PROGENITOR OR MERE PREDECESSOR: A STUDY OF *UKIYO-E*'S PLACE IN THE

DEVELOPMENT OF MODERN *MANGA* THROUGH THE WORKS OF RUMIKO

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A THESIS IN
Art History

Presented to the Faculty of the University
of Missouri-Kansas City in partial fulfillment of
The requirements for the degree

MASTER OF ARTS

by
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B.A., Pomona College, 2006

Kansas City, Missouri
2014

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ABSTRACT

In their effors to understand the history of *manga*, or Japanese comics, scholars have struggled determining the timeline of this art form. While some historians begin their narrative as far back as the twelfth century with examples of art that might be classified as "pre-*manga*," some academics choose to cite the start point *manga*'s timeline in the nineteenth century with the first usage of the term "*manga*." Others researchers are even more conservative, beginning their scope of *manga*'s history with the techniques developed during the mid-twentieth century which yield artwork recognizable to today's aesthetics. The study of *manga* is still in an embryonic state, and the scope of this genre of art is vast; these two factors create a challenge in establishing a timeline for *manga*'s history.

Although it would be convenient to consider the history of Japanese illustrative art as a timeline that leads directly to modern *manga*, the myriad of genres and styles complicate the researcher's ability to make claims about the pertinence of any specific point on that timeline to the development of *manga* as it is known today. The most poignant example of this is *ukiyo-e*, or nineteenth-century Japanese woodblock print art. Speaking of *manga* as a whole, it is impossible to reconcile the exact role of *ukiyo-e* as a parent (or if not father,

perhaps an uncle of sorts) to today's *manga*. At present, the state of the scholarly literature

on this remains noncommittal, refusing to admit fully or deny completely whether or not

manga owes its history to the woodblock print art of nineteenth-century Edo.

      The objective of this research is to open the discussion about the roles the *ukiyo-e*

played in the development of modern *manga*. This may be achieved through the study of the

works of one *mangaka*, or artist-author of *manga*, Rumiko Takahashi (1957–). Through

studying Takahashi's work, one may recognize the ways in which *ukiyo-e* was essential to

manga's development. There are elements of Takahashi's work that could not exist if it were

not for the influence and developments that source from nineteenth-century woodblock

prints. Through the microscope of the work of one prolific and popular *mangaka*, it is

possible to initiate a discussion of *ukiyo-e*'s participation in *manga*'s timeline. And perhaps

art historians may broaden the acceptance of these concepts to apply to *manga* as a whole.

APPROVAL PAGE

The faculty listed below, appointed by the Dean of the College of Arts and Science, have examined a thesis titled "Progenitor or Mere Predecessor: A Study of *Ukiyo-e*'s Place in the Development of Modern *Manga* Through the Works of Rumiko Takahashi" presented by candidate for the Master of Arts degree, and certify that in their opinion it is worthy of acceptance.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my mother, Laura Kemper Fields, without whom I would never have completed the work. Her love of art and depth of knowledge has always been and will always be an inspiration to me. She pushed me to meet my deadlines, she helped me to find motivation, and she never failed to encourage me to always move forward.

I wish to thank my thesis advisor, Frances Connelly, Ph.D., thesis committee members Rochelle Ziskin, Ph.D. and Burton Dunbar, Ph.D., and all the other professors at the University of Missouri-Kansas City under whom I was so fortunate to study at the University of Missouri – Kansas City.

I would like to give special thanks to undergraduate advisor Lynne Miyake, Ph.D., Pomona College, for teaching me the scholarly value of *manga*, not just as an aesthetic enjoyment and a literary amusement but as beloved topic worthy of study.

I also want to thank my father, Michael D. Fields, for his support and (often brutal, but always immensely helpful) editing assistance. I could ask for no greater inspiration than that which I received throughout my life from my two parents whose love of art instilled within me both my appreciation of art and my ability to speak critically about it.

Very special thanks to my wonderful husband, Caleb, for his love and encouragement. And to my darling twin daughters Evelyn and Mildred, who inspire and make their mother proud every day.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Contemporary interest in *manga* (漫画), or Japanese comics, has led art historians to explore the development of this genre of sequentially illustrated narratives to its origins in earlier art forms. Too often, young *manga* enthusiasts regard *manga* as wholly a product of the modern era, as if it sprang like the Greek goddess Athena from the head of her father Zeus, fully mature and in its present form. Even the most cursory explorations of earlier *manga* publications reveal that *manga* today is an art form developed from decades, if not centuries, of Japanese artistic traditions. *Manga* is a modern art form, but it also draws upon Japan's traditions of narrative illustrations.

The origins of modern *manga* have been traced to various landmark examples along the timeline of Japanese art history. No scholar will equivocate with the identification of Osamu Tezuka (手塚•治虫) (1928 – 1989), known as *manga no kami-sama* (漫画の神様), or the "god of comics."[1] He is the *mangaka*[2], or artist/author of *manga*, responsible for revolutionizing *manga* in the post-World War II era into the modern form that appears today. [Image 1] The *manga*[3] that was published during the first half of the twentieth century lacks the inclusion of cinematic techniques that Tezuka adopted in his art, techniques that are

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[1] Fred Patten, *Watching Anime, Reading Manga: 25 Years of Essays and Reviews* (Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press, 2004), p. 198.

[2] The term *mangaka* may be translated to mean artist/author of *manga*, or Japanese comics. Unlike American comics which employ an assembly line system of staff that includes a separate writer, penciller, inker, colorist, letterer, etc., Japanese *manga* are created by a single *mangaka* who both writes and illustrates the sequential narrative. The identity of the *mangaka* is crucial to work because the art and story are the conception of a single, unified creator. Although the textual element of *manga* will not be discussed in this research, it is important to realize that the *mangaka* is an artist who is working from his or her own invention rather than reinterpreting the vision of a separate author.

[3] The reader will note that the term *manga*, as a Japanese word, does not have a different form for singular or plural (much like the English nouns "fish" or "deer"). Japanese words do not pluralize, therefore it is correct to write "a manga" (singular) and to write "many manga" (plural). All Japanese nouns function in this way, and the reader will note this at several occasions throughout the work.

considered essential to the way that modern *manga* is read. Because of this, some scholars

choose to begin *manga*'s timeline with Osamu Tezuka, dismissing early twentieth-century

manga as propaganda of the militaristic Japanese government of that epoch. Unfortunately,

to do this is to ignore the wealth of Japanese narrative artistic traditions that existed long

before *manga* was established as a popular art form. One cannot begin *manga*'s history with

the revolution of the art form that created "modern *manga*" because Tezuka reinvented

manga; he did not invent *manga*.

To another extreme, the earliest starting point for the development of *manga* dates

back to the Heian period[4] (794-1185) with the narrative *emakimono* (絵巻物), or illustrated

scrolls. [Image 2] The theory centers on the idea that the development of modern *manga* is

the conclusion of hundreds of years of Japanese art history. These *manga* scholars, such as

Frederik Schodt and Brigitte Koyama-Richard, assert that Japanese art history builds towards

the development of the contemporary form of Japanese illustrated narrative: modern *manga*.

If *manga* can trace its history back to the early examples of Japanese art--those scrolls and

screen paintings that function to tell a story through a series of sequential images using the

distinct abstract language inherent to cartooning--then the Japanese art from the Heian period

up to the modern *manga* created today can be seen as points on the unbroken timeline of the

manga's history. This approach is more inclusive of past artistic influences upon modern

manga's evolution; however, this slant tends to overemphasize the participation of Japanese

art history and underplay the necessary influences of foreign elements that were imported

from Western popular culture during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

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[4] The Heian era, (平安時代) is the period from 794 to 1185 at which time the capital city was Heian-kyō,
modern day Kyōto. During this era, Japanese culture flourished under the imperial court, and the Heian jidai is
known for art, particularly literature and poetry, that defined this Classical period of Japanese history.

The question is really not "is *ukiyo-e* (浮世絵) is a predecessor of *manga*?" but rather "is *ukiyo-e* is a true progenitor of *manga*?". To begin this discussion, one must start from the approach that evolution of modern *manga* is the conclusion of a timeline of Japanese art that begins with the Heian period *emakimono* and arrives at contemporary Japanese comic books. In this respect, the woodblock prints of the Tokugawa era[5] (1600-1868) and into the twentieth-century are a distinct point of this evolutionary progress through which the Japanese illustrated narrative passed, picking up stylistic form and technique in the adolescence of its fruition. From this method, one may explore *manga*'s history with acknowledgement that this modern art form is a response to the art that preceded it. *Manga* is a modern art form, but *manga* developed with the influence of stylistic elements imported from the West and does not owe its evolution solely to an ancient Japanese process or style. The unique art form of *manga* sources a Japanese past inclusive of earlier Japanese illustrated narratives, however, including pre-modern art. The synthesis of *manga*'s history in its modern form can be seen through the study of *manga* alongside the Japanese art that influenced and preceded it.

State of Fields of Study; Literary Review

In the study of *manga*'s development, over the last several decades, nearly all art historians recognize that the sequentially illustrated narratives of today's Japanese comic books are the descendants of centuries of Japanese art. Although *manga* is certainly a genre of contemporary art, firmly rooted in the culture of today, it could not exist without Japan's vast artistic traditions that seem to share an inherent need to tell a story through pictures.

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[5] The Tokugawa era (徳川時代), or Edo period (江戸時代), was established in 1600 C.E. by Shōgun Tokugawa Ieyasu (徳川•家康) and continued until the 1868 Meiji restoration (明治維新). This period is commonly referred to by either name: the name Tokugawa denoting the ruling shōgunal family or Edo which signifies the capital during that era.

Recently, Masako Watanabe, senior research associate of the Department of Asian Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, organized an exhibition, "Storytelling in Japanese Art," which highlighted the narrative function of Japanese art through objects dating from the twelfth to the nineteenth-century, including illustrated books, folding screens, hanging scrolls, and other such formats. Watanabe emphasizes the role of the artwork to tell a story, a tradition that is as much a part of contemporary *manga* as with early Japanese art. [Image 3] In her essay, "The Art of Japanese Storytelling," Watanabe underlines the participation of this historical convention in modern Japanese works. She writes, "Japan is a land of fascinating tales, with a long and rich tradition of pairing narrative texts with elaborate illustrations—a tradition that continues to this day with *manga* and other forms of animation and graphic art."[6] The show and catalog label *manga* as an extension of practice, seen in those early examples of Japanese narrative art, of illustrating a story for the viewer to experience as art as well to read as literature. Masako Watanabe is one of very few art historians who independently bring up *manga* in their definition of Japanese art from the twelfth through nineteenth centuries;[7] however, Watanabe's reasons for repeatedly mentioning *manga* in her show has more to do with an attempt to peak the interest of a young American audience than to present a scholarly argument about the evolution of Japanese art into the popular form of *manga* and *anime*.

A discussion of *manga* as a descendant of earlier forms of Japanese art requires an adequate understanding of Japanese woodblock print art. Tadashi Kobayashi provides a clear definition of *ukiyo-e* in his book, *Ukiyo-e: An Introduction to Japanese Woodblock*

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[6] Masako Watanabe, "The Art of Japanese Storytelling," *Storytelling in Japanese Art* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), p. 3

[7] Many *manga* scholars cite reference to *ukiyo-e*, but discussion of woodblock prints does not necessitate references to *manga* by way of definition, as it does the other way.

Prints. Kobayashi specifies that *ukiyo-e* was only one of many forms of pictorial art of the

Tokugawa era. Kobayashi highlights *ukiyo-e* as the art of the urban middle class of Edo, as a

distinct genre of Japanese art from such styles as *yamato-e*, *bunjin-ga*, *shasei-ga*, or *yōfū-ga*.[8]

Kobayashi identifies illustrated books from Edo as the progenitors of *ukiyo-e*. Early

illustrated books called *e-iribon*, literally "books with inserted pictures," were published

using woodblock prints and flourished during the seventeenth century. Unlike the *ukiyo-e*

artists who followed, the anonymous townsmen artists responsible for these illustrations did

not sign their works.[9] Much of Kobayashi's research focuses on tracing the development of

styles, techniques and genres within the broad spectrum of works that fall under the category

of art known as *ukiyo-e*. He uses the work of several specific artists to present the trends

found in *ukiyo-e* as representative of the artistic ideals of Edo merchant class. Kobayashi

underlines that this type of woodblock print art was distinctive of a very specific time and

place in Japanese art history.

   But the study of Japanese woodblock prints is not always clearly delineated. In her

essay, "From Shadow to Substance: Redefining Ukiyo-e," Sandy Kita, from the University of

Maryland argues that the broad term *ukiyo-e* actually encompasses several different groups of

woodblock print art that overlap, built on the basis of definition. Kita identifies the challenge

of studying *ukiyo-e* through these numerous definitions of the term: as a school of art, genre

of art or style of art.[10] Each of these three approaches to understanding *ukiyo-e* provides a

valid method of study with separate criteria for constituting the work included under a

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[8] Tadashi Kobayashi, *Ukiyo-e: An Introduction to Japanese Woodblock Prints*. Mark A Harbison, tr. (Tokyo, New York, and London: Kodansha International, 1997), p. 65.
[9] Kobayashi, pp. 69-70.
[10] Sandy Kita, "From Shadow to Substance: Redefining Ukiyo-e." *The Floating World of Ukiyo-e: Shadows, Dreams, and Substance*. Newsom, Iris, ed. (New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2001), p. 27.

broadly used term.[11] As Kita narrows her definition of *ukiyo-e*, she identifies that the

unifying feature of all artwork labeled under this term is that they are the woodblock prints of

a specific time and place, namely Tokugawa era Edo (seventeenth through nineteenth

centuries). She points to the feudal shōgunal rule and social structure of the merchant class

as essential to the form, style and content of the woodblock print art.[12] Kita's redefinition of

ukiyo-e ultimately finds its crux in the portrayal of the very specific world of the artist. She

writes, "we might define *ukiyo* as a here and now perceived via the physical senses… an art

in which artists rely on what they can see for themselves with their own two eyes."[13] The

redefinition of *ukiyo-e*, according to Sandy Kita, might be condensed into an understanding

that *ukiyo-e* is fundamentally the woodblock prints by artists working in Edo during the

feudal rule of the Tokugawa shōgunate, creating images that expressed the humor and

realism of the urban middle class.

Although the term *manga* originated in the nineteenth-century with the famous

Hokusai Manga (北斎漫画), [Image 4] a collection of sketches by the *ukiyo-e* artist

Katsushika Hokusai[14] (1760-1849), few art historians mention modern *manga* in their studies

of Edo period woodblock prints. Adam Kern's *Manga from the Floating World: Comicbook

Culture and the Kibyōshi of Edo Japan* brings together the discussion of Tokugawa era print

art and the comic book culture of contemporary Japan in the same narrative.[15] Kern

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[11] For the purpose of this thesis, Kita's broad definition of *ukiyo-e* will be accepted. Rather than separating out
"true *ukiyo-e*" from other examples of Japanese woodblock print from Tokugawa era Edo, this paper will use
ukiyo-e as a general term for Japanese woodblock prints.
[12] Kita, pp. 28-9.
[13] Kita, p. 60.
[14] Katsushika Hokusai (葛飾•北斎) (1760-1849) is one of the internationally best-known *ukiyo-e* artists. He is
most famous for his *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* (富嶽三十六景) (c. 1831) and is credited for coining the
term *manga* with his *Hokusai Manga* (北斎漫画), which comprise thousands of printed sketches in fifteen
volumes, published between 1814 and 1878.
[15] Adam L. Kern, *Manga from the Floating World: Comicbook Culture and the Kibyōshi of Edo Japan*
(Cambridge, MA, and London: Harvard University Press, 2006).

discusses the idea that modern *manga* developed from earlier art forms, but he asserts that

studies of *manga* are insufficient to draw significant conclusions. Part of this difficulty, Kern

identifies, is the expansiveness of the field of *manga*, which encompasses a variety of genres.

When speaking of *all manga*, comparisons that may be drawn between one example of

manga to Edo period woodblock printing might be contradicted by the features of the style of

another *manga*. Kern's work focuses on the woodblock printed publications called

kibyōshi,[16] a genre of illustrated fiction that was widely read in the late eighteenth-century

Edo culture. He calls *kibyōshi* the "*manga* from the floating world." He concludes that the

connection between Edo era *manga* and contemporary *manga*, "The modern *manga* is too

broad a phenomenon, and its study still too embryonic, for meaningful comparisons [to

earlier Japanese art forms] to be made at the present juncture."[17] Kern is unwilling to extend

his discussions of *manga* from the Tokugawa definitions of sketches published in woodblock

prints into today's published Japanese comics.

The foremost authority on *manga* is Frederik Schodt. His book, *Manga! Manga! The

World of Japanese Comics*, although twenty-five years old, remains the quintessential source

on *manga*'s form, function and history. In *Manga! Manga!*, Schodt explores multiple aspects

of the art form, including *manga*'s identity as a distinctly Japanese entity. He notes that, of

all the nations of the world, Japan alone has developed a "comics phenomenon [of this]

magnitude," and attributes it to the Japanese language system, which incorporates ideograms

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[16] *Kibyōshi* (黄表紙) refers to a popular genre of illustrated fiction that flourished during late eighteenth-century Edo culture. *Kibyōshi* was published by means of woodblock printing, and it is frequently categorized as a subcategory of *ukiyo-e* because it too is inextricably connected to the "floating world" of the urban merchant class of Tokugawa period Edo. The term itself is drawn from the yellow covers common to *kibyōshi* publications.
[17] Kern, p. 133.

as well as phonetic syllables, and Japanese visual and literary culture.[18] Schodt goes on to

cite early works of Japanese art history as the basis for *manga*'s evolution in contemporary

art, building a timeline for *manga* that begins in early Japanese writing and illustration and

has evolved into the *manga* of today. Schodt's self-proclaimed sequel, *Dreamland Japan:*

Writings on Modern Manga, published ten years later, focuses on the *manga* industry from

1980 to 1996, but it is Schodt's *Manga! Manga!* that remains the best "comprehensive

introduction to the *manga* field in Japan," largely due to its devotion to a historical overview

of *manga*'s roots in earlier Japanese art.[19]

Another *manga* scholar, Paul Gravett, author of *Manga: Sixty Years of Japanese*

Comics, does not begin his timeline of the history of *manga* until 1945 when *Manga*, the first

post-war cartoon magazine, resumed publication.[20] Gravett acknowledges the long tradition

of Japanese narrative art with credit to comics critic Fusanosuke Natsume's identification of

"pre-*manga*," which includes early narrative art from the twelfth-century.[21] Japanese

emakimono, or illustrated scrolls, such as the twelfth-century *Chōjūgiga*, or "Animal

Scrolls," by Bishop Toba Sojo[22] (1053-1140) are Natsume's best example of pre-*manga*;

however, these works were intended for an elite audience, and hence are not a part of the

popular culture that seems essential to the function of *manga*. [Image 2] Gravett puts

stronger emphasis on *ukiyo-e* as a progenitor of *manga* because its printed nature made it

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[18] Frederik L. Schodt, *Manga! Manga! The World of Japanese Comics* (Tokyo, New York, and San Francisco: Kodansha International, 1986), p. 25.

