and fans have played a vital role in the process of

getting manga across cultural borders. Publishers set a precedent of flexibility or overlooking their claim to copyright, and must maintain a delicate balance between controlling the distribution of manga in ways that it benefits them and by turn the Japanese publishers and authors. Their attempt to stop the distribution of scanslations may prove to be fruitless thanks to the lax precedent set earlier.

CONCLUSION

A lot has happened since the beginning of this project. While this made the research material a moving target, it allowed me to compare the “times before” with “times to come.” This was expected from the beginning, because media systems are always dynamic. The changes to American bookselling and the American manga market were dramatic. Amid a climate of declining sales in graphic novels in general, manga sales showed a marked decline from 2005-2010. The industry blamed translators for the decline, as well as the general economic climate.

In light of the declines in sales, the manga industry underwent changes unlike any since the advent of the industry. Most notably, Tokyopop closed its offices in the U.S. As one of the pioneering manga-only publishers, its end rocked the industry. Its closing followed announcements that the senior editor had been laid off, which was received with much dismay. After such a major act, its closing was not unexpected, but happened rather suddenly, about 2-3 weeks after press releases had been issued.

Viz continues to dominate the manga bestseller charts, although Tokyopop still owns licenses to several titles on the bestseller lists. Yen Press has stepped up as the second dominant manga publisher, after building a strong base of licenses, notably winning the bid war for *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya*. More importantly, Yen Press made a series of smart choices in distribution and title selection that enabled them to gain a head start before the economy went bad.

The graphic novels and comics market has improved since the beginning of the downturn, but the landscape is still changing. One important change for the general book market is the increase in sales of digital titles. While sales in digital titles for graphic

novels has increased, the proportion of sales of paper titles of graphic novels to digital sales is smaller than that of the overall book market.

Manga's Impact

Manga serves as a prime example of the rise and transformation of a format in today's bookselling industry. During this evolution, young adult fantasy, especially that marketed to young women, proved to be a genre that gained enormous popularity. As in the case of manga, the market soon became saturated with titles seeking to capture the same demographic. As some manga industry employees speculated, some of the target demographic may have moved towards young adult fantasy at this time. But why a move from graphical works to non-graphical? Was the move that reshaped manga in the U.S. as books rather than comics (Brienza, 2009a) also responsible for allowing the target demographic to easily move to prose rather than graphic novels? Perhaps more likely is that the two formats dealt with the same subject matter.

But rather than the vigilant policing given to graphical fiction, non-graphical fiction is given more leeway in terms of what is allowed to be available on bookstore shelves. As a result, non-graphical fiction can portray more mature subject matter than graphical works. As the target demographic for shoujo manga grows older, their tastes also mature. The precedents set by the bookselling model for manga mean that the way in which booksellers think about manga, as something to carefully police with restrictions, means that more mature content in the manga section will be made more unavailable to shoppers in order to keep mature titles away from younger readers. Thanks to the precedents and practices set in past years, publishers may shy away from licensing more mature titles. Meanwhile, the target demographic also expects to find

more mature content in the young adult section, rather than the manga section, and moves away from manga. Those who want more mature content but who do not want to move away from manga may move from the bookstore to the Internet to find new manga. As more fans become aware of scanslations by word of mouth, more are able to find and download titles that satisfy them.

Manga serves to illustrate media on the cusp of a new era. This case exemplifies the changes that print media and bookselling have had to undergo within the past decade. Manga was a format imported into the U.S. professionally and through fan activity. Scanslations quickly underwent a process of digitization after technology became more available to non-professionals. Publishers, on the other hand, took a while longer to make the transition into digital media, because of questions of copyright licensing in different media and the importance of digital rights management. Seeking licenses and protective technology took a while to be established, so digital manga lagged behind e-books by a few years. The release of manga titles as e-books required a good amount of coordination between Japanese and American publishers, and some retroactive licensing agreements. After manga publishers began digitizing their titles, each publisher was still experimenting with the best way to distribute their own title. Each publisher came up with their own proprietary standard to ensure the protection of their own property. Some publishers created a time-sensitive model where buyers would only have access to a purchased title for a limited amount of time. After that, the title would no longer be available to them. This model proved to be extremely unpopular with many readers and critics. Many other publishers adopted a model similar to the ones used by mainstream e-book providers, where a title would be licensed for use on at least one specific device,

and would need to be repurchased if it is moved to other devices beyond the purchased licenses.

In the meantime, scanslations are becoming more well-known and widespread among fans. Because scanslators are able to release titles without delay, new titles become available through scanslation much more quickly than publishers are able to release them, let alone obtain the license for them. Thus, while publishers have the desired effect of official licensing and compensation, scanslations develop a reputation for being more reliable in terms of providing titles that fans are interested in reading.