[19] Frederik L., Schodt, *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga* (Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press, 1996), p. 12.

[20] Paul Gravett, *Manga: Sixty Years of Japanese Comics* (London: Laurence King Publishing, 2004), pp. 6-7.

[21] Gravett, p. 18.

[22] Bishop Toba Sojo (鳥羽•僧正) (1053-1140) was a Buddhist monk of the Tendai Sect. His *Chōjūgiga* (鳥獣戯画, also written as *Chōjūjinbutsugiga*, 鳥獣人物戯画) features humorous images of foxes, frogs, rabbits and monkeys, adorned in priests' vestments, and the narrative presents a satirical caricature of the religious hierarchy of the time.

more affordable and accessible to the public, thus "probably closer in spirit to *manga*."[23] However, Gravett's analysis of the development of *manga* hinges on his focus that *manga*, while being distinctly Japanese, owes its emergence to the influx of Western cartoons, caricatures, newspaper strips and comics that came with the opening of Japan to the West with the Meiji period[24] and the United States occupation of Japan (1945-1952) after the Second World War.[25] Gravett declares, "*Manga* grew out of an amalgam of East meets West, old meets new; or as another nineteenth-century modernization slogan put it, it was a matter of *wakon yōsai*—'Japanese spirit, Western leaning'."[26] However, the reader must consider the time at which Gravett writes. At a time when *manga* was first gaining acknowledgement as an art form worthy of scholarly attention, Gravett's *Manga: Sixty Years of Japanese Comics* was attempting to conquer negative preconceptions about the art form. The tone of Gravett's opus reads as an aggressive defense for *manga* against Western prejudices against this genre of art. Gravett writes, "Often misrepresented as little more than 'tits and tentacles', *manga* were, and still are, open to being doubly damned in the West for being Japanese, and for being comics."[27] To Gravett, *manga* is a part of a very specific time and place; *manga* is post-WWII, post-American Occupation, modern Japanese comics. Although Gravett does not and cannot dismiss the participation of earlier Japanese narrative illustrations in the evolution of *manga*, he hesitates to credit nineteenth-century woodblock

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[23] Gravett, pp. 19-20.
[24] The Meiji revolution of 1868 marked the end of the Edo era (1600-1868) in which the feudal system of the Tokugawa shōgunate maintained two and a half centuries of peace in Japan, allowing for the flourish of the merchant class in urban areas, such as the shōgun's capital in Edo. During this time, the emperor still continued to exist in the imperial capital of Kyoto, but the emperor had no governmental power during this epoch. The Meiji restoration period reunited Japan under the power of the emperor and opened the country to trade with Western nations, such as Europe and the United States of America.
[25] The United States occupied Japan from 1945 until 1952 after Japan's surrender to the Allied Forces after World War II.
[26] Gravett, p. 18.
[27] Gravett, p. 8.

printing as a parent art form of *manga*. Gravett instead concentrates on *manga*'s growth and development in the very recent history of the second half of the twentieth-century up to present day.

Gravett is by no means alone in his focus on *manga* as an art form that is, in essence, a product of modern popular culture. Even Frederik Schodt would not deny the role of popular culture, consumerism and even commuter culture in the proliferation of *manga* and its development.[28] However, formalist study of *manga* clearly evidences nineteenth-century Japanese print culture with the appearance of contemporary Japanese comics. In his introduction to *Manga Design*, Julius Wiedemann synopsizes the definition of *manga* in a single page, highlighting the typical appearance of modern *manga* as black and white anthologized series of illustrated narratives.[29] He notes also that *manga* have higher publication numbers and greater influential impact than the comic book traditions of any other country in the world, a trend inherited from the rise in literacy rating in Japan that began in during the Tokugawa period and has continued since that Japan has the highest literacy rate in the world. Wiedemann makes note of wide variety of *manga* genres and the extensive availability of *manga* to the consumer public of Japan.

Both contemporary *manga* and nineteenth-century *ukiyo-e* share a reliance on popular culture and consumerism. Although these art forms can be appreciated as beautiful works on a purely aesthetic level, they are, and were historically, primarily products that are marketed to the population for literary and artistic consumption, often to be discarded once consumed. In 2005, artist and theorist Takashi Murakami presented his show, *Little Boy: The Arts of Japan's Exploding Subculture*, as a presentation of *manga-* and *anime*-style art that mirrors

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[28] Schodt, *Manga! Manga!*, pp. 25-7.
[29] Julius Wiedemann, "Introduction." *Manga Design*. Amano Masanao, ed. Köln, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Paris & Tokyo: Tascen, 2004, p. ii.

Japan's cultural identity. In his essay "Superflat Trilogy: Greetings, You Are Alive," Takashi Murakami asserts his belief that the "true nature of art in Japan" is firmly rooted in Japanese art history yet equally centers on the popular culture of the present day.[30] Murakami sees Japanese art as a synthesis of tradition and pop culture. Murakami's Superflat thesis states that the absence of illusionistic space, the use of planar surfaces, and the stylized features inherent to Japanese art are part of a long lineage that connects *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints to early modern *Nihonga* painting and postwar *manga* and *anime*.[31] He states that these elements characterize the "superflat" style that is integral to Japanese art. Murakami relates the work of *mangaka* and Japanese Neo Pop artists, such as Yoshitomo Nara and Chiho Aoshima, to earlier Japanese artistic traditions through his concept of "superflat."

Takahashi Murakami's writings mark a readiness in the field of *manga* studies for further discussion of the specific ways in which modern *manga* echoes its origins in Japanese art of the past. Although Kern's arguments of the embryonic nature of scholarly research on *manga* hold water, it is unfair to dismiss attempts to relate contemporary Japanese comics to their origins in the history of Japanese narrative illustrations. From the foundation of *manga* scholars such as Schodt, Gravett, Kern, Wiedemann and Murakami, the stage is set for a discussion to answer the question of whether or not *ukiyo-e* is a predecessor and progenitor of modern *manga*. The element that has prevented this topic until now is a good vehicle by which to discuss the question. This thesis will take the approach of studying the topic through the work of a single *manga* artist, or *mangaka*, by which to better investigate the influence of nineteenth-century woodblock print traditions on her work. Through specific

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[30] Takashi Murakami, *Little Boy: The Arts of Japan's Exploding Subculture* (New York: Japan Society, Inc., 2005), p. 151.
[31] Murakami, p. 244.

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study of *ukiyo-e*'s role in one artist/author's *manga*, one can better see the relationship of woodblock printing to modern *manga* as a whole.

Contribution to Field

The state of the field on *manga* research no longer requires art historians to justify *manga* as legitimate art as was the case at the beginning of the 21st-century. Although *manga* is still dismissed by many scholars as merely a phenomenon of popular culture, a defense of *manga* as art is not necessary as one delves into theoretical or stylistic aspects of this genre. Unfortunately, although more secondary sources are published that discuss *manga* as an art form, few scholars are able to agree upon the question of whether or not, or to what extent, the Edo period's artistic traditions of printed illustrations, known as *ukiyo-e*, have shaped modern *manga*.

The current published research on *manga* is ill-equipped to discuss a direct relationship between modern *manga* and Tokugawa era woodblock print art because of the approaches taken to art historical research on *manga*. Of the published works on *manga*, particularly those available internationally, the bulk of material focuses on pop culture and fan literature or how-to guides for aspiring young artists who wish to join their favorite *mangaka* as the latest and greatest new talent on the Japanese comics scene. In the limited art historical research on *manga*, most scholars approach the topic with a broad scope, attempting to generalize *manga* as a single and cohesive genre. This approach makes it impossible to discuss the similarities in style, content and origin between *manga* and *ukiyo-e* because of the vastness and the diversity of design and of subject matter in the myriads of genres that comprise modern Japanese comics. It is with this in mind that a study of a single

mangaka's work lends itself better to the study of the relationship between modern *manga* and earlier woodblock print art.

This thesis takes a different approach to the discussion of the relationship between earlier woodblock prints and modern Japanese comics as it orients its perspective through the work of one contemporary *mangaka*, Rumiko Takahashi[32]. By focusing on Takahashi's work, rather than attempting to study all of *manga* as a homogenous whole, the influence of Japanese woodblock print art on modern *manga* can be discussed without distraction of *manga*'s diversity of style and genre.

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[32] Rumiko Takahashi (高橋•留美子) was born on 10 October 1957, Niigata, Japan. Her professional career spans from the late 1970s (she won an honorable mention in Shōgakukan's Shinjin Comic Taisho (小学館新人コミック大賞), or Newcomer's Award for Comics, for *Those Selfish Aliens* in 1978) to present day. Takahashi write/illustrates *shōnen manga* (少年漫画), or boys' *manga*, which are the most widely read comic magazines in Japan (Schodt *Manga! Manga!* 12).

CHAPTER II

MANGA AND UKIYO-E DISCUSSED

TAKAHASHI'S WORK

Tracing Contemporary Creations to Earlier Art

A conclusive answer to the question of whether or not earlier Japanese woodblock

printing is a direct progenitor of modern *manga* has not yet been published.   Adam Kern

attributes the inability to definitively address this question to a lack of study; Kern asserts

that the research remains too incomplete at this time.[1] Kern is not incorrect. The published

research on *manga*, particularly in regards to its evolution from earlier Japanese art, is limited

and centralized on a one-size-fits-all timeline. In order to make statements about the

development of *manga* from Heian *emakimono* and Tokugawa *ukiyo-e* apply to modern

manga as a whole, *manga* scholars refrain from going into too much depth, embellish and

stretch connections beyond reasonable scope, and avoid specifics that might yield

contradictions when applied to the sum total of *all manga*. Thus, the research gives only a

cursory suggestion that the timeline of modern *manga*'s evolution into its present form

passed through the stage of woodblock prints, without providing sufficient examples about

the influence of this earlier art form on the state of *manga* today.

The problem with present approaches to understanding modern *manga* and its origins

lies in the broad generalizations utilized by most scholars. *Manga* is a well established art

form, and there are countless genres and individual *mangaka*, each with unique styles. It

would be impossible to write about the influences of all *manga* without a long list of

exceptions and examples that would muddle even the most convincing argument. By

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[1] Kern, p. 133.

selecting the works of a single *mangaka* as the examples from which to discuss the influence of nineteenth-century woodblock printing as predecessor to modern *manga*, one may better approach the subject. In turn, this argument may then be used as the basis of a discussion of *manga* as a whole. But without an approach that allows a detailed analysis, it is impossible to begin a discourse about *ukiyo-e*'s participation in the history of *manga*.

The choice of Rumiko Takahashi's *manga* as the focus of this thesis is deliberate. Takahashi's work represents *manga* well because of Takahashi's long and prolific career. She possesses a strong status as a popular and renowned *mangaka* of *shōnen manga*[2]. The argument of this thesis seeks to discuss the relationship between nineteenth-century woodblock print art and modern *manga* by studying the work of a single *mangaka*; the strength of the argument is assisted by the choice of one of the best representatives of the field.

Takahashi's Career and Education

Takahashi's work was selected from a wide pool of *mangaka* who write and illustrate comics in Japan today. In Japan, *shōnen manga* accounts for approximately 40% of *manga* magazine sales, so it follows that the most representative example of contemporary *manga* might be a part of this genre.[3] Within the category of boys' *manga* there are many diverse genres, including action, adventure, drama, humor, science fiction, sports stories and narratives that reflect day-to-day life, but the appeal of Rumiko Takahashi's *manga* stems from her use of humor and gags, paired with dramatic story and true-to-life sentiments (and

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[2]*Shōnen manga* (少年漫画), or simply *shōnen*, is *manga* marketed to a young male audience. *Shōnen manga* is regarded to be the most popular form of *manga*, by sales both in Japan and abroad. *Shōnen manga* is distinct from its counterpart, *shōjo manga* (少女漫画), which is marketed to girls.

[3] Deb Aoki, "Introduction to Shōnen Manga - Japanese Comics for Boys." *About.Com: Manga*. (web. 17 May. 2012. < http://manga.about.com/od/mangacategories/p/shonenintro.htm>. New York: About.Com, Part of the New York Times Company, 2012).

the occasional love triangle or more complicated polygons). Besides being an incredibly

prolific *mangaka*, Takahashi is an internationally renowned artist/author, even credited as

one of the first *mangaka* to achieve fame in the United States of America.[4] Rumiko

Takahashi's work was chosen as the focus for this thesis' comparison of modern *manga* to

nineteenth-century *ukiyo-e* prints because of striking similarities found in her work as well as

her popularity, prolific professional career, and education as an artist.

Takahashi is a formally educated *mangaka*. She graduated with a history degree from

Japan Women's College (日本女子大学, *Nihon Joshi Daigaku*) and studied under the

tutelage of Kazuo Koike[5] at his *manga* training school, *Gekika Sonjuku*.[6] During this course,

she was obliged to create no less than one story per week, with the course emphasizing her

ability to create vignettes and full pages of *manga*.[7] Takahashi has stated in interviews that

her career path as a *mangaka* was determined during her second year of high school because

of her love of *shōnen manga* that developed from early childhood.[8] Takahashi also worked

as assistant under Kazuo Umezu[9], Japan's premiere horror *manga* creator. Her professional

career began in 1978 when she won the Shogakkan New Comics Award for her *manga* short

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[4] Urian Brown, "Final *Animerica* Interview, taken from *Animerica* Vol. 13, No. 6, June 2005." *Rumiko Takahashi Interviews*. Rumic World, 2005 (Web. 23 Mar. 2011. <http://www.furinkan.com/takahashi/>), p. 2.
[5] Kazuo Koike (小池•一夫), born in 1936, is a prolific Japanese *mangaka*, novelist and entrepreneur. He is best known for writing *Kozure Okami* (子連れ狼), or *Lone Wolf and Cub*, illustrated by Goseki Kojima (小島•剛夕) (1928-2000), and *Crying Freeman* (クライング フリーマン), illustrated by Ryoichi Ikegami (池上•遼一) (1944-). Koike has won the 2004 Hall of Fame Eisner Award for his *manga* work, and his list of graduates of his *Gekika Sonjuku* include an impressive list of *mangaka*, game designers, writers and artists.
[6] Seiji Horibuchi, Interview with Rumiko Takahashi (1993). *Anime Interview: The First Five Years of Animerica, Anime & Manga Monthly (1992-1997)* (San Francisco: Cadence Books, 1997), p. 16
[7] Dylan Acres, tr., "Interview in Italy, taken from *Kappa Magazine* Issue 5, Star Comics, November 1992." *Rumiko Takahashi Interviews*. Rumic World, 1992. (Web. 23 Mar. 2011. <http://www.furinkan.com/takahashi/>), p. 2
[8] Toshiaki Yamada, tr., "Toriyama/Takahashi Interview Take from Tereburu 1986." *Rumiko Takahashi Interviews.* Rumic World, 1986 (Web. 23 Mar. 2011. <http://www.furinkan.com/takahashi>), p. 4.
[9] Kazuo Umezu (楳図•かずお) is a horror-genre *mangaka* famous for his detailed illustrative style. His *Orochi* series (1969) is considered one of the finest in the genre.

story, *Katte na Yatsura*[10] (勝手なやつら). In 1980 she won the Manga Award (小学館漫画

賞) in the *shōnen manga* category for her weekly manga, *Urusei Yatsura* (うる星やつら),

which ran in *Weekly Shōnen Sunday* (週刊少年サンデー) from 1978-1987. [Image 5] In

addition to *Urusei Yatsura*, Takahashi's major works published by *Shogakukan* include:

Maison Ikkoku (めぞん一刻), 1980-1987; *The Mermaid Saga* (人魚シリーズ), 1984-1994;

Ranma ½ (らんま½), 1987-1996; *One Pound Gospel* (1 ポンドの福音), 1987-2007; *Rumic*

Theater (高橋留美子劇場) 1987-ongoing; *Inu-Yasha*[11] (犬夜叉), 1996-2008; and *Rinne* (境

界の RINNE), 2009-ongoing. As well, her body of work includes several sequentially

illustrated short stories that appeared in single installments or limited series of *manga*; these

short stories are compiled in the two volume *Rumic Theatre* and the three volume *Rumic*

World Trilogy. All of Takahashi's *manga* fall under the publication category of *shōnen*

manga, but the genres include comedy, romance, adventure, and even the occasional horror

theme. Takahashi's body of work is extensive and reaches a wide audience.

Comparison of Images

In an interview by Toshifumi Yoshida for *Animerica*, an American magazine

published for foreign fans of *manga* and *anime*, Yoshida noted the many "grotesque"

monsters that occupy the pages of *Inu-Yasha*. [Image 6] He asked Takahashi if the monsters

that she creates are based upon old myths and legends, to which Takahashi responded in the

affirmative. She notes that half are her original creations, but "the design of the ghosts,

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[10] *Katte no Yatsura* (勝手なやつら), or *Those Selfish Aliens*, were later reprinted in a collection to Rumiko
Takahashi's short stories entitled *Rumic World* (るーみっくわーるど) in three volumes.
[11] The full title of *Inu-Yasha* is "*Inu-Yasha, a Feudal Fairy Tale*" (戦国御伽草子犬夜, *Sengoku Otogizōshi*
Inu-Yasha); however, for the duration of this thesis, the title will be presented in its shortened for.

demons, dragons, and the *hebi no bakemon kappa* demon (snake *kappa*[12] demon) are all from Japanese legend."[13] Study of Takahashi's illustrations in *Inu-Yasha* reveals a striking resemblance to the demons, ghosts and monsters found in nineteenth-century woodblock print art. [Image 7] Because *Inu-Yasha* is an adventure series that features demons from Japanese myths and *yokai*[14] tales, the visual representations of the monsters, particularly those taken from common legend, should be recognizable.   The influence of the depictions of demons, monsters and inhabitants of the barbarian lands illustrated in Katsushika Hokusai's *Hokusai Manga* are visible in Rumiko Takahashi's drawings.

One of the first monsters that appears in Takahashi's *Inu-Yasha* is a centipede demon, who appears as the multi-armed torso of a woman on the body of an improbably large centipede. [Image 8] The woman's face on the monster is almost devoid of expression with high, round, applied eyebrows common to images of women in Heian court makeup. The thick, snake-like body features dozens of legs skittering through space as the monster pursues the female protagonist, the junior high school student, Kagome. The reference for this creature can be found in the illustration of *Hokusai manga*, "The three-eyed monster, the monk-musician, and two women with extenisible necks." [Image 9] Here is precedent for the combination of misproportioned human and grotesquely altered bodies to create *yōkai* monsters. The monsters are not overtly terrifying, but simply unsettling, and even perhaps

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[12] The *kappa* (河童) are a type of Japanese water sprite typical to Japanese folklore. They are aquatic creatures with webbed hands and feet and an indentation on the top of their heads to hold water, the source of their power. Kappa appear in stories as mischievous troublemakers who are said to try to lure people to the water and pull them in.