The increase in e-manga as a provider of manga titles has come at the same time as the collapse of one of manga's biggest advocates in bookselling—the Borders Group. Although its decline was gradual, the end, when the terms of its bankruptcy agreement fell through, was dramatic. Rather than the chain being picked up by another corporation and continued, the company was forced to liquidate and close completely. Because Borders is one of the places where manga was originally made available to the wider public, it pioneered the manga selling model in the United States, and set the precedent for how it would be sold. Its dissolution marks in part the changes booksellers are undergoing to keep up with new models of commerce. Instead of booksellers acting as purveyors of physical goods, they must in part become specialists in digitized content.

As digitization of more media becomes easier and more cost-effective, this trend has pervaded all the media industries. One interesting feature for booksellers is the tactile experience of books that digitization cannot convey. Other media, such as film and television, offer very similar experiences to viewers on being digitized. Home entertainment technology and tablet computers, etc., have even stepped up to better

recreate the experience of watching a movie in a theater or watching a show on television. Books, on the other hand, offer a range of sensual experiences that e-books cannot convey. While e-book readers attempt to recreate the physical presence of a book in hand, it has not been enough to eliminate the paper book. The manga fans I interviewed all professed a preference for the paper books over scanslations. In part, they preferred the physical presence of the book in their hands, and in part, they wished their favorite titles to be legitimized through print. Additionally, there is an element of collectorship where a fan takes pleasure in acquiring copies of a favorite title and can complete his or her collection.

With the increase in models of bookselling involving digitized books comes a need for new models of distribution. In previous years, thanks to the high-risk nature of media, the element that could be controlled the most by corporations is a text's distribution. Determining where and when a media product would be available, and to whom, was one of the few ways media producers could dictate how a text was consumed. By releasing a text into progressively cheaper and less exclusive windows, the producers ensured that early consumers would pay the most, and that later consumers would pay what they were willing. For instance, new releases of books were produced in hardcover, and only later were reprinted as cheaper paperbacks. Other means of controlling distribution pertained to physical space rather than time. By releasing something in specific stores, in specific locations, in specific displays, publishers are able to control the visibility of a title.

Windowing is one way that publishers and other media companies control distribution. Its success depends on generating scarcity in some areas and availability in

others. Peer-generated distribution, whether scanslation or another type of file sharing, disrupts the careful plans of media companies by making availability more widespread. While peer distribution allows a wider audience of people to read a text, and thus generates a wider audience, the goal of windowing and other controlled distribution is to generate increasing numbers of paying market customers. This brings a progressively larger audience spending increasing individual costs for media consumption.

Peer distribution provides a media text in parallel with windows of decreasing cost. Instead of allowing the audience to increase as the access fee goes down, the audience increases without paying the access fee, sometimes at a time when the access fee is higher (close to the theatrical release date of a movie, for instance).

Media companies have responded by collapsing the windows between releases. For instance, a movie's DVD release may happen at the same time as its release to pay-per-view. In a case specific to manga, recall the discussion in Chapter 5 of *Rin-Ne's* simultaneous release in magazines in Japan and on the VizMedia web site in the United States. Collapsing the windows in this instance created availability, or a lack of scarcity. Since scanslations operate to fill the void of scarcity, this was an attempt on the publisher's part to curtail scanslations before they happened.

New Models of Distribution

Similar attempts have been made to release books at the exact same time in locations all over the world. The popularity of the *Harry Potter* series, for example, means that the publishers have the capability to produce copies for international simultaneous release. Manga, being a smaller market, have fewer resources to collapse windows in this way. Thus, while scarcity is purposefully produced for some book titles,

for manga scarcity works against it because of the work of scanslators to fill that lack. Additionally, the choices needing to be made by publishers in terms of what titles to license (as discussed in Chapter 2) mean that for manga there will be a scarcity regardless of how much the windows between releases are collapsed. From the point of view of fans, there will always be titles that will be unavailable in English *unless* fans work to translate them.

The distribution model for manga has been further challenged by the introduction of e-books to the general bookselling market. Although manga publishers had decided to start offering titles as e-books, it took a long time to arrange for the licensing rights for existing titles with Japanese publishers. Because of this, the American manga publishers released e-manga years after e-books became widespread and mainstream. As such, scanslations served to fill the lack of e-manga, without *directly* reproducing paper manga. After manga publishers began to release e-manga, the threat of scanslations to their market grew even more acute.