[13] Toshifumi Yoshida, "*Inu-Yasha* Comes to America, taken from *Animerica, Vol. 9, No. 6,* June 2001, Interview by Toshifumi Yoshida." Andy Nakatani, tr. *Rumiko Takahashi Interviews.* Rumic World, 2001 (Web. 23 Mar. 2011. <http://www.furinkan.com/takahashi>), p. 3.

[14] *Yōkai*, (妖怪) combines two *kanji*, or Chinese characters, that translate as "uncanny" or "eerie." The term *yōkai* has been used since the Meiji period (明治時代) to refer to supernatural phenomena, eerie feelings or sounds, and animal or human characters. Monsters in Japanese art and literature may also be described with the terms *bakemono* (化物), *henge* (変化), and *mononoke* (物の怪).

amusing. Takahashi's use of the centipede demon as her introduction to the fantasy world of *Inu-Yasha* sets the tone of this "feudal fairytale" (the English subtitle for the *manga*). In the same volume, a crow demon appears, featuring three eyes, sharp needle-like teeth and a featherless tail of a rat. [Image 10] This creature is immediately recognizable as a monster, rather than an ordinary crow, and it specifically recalls the monsters illustrated in *Hokusai manga*, particularly the *tengu* and the *yurei*. [Image 11] The crow reminds the viewer of the *tengu* because of the presentation of beak and feathers, but the eerie *yurei* with its passive, open-mouthed expression yet predatory pose are clearly reminiscent. Hokusai's demons are clearly visible in Takahashi's illustrations. She has borrowed his composite drawings of different animals, his tone of presentation and even examples directly from the demons in his pages. Takahashi has intentionally illustrated demons and monsters that recall Tokugawa presentations of the supernatural.

Although Takahashi does not verbally acknowledge the influence of *Hokusai Manga* on her depictions, her interest in creating the recognizable monsters of Japanese legend would logically direct the artist to use famous prints as source material for her illustrations. In *Anime and its Roots in Early Japanese Monster Art*, Zília Papp addresses the appearance of supernatural and otherworldly creatures in Japanese art. Although the late Heian period can be noted as the first appearance of monsters in such works as the *Hell, Hungry Ghost* and *Disease Scrolls* (地獄草子 Jigoku Zōshi, 餓鬼草子 Gaki Zōshi, 病草子 Yamai Zōshi, twelfth century), while these *Heian emakimono* might be the forerunners of grotesque themes--and thus *yōkai-ga*--these images derived from Buddhist iconography do not illustrate the folk monsters typical to Japanese *yōkai* tales as they are known today.[15] Papp specifically

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[15] Zília Papp, *Anime and its Roots in Early Japanese Monster Art* (Kent, UK: Global Oriental Ltd., 2010), pp. 25-8.

highlights the print art of Hokusai--in particular Hokusai's *Hyaku Monogatari* (百物語), *One Hundred Ghost Stories* series (ca. 1830), which was itself "an important reference for future *ukiyo-e* artists [in establishing] an Edo period style depiction of the horrid and the other worldly, and even influences contemporary sensibilities and aesthetics in Japan in the horror genre."[16] [Image 12]

One clear example of this theory at work can be seen in Rumiko Takahashi's *Ranma ½*, wherein the father will seemingly transform into a monster in the fervor of his fatherly protective overreaction. [Image 13] Like the monsters in Hokusai's *Hyaku Monogatari*, the character of the father, Soun Tendo, is illustrated with an oversized, looming head, his tongue lolling out aggressively. His eyes are transformed from the benign *manga*-style eyes, inherent to Takahashi's illustrative style, into large reptilian eyes with slit pupils, hostilely focused on his daughter's suitor. Comparing Takahashi's illustrations to those from Hokusai's *Hyaku Monogatari*, one can see a clear reference between the left-hand panel [Image 13] and the first two woodblock prints, *Kohada Koheiji* (こはだ小平二) and *Oiwa San* (お岩さん), followed by a visual reference in the right-hand panel to Hokusai's *Sarayashiki* (さらやしき, The Tale of the Dish Mansion), through the use of the coiling neck that illustrates the weightlessness of a floating ghost or the deflated Soun.

Several scholars have noted the influence of Japanese traditions and popular fable on Rumiko Takahashi's *manga*. Takahashi identifies these elements in her work, particularly in *Urusei Yatsura*, *The Mermaid Series*, *Ranma ½*, and *Inu-Yasha*. Takahashi reasons, "For me, fables represent a shared knowledge, in the sense that the great mass of Japanese readers remember the stories, and are therefore easy for them to understand. The popularity of fables

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[16] Papp, *Anime and its Roots in Early Japanese Monster Art*, p. 37.

are important and helpful in comics, in that they are easily understood by the mass audience."[17]   Because of the large number of *jidai geki*, or historical dramas, on television, in movies and in literature, the feudal era setting of *Inu-Yasha* is not unusual. Takahashi explains her choice to set *Inu-Yasha* in the Sengoku Era[18] "because it is relatively easier to extract a ghost story from that time period…. In the Sengoku Era, there was war, and lots of people died. For a ghost to appear and kill a lot of people in the present day—although I guess there are some *manga* like that--but for one of my *manga*, I thought that if I set it in the Sengoku Era, it could be portrayed more softly. The cruelty becomes softer, I think."[19] A question presented to Takahashi in an interview with Seiji Horibuchi for *Animerica* looked at the historical setting of *Inu-Yasha*. Horibuchi questioned whether or not the historical setting of the *manga* was relatable to audiences. Takahashi responded, "When I'm drawing the story, I'm drawing it for the Japanese readers, and historical settings don't matter to them. Instead, I have to draw a piece that will register to them as *manga*."[20]

Rumiko Takahashi's *Mermaid Saga* (1984-1994) is another *manga* series in which the *mangaka* presents fictional scenes in a specific historical setting. The plot presents an ancient legend that one might gain eternal life, youth and longevity if he eats the flesh of a mermaid; however, the slim chance of immortality comes at a much likelier risk of violent death or hideous transformation into a monster upon eating the poisonous meat. The two protagonists, Yuta and Mana, wander Japan in search of a cure for their immortal condition, and each storyline of the episodic series tells of their encounters with other lives ruined by

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[17] Dylan Acres, p. 3.
[18] The Sengoku Jidai (戦国時代), or Warring States era, refers to the period of nearly constant political upheaval and military unrest in Japan's history, roughly from the fifteenth century to the seventeenth century, until Japan was unified under the feudal rule of the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1868 (which began the Edo Jidai).
[19] Yoshida, p. 3.
[20] Seiji Horibuchi, "Interview with Rumiko Takahashi (1997), taken from *Animerica Vol. 5, 1997*." Takayuki Karahashi, tr. *Rumiko Takahashi Interviews*. Rumic World, 1992 (Web. 23 Mar. 2011. <http://www.furinkan.com/takahashi/>), p. 2.

the mermaid flesh. Yuta is some five hundred years old, and the stories frequently present moments in the past, such as the Edo Jidai and the Taishō period[21], as well as various scenes in an unlabeled moment in Japan's past. Takahashi is quoted to state, "In *Mermaid Forest* I have not illustrated my personal world. I wanted the reader to feel the atmosphere of a typical small Japanese village. One of those places that every one of us visited when we were little and on which an infinite number of fables and legends were based."[22] [Image 14] Whether her art draws from specific times and places or merely captures "the feeling" of a scene from the past, Takahashi's illustrations in her *Mermaid Saga* present a visual reference to traditional Japan in the same way that the literature of her stories rely on folklore.

Several interviews with Rumiko Takahashi have noted the influence of traditional Japanese literature and folklore on her work, but there are few statements that indicate an intentional usage of imagery taken from *ukiyo-e*. Although Takahashi has not verbalized a deliberate use of visuals borrowed from earlier woodblock print art, the illustrative quotations are plain to see. In a poster that Takahashi illustrated to commemorate 300 episodes of *Ranma ½*, Takahashi depicts all of the characters of her 36 volume series against the backdrop an ocean wave that unmistakably references Katsushika Hokusai's famous woodblock print, "The Great Wave off Kanagawa" from his *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* (c. 1829–32). [Images 15 and 16] The treatment of the wave leaves no doubt as to Rumiko Takahashi's familiarity with Katsushika Hokusai's work. The white foam at the top of the waves appears tangible with its claw-like shapes curving like fingers from the crests. Large circles of white represent spray falling from the waves like snow. Stark shapes of white

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[21] The Taishō period (大正時代) spanned from 30 July 1912 to 25 December 1926, coinciding with the reign of the Emperor Taishō. The period was known for its liberal politics, distinguishing it from the preceding Meiji era and the drive of militarism of the Shōwa period the followed.

[22] Dylan Acres, p. 5

crease the ocean's blue, reminiscent of snow in the crevices of a mountain viewed from a distance. Takahashi revisits her interpretation of Hokusai's "Great Wave off Kanagawa" in several presentation of the ocean. In her large diptych poster--which again showcases all of her characters from the *Ranma ½* series, now illustrated to present the four seasons--the Hokusai wave is the primary source of movement in the right-hand-side of the diptych, ushering the composition from right to left. [Image 17] In both works, Takahashi's iteration of Hokusai's "Great Wave" is instantly recognizable. The use of two colors of blue--dark and light--with the stark white foam and spay, as well as the shape of the water's form, all evidence a conscious use of Hokusai's print as source material for how Takahashi chose to present the ocean swell.

In the body of *manga*, Takahashi continues to reference the great masters of *ukiyo-e*. In one of the more comedic characters in *Ranma ½*, the lecherous character Happosai--whose licentious hijinks include stealing girls' undergarments, voyeurism and groping (on a scale worthy of his resemblance to the eight-legged cephalopod)--Takahashi illustrates a striking visual reference to one of Utagawa Kuniyoshi's humorous prints, "Fashionable Octopus Games" (1840-42). [Images 18 and 19] The visual comparison between the two illustrations is conspicuous. Like the octopodes in Kuniyoshi's woodblock print, Happosai is defined by his large eyes, furrowed brow and protruding mouth. Takahashi's illustration of the old male character, withered with age, does not present a picture of frailty or helplessness; instead, Happosai appears as a humorous, buoyant side character in the world of *Ranma ½*. The similarities of Rumiko Takahashi's Happosai to the octopodes in Kuniyoshi's "Fashionable Octopus Games" is further emphasized in a brief scene at the conclusion of one episode of *Ranma ½*, volume 8, part 10, as Happosai, swimming in the ocean, finds himself face-to-face

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with an octopus who then attaches itself to Happosai as if the octopus has found a mate. Happosai's speech bubble underlines Takahashi's intentional design similarities as the character pouts, "But I'm not an octopus!"[23] In this example, Takahashi has used the textual element of *manga* to further underline the visual similarity between her design of Happosai and an octopus, and they are Kuniyoshi's octopodes from "Fashionable Octopus Games" that Happosai resembles.

Images from nineteenth-century woodblock prints are not limited to Takahashi's *Ranma ½.* Utagawa Kuniyoshi's work reappears in Rumiko Takahashi's series, *Inu-Yasha*, an epic adventure series with a storyline set during Japan's Sengoku Era (戦国時代), or Warring States period. *Inu-Yasha* is a story that centers upon the demons and *yōkai* of Japanese legends and ghost stories, and provides ample opportunity for Takahashi to adopt the representations of existing demons from nineteenth-century prints. In addition to the previously mentioned monsters taken from Hokusai's sketches, full panels within Takahashi's *Inu-Yasha* reference the prints of the master *ukiyo-e* artists. Utagawa Kuniyoshi's famous triptych featuring a gigantic skeleton, "Mitsukuni defies the skeleton specter conjured up by Princess Takiyasha" (1845-6), appears in "Koga and the skeleton ghost of Kyokotsu" in the 24th volume of Rumiko Takahashi's *Inu-Yasha*. [Images 20 and 21] Although the skeletons do not line up as exact replications of one another---each is in a different pose--the similarities illustrate Takahashi's reference of Kuniyoshi's scene: the size and scale of the bones; the emphasis on the empty eye-sockets of the skull and open-mouthed jaws, which share blank expressions that are both quizzical and unnerving; and the notation of the bony, claw-like, skeletal hand. The way in which the skeleton is illustrated by

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[23] Rumiko Takahashi, *Ranma ½.* Vol. 8, Part 10 (San Francisco: VIZ, LLC, 1997) p. 166.

Takahashi suggests more of an interest in replicating the feeling of Kuniyoshi's woodblock print than creating anatomical correctness as both skeletons reveal a stylized curvature of the ribs that create aesthetically pleasing loops but fail to adhere to an exact portrayal of an anatomical model. Such a simple comparison can go by unnoticed; however, highlighting the similaries between Takahashi's panel and the earlier work yield a pleasing sensation of familiarity as Kuniyoshi's terrifying skeletal specter from his triptych echoes in Takahashi's looming skeleton of the withered foe.

In Tsukioka Yoshitoshi's[24] "Priest Raigo of Mii Temple" from Yoshitoshi's 1891 series entitled, *Shinkei Sanjurokuten*, or "36 Ghosts," the spirit of the vengeful priest Raigo returns as a plague of rats and destroys the Mii Temple. [Image 22] This image reappears with remarkable similarities in the 33rd volume of Takahashi's *Inu-Yasha*. One of many demons illustrated by Takahashi, the *Zushi-Nezumi*, or shrine rat, appears in the story as a monster rat who can release swarms of small demon rat monsters from the portable shrine that he carries on his back.[25] [Image 23] The two images of a human-sized monster rat are remarkable in their similarities, even so far as to include a narrative of destruction from a plague of rats that wreck havoc in their destructive swarm. The shape of the rats' heads, the treatment of the eyes and whiskers, and the long fingers that appear as neither fully human nor rodent are all congruent between the two works.

Takahashi is clearly aware of the woodblock print art, but it is unclear whether or not her visual references are intentional. In the instance of some of these images, there is an

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[24] Tsukioka Yoshitoshi (月 岡•芳年) (1839-1892) is widely recognized as the last great master of *ukiyo-e*, creating woodblock print art through two eras, the last years of the Edo period (1600-1868) and into the beginning of the Meiji restoration period (1868-1912). Toshitoshi continued to utilize archaic methods of creating his art, despite the move to modern forms of lithography and photography of his contemporaries and his work represent the last holdouts of traditional woodblock printing of the epoch.
[25] This volume of Takahashi's *Inu-Yasha* was printed in the United States of America in April 2008 in a left-to-right format, ostensibly to be more easily read by a Western audience. Because of this, the images have been "flopped," and are mirror images of the original pages and panels from the Japanese publication.

obvious intention. The use of Katsushika Hokusai's iconic "The Great Wave off Kanagawa"

from his *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji* (c. 1829–32) series shows a deliberate reference to

ukiyo-e art. The addition of textual references to the work of the *ukiyo-e* master Utagawa

Kuniyoshi with her illustration of Happosai from *Ranma ½* as an octopus from Kuniyoshi's

"Fashionable Octopus Games" (1840-42) underscores further awareness of Edo period

woodblock prints and exhibits her sense of humor in using these references. Still, the

frequent appearance of images that recall scenes from the great masters of *ukiyo-e* does not

necessarily speak to an intentional retelling of woodblock scenes in Takahashi's *manga*. It is

certainly possible that her artwork merely references these images as a subconscious

reflection of sources she had seen in her past. But this doubtful appraisal yields to the more

convincing suggestion that Takahashi is both familiar with *ukiyo-e* print art and references

scenes when it enhances her *manga*, such as borrowing the skeleton from Utagawa

Kuniyoshi's Mitsukuni defies the skeleton specter conjured up by Princess Takiyasha" or

Tsukioka Yoshitoshi's "Priest Raigo of Mii Temple." Whether intentional or subconscious,

the reappearance of these Tokugawa era images in Takahashi's modern illustrations

highlights the idea that *manga* is an art form built upon the foundation of Edo period

woodblock prints.

CHAPTER III

UKIYO-E'S PLACE IN *MANGA*'S DEVELOPMENT

Many art historians look to the Tokugawa era (1600-1868) as the origin of *manga*

because it was during this epoch that the term was coined. Although the word *manga* today

simply means "comics," the original term is somewhat more difficult to translate. Julius

Weidemann explains that it was during the nineteenth-century that Katsushika Hokusai used

the two *kanji*[1] "*man*" (translated as lax) and "*ga*" (picture) to write the word *manga*, or 漫画,

as the name for his characters and sketches which are known as *Hokusai Manga*.[2] [Image

24] The *Hokusai Manga* comprises more than eight hundred pages and almost four thousand

motifs, bound in fifteen volumes that were published between 1814 and 1878.[3]

Japan possesses a long history of illustrated narratives, stemming back to the twelfth-

century. Thomas P. Campbell, director of the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York,

identifies a direct relationship between contemporary *manga* and the objects, dating from the

twelfth to the nineteenth-century that were showcased in "Storytelling in Japanese Art,"

organized by Masako Watanabe, senior research associate in the Department of Asian Art.

Campbell writes, "The popularity of Japanese comics, or *manga*, and the preeminence of the

graphic arts in contemporary Japan attest to the enduing legacy of these traditions."[4] In his

1983 history of *manga*, *Manga! Manga!: The World of Japanese Comics*, Frederik Schodt

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[1] *Kanji* is one of the alphabets in the Japanese language. These Japanese characters, derived from the Chinese alphabet, represent words and meanings in pictograms and ideograms.
[2] Wiedemann, p. ii.
[3] Jocelyn Bouquillard and Christophe Marquet. *Hokusai: First Manga Master* (Liz Nash, tr. New York: Harry N. Abrams, Inc., 2007), p. 8.
[4] Thomas P. Campbell, "Director's Forward." *Storytelling in Japanese Art*. Watanabe, Masako, ed. (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), p. vi.

implies that the Japanese have a *need* to tell a story through sequential illustrations. [5] He

suggests an inherent cultural phenomenon, unique to Japan, which lay the foundation for

manga's emergence from the first caricature art, through the illustrated scrolls, flourishing

during woodblock prints and finally reinventing itself after the Second World War.

The reason to highlight the print art of the nineteenth-century is accessibility of *ukiyo-

e* to the highly literate city dwelling population of Edo, which Paul Gravett identifies as "in

the spirit [of] *manga*."[6] Woodblock prints were a mass-produced consumer product during

the Tokugawa period. Publication in the woodblock printing business yielded finished prints

being produced from a print workshop at a rate of at least 200 a day on average per printer.[7]

In the modern era, *manga* are the swiftly produced consumer product. Like *ukiyo-e*, *manga*

are artistic works intended for the pleasure of the mass population, quickly produced and

often discarded after they are consumed. In its own time, Japanese woodblock print art was

not considered fine art. Most art historians are familiar with the tale of how Western artists

discovered *ukiyo-e* that was inadvertently imported to Europe as packing material, evidence

of how casually old woodblock print art was discarded. The *manga* of today function much

as woodblock print art functioned in Edo society. *Manga* are published quickly and cheaply

(a topic that will be discussed in further detail in Chapter 4) for the amusement of the public.

In addition to *manga* carrying on "the spirit" of nineteenth-century woodblock print culture,

several elements of style and visual features appear to carry through from Edo epoch *ukiyo-e*

into the modern art form of *manga*.

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[5] Schodt, *Manga! Manga!*, pp. 25, 28-37.
[6] Gravett, p. 18-20.
[7] Rebecca Salter, *Japanese Woodblock Printing* (Honolulu, University of Hawai'I Press, 2008), p. 11.

FEATURES OF *UKIYO-E* THAT CARRY OVER TO *MANGA*

Flat nature of Japanese art in *ukiyo-e* and in *manga* and *anime*

It requires no stretch of the imagination for a scholar to identify a relationship

between woodblock print art and *manga* and *anime*. The flat nature of Japanese art is readily

grasped by the naked eye. Despite the use of techniques to indicate perspective and separate

the areas of foreground, middle-ground and background, neither the art of *ukiyo-e* nor the art

of modern Japanese comics attempts to create the illusion of three-dimensionality. The

characters appear flat and two dimensional on the page. The flat appearance of Japanese art

does not reflect a lack of skill or technology in Japanese art but rather evidences an aesthetic

choice that pervades much of the art from this country. Artist and theorist Takashi Murakami

presents a theory that the flat nature of Japanese art is an essentially Japanese construct of the

identity of Japanese two-dimensional art[8]. The stylistic element of Japanese "flatness"

precedes contact with Western perspectival art and continues independently of modernist

movements in Western nineteenth- and twentieth-century art.

Takashi Murakami's concept of "superflat" operates on two separate and distinct

levels. Murakami uses the term "superflat" to describe the lack of illusionistic presentation

in space, the visually flat nature of Japanese art, and to describe "the sensibility that has

contributed to and continues to contribute to the construction of Japanese culture, as a

worldview, and show that it is an original concept that links the past with the present and the

future."[9] Takashi's agenda in creating art is a synthesis of aesthetics and creativity and an

awareness of contemporary Japanese art as an element of popular culture, marketing and

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[8] Murakami, *Little Boy*, p. vii; Papp, p. 5
[9] Takashi Murakami, *The Super Flat Manifesto, in: SUPER FLAT*. Takashi Murakami, ed. (Tokyo: 2000), p. 5.

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commerce.[10] Takashi Murakami's discussion of "superflat" is essential to the argument of *manga's* place in a greater timeline of Japanese artistic tradition because the same principles of design and role are present in the *manga* of today and the woodblock prints of the Edo period.

In a page from "Mermaid's Gaze," a chapter of Rumiko Takahashi's three-volume *Mermaid Saga*, the flat aesthetic of *manga* is easily identified. [Image 25] Here the illustration takes on a flat appearance caused by the use of black outline and the lack of illusionistic shading. The absence of shadow on the faces makes the artwork appear flat, much like the woodblock print art of the nineteenth century. The emphasis on line and outline, a defining characteristic of *manga*, comes from Japanese artistic and writing traditions. Several theorists highlight this flat aesthetic as distinctly Japanese. The flat appearance of the scene and the use of outline carries over from earlier Japanese artistic traditions, including *ukiyo-e*. If one compares a panel of manga to a nineteenth-century woodblock print, such as Utagawa Kunisada's[11] "Cherry Blossom beneath the Evening Moon in the Northern Quarter," one notes the lack of depth in each work. Although both scenes use scale and angles to denote the parts of the scenes, defining the foregrounds, middlegrounds and backgrounds, each artwork bypasses the common use of shade to realistically suggest depth.

Murakami's second meaning of "superflat" reflects his interpretation of Japanese culture. In his essay, "Earth in My Window," Takashi Murakami equates the trends in

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[10] Margrit Brehm, "Takashi Murakami: A Lesson in Strategy (Morphed Double-Loop)." *Japanese Experience: The Inevitable*. Margrit Brehm, ed. (Ostfildern, Germany: Hatje Cantz Publishers, 2003), p. 36.
[11] Utagawa Kunisada (歌川·国貞) (1786-1865) is regarded as a great master of *ukiyo-e*.   In his own time, his reputation far exceeded that of his contemporaries, Hokusai, Hiroshige and Kuniyoshi. Kunisada was regarded as one of the most financially successful, prolific and popular designers of *ukiyo-e* woodblock prints in nineteenth-century Edo.

Japan's contemporary culture as the direct effect of the Second World War, citing an absence

of closure to the atomic bombing of Hiroshima on 6 August 1945 which pervades Japanese

society and culture. He states, "But everyone who lives in Japan knows—something is

wrong. Still, it's not worth a second thought…. And now, Japan is Superflat. From social

mores to art and culture, everything is super two-dimensional."[12] Murakami attributes the

childlike culture of Japan--such as the fascination with *kawaii* (cute) culture, the

superficiality of consumerism, and even the popularity of comics--as all owing to the fact

that Japan was occupied in the post-war period and never permitted to grieve. Murakami

claims that Japan embodies the identity of "Little Boy," reference to the nickname of the

atomic bomb, a heedless culture that embraces immaturity.[13]

In Murakami's discussion about the superflat world of contemporary Japan, he

repeatedly identifies a society that thinks little of anything but the sensations of "I feel good";

he might as well be describing the Pleasure Quarters of Edo Japan. Murakami's Superflat

Thesis, which wishes to place the blame for Superflat--commercialism, superficiality and a

consumer culture that places emphasis on gratification--upon the atomic bomb and its

aftermath, falls under Adrian Favell's description of "a DIY sociology of post-war Japan

written through the eyes of 1960s and 70s nerds"[14] Favell reminds readers in his book,

Before and After Superflat: A Short History of Japanese Contemporary Art, 1990-2011, that

Murakami, himself an icon of popular *otaku*[15] culture, graduated from the elite national

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[12] Murakami, *Little Boy*, p. 100.

[13] Murakami, *Little Boy*, pp. 100-1.

[14] Adrian Favell, *Before and After Superflat: A Short History of Japanese Contemporary Art, 1900-2011* (Hong Kong: Blue Kingfisher Ltd., 2011), p. 22.

[15] The term *otaku* (おたく/オタク) is derived from a Japanese term for another person's house or family (お宅). *Otaku* is commonly used as a descriptive noun for a person with obsession, typically in reference to (but not limited to) *manga* or *anime*, comics or animated shows. The slang term carries negative connotations; *otaku* might perhaps best translated into English as "geek;" however, many fans have appropriated the term into a badge of honor.

Tokyo University of the Arts with a PhD and was trained in classical *nihonga*[16]. Murakami

and his sensationalist statements come from a background of education in Japanese art.

In an interview by Arthur Lublow, Takashi Murakami "mentioned the pioneering

influence of the eccentric Kuniyoshi, on both *manga* and his own giddily off-kilter work."[17]

Utagawa Kuniyoshi[18] is known for his dramatic, heroic and powerful warrior and battle

prints, his delicate, graceful and serene *bijin-ga*, or images of beautiful women, and his often

humorous prints that were created simply to amuse his audience.   Kuniyoshi perhaps best

personifies the popular aspect of woodblock prints, though any well-known *ukiyo-e* artist

might exemplify as well that prints were illustrated for the entertainment of the Edo

populace.

Subject Matter of Manga from Ukiyo-e

The subject matter of Japanese woodblock prints is dominated by several distinct

genres: portraits of *kabuki* actors and heroic scenes taken from plays; *bijin-ga*, or pictures of

beautiful women; landscapes and scenic images taken from elements of nature; and

humorous illustrations. Although the term *ukiyo-e* literally means "pictures of the floating

world," a concept referencing the "illusory or sensory world and the transitory nature of life,"

the subject is distinctly contemporary with very little reference to religious imagery.[19] The

wealthy merchant middle class were the creators and consumers of Edo period woodblock

prints, and it was to that contemporary audience that the images were intended to appeal as

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[16] *Nihonga* (日本画) references traditional Japanese art and translates literally as Japanese-style paintings.
[17] Arthur Lublow, "Everything But the Robots: A Kuniyoshi Retrospective Reveals the Roots of Manga." *New York Magazine*. 7 March 2010: p. 109.
[18] Utagawa Kuniyoshi (歌川・国芳) (1797-1862) is one of the great master's of *ukiyo-e* woodblock printing. He worked in several genres, including images of warriors, Kabuki actors, *bijin-ga*, or pictures beautiful women, landscapes and mythical animals as well as creating humorous works that were illustrated with the intension of amusing his audience.
[19] Salter, p. 10.

an inexpensive, popular art form and mode of entertainment. The woodblock prints that were published in Japan from the mid-seventeenth to the early twentieth-century were not considered to be "fine art" during their time of production but rather an "urban phenomenon of a purely commercial nature."[20] As such, the images were designed as pictures that would appeal to the audience and sell.

And certainly the same is true of modern *manga*. Rumiko Takahashi's prolific body of work is immensely popular and her series notably long-running, which has made her both a beloved *mangaka* and one of Japan's wealthiest citizens.[21] Numerous scholars identify her stories as uniquely "appealing" to audiences.[22] This appeal is not solely due to her sophisticated storytelling techniques but also due to her imagery which employs of beautiful young protagonists. Because her chosen genre of *manga* is *shōnen*, or *manga* aimed toward a young male audience, images of beautiful, often undressed, women frequently appear on the pages of her comics. The beautiful women of Rumiko Takahashi's *manga* are reminiscent of the *bijin-ga* of earlier woodblock prints. The emphasis of perfect and idealized female proportion and subtle eroticism without blatant vulgarity recall the beautiful women of artists from the Edo period, as well as examples from the later Taishō era[23]. It was during the Taishō that the revival of interest in woodblock printing in the twentieth century

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[20] Andreas Marks, *Japanese Woodblock Prints: Artists, Publishers and Masterworks 1680-1900* (Tokyo, Rutland, VA, and Singapore: 2010), p. 10.

[21] Seiji Horibuchi, "Interview with Rumiko Takahashi (1993)," p. 16.

[22] Amano Masano, ed., *Manga Design* (Köln, London, Los Angeles, Madrid, Paris & Tokyo: Taschen, 2004), p. 302.

[23] The Taishō period (大正時代) (1912-1926) is the epoch directly following the chaotic Meiji Restoration era (明治時代) (1868-1912) and preceding the movement toward Japanese militarism during the Shōwa period (昭和時代) (1926-1989). Although artwork from the Taishō period is outside of the normal frame of reference for *ukiyo-e* and nineteenth-century woodblock prints, examples from this epoch represent a movement that used the same techniques and subject matter as Edo period *ukiyo-e*. Because this thesis aims to discuss the influence of earlier Japanese woodblock print art on the work of a contemporary *mangaka*, it is unnecessary to exclude a good example that meets all other criteria except the exact dating. Afterall, because there is no specific record of Rumiko Takahashi modeling her art upon Tokugawa era *ukiyo-e*, the woodblock prints that may have influenced her art need not be limited to exclude Taishō era prints that represent the reiteration of style and technique of those earlier prints.

with the *Sōsaku Hanga* (創作版画), or Creative Prints, movement marked a new generation

of Japanese artists who began to use the same techniques that flourished through the early

eighteenth-century to the mid-nineteenth-century, considered the peak of *ukiyo-e*.[24] The

bijin-ga of Hashiguchi Goyō are remarkably recalled in some of Rumiko Takahashi's images

of beautiful women in her *manga*. [Image 27 & 28]

     Takahashi's illustrations of her female characters in the act of bathing are not lewd,

but they are not evasive about the sexual attraction of the well-figured girls drawn on the

page. Like the prints by Torii Kiyonaga[25] and Hashiguchi Goyō[26], Takahashi's nudes are

beautiful. They are meant to be appreciated as *bijin*, or beautiful people. Rumiko

Takahashi's art revels in the sensuous beauty of the human female form without straying into

the realm of erotica. The nude female form appears frequently in the body of Takahashi's

work. In her *Mermaid Series*, *Maison Ikkoku*, *Ranma ½*, *Inu-Yasha*, and other *manga*, the

common act of bathing might appear illustrated on the *manga* page. The artist seems to take

care never to illustrate graphic depictions of genitalia, instead covering the private parts of

the body with props (such as a bucket, wash cloth, or using the rotation of the body to keep

anything "inappropriate" out of view).

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[24] Salter, p, 11-12.

[25] Torii Kiyonaga (鳥居·清長) (1752-1815) is considered one of the great masters of *bijin-ga*. He is most famous for his images of courtesans and other beautiful women, but his body of work also includes many prints and paintings of Kabuki actors and related subjects.

[26] Hashiguchi Goyō (橋口·五葉) (1880-1921) represents a later revival of *ukiyo-e* subject matter and techniques. Creating modern *nishiki-e*, Goyō personally supervised the carving, printing and publication of his woodblock print art from 1918 until his death. Born Hashiguchi Kiyoshi, Goyō took the name of Goyō while attending the Tokyo School of Fine Arts, from which he graduated best in his class in 1905. Goyō was influenced by classical *ukiyo-e* artists and studied from books, originals and reproductions. His dominant interest and inspiration came from the great classical *ukiyo-e* artists, such as Utamaro, Hiroshige and Harunobu, of whom he authored several articles.

As in many scenes of women bathing, the figure in Hasaguchi Goyō's "Nude Woman with Towel and Basin" (浴場の女) (1915), is nude.[27] [Image 27] Her body is presented to the viewer without any clothing, but one very little of the nudity that would actually offend the sensitive viewer. Her left breast and its nipple are clearly visible, but the rest of her genitalia are hidden by her bent right leg and her arms. She is nude but modest. She is simply bathing. In Takahashi's depiction of "Shampoo at Bath" (1998) [Image 28], the genitalia are similarly concealed by the use of cascades of long hair and limbs. As in Goyō's "Nude Woman with Towel and Basin," only the left breast and nipple are unobstructed to the view of the audience. The viewer in both works is encouraged to appreciate the beauty of the female form--and perhaps even experience arousal--but the artist does not present nudity in a way that is pornographic or lewd.

However, there is no concern about illustrating a woman's breasts; in some scenes of *Ranma ½*, the plotline revolves around the presentation of the body, thus the story provides ample opportunities for Takahashi to illustrate the breasts of the female incarnation of the protagonist. [Image 29] In frequent instances, these nudes are illustrated with such lack of embarrassment or modesty as to appear brazen. Of course, the storyline of *Ranma ½*, which centers around the identity of the protagonist as an adolescent male who frequently (and most often unintentionally) transforms into a girl, muddles the question of how this naked female form is to be received. In most other examples from Takahashi's *manga*, the nudity of the female characters appears less frequently, most often in the natural occurrence of the characters at bath.

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[27] Goyō created woodblock print art during the Taishō Era, a period later than the other works discussed in this thesis; however, his work intentionally recalled the nineteenth-century masters and the echoes of *ukiyo-e* seen in his creations can likewise be interpreted to trickle down into Rumiko Takahashi's art.

The presentation of bathing is illustrated without a sense of shame or judgment, reflecting Japan's culture which accepts personal hygiene as an integral element of daily life. Kenneth Clark, in his book, *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form*, distinguishes between the terms "naked" and "nude" with regards to nakedness's embarrassment that comes with being deprived of clothing as distinct from nudity's lack of uncomfortable overtone.[28] The nudes in both *ukiyo-e* and Takahashi's *manga* appear comfortable and natural in their state of undress. Justin Velgus, who discusses Japan's contemporary acceptance of nudity in both media and everyday culture attributes the presentation of the nude in Japan to the prominence of Japan's bathing culture and to Japan's acceptance that sex and sexuality are simply a natural part of life and existence.[29] The nudes that appear in both *ukiyo-e* and *manga* are not without their sexual appeal, but neither does the nudity have to be overtly erotic.

Torii Kiyonaga's "Women at Bath" depicts eight women at a public bath [Image 30]. The female figures range in their states of déshabille from the more-or-less fully clothed woman at the far right to women loosely draped in their yukata to several fully nude women engaged in the act of bathing. Clark attempts to distinguish the unclothed figures of Japanese *ukiyo-e* from the nudes of Western art when he writes, "In Japanese prints [nudes] are part of *ukiyoe*, the passing show of life, which includes, without comment, certain intimate scenes usually allowed to pass unrecorded. The idea of offering the body for its own sake, as a serious subject of contemplation, simply did not occur to the Chinese or Japanese mind, and to this day raises a slight barrier of misunderstanding."[30] Clark should not be interpreted as

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[28] Kenneth Clark, *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday Anchor Books, 1956), p. 23.
[29] Justin Velgus, "Why Japanese People are Comfortable with Nakedness." Japan Today: Japan News and Discussion. Opinions, 12 Nov. 2012 - 06:19AM JST. Web. 27 Nov. 2012. < http://www.japantoday.com/category/opinions/view/why-japanese-people-are-comfortable-with-nakedness>.
[30] Kenneth Clark, p. 29-30.

having made an erroneous suggestion that the nudes in Japanese *ukiyo-e* were not intended to arouse the viewer. Certainly, Japanese art has the potential to be as bawdy as any presentation of the nude female form. Rather, Clark notes that the Japanese nudes, unlike those created contemporaneously in Europe, should not be interpreted as studies of the human body for the sake of art.

Interest in the Contemporary World

The art of the Japanese woodblock print is uniquely representative in the way that it simultaneously represents the "real" world of the artist without a necessity for a photorealistic illustration. *Ukiyo-e* is inherently stylized, lacks an illusionistic depiction of space, and does not attempt to recreate a factual presentation of the landmarks or events of the scenes the artist presents. However, the art of *ukiyo-e* is an artistic account of the "floating world" of Tokugawa era Japan, a staging of nineteenth-century Japan on paper.

In her essay "From Shadow to Substance: Redefining Ukiyo-e," Sandy Kita tackles a redefinition of the term *ukiyo-e* to examine this art. Through her many explorations into the meaning of the term, Kita isolates a feature of *ukiyo-e* to express the world of the artist. She hesitates to the use the term *realism* because that term is heavily weighted to mean the depiction of things and people "as they really are;" however, while *ukiyo-e* does not strive towards any sort of stylistic realism, it is inarguably a portrayal of the real world of Edo Japan.[31] She asserts that *ukiyo-e* is the art of what the artists perceived, through physical senses, of the material world of Edo culture. The woodblock prints are a highly stylized account of the "floating world."

Takahashi's *manga* also presents a depiction of the world in a stylized representation.

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[31] Kita, p. 60.