Whereas in the beginning, scanslations could function as online promotional materials, at no cost to the publishers, the increasing availability of paper manga and advent of e-manga both meant that it became even more important to publishers to be able to control manga's promotion and distribution. The early days of U.S. manga were marked by a scarcity that marked manga as something with only cult status. With the cooperation of the Borders Group and other factors, manga was able to transcend this status and achieve widespread niche availability. Given that manga's success was based on carefully controlling its availability, after manga became more widespread, the model still was to manage the balance between scarcity and the ability of readers to access

manga titles. Since scanslation increases availability beyond the control of manga publishers, it is apparent that scanslation would disrupt any careful plans that the publishers have in terms of how to promote titles or get them to their target market.

This is the crux of the problem that manga publishers and scanslators have had to negotiate. An audience of readers and a market of readers are not the same group of people. While they overlap, the group that was far more important to Tokyopop in terms of helping keep Tokyopop afloat was the market of readers. This group, in part constructed by Tokyopop through its decisions about which licenses to pursue, was the group of people who would actually pay for access to licensed titles. Contrast this with the audience of readers, who were in part constructed by Tokyopop and partly constructed through their reading activities.

While the two groups overlap—indeed, the market is within the larger audience—the market is the group who directly contributes to Tokyopop's efforts. As such, they had to focus their own efforts on them. Scanslations benefit and expand the reading audience, but not necessarily expand the paying market. Only probably do they do this. In terms of control over the market, Tokyopop can have direct influence over the paper manga and e-manga they sell. Additionally, they get feedback about how many people are buying what titles. Tokyopop cannot have direct influence over what scanslations assist in their future and present paying market, but they can control and monitor titles that are only available through their own channels.

Copyright works to enable Tokyopop to maintain control over their paying market in the best way they can—through manipulating channels of flow and monitoring sales. This specifically, and not sales exclusively, is what is challenged by scanslations. The

unbridled distribution of manga titles helps expand the reading audience, but allows no control over the paying market on the part of Tokyopop.

In turn, booksellers act as gatekeepers to the public and have great influence over what the market can purchase, and what the reading audience can access in paper form. Their requirements of what is salable and what should be stocked in a brick-and-mortar store help shape both the market and the reading audience. So not only publishers and intellectual property holders determine which way a text will go. They are gatekeepers as well, but not the only ones in the bookselling system. Booksellers, both online and off, help determine the way in which books are presented and how, and which are omitted. They also help construct the audience browsing for manga through these choices. In all, the manga market and audience are shaped and directed by a series of gatekeepers.

At the same time, as is the nature of media industries, the gatekeepers never have complete control over the way a text is received. To a certain extent, booksellers and publishers must expect to be subject to the market's whims. Because of this, they must adapt to audience trends or risk unrecoverable failure. In the instance of Tokyopop's target market, young women, the employees theorized that many of them had moved on, away from manga, probably towards young adult fiction. In part, this could be due to the stringent bookselling requirements required of publishers in order to promote their titles. As their target market matured, booksellers' requirements about ratings and content stayed the same, which meant that more mature content was limited to other sections of the store.

Manga serves as a prime example of the rise and transformation of a format in the book market, and more broadly as a form of media. Young adult fantasy also proved to

be a genre that “sticks,” now with a saturated market. Perhaps the female demographic moved on to this genre. But why is a move to non-graphical books necessary? One reason is that non-graphical books are not patrolled by bookstores to the same extent as graphical works. Thanks to the bookselling model that simply alphabetizes titles rather than sorting them by age group, mature subject matter cannot be physically separated from younger material. Because of this, the whole mass of manga is patrolled for suitability, and thus restricted in terms of being too mature to show up in the bookstores. Conversely, non-graphical fiction is separated into children’s, young adult, and adult fiction, sometimes with subdivisions in between for elementary students, tweens and teens. Moreover, the book formats tend to be different enough—in terms of illustrations, length, etc.—that a quick flip-through demonstrates features that are typical of each. All of these age groups are constructed to market books, yes, but it provides some kind of loose guide for readers wishing to find age-oriented materials.

There are similar instances in American history of a genre or format proving to be successful in the U.S. after becoming successful in its origin country. Often, the initial entry into the country is through underground channels, which are then tapped by mainstream channels and adapted for the local audience. Those that retain the trappings of having been imported tend to stay within a more subcultural niche. Others that adapt seamlessly practically offer no clues that they were imported. Manga is unique in that it has kept the features that make it unique as a format, but tends to be more mainstream in terms of ability to acquire. The symbiotic nature of translators and publishers, however, was never a perfect relationship thanks to conflicting goals and motives.

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