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Takahashi's *Maison Ikkoku*, a thirteen volume *manga* that began in October 1980 in

the biweekly *seinen manga* magazine, *Big Comic Spirits* (ビッグコミックスピリッツ),

was modeled from the artist's experience as a student living in an apartment. In an interview

by Toren Smith, taken from *Amazing Heroes* in 1990, Rumiko Takahashi talks about her

inspiration for the setting of *Maison Ikkoku*:

> When I was a poor college student, I lived in Nakano (a district in Tokyo) in a small
>
> apartment that cost ¥55,000 a month (about $550). Just behind my apartment house,
>
> there was another which seemed rather…er…'strange.' Two of the people who were
>
> living there often spent hours talking by walkie-talkie with one in his room and the
>
> other just a few yards away on the street (laughs). I thought they were pretty
>
> annoying, but I was also a little scared and wondered what they could possibly be up
>
> to.
>
> Once you're thrown into an apartment, you have to live there--unless you move out
>
> [this is terribly difficult and expensive in Japan, where moving into an apartment
>
> often requires a deposit of six months rent--about four months of which is non-
>
> refundable]. You can't just reject the people who share the place with you… you
>
> have to get along with them. I wanted to create an emotional human drama centering
>
> around the apartment and its tenants.[32]

The story and art of her contemporary surrounding mirror the abundant images of the

pleasure quarters that define nineteenth-century Japanese woodblock print art. The Ikkoku-

kan, or Ikkoku Apartments, in which the romantic comedy story is set, is almost a character

of the story. It is illustrated with attention to realistic detail, making it instantly recognizable

as a typical cheap Japanese apartment house, with shared bathrooms, no hot running water

and reliance on the public baths down the road for the bathing needs of its tenants. The

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[32] Toren Smith, "Career Retrospective, Taken from *Amazing Heroes* 1990." *Rumiko Takahashi Interviews*
(Rumic World, 1990. Web. 23 Mar. 2011. <http://www.furinkan.com/takahashi>), p. 5.

feeling of verism of Ikkoku-kan in *Maison Ikkoku* is not an accident. In an interview, Takahashi confirms that Ikkoku-kan is based on a real building.[33] [Image 31] The art of *Maison Ikkoku* blends a fictional storyline with a true-to-life setting. Takahashi identified that "[readers/viewers] can see themselves in [the protagonist's] place."[34] Although *manga* is a stylized art form--certainly the use of large eyes, small mouths, and nubile bodies that are too perfect to be anatomically proportionate lack verism--the *mangaka* aims to evoke a true sense of the real, contemporary world.

The plotlines of Takahashi's *manga* also strive to capture the contemporary life of the artist. Despite the comedic foibles, amusing misunderstandings and hijinks, and laughing tone of Takahashi's stories, her art presents the contemporary world in both the use of visual elements and storytelling. Brigitte Koyama-Richard makes special note of *Maison Ikkoku* in her history of *manga*, *One Thousand Years of Manga*, to state that "[*Maison Ikkoku*] is a realistic look at Japanese society through the love affair between a student and a young widow."[35] Takahashi's artwork is firmly rooted in the place and time of its creation, much as Edo period print art is a reflection of the society from which it was created. In her 1997 interview with Seiji Horibuchi, Takahashi herself noted that she illustrates all of her works, even the more fantastical *manga*, with daily observations from the world around her.[36]

Techniques and approaches that stem from earlier work

In addition to continuing an aesthetic tradition that stems from *ukiyo-e*, modern *manga* utilizes numerous techniques carried over from earlier woodblock prints. *Manga* as it

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[33] Harley Acres, tr., "Another 100 Questions, taken from an interview between Takahashi and *Yahoo Japan*." *Rumiko Takahashi Interviews* (Rumic World, 2008. Web. 23 Mar. 2011. <http://www.furinkan.com/takahashi/>), p. 5.
[34] Smith, p. 6.
[35] Brigitte Koyama-Richard, *One Thousand Years of Manga* (Paris: Flammarion, 2007), p. 161.
[36] Seiji Horibuchi, "Interview with Rumiko Takahashi (1997)," p. 4.

is known today is very much a product of the contemporary world. Its style incorporates the technological developments that came about after the Meiji Reformation, particularly the modernizations of publishing systems, innovations in newspaper printing and formatting, and early twentieth-century influences from American comic strips (as defined by the sequential serial narrative comics with many frames, text balloons and story-telling devices).[37] However, despite the many advances that the contemporary world has contributed to modern *manga*, most art historians agree that the framework of *manga* owes itself equally, if not predominantly, to the pre-*manga* of earlier Japanese artistic traditions.

Paul Gravett suggests that one way that modern *manga* is read might be traced back to earlier Japanese art, looking well earlier than *ukiyo-e* to pre-modern *emakimono* scrolls and to decorative screen paintings. Gravett highlights the process of how a reader regards a work on a horizontal scroll, moving from right to left as the image opens out into a pictorial narrative. He hypothesizes that this flowing technique of reading and viewing survives in *manga* today. In the same way, Japanese screen painting is credited with the use of vertical white gaps, or "gutters," in *manga*. The gutters between panels of a *manga* function just as the separation of frames on a screen made the row of images readable as a narrative [Images 32 & 33].[38] Scott McCloud, in his discussion of the use of panel-to-panel transitions in comics, takes this theory one step further to suggest that Japanese *manga*, distinctly from Western comics traditions, inherits a structural format from the pre-modern artistic traditions of landscape paintings and uniquely Japanese narrative works of art.[39] These theories

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[37] Fusanosuke Natsume, "East Asia and Manga Culture: Examining Manga-Comic Cutlture in East Asia." *The Asian Face of Globalisation Reconstructing Identities, Institutions, and Resources* (The Papers of the 2001 API Fellows, part III, 2003, pp 95-106), p. 98.
[38] Gravett, p. 18.
[39] Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (New York: Harper Perennial, 1994), pp. 78-82.

suggest that the act of reading *manga* is a skill developed from "reading" a scroll or screen painting.

The actual labor of *manga* creation also echoes that of its progenitor, *ukiyo-e*. During the Edo period, the creation of a print was the endeavor of a team of creators: the painter, the engraver, the printer, and the publisher. The publisher would commission an artist, providing the materials (and often the theme). The finished painting, drawn in ink by brush, was pasted on a wood block and carved by the engraver.[40] After a number of black and white prints (20 or so) were made from the keyblock, these prints were returned to the artist that he might indicate the use of color and shade on each sheet. Notably, Rebecca Salter's in-depth study of the technical creation of woodblock printing and prints concludes that the artist did not color a complete print to be used as a master for reference.[41] Again, the individual sheets for each color would be pasted onto wood blocks to be cut by the carver. Finally, all of the blocks--the keyblock for black outline and the blocks for each color--were taken to the print workshop where the production line of printers would create and reproduce the final product that was trimmed, bundled, published and sold.

In the production of contemporary *manga*, the process is much the same. The *mangaka* chooses the subject of his or her work in conjunction with the publishers.[42] Like the *ukiyo-e* artists, the *mangaka* generally might work within a specific genre. Rumiko Takahashi creates *shōnen* and *seinen manga*, which are *manga* marketed to a young male audience. Once a story is approved, the *mangaka* will write and design his or her work and

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[40] Although authorship of a work is credited to the named artist responsible for illustrating the initial drawing, few original sketches survive because of the nature of this process. Because the carver would paste the original painting onto the woodblock and carve the wood from it, the procedure necessitated the destruction of the artist's fundamental drawing. The woodblock carvers were regarded as craftsmen and are generally unnamed, and the painter of the original drawing is given credit as the artist of the complete, printed work of art.

[41] Salter, p. 11.

[42] Koyama-Richard, p. 164.

pass instructions on to a team of assistants. Rumiko Takahashi considers herself totally responsible for her work and utilizes her assistants primarily for finishing backgrounds that she has sketched.[43] In her 1992 interview published in *Kappa Magazine*, Takahashi mentioned that she currently employed four assistants but that there were only three (including herself) who worked on her earlier pieces, *Urusei Yatsura* and *Maison Ikkoku*, and that she specifically does not employ male assistants "so that the girls will work more seriously if they aren't worried about boys."[44] Although *manga* creation does not involve the lengthy process of carving individual blocks for each color used in the final print--in fact *manga* are published in black and white with only the cover in color--the team of nameless assistants correlates to the workshops of carvers and printers who facilitated the creation of the finished printed pages in the Tokugawa era. The artists and workers who create modern *manga* are united under the publisher, just as was the scenario in creating nineteenth-century woodblock prints. Brigitte Koyama-Richard summarizes this parallel in *One Thousand Years of Manga* as she writes, "In the Edo era, a print was a joint endeavor between the painter, the engraver, the printer and the publisher. It is a situation that has hardly changed."[45] The techniques, process and organization of labor exhibit parallels between *ukiyo-e* and *manga*. In addition, the publisher's role of guiding genre and subject through the fads and popularities of the contemporary audience continues the same organization in modern Japanese comic book publication that was in place at the height of woodblock print art/literature.

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[43] Dylan Acres, tr. "Interview in Italy, taken from *Kappa Magazine* Issue 5, Star Comics, November 1992." *Rumiko Takahashi Interviews* (Rumic World, 1992. Web. 23 Mar. 2011. <http://www.furinkan.com/takahashi/>), p. 2-6.
[44] Dylan Acres, p. 6.
[45] Koyama-Richard, p. 164.

The themes illustrated in *ukiyo-e* varied with the intention of providing a "wide range of products, aiming at consumers with a wide range of interest" to keep up with the consumers' interests and the technologies of the time.[46] But most popular among the different styles of *ukiyo-e*, one of the most popular genres are the *bijin-ga*, or pictures of beautiful women. As early as the seventeenth century, prints artists developed stylistic iconography of how to depict the beautiful women who were the focus of this genre. Artists illustrated the figure in a classic pose, looking over the shoulder, and never in full frontal view.[47] Later, with the changes in print technology that allowed the color printing, from the mid-eighteenth-century, the standards of *bijin-ga* were further refined. Suzuki Harunobu[48] defined the presentation of the youthful, anonymous figure-types, illustrated as standing or seated, in simple architectural settings and an emphasis on seasonality.[49] [Image 34] Although by the end of the eighteenth-century *bijin-ga ukiyo-e* evolved to emphasize the upper part of the body, moving away from the full form of the standing or seated figure, Harunobu's presentation of the beautiful character still remained an iconic formality of the *bijin-ga* style.

In Takahashi's art, the standards of presentation developed in the Tokugawa period remain. Illustrations of her female characters, particularly when they are drawn alone (rather than within a narrative scene), are predominantly illustrated in a three-quarters profile, often looking at the viewer over a shoulder, in the same minimalist presentation of a background.

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[46] Marks, p. 14

[47] Richard Wilson, Class Lecture. History of Eastern Art. "Popular Culture." (International Christian University, Tokyo: 2 November 2004), p. 38.

[48] Suzuki Harunobu (鈴木・春信) (1725-1770) is considered one of the most famous *ukiyo-e* artists and the inventor of *nishiki-e* (錦絵), or multi-color woodblock prints, in 1765. Harunobu is best known for his *bijin-ga*, depicting the timeless female figure in simple architectural settings.

[49] Wilson, p. 37-8

[Image 35] The same approach of presenting the *bijin*, or beautiful woman, is used in *manga* that was developed long ago in woodblock print art.

In fact, argument could be made that one of the themes of Takahashi's series *Ranma ½* is the presentation of a variety of beautiful women. The plotline of the comedy *Ranma ½* follows the daily life of the protagonist, a young martial artist who bears a curse that he transforms from a boy into a girl every time that he is splashed with cold water (hot water returns him to his natural form), but one repetitive scenario of the thirty-six volume story is the appearance of a new female character with a matrimonial claim on Ranma. Ranma and his father reside in the home of the Tendo family, and it is the two fathers' intension that the families merge to continue their martial arts school through an arranged marriage with one of the three Tendo daughters. [Image 36] The romantic comedy centers around Ranma's relationship with the youngest daughter Akane, but amidst the teenage romance between these two characters who are yet unready to express their fondness for one another. Throughout the story, several additional potential romantic partners appear, each vying for Ranma's affection. These include the exotic, Chinese warrior Shampoo, who was beaten by Ranma in combat (and according to her tribe, if an Amazon is beaten by a woman she must kill her; if she is beaten by a man she must marry him); the aggressive Kodachi Kuno, the sister of a school upperclassman, Tatewaki Kuno who himself desires to date both Akane Tendo and/or the female Ranma; and the lovely okonomiyaki chef Ukyo Kuonji, yet another fiancée, this one the product of an arranged marriage from when she and Ranma were childhood friends while Ranma was travelling with his father. [Image 37] All of the female characters present a different appealing archetype of an attractive girl.

The archaic cultural influences of Japanese culture upon modern *manga* are impossible to ignore. Art historians uniformly agree that elements of "pre-*manga*" from art dating back to the Heian era of the twelfth century are undeniably integral to the development of *manga* as it is known today. Although Fusanosuke Natsume warns that it is "impossible to discuss *manga* within a framework based solely on traditional culture native to Japan because the background factors of *manga* are too complicated," Natsume takes time to specifically highlight the influence of *kamishibai*[50], *kōdan*[51], *rakugo*[52], and *setsuwa*[53] on modern *manga*.[54] Early Japanese art established how the art of *manga* is "read." Woodblock print culture established the process of how the art of *manga* is created. Likewise, *ukiyo-e* set a precedent of content, including the focus on the world as the artist sees it and the visual vocabulary of illustrating characters.

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[50] *Kamishibai* (紙芝居), or picture-card shows, is a method of storytelling that utilized sequential illustrations to narrate a story. Scholars believe that *kamishibai* originated during the twelfth century in Buddhist temples where monks would use *emakimono* to present tales with a moral lesson. *Kamishibai* enjoyed their greatest popularity throughout Japan from the 1920s to the 1950s, and they credited as "the missing link" in the development of modern *manga*.

[51] *Kōdan* (講談) is a style of traditional oral Japanese storytelling that developed in the Heian court and evolved through Japanese society until its decline during the Tokugawa period.

[52] *Rakugo* (落語), which literally translates as "fallen words," is a comedic storytelling in which a narrator presents a tale (usually with two or more speaking characters) form a seated position on stage. It uses no images or props beyond a paper fan (扇子 sensu) and a small cloth (手拭 tenugui). This type of narrative presentation gained popularity during the Edo period and continues to be performed as a style contemporary Japanese theater, a "sit-down comedy".

[53] *Setsuwa* (説話) is a form of narrative storytelling that pre-dates the fourteenth century. This literary genre comprises myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes.

[54] Natsume, "East Asia and Manga Culture," p. 98.

CHAPTER IV

UKIYO-E'S RELATIONSHIP TO MODERN *MANGA*

Manga is, first and foremost, a part of contemporary society. Not only is *manga* a feature of popular Japanese culture, but *manga* reflects the sensibilities of the contemporary Japanese audience, incorporating aspects of popular styles and culture into its stories and art. This statement of *manga*'s place in its contemporary world--rather than diminishing modern *manga*'s relation to Tokugawa era *ukiyo-e*--reinforces the correlation between contemporary *manga* and Edo period print culture because *ukiyo-e* is also considered a product and part of its own specific epoch and circumstances. An art historical comparison of the mass produced art in pre-modern East Asia, from the sixteenth-century through the nineteenth-century, notes that the flourishing of woodblock print art and literature could not have occurred without the prosperity, flourishing trade, stable government, good agriculture and increased population into cities that defined the Edo jidai.[1] Likewise, scholars agree that *manga* could not have developed to its current scale without its own set of specific circumstances: the influence of Western newspapers and serialized comic strips, a commuter culture that relies upon *manga* as a form of entertainment, and a tradition of visual narration inherited from Japanese culture. Both *ukiyo-e* and *manga* can be seen as destination points on the timeline of Japanese art, with the timeline of contemporary *manga* necessarily passing through the woodblock print art of the Tokugawa era.

In 2011, Masako Watanabe, senior research associate of the Department of Asian Art, The Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, launched an exhibition entitled, *Storytelling in*

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[1] Wilson, p. 38

Japanese Art, which presented Japanese painted narratives--in formats that included illustrated books, folding screens, hanging scrolls, playing cards, and individual printed pages--with the thesis that "Japan is a land of fascinating tales, with a long and rich tradition of pairing narrative texts with elaborate illustrations—a tradition that continues to this day with *manga* and other forms of animation and graphic art."[2] As art historians begin to investigate Japanese popular culture, specifically with an interest in the origins of style, themes and technique, scholars are today finding that the popular art and literature of contemporary *manga* are truly a part of a Japanese *need* to express art and story together in an illustrated narrative. Russian filmmaker Sergei Eisenstein identified a link between the use of ideograms in Japanese writing as his explanation for the "inherently cinematic" nature of much of Japanese culture, going so far as to state that the combination of pictographs to express complex thoughts in Japanese text was a "form of montage that influenced all Japanese arts."[3] Much of the art presented in Watanabe's exhibition, *Storytelling in Japanese Art*, predates *ukiyo-e*; however, Watanabe highlights the techniques of narration that originated in these earlier works of art that were synthesized in nineteenth-century woodblock publications and now actively function in *manga* today.

In his forward to Andreas Marks's *Japanese Woodblock Prints: Artists Publishers and Masterworks, 1680-1900*, a brief essay entitled, "The Buoyant World of Japanese Prints," Stephen Addiss likens *ukiyo-e* prints to contemporary pop songs.[4] Despite the prized nature of these woodblock prints today, in their time, these works were merely disposable popular amusements. Study find that *manga* volumes receive a similar treatment in contemporary society as a *manga* magazine (雑誌), comprised of the most recent

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[2] Masako Watanabe, p. 3.
[3] Cf. Schodt, p. 25.
[4] Marks, p. 9.

installments of several titles by its given publishing company, is purchased (often near a train station) consumed during the purchaser's commute, and then disposed of once the reader has finished.[5] *Manga* critic Eiji Ōtsuka posed the question in the media magazine *Tsukuru* in 1994, "Why were *manga* able to surpass, even overwhelm, other media in postwar Japanese culture?" His answer: "Ultimately, the main reason must surely have been their utterly, almost hopelessly 'cheap' quality."[6] It was in this postwar era, in 1959, that *manga* magazines adopted their modern format when Kōdansha, one of Japan's largest publishers, issued *Shūkan Shōnen Magazine* (週刊少年マガジン), or "Weekly Boy's Magazine," the first of several all-*manga* omnibus magazine publications. The printed volumes of *manga* today and woodblock printed books of the Edo jidai share a tradition of cheap publication to provide an inexpensive, disposable consumer product for their contemporary voracious readers.

The amusing coincidence is that Edo period woodblock printing is often theorized to have flourished in part due to a desire to keep production costs down. Movable-type printing was available during the Tokugawa era, introduced in 1590 by Jesuit missionaries who imported the Gutenberg technique (invented in 1445) and a second technique brought back to Japan from Korea after military expeditions in 1592-93; however, moveable-type printing never took off as a standard printing technique as it did in other countries. Most scholars note the close association between art and literature that made woodblock printing more suited to Japanese publication--and facilitated the production of illustrations as inseparable from narration--but, Brigitte Koyama-Richard notes that ability to reuse engraved boards allowed prints to be reissued with minimal costs, rather than typography that necessitated

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[5] Schodt, *Dreamland Japan*, p. 81.
[6] Cf. Schodt, *Dreamland Japan*, p. 81.

compositions be reset when the characters were reused.[7] Edo era book publications written

in a colloquial style and with large-size illustrations, called *kusa-zōshi* (草双紙), were

defined by the colors of their bindings: *aka-hon* (赤本), or "red books," comprised legends

and tales, especially targeted to a young audience, published from 1673 on; *kuro-hon* (黒本),

or "black books," were in circulation between 1744 and 1751; *ao-hon* (青本), or "green

books," re-told dramas from popular theatre and were published from 1745 on; and *kibyōshi* (

黄表紙), or "yellow books," were the most popular and widely circulated and featured

simple texts and extensive illustrations, and appeared from 1775 and remained popular until

1818. Other types of Tokugawa woodblock print books include *sharebon* (洒落本), or

"books for men about town," which focused on the humor and entertainment of Edo's

pleasure quarters; *kokkeibon* (滑稽本), books with comic material, literally translated "comic

book;" and *ninjōbon* (人情本), which included moral tales and romantic stories, and directed

toward young female readers.

From these distinctions of different publications of Edo books, one identifies the

development of genres of modern *manga*. But perhaps more importantly, scholars note the

emergence of Japan--beginning with the merchant class in Edo, the capital city and center of

Tokugawa culture--as a culture that consumes literature, which was necessarily accompanied

by woodblock print illustrations. Art and literature as inseparable in illustrated narratives

was enjoyed by an outstanding percentage of the Edo population; most scholars cite a literacy

rate of 80% population in urban centers, with male literacy rate of no less than 85% in Edo,

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[7] Koyama-Richard, pp. 41-2.

the capital.[8] While art historians who study modern *manga* cite contemporary Japan's

commuter culture as a fundamental reason for *manga*'s flourishing popularity, Japan's

literary culture--which began its renaissance during the Edo period--deserves ample credit.

In his early study, *manga* scholar Frederick Schodt highlights the impressive number of

manga published throughout Japan. He notes that Japan is one of the most "print saturated

nations" with over 5 billion books and magazines published in the single year of 1984, and--

more impressively--27 percent, or roughly 1.38 billion, were *manga* (in both magazine and

book forms).[9] Paul Gravett updated this figure in 2004 to indicate that nearly 40 percent of

all books and magazines sold in Japan were *manga*.[10] Japanese *manga* is a fundamental part

of contemporary Japanese culture, but this broad readership actually finds its roots in the

print culture of the nineteenth-century.

The Tokugawa period of Japanese history marks an explosion of written literature and

a high rate of literary and consumption.[11] Due to the increased population into large cities,

the flourishing agriculture and trade, the stable government, and the relative peace enjoyed

during this time, the Japanese population was able to devote more time to entertainment,

which became the basis for much of Japanese culture of the time. The art and literature

illustrate the influence of the pleasure quarters and their importance in the contemporary

culture of the time. The prosperity enjoyed by the merchant class population of Edo and

other Tokugawa era cities gave rise to a literary culture that consumed printed material with a

voracity reflected in its high literacy rates. The high literacy rate yielded a need for the high

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[8] Kazuo Asano, "Basic Knowledge for Japanese Culture, Edo Culture." *Syakazuka: Past 500 Years from Kyoto to Echigo*. English translation from Japanese. web. 19 August, 2012. < http://www.syakazuka.com/contents_eng/datas /data_01.html>, 29 May 2002.
[9] Schodt, *Manga! Manga!*, p. 12.
[10] Gravett, p. 18.
[11] Wilson (4 November 2004), p. 38.

volume of works published during this time, which in turn accounts for the vast variety of content and genre. Japan's *manga* genres are much more diverse than those of other countries, a fact that *manga* historians reference as inherited from Edo period publications.[12]

The area in which modern *manga* best recalls the artwork of the Tokugawa period is in the area of publication for the mass public. Tadashi Kobayashi centers his discussion of "The Development of *Ukiyo-e*" on the movement of art work during the Edo period into "an art form for the masses rather than a luxury item permitted only to the select few."[13] The ability of publishers to cheaply print numerous editions of an original woodblock print made the artwork accessible to a wide audience, particularly among the wealthy merchant class. Kobayashi credits this broad proliferation of viewership to the use of woodblock prints in *e-iribon* (絵入本), or "books with inserted pictures," also referred to as "illustrated books." *E-iribon* featured new genres within the "pictures from the floating world," highlighting erotic stories and literature (*kōshoku-bon*, 好色本), chronicle of fabulous deeds of heroism (*kinpira-bon*, 金平本 or 公平本), and accounts about well-known Kabuki actors and famous courtesans (*hyōban-ki*, 評判記).[14] As the publication industry rapidly expanded during the Manji and Kanbun eras[15], so did the viewership and introduction of genres in *ukiyo-e*.

What art historians see in modern *manga* is an even greater proliferation of themes and genres in the illustrated narratives popular during the Tokugawa period. *Manga*'s subject matter reaches far beyond *ukiyo-e*'s original classification as "pictures from the

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[12] Koyama-Richard, p. 59-61, 64.

[13] Tadashi Kobayashi, *Ukiyo-e: An Introduction to Japanese Woodblock Prints*. Mark A. Harbison, tr. (Tokyo, New York, and London: Kodansha International, 1997), p. 67.

[14] Kobayashi, *Ukiyo-e: An Introduction to Japanese Woodblock Prints*, p. 70.

[15] The Manji era (*Manji gannen*, 万治元年) (1658-61) and the Kanbun era (*Kanbun gannen*, 寛文元年) (1661-73) are subdivisions of the broader Edo (or Tokugawa) period (1600-1868). The necessity of this distinction is limited. Inclusion of these subdivisions are presented here only to draw attention to the very early occurrence of woodblock prints as illustration for narration in the history of *ukiyo-e*.

floating world;" however, some of the subgenres found in *ukiyo-e*'s early *e-iribon*

publications, such as erotica and epic narratives, remain staples of *manga*'s massive breath of

content. In fact, Brigitte Koyama-Richard notes that the *shunga*[16] is a genre of *ukiyo-e* that

directly translates to modern *manga*, with images of pornography and erotic illustrations

capable of shocking and/or exciting contemporary audiences.[17] Sub-genres of Tokugawa

literature, such as *sharebon* (洒落本), *kokkeibon* (滑稽本), and *ninjōbon* (人情本) can be

seen as directly leading up to *manga*'s present-day classifications by genre and audience

type, such as *shōnen manga* (少年漫画) and *shōjo manga* (少女漫画). However, even if one

chooses to be more conservative about drawing correlations of these woodblock print

drawings as directly influencing the development of contemporary Japanese comic books--as

Adam L. Kern would remind readers to be hesitant in accepting too much of *manga*'s origin

as stemming from Edo sources--it is generally agreed upon that the illustrated literary works

of the Tokugawa jidai are integral to *manga*'s development.

Art historians walk a tight-rope between giving proper credit to *manga*'s history from

earlier Japanese artistic and literary predecessors and ignoring *manga*'s identity as a modern

artform that owes its identity to elements imported from modern cinema, newspapers and

comic books from Western cultures, in addition to its uniquely Japanese history. Adam L.

Kern warns scholars of the pitfalls of inventing "a monolithic, transhistorical *manga* culture

that risks distorting both the modern as well as the pre-modern forms."[18] Kern scorns

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[16]*Shunga* (春画), or erotic art, typically refers to woodblock print art; however, erotic pictures called *shunga*
actually predates *ukiyo-e* with some examples dating to Heian period hand scrolls. Translated literally, the term
shunga comprises the characters for "spring" and "picture," with the idea that this "picture of spring" plays
upon "spring" as a common euphemism for sex.
[17] Although *shunga* and erotic woodblock print art may translate well into a discussion of modern *manga*,
because Rumiko Takahashi does not illustrate/write pornographic *manga*, this paper will not discuss this aspect
of comparison.
[18] Kern, p. 132.

scholarly attempts to present a seamless history of Japanese comic books that trace back to pre-modern Japanese illustrated narratives, specifically *kibyōshi*, with an intent of presenting a myth that elevates *manga* as a cultural endpoint on the timeline of Japanese art history.[19] Notably, Kern participates in the same manipulation that he derides when he titles of his book, *Manga from the Floating World: Comicbook Culture and the Kibyōshi of Edo Japan*. Scholars of pre-modern Japanese art and literature use *manga* to attract modern attention to their research on *kibyōshi* and other genres of Tokugawa artistic and literary forms while simultaneously *manga* scholars use pre-modern Japanese works to validate scholarly attention of this popular culture phenomenon by tracing its history back to its roots in earlier Japanese cultural history. To avoid stepping over the line of Kern's "monolithic, transhistorical, distorting" presentation, I believe that discussions of *manga*'s roots must distinguish the difference between predecessor and progenitor.   Frederick Schodt draws attention *kibyōshi* as an Edo period form of visual narration that functions a predecessor to *manga*, a possible influencer of *manga*, but he avoids the pitfall of claiming that *kibyōshi* fed directly into *manga*.

> In the early nineteenth century, *kibyōshi*, 'yellow cover' booklets, were produced by the thousands. Like modern comics, *kibyōshi* evolved from illustrated tales for children and gradually encompassed more and more sophisticated adult material. Most pages consisted of a drawing combined with the text in a block above it to form an illustrated, running story.[20]

The parallels between *kibyōshi* and today's *manga* are noteworthy. Adam Kern, in his in-depth study of *kibyōshi*, suggests that art historians tend to go too far when they insist upon a link of causation between *kibyōshi* and contemporary *manga*. *Kibyōshi*, which is generally

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[19] Kern, pp. 129-131.
[20] Schodt, *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga*, p. 138. See also Schodt, *Manga! Manga!*, p. 37.

regarded as a sub-genre of the larger body of published woodblock print art/literature of the Edo jidai, is definitively a predecessor of modern *manga*; however, the distinction that Kern and other scholars make is that *kibyōshi* or *ukiyo-e* (or any individual type of Tokugawa art or literature, for that matter) is not the sole progenitor.

Nobuo Tsuji takes the most conservative position of the role of Japanese tradition on modern *manga* in his essay, "Early Medieval Picture Scrolls as Ancestors of *Anime* and *Manga*," when he states that *manga* does not derive *entirely* from the Western comicbook; however, most art historians are willing to go further.[21] By all means, credit is due to the influence of European newspapers and magazines and to American comics and animation, but the sophistication of Japanese *manga* as a comics art form, distinct from any of the sequentially illustrated narrative traditions of any other country, must owe to an inheritance from Japanese culture.

Like any chapter of art history, techniques and styles in Japanese popular art experience an ebb and flow that blurs the lines of origin. One such example might be the sophisticated use of sequential illustration to create panel transitions indicating movement and passage of time in modern Japanese *manga*. Scott McCloud highlights Japanese comics' use of transitions as distinct from Western comics, utterly unlike the panel-to-panel transitions employed in American or European publications.[22] The typical discussion of *manga*'s ability to present the passage of time and movement in a film-like presentation is credited to the revolution of post-World War II *manga* by Osamu Tezuka. Tezuka is quoted from his autobiography to use Western cinematic technique in his illustrations.

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[21] Nobuo Tsuji, "Early Medieval Picture Scrolls as Ancestors of *Anime* and *Manga*." *Births and Rebirths in Japanese Art*. Nicole Coolidge Rousmaniere, ed., Leiden: Hotei Publishing, 2001, pp. 53-82.
[22] McCloud, pp. 78-82.

I began to use cinematic techniques…. French and German movies that I

had seen as a schoolboy became my model. I experimented with close-ups

and different angles, and instead of using only one frame for an action scene

or the climax (as was customary), I made a point of depicting a movement

or facial expression with many frames, even many pages.[23]

Tezuka's cinematic approach to illustrative storytelling revolutionized the Japanese comic

industry that had grown stale during the years of pro-war propaganda, but post-war

innovations of Tezuka do not receive all of the credit for *manga*'s ability to convey

movement, action and time. In *One Thousand Years of Manga*, Brigitte Koyama-Richard

credits Katsushika Hokusai as the "source of inspiration for his contemporaries and his

successors alike."[24]

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[23] Cf. John A. Lent, "Japanese Comics." *Handbook of Japanese Popular Culture*. Richard Gid Powers, and
Hidetoshi Kato, eds. (New York, Connecticut and London: 1989), p. 229.
[24] Koyama-Richard, p. 79.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

A Timeline Moving Toward Manga

The challenge of answering the question of whether or not the Japanese woodblock prints of the Tokugawa era can be seen as the direct predecessor of modern *manga* brings to focus several central questions. The first question centers upon placing *manga* at the end of the timeline of Japanese art history. Do *manga* scholars overreach to present the history of Japanese art as a linear path leading to modern *manga* as its conclusion? Or does it suffice to simply emphasize a more moderate statement that older forms of Japanese art participate in *manga*'s history. If *manga*'s history is inexorably linked to its Japanese past--because Japanese comics *are* Japanese and would not exist as they do were they created by any other culture--woodblock print culture *is* a prominent point on the timeline of *manga*'s development.[1]

Acknowledgement must be given to critics of *manga* history. Adam L. Kern is correct in his assessment that one risks distorting the roles of Japanese art forms if one attempts to claim a linear path of causality leading to *manga*. *Manga*'s creation is owed to numerous sources, both indigenous and foreign. However, part of Kern's objection to the presentation of a history of *manga* is largely due to the newness of *manga* studies.[2] Perhaps the flaw in creating a timeline of *manga*'s development lies not in attributing its origins to specific moments in Japanese art history but in not presenting an appropriate method by

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[1] The participation of other factors *manga*'s evolution--the innovations from Western printed material or cinema, for example--do not diminish the fact that *manga* is distinctly and definitely Japanese. The emergence of a more global environment in the contemporary era results in an art historical discourse that must include influences from other cultures; however, despite the participation of other factors in *manga*'s history, scholars agree that *manga* remains manifestly Japanese, distinct from other comics traditions in either the West or other countries in Asia.

[2] Kern, p. 133.

which to discuss the *manga* itself. Because of the vastness of *manga* as a subject, too many exceptions and blanket statements must be made if scholars attempt to discuss *manga*'s development as the whole. The most authoritative scholars on *manga*--authors and art historians such as Frederick Schodt, Fusanosuke Natsume, Paul Gravett and Brigitte Koyama-Richard, to name a few,--attempt to avoid these pitfalls by separating their discussions of modern *manga* into genres, seldom speaking of *manga* as a whole but instead addressing the themes, techniques and influences upon specific types of *manga*, studying *shōnen manga* and *shōjo manga* as distinct groups, and even separating out sub-genres by topic, such as *jidai geki* (historical drama) or *yaoi* (boys' love stories) outside of their respective types.

The approach of this study is to look at the work of one specific *mangaka*, Rumiko Takahashi. Limiting the scope of investigation to one artist/author allows a focused inquiry and comparison of *ukiyo-e*'s participation on Takahashi's work. Rumiko Takahashi is a formally educated *mangaka* who works within the *shōnen* genre. Most of her *manga* are comedies; however, her body of work also includes elements of horror, romance, and certainly epic narratives. Takahashi is extraordinarily prolific, and her career spans several decades with great popularity from her contemporary Japanese and foreign audiences. Takahashi's artwork makes an excellent representative for *manga* because of all of the aforementioned qualities. A broader statement applying to *manga* as a whole can be extrapolated from discussions about the influence of Edo period woodblock prints upon Takahashi's art, but this discussion of *ukiyo-e* and *manga* are not contingent upon the inevitable exceptions that would arise were one to attempt to discuss *manga* a whole.

This methodology avoids the failures warned against by Adam Kern. Kern cautions against insisting causation while drawing parallels between modern *manga* and earlier Japanese illustrated narratives.[3] Broad statements about *manga* as a whole present a challenge when discussing the origins and influences of *manga* because one cannot state that all modern *mangaka* are familiar with *ukiyo-e*, because some examples of modern *manga* exist outside of the trends cultivated in contemporary Japanese cartooning, and because speaking about *manga* as a whole does not lend itself to specific examples. The undertaking is inappropriate. However, a study of Rumiko Takahashi's body of work yields a productive discussion of the participation of nineteenth-century woodblock prints on the history of modern *manga*. One finds in her work specific references to *ukiyo-e* images, techniques and a conscious use of historical culture as a part of her contemporary art. Once it is established that a popular and prolific *mangaka* creates her work with reliance upon the history of Japanese art, it is impossible to banish the debate forever. Takahashi's art references a history of *manga* that highlights Tokugawa era woodblock print culture as a part of its timeline.

A Similar Cultural Role

Another way to look at *ukiyo-e*'s relationship to modern *manga* lies outside of the debate between woodblock print art as predecessor or progenitor. Moving past the clear transference of style and technique that *manga* has inherited from past forms of Japanese art, one can identify a similar cultural role in contemporary Japanese comics that takes the place of woodblock print art/literature from the Edo era.

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[3] Kern, p. 131.

Manga's success in Japan--it is noteworthy that Japanese comics enjoy a popularity and esteem unsurpassed by the cartooning traditions of any other country--is most often attributed to contemporary Japanese culture. Paul Gravett writes of a "need" for *manga*, citing such aspects of society as the strong commuter culture, as an explanation for why *manga* has grown into such an important feature of Japanese life.[4] The role of *manga* in contemporary Japanese culture is to be consumed by the populace. Like the woodblock print art before it, *manga* is viewed and read and then discarded. *Manga* is the inheritor of the Tokugawa period's development of recreational reading. Art and literature created as pure amusement for consumption by the broad populace at large--without the limitations of higher social or economic status--is the product of Edo culture. This began a trend that continued into present day Japanese society, and *manga* may function in the same way that *ukiyo-e* functioned during the Tokugawa period.

The publication of woodblock prints in the Edo era developed two types of literature: *shomotsu* (書物), which comprised useful articles, such as scholarly essays, educational works or religious texts; and *sōshi* (草紙), or books for entertainment, which were old out of specialist outlets known as *ezōshiya* (絵草紙屋).[5] It is to these *sōshi* illustrated works that many scholars attribute Japan's high literacy rate[6]; according to the Central Intelligence Agency's World Factbook, Japan now enjoys a literacy rate of 99% for all persons, male and female, over the age of 15 years.[7] The Japanese publication industry, in 2007 attributed an

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[4] Gravett, p. 8.

[5] Koyama-Richard, p. 40.

[6] It is estimated that Japan's literacy rate at the time of the collapse of the Tokugawa shogunate (1868) was over 40 percent, a level that compares favorably with many Western nations at the time ("Japanese Education and Literacy." *Asian Info*. Web. 15 Aug. 2012. <
http://www.asianinfo.org/asianinfo/japan/education_literacy.htm>)

[7] "Field Listing: Literacy." World Fact Book. Central Intelligence Agency. 2002. Web. 15 Aug. 2012. <
https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/fields/2103.html>

annual 406 billion yen (approximately $3.6 billion USD) to sales from *manga*.[8] *Manga* are

part of the same concept of massproduced consumer product as the Edo period print culture.

Manga, most commonly, appear on newsstands in large volumes, similar to a telephone

book, printed in monochrome on inexpensive paper. These *manga* magazines, such as

Shōnen Jump, *Shōnen Champion*, *Shōnen Magazine*, and *Shōnen Sunday*, to name four of the

top boys' comics magazines, usually comprise around 350 pages and as many as fifteen

illustrated stories. *Manga* is a significant player in the area of visual arts and literary works

consumed by the Japanese public, and its popularity has expanded far beyond the borders of

Japan's archipelago, reaching fans all across the globe.

Contemporary Japanese artists such as Takashi Murakami and Yoshitomo Nara have

elevated elements of popular culture, such as *manga*, into a part of the dominant artistic

identity of Japan today. Adrian Favell, professor of Sociology at Sciences Po, Paris and

author of *Before and After Superflat: A Short History of Japanese Contemporary Art, 1900-*

2011, notes the shift in the official foreign policy in the 2000s when *manga* and *anime* were

printed on official brochures as part of the *Yōkoso Japan!* (Welcome to Japan) tourist

campaigns.[9] Contemporary Japanese culture embraces the art of *manga* and *anime*, and this

consumer art has become emblematic of Japanese popular culture today. Just as *ukiyo-e* was

elevated from popular diversion to high art by Western collectors and art historians, *manga*

also has the potential to be regarded as a respected avenue of Japanese creativity that defines

its culture, just as woodblock print art did of the Edo period.

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[8] Cube. "2007 年のオタク市場規模は 1866 億円―メディアクリエイトが白書." *Inside for All Games*. 18
December 2007. Web. 10 October 2012. < http://www.inside-games.jp/article/2007/12/18/25855.html>.
[9] Favell, p. 41.

Progenitor or merely Predecessor

Contemporary scholars are hesitant to definitively state that the woodblock prints of

the nineteenth-century are the progenitors of modern *manga* because of the vast field of

genres encompassed by *manga*. There can be no doubt that *manga* received influence from

woodblock print art because of the similarities in style, function, and the technical

innovations of creation that undoubtedly stem from those earlier works. When one looks at

the work of an individual artist, such as the contemporary *mangaka* Rumiko Takahashi, the

evidence is even more striking as one investigates the influences of *ukiyo-e* on her art.

Modern *manga* is the current incarnation of centuries of evolution of Japanese narrative art,

and Tokugawa era woodblock prints are a part of this same timeline. If *ukiyo-e* is not

directly the "father" of modern *manga*, scholars must acknowledge it to be at least a sort of

"uncle."

Within the *manga* of today are the traces of numerous sources. Scholars correctly

identify the idea of a pre-*manga* in the twelfth-century *Chōjūgiga*, or "Animal Scrolls," by

Bishop Toba Sōjō as the beginning of *manga* due to the pairing of words with illustration--

which fulfills Fusanosuke Natsume's definition of the basic requirements of *manga*--and the

use of an abstract visual language inherent to comic book illustration, such as illustrating a

laughing rabbit with his eyes presented as a curved line, as a human face would be drawn

with laughing eyes but which is biologically impossible for a rabbit eye to replicated.[10]

[Image 2] *Manga*'s history has a starting point that can be debated any of a dozen ways,

with the origin of Japanese comics beginning as early as the twelfth-century with Toba

Sōjō's *Chōjūgiga* or as late as the post-war period when Osamu Tezuka revolutionized

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[10] Fusanosuke Natsume, "Japanese Manga: Its Expression and Popularity." (*Asian/Pacific Book Development* (*ABD*), vol. 34, no. 1, October 2003, pp. 3-5), p. 3; McCloud, pp. 130-1.

manga into the style and format that exists today. The window between these two dates comprises eight centuries of Japanese art, and even the most conservative art historian must recognize the participation of Japanese traditions in the development of *manga*, regardless of its partnership with modern culture and the import of foreign influences.

It is easy to relate modern Japanese *manga* to earlier forms of Japanese art and illustration. The techniques of creating and reading *manga* illustrate the participation of contemporary *manga* as part of larger tradition of Japanese art history. Japan has a long history of artistic traditions, and creation of art with a function to tell a story through the use of sequential illustrations is a process visible in many avenues of pre-modern Japanese art. Hand-scrolls, screen paintings, woodblock print art, and paper theatre are all predecessors to and influencers of modern Japanese comic books. Likewise, Western comic strips, cartoons, animation and cinema are essential participants in the creation of *manga* as a modern Japanese art form. *Manga* owes its creation to numerous "parents," but the import of foreign influence does not lessen the participation *manga*'s indigenous predecessors. In reality, as *manga* scholars such as Adam L. Kern and Fusanosuke Natsume, have stated in their respective works, the history of modern *manga* is simultaneously an art form of the modern era and a tradition stemming from traditional Japanese culture.

IMAGES

Image 1

Osamu Tezuka (手塚•治虫), known as *manga no kami-sama* (漫画の神様), or the "god of comics," is famous for revolutionizing *manga* into the modern art form known today. His work is cited as the origin for the style of large eyes, small mouths, and small noses that identify the iconography of Japanese comics, as well as introducing the cinematic techniques into his sequential illustration that defines how *manga* are read.

Tezuka, Osamu. "Tezuka Stamps." Japanese Postal Service. 1997.

Image 2

Toba Sōjō (鳥羽 僧正). *Chōjū-jinbutsu-giga* (鳥獣人物戯画), first scroll. Tokyo National Museum. Tokyo, Japan. 12th c.

Image 3

Detail from *The Great Woven Cap* showing the Kamatari's wife, a diver, leaping into the sea, attached to the ship by a five-colored rope (*goshiki no ito*) to retrieve the jewel stolen from Katamari, now hidden in the depths of the sea in the Dragon Palace. Katamari's wife is spotten by a dragon guard on her way back to Kamatari's ship, but before she is overcome by him, she bravely opened her chest with a knife to hide the jewel inside so that it is found when her body was pulled from the water, thus allowing Kamatari to bring the jewel to Kōfukuji and place it in the forehead of Shakyamuni Buddha, illuminating the temple with his wisdom.

The Great Woven Cap (vol. 3. of 3). Edo Period (1615-1868), second half of the 17th century. Ink and color on paper, each page 9¼ x $16^{11}/_{16}$ in. (23.4 x 17 cm). Japanese MS 106, Spencer collection, The New York Public Library, Asor Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Image 4
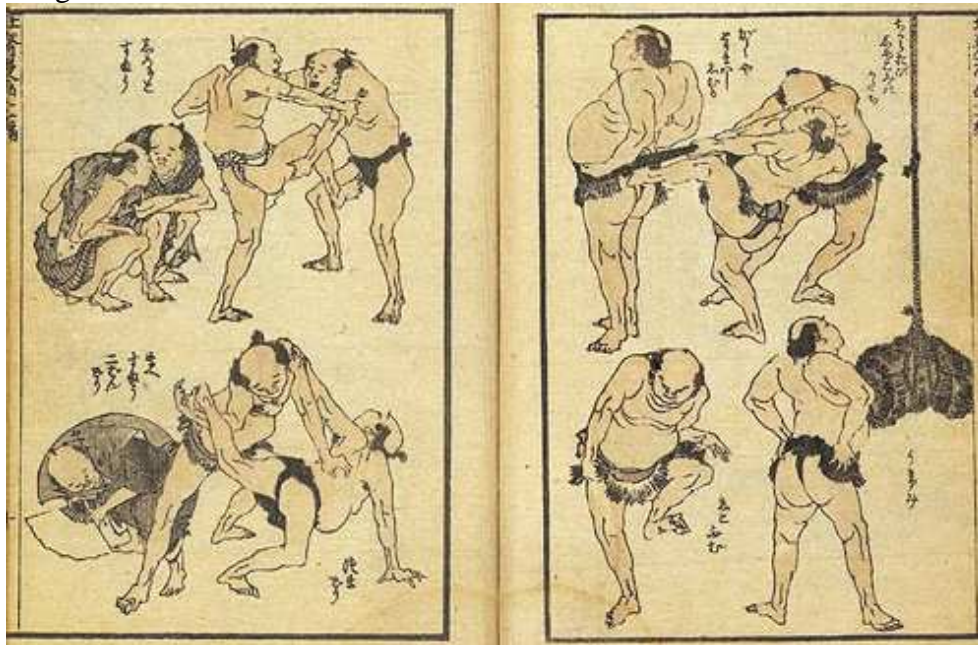
Hokusai Manga (北斎漫画). Edo period, 1814–1834
Collection of Hagi Uragami Museum.

Image 5

Takahashi, Rumiko. *Katte na Yatsura* (勝手なやつら). Tokyo: Shogakukan.1978.

Image 6

One of many scenes in which the protagonists encounter monsters and demons: the protagonists of *Inu-Yasha* are assaulted by an army of ogres. The ogres have been conjured by a painter with demonic abilities, thus the presentation of the horde of creatures to resemble traditional Japanese art works is intentional.

Takahashi, Rumiko. "Painted Ogres." *Inu*-Yasha. vol. 6. San Francisco: Viz Communications, 2000, p.150-1.

Image 7

Hokusai's *Inhabitants of the Barbarian Lands* portrays outsiders as demons and monsters.

Hokusai - First Manga Master, p. 130-1 - Inhabitants of the Barbarian Lands

Image 8

Kagome is pursued by centipede demon, who appears as the multi-armed torso of a woman on the body of an improbably large centipede.

Takahashi, Rumiko. "Kagome Pursued by Centipede Demon." 1996. *Inu-Yasha*. vol. 1. p.39.

Image 9

Hokusai
manga
illustration

Hokusai - First Manga Master, p. 132-3 – "The three-eyed monster, the monk-musician, and two women with extenisible necks"

Image 10

A crow demon watched the protagonists. The features of the animal are altered to illustrate that the creature is a demon, not just a regular crow. The demon possesses three wide eyes, a rat-like tail, and sharp, pointed teeth within its beak. Although the viewer recognizes that this creature resembles a crow, the overall impression references depictions of a tengu, such as in Katsushika Hokusai's demon prints [Image 11].

Takahashi, Rumiko. "Crow Demon." *Inu-Yasha*. 1996. vol. 1. p. 82.

Image 11

Four demons from Hokusai's *Hyaku Monogatari*: yurei is in the top left, with a picture of a Yamauba underneath. On the right side in the top is a tengu, and underneath that is a mountain yokai called a Hihi. Hihi is the Japanese word for baboon, and at the time a baboon was no less a fantastical creature than a mermaid or tengu.

Hokusai - First Manga Master, p. 136-7 - Demons (Yurei, Yamauba, Tengu and Hini)

Image 12

Fig. 4.28 Kohada Koheiji (こはだ小平二)

Fig. 4.29 Oiwa San (お岩さん)

Fig. 4.30 Sarayashiki (さらやしき, The Tale of the Dish Mansion)

Fig. 4.31 Shūnen (しうねん, Obsession)

Fig. 4.32 Warai Han'nya (笑いはんにゃ, Grinning Han'nya)

These images from Hokusai's *Hyaku Monogatari* (百物語), *One Hundred Ghost Stories* series (ca. 1830), set the precedent for the presentation of the horrid and otherworldly in subsequent *ukiyo-e* illustrations and beyond. The woodblock prints depict several monsters and ghosts from famous Japanese horror tales. Many scholars, such as Zilia Papp, identify these portrayals as responsible for the way modern *mangaka* interpret supernatural figures.

Cf. Papp, Zilia. *Traditional Monster Imagery in Manga, Anime and Japanese Cinema* (Kent, UK: Global Oriental Ltd., 2011), p. 73.

Image 13

Takahashi, Rumiko. "Monstrous Soun Tendo." *Ranma ½*. vol. 19. 1997. p. 134.
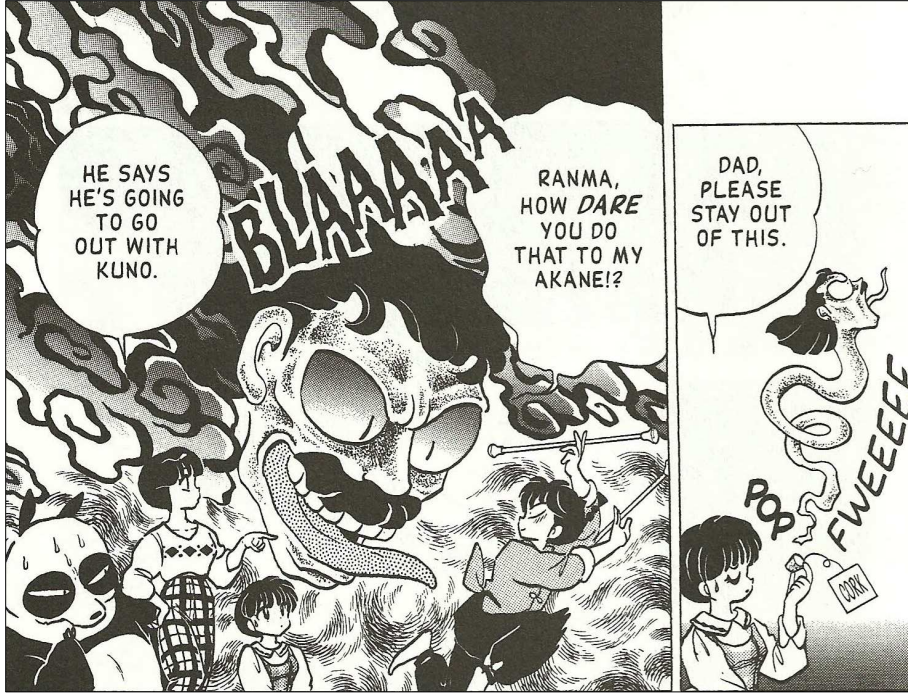
In several scenes in Takahashi's *Ranma ½* Akane's father seems to momentarily transform into a terrifying monster as a presentation of his fatherly protective fervor. As a monster, he takes on the same traits as the monsters and ghosts in Hokusai's *Hyaku Monogatari* (百物語), *One Hundred Ghost Stories* series (ca. 1830).

Image 14

Takahashi, Rumiko. 人魚の森 (*Ningyo no mori*). Tokyo: Shogakukan, Inc., 1988. p. 14.

Rumiko Takahashi achieved her desired tone of myth in her *Mermaid Saga* by setting many of the scenes in small villages and towns the like of which many Japanese readers are familiar. The settings are not specific sites, but instead, Takahashi aimed to present the "typical small Japanese village" of legend and fable, familiar to her audience. In the scene in which the character Mana is introduced, she recalls her youth in one such village, deep within the mountains and forests, separated from the outside world and inhabited by the mermaids. Through her use of imagery, Takahashi suggests a fictitious place that is believable because the viewer recognizes this type of locale from fairy tales and stories. Takahashi uses this familiarity with folklore to conjure a world that feels very real.
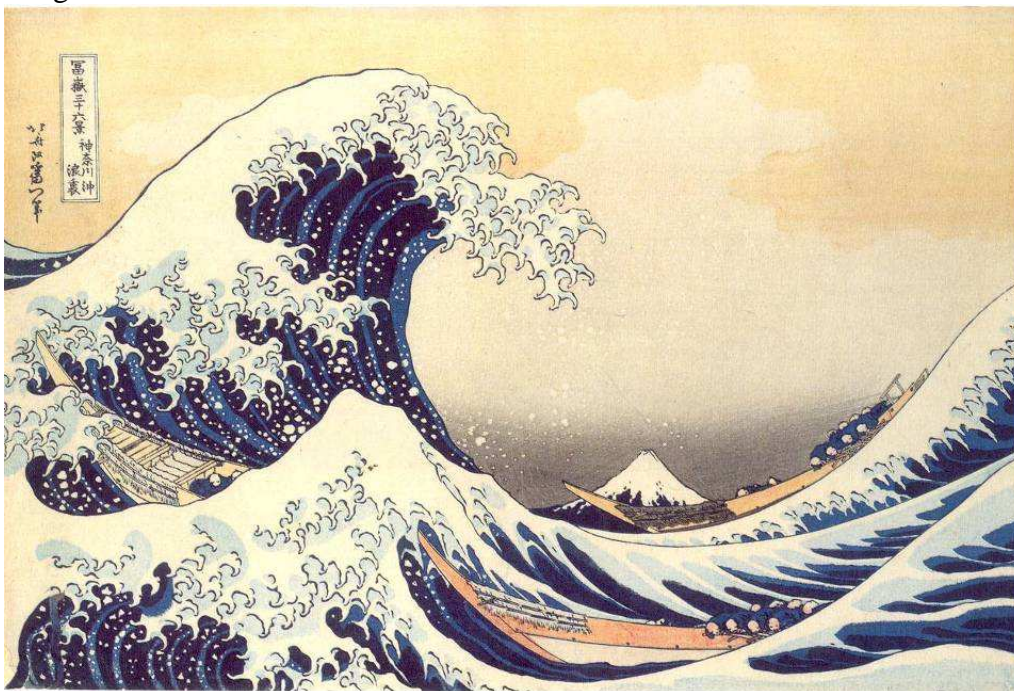
Image 15

Takahashi, Rumiko. "300 Episode Poster." *The Art of Ranma ½*. Hyoe Narita, ed. in chief (San Francisco: Viz Communications, 2001), p. 34-5.
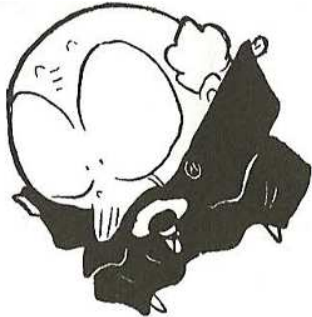

Image 16

Katsushika Hokusai (葛飾 北斎). *The Great Wave off Kanagawa* from *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*. Color Woodblock print. 25.7 cm × 37.8 cm (10.1 in × 14.9 in). c. 1829–32.

Image 17

Takahashi, Rumiko. Ranma ½ extra-large poster. <u>Ranma ½ Memorial Book</u>. 1996

Image 18

Detail of "Happosai,"
cf. Takahashi, Rumiko,
Ranma ½. Vol. 8, part 8.
p. 131

Takahashi, Rumiko. "Happosai at the Beach." *Ranma ½*. Vol. 8, part 10. 1997. p. 166.

Image 19

Kuniyoshi, Utagawa. "Fashionable Octopus Games." 1840-42. Color woodblock print, ōban. Published by Fujiokaya Kikotarō. 14 ½ x 9 ⁵/₈ in. (36.7 x 24.4 cm). American Friends of The British Museum (The Arthur R. Miller Collection).

Image 20

Takahashi, Rumiko. "Koga and the skeleton ghost of Kyokotsu." *Inu-Yasha*. vol. 24. p. 129.
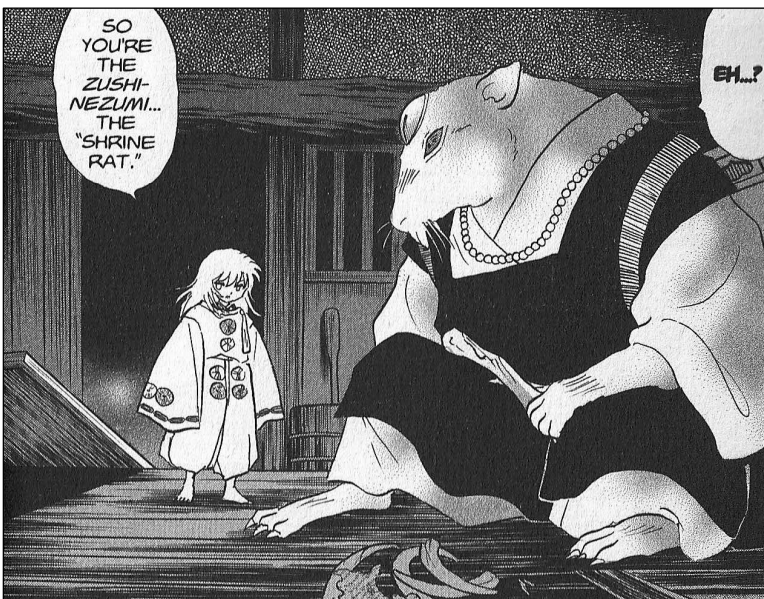
Image 21

Kuniyoshi, Utagawa. "Mitsukuni defies the skeleton specter conjured up by Princess Takiyasha." 1845-6. Color woodblock, ōban triptych, publisher unidentified. 37.2 x 25.1 [R], 37 3 25.3 [C], 37.2 x 25.3 [L]. The British Museum.

Image 22

Yoshitoshi, Tsukioka. "Priest Raigo of Mii Temple." *Shinkei Sanjurokuten* (36 Ghosts) series. 1891. Wood-block Print; Ink on Paper; 14 $^{11}/_{16}$ in. x 9 $^{7}/_{8}$ in. (373.06 mm x 250.83 mm). The Scripps College Collection of Japanese Prints, Claremont, CA.

Image 23

Takahashi, Rumiko. "Zushi-Nezumi." *Inu-Yasha*. Vol. 33. p. 155.

Image 24

The *Hokusai Manga* comprises more than eight hundred pages and almost four thousand motifs, bound in fifteen volumes that were published between 1814 and 1878

Hokusai, Katsushika. *Hokusai Manga*.

Image 25

Manga illustration appears flat due to the use of black outline and lack of illusionistic shading. The emphasis on line and outline, a defining characteristic of *manga*, comes from Japanese artistic and writing traditions.

Although a scene might use scale and angles to denote the parts of the scene, defining the foreground, middleground and background, the artwork bypasses the common use of shade to realistically suggest depth. The lack of shadow on the faces makes the artwork appear flat, much like the woodblock print art of the 19th century. Theorists, such as artist Takahashi Murakami, have suggested that this is an intentional reference that reflects a distinct Japanese cultural identity.

Takahashi, Rumiko. *Mermaid's Gaze*. p. 36

Image 26

Kunisada, Utagawa. "Cherry Blossom beneath the Evening Moon in the Northern Quarter."
Yoko-ōban 25.7 x 37.5 cm. Nishiki-e. Published by Yamaguchiya Chūsuke.
Cf. Fahr-Becker, Gabriele. *Japanese Prints* (Hong Kong, Köln, London, Los Angeles,
Madrid, Paris & Tokyo: Taschen, 2007), p. 160.

Image 27

Goyō, Hashiguchi. "Nude Woman with Towel and Basin" (浴場の女). Taishō Era (1915)
(Taishō 4). Woodblock print; ink and color on paper, Shin hanga; bijin-ga. Vertical ōban;
41.8 x 27.7 cm (16 $^7/_{16}$ x 10 $^{15}/_{16}$ in). Published by Watanabe Shōzaburō. Museum of Fine
Arts: Boston, MA.

Image 28

Shampoo (center), a Chinese Amazon warrior who was cursed, like Ranma, to change form whenever she is splashed with cold water, enters the public baths as a cat and transforms into her true female body after dousing herself in hot water as Akane (right) and other bathers look on.

Takahashi, Rumiko. "Shampoo at Bath." *Ranma ½*, vol. 11, p. 13

Image 29

Frequent mention is made of Ranma's "lack of feminine modesty" (somewhat irrelevant since Ranma is a boy who simply happens to turn into a girl, not actually a girl) in the text of *Ranma ½*. In numerous scenes, female Ranma is illustrated without a shirt, presenting a partially nude female figure without any shame or embarrassment.

Takahashi, Rumiko. "Bare-Breasted Girl-Ranma." *Ranma ½*. Vols. 1. (San Francisco: Viz Communications, Inc., 1993), p. 162.

Image 30

Kiyonaga, Torii. "Women at Bath."

Image 31

The setting of *Maison Ikkoku* centers upon a rundown apartment house, inspired by an actual building that stood adjacent to Rumiko Takahashi's lodgings while in college. The building is old, in poor repair, and its tenants are an eccentric collection of characters. Although the plotline of the story featured far-fetched misunderstandings along the romantic comedy that is its center, the world that Takahashi presents is firmly rooted in realistic, contemporary life. The *mangaka* presents a world that is familiar and recognizable to her audience.

Takahashi, Rumiko. "Ikkoku-kan." *Maison Ikkoku.* Vols. 1. (San Francisco: Viz Communications, Inc., 1994), p. 112.

Image 32

The Tales of Ise. Edo period (1615-1868), early 17th century. One of a pair of six-panel folding screens; ink, color, and gold on paper, 23 11/16 in. x 8 ft. 7 ¼ in. (93.2 x 262.2 cm). Mary and Jackson Burke Foundation.
Cf. Watanabe, Masako. *Storytelling in Japanese Art* (New York: The Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2011), p. 16.

Image 33

Some *manga* scholars assert that the method of reading *manga* is inherited from earlier Japanese art. The process of reading the *manga* across the horizontal plane might be regarded as learned from the process of reading a handscroll or *emakimono* that is unrolled to reveal the progression of the story. The use of gutters between panels, or empty space between the outline of each illustrated scene on the page, might be inherited from screen paintings, whose folds created distinct horizontal lines in the art. A narrative work of art painted on a screen might use the folds to establish breaks and pacing, much in the way that the gutters of modern panel structure do in *manga* today.

In this page of a short story, "One Hundred Years of Love," the story is told through narrative dialog and the panel (flopped to be read from left to right by Western viewers) with the rectangular panels functioning to move from image to image within the scene.

Takahashi, Rumiko. "One Hundred Years of Love." *Rumic Theater*. Vols. 1. (San Francisco: Viz Communications, Inc., 1996), p. 154

Image 34

Suzuki Harunobu perfected the representation of the *bijin*-ga woman. He created images that depict the timeless female figure in simple architectural settings. The female characters, particularly when they are drawn alone (rather than within a narrative scene), are predominantly illustrated in a three-quarters profile, often looking at the viewer over a shoulder, in the same minimalist presentation of a background

Harunobu, Suzuki. *Woman Admiring Plum Blossoms at Night* (*Yoru no ume*, 夜の梅). Edo period, (ca. 1725–1770). Polychrome woodblock print with embossing (karazuri); ink and color on paper, 12¾ x 8¼ in. (32.4 x 21 cm). The Metropolitan Museum: New York, NY.

Image 35

Rumiko Takahashi illustrates women with a timeless beauty that recalls the *bijin-ga* ideals. The faces of Takahashi's characters have a similar anonymous quality to the faces in 19th-century Japanese print art. The positioning of the head recalls the same three-quarters profile seen in earlier images of women.

In this illustration of Kyoko Otonashi, the female protagonist of Takahashi's *Maison Ikkoku*, Kyoko appears in a yukata for the local summer festival. Takahashi intentionally illustrates the character as a classical beauty.

Takahashi, Rumiko. "Kyoko in her Yukata." *Maison Ikkoku.* Vol. 3. (San Francisco: Viz Communications, Inc., 1995), p. 121

Image 36

The first characters presented in *Ranma ½* are the members of the Tendo and Saotome families. Ranma and his father come to the Tendo home with the intension of establishing a union between Ranma and one of Tendo's three daughters. Each of these daughters represents a different type of modern girl: Kasumi, the eldest, is the traditional, feminine homemaker; Nabiki, the middle daughter is modern, shrewd and mercenary (her obsession with money reflects the Japanese household practice that the wife manages the accounts, paying bills and giving the husband an allowance of his paycheck); and Akane, the youngest, is a sweet girl with a tomboy exterior.

Takahashi, Rumiko. "The Tendo/Saotome Household."*The Art of Ranma ½.* Hyoe Narita, ed. in chief (San Francisco, CA: Viz Communications, 2001), p. 51.

Image 37

Each of the female characters present a different archetype of an attractive girl. At top right is Shampoo, the exotic, Amazon warrior; bottom right is the deadly Kodachi, a student from an all-girls high school; bottom left is Ukyo, the childhood friend grown up into a teenage beauty with a flare for cooking; top left is Akane, the scrappy heiress to the Tendo school of martial arts; and in the center is Ranma in his female form, also a beauty. The characters are all appealing in their own ways, providing the viewer with the opportunity to develop favorites and fantasies while watching these modern *bijin* play out the story of Takahashi's epic *manga*.

Takahashi, Rumiko. "Akane, Shampoo, Girl-Ranma, Ukyo, and Kodachi."*The Art of Ranma ½.* Hyoe Narita, ed. in chief (San Francisco, CA: Viz Communications, 2001), p. 86.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Aka-hon (赤本): *Aka-hon*, or "red books," named for the color of their covers, were a genre of *kusazōshi* (草双紙) that comprised legends and tales. The especially targeted a young audience. *Aka-hon* were published from 1673 on, throughout the Edo Period.

Ao-hon (青本), or "green books," named for the color of their covers, were a genre of *kusazōshi* (草双紙) that re-told dramas from popular theatre. They were published from 1745 on, throughout the Edo Period.

Bijin-ga (美人画): *Bijin-ga* literally translates to mean "beautiful person picture," and it is used as a generic term for images of beautiful women in Japanese art, particularly in reference to *ukiyo-e*, or Japanese woodblock print art.

Bunjin-ga (文人画): Bunjin-ga, also called *Nanga* (南画) painting, was a style of Japanese painting from late Edo period Japan by literati artists. Nanga or bunjinga paintings incorporated inscriptions and poetry alongside images of landscapes, flowers and birds, all elements that were typical of Chinese literati schools of painting. Because Japan was, at that time, cut off from foreign contact, due to the Edo policy of *sakoku* ("period of seclusion," c.1639-1853), Bunjin-ga owes its influence primarily to Chinese woodblock-printed painting manuals and those paintings, widely ranging in quality, which had come into Japan previously, rather than to direct observation of Chinese art or landscape.

Comics: Comics, also written as Comic Books or Comix (to denote the "co-mixture" of art and text), are sequentially illustrated narratives used to tell a story, usually pairing textual dialog and narrative description with images that depict the scenes of the plotline. While "*manga*" denotes the comic books specifically from Japan, the term "comic" is a general term that might refer to sequentially illustrated narratives from any country or culture.

E-iribon (絵入本): *E-iribon* literally translates to mean "books with inserted pictures." The term refers to illustrated books. During the Edo period, books printed using woodblocks featured both text and images, and the resulting narratives with illustration were very popular among the merchant class consumers.

Emakimono (絵巻物): Literally translated as "picture scroll," *emakimono*, which can also be written simply as *emaki* (絵巻), is a Japanese illustrated narrative form, dating from the eleventh to twelfth centuries. *Emakimono* combine both text and images and are read horizontally on a handscroll. The subject matter for *emakimono* is divers, included stories of romance, famous battles, religious allegories, folk stories, and supernatural tales.

Heian Period: The Heian era, (平安時代) is the period from 794 to 1185 at which time the capital city was Heian-kyō, modern day Kyōto. During this era, Japanese culture flourished under the imperial court,

and the Heian jidai is known for art, particularly literature and poetry, that defined this Classical period of Japanese history.

Hiragana (ひらがな): *Hiragana* is a Japanese syllabary, or *kana* systems, which comprise the modern Japanese writing system, along with *katakana* and *kanji*.

Jidai (時代): *Jidai* is the Japanese word for era

Jidaigeki (時代劇): Historical dramas

Kamishibai (紙芝居): *Kamishibai*, or picture-card shows, is a method of storytelling that utilized sequential illustrations to narrate a story. Scholars believe that *kamishibai* originated during the twelfth century in Buddhist temples where monks would use *emakimono* to present tales with a moral lesson. *Kamishibai* enjoyed their greatest popularity throughout Japan from the 1920s to the 1950s, and they credited as "the missing link" in the development of modern manga.

Kanji (漢字): *Kanji* are the adopted Chinese characters used in the modern Japanese writing system, along with *hiragana* and *katakana*.

Kappa (河童): *Kappa* are a water sprite type of *yōkai* common to Japanese folklore. They are aquatic creatures with webbed hands and feet and an indentation on the top of their heads to hold water, the source of their power. Kappa appear in stories as mischievous troublemakers who are said to try to lure people to the water and pull them in.

Katakana (カタカナ): *Katakana* is a Japanese syllabary, or *kana* systems, which comprise the modern Japanese writing system, along with *hiragana* and *kanji*.

Kibyōshi (黄表紙): *Kibyōshi*, or "yellow books," named for the color of their covers, were a genre of *kusazōshi* (草双).   *Kibyōshi* were the most popular and widely circulated and featured simple texts and extensive illustrations, and appeared from 1775 and remained popular until 1818. Each page of a *kibyōshi* features a large picture with dialogue and narrative descriptive filling in the blank spaces within the art.

Kōdan (講談): *Kōdan* is a style of traditional oral Japanese storytelling that developed in the Heian court and evolved through Japanese society until its decline during the Tokugawa period.

Kokkeibon (滑稽本): *Kokkeibon* were a genre of Tokugawa era woodblock print books with comic material. The literally translation would "comic book;" however, it is notable that the emphasis of these was on humor, not simply an indication of being a sequentially illustrated narrative, as our vernacular might designate the term.

Kuro-hon (黒本): *Kuro-hon* or "black books," so named for the color of their covers, were a genre of *kusazōshi* (草双紙) that were in circulation between 1744 and 1751.

Kusazōshi (草双紙): Japanese picture books from the Edo period.

Manga (漫画): In English, the term *manga* means Japanese comics. (In Japan term simply translates to mean "comics.")

Mangaka (漫画家): The term *mangaka* may be translated to mean artist/author of *manga*, or Japanese comics. Unlike American comics which employ an assembly line system of staff that includes a separate writer, penciller, inker, colorist, letterer, etc., Japanese *manga* are created by a single *mangaka* who both writes and illustrates the sequential narrative. The identity of the *mangaka* is crucial to work because the art and story are the conception of a single, unified creator. Although the textual element of *manga* will not be discussed in this research, it is important to realize that the *mangaka* is an artist who is working from his or her own invention rather than reinterpreting the vision of a separate author

Meiji Restoration Period (明治時代): The Meiji revolution of 1868 marked the end of the Edo era (1600-1868) in which the feudal system of the Tokugawa shōgunate maintained two and a half centuries of peace in Japan, allowing for the flourish of the merchant class in urban areas, such as the shōgun's capital in Edo. During this time, the emperor still continued to exist in the imperial capital of Kyoto, but the emperor had no governmental power during this epoch. The Meiji restoration period reunited Japan under the power of the emperor and opened the country to trade with Western nations, such as Europe and the United States of America.

Nihonga (日本画): *Nihonga* references traditional Japanese art and translates literally as Japanese-style paintings.

Ninjōbon (人情本): *Ninjōbon* were a genre of Tokugawa era woodblock print books which included moral tales and romantic stories. These books were aimed toward a young female readership and might be considered the predecessors of *shōjo manga*.

Okonomiyaki (お好み焼き): *Okonomiyaki* is a savory pancake containing meat, or seafood, and vegetables.

Oni (鬼): *Oni* are a type of *yōkai* common to Japanese folklore. *Oni* are variously translated as demons, devils, ogres or trolls.

Otaku (おたく/オタク): The term *otaku* is derived from a Japanese term for another person's house or family (お宅). *Otaku* is commonly used in slang as a descriptive noun for a person with obsession, typically in reference to (but not limited to) *manga* or *anime*, comics or animated shows. This term carries negative connotations; *otaku* might perhaps best translated into English as "geek;" however, many fans have appropriated the term into a badge of honor.

Redīsu kommiku (レディースコミク): *Redīsu kommiku*, or "ladies comics," are *manga* created for an adult female audience. (The "synonymous" term "*josei* manga (女性漫画)," which attempts to parallel the

manga marketed to the adult male equivalent audience, *seinen manga*, is not used as commonly as *redīsu kommiku*.)

Rakugo (落語): Rakugo literally translates as "fallen words." It is a comedic storytelling in which a narrator presents a tale (usually with two or more speaking characters) form a seated position on stage. It uses no images or props beyond a paper fan (扇子 sensu) and a small cloth (手拭 tenugui). This type of narrative presentation gained popularity during the Edo period and continues to be performed as a style contemporary Japanese theater, a "sit-down comedy".

Seinen manga (青年漫画): *Seinen manga* is a genre of *manga* that is named for its targeted audience of men from ages 17 and into adulthood. In Japanese, the word seinen means "young man" or "young men," thus it is "young men's *manga*," as distinct from *shōnen manga*, or "boys's *manga*."

Sengoku Era (戦国時代): The Sengoku jidai, or Warring States period, refers to the era of nearly constant political upheaval and military unrest in Japan's history, roughly from the fifteenth century to the seventeenth century, until Japan was unified under the feudal rule of the Tokugawa Shogunate in 1868 (which began the Edo Jidai).

Setsuwa (説話): *Setsuwa* is a form of narrative storytelling that pre-dates the fourteenth century. This literary genre comprises myths, legends, folktales, and anecdotes.

Sharebon (洒落本): Sharebon, or "books for men about town," are a genre of Tokugawa era woodblock print which focused on the humor and entertainment of Edo's pleasure quarters.

Shasei-ga (写生画): *Shasei-ga* refer to realistic sketches from nature, created for study purposes. These works were often created in small handscroll format and later mounted in an album.

Shōjo manga (少女漫画): *Shōjo*, or *shōjo manga*, is translated as "girls' *manga*" and is a genre of Japanese comics books that are marketed to a female audience comprising between the ages of 10 and 18.

Shōnen manga (少年漫画): *Shōnen, or shōnen manga,* is translated as "boys' *manga*," because it is *manga* marketed to a young male audience, roughly ages 10-17. *Shōnen manga* is the most popular form of *manga*.

Shunga (春画): Shunga, or erotic art, typically refers to woodblock print art; however, erotic pictures called shunga actually predates ukiyo-e with some examples dating to Heian period hand scrolls. Translated literally, the term shunga comprises the characters for "spring" and "picture," with the idea that this "picture of spring" plays upon "spring" as a common euphemism for sex.

Sōsaku-hanga movement (創作版画): The Sōsaku-hanga movement, which literally translates as the "creative prints" movement, was an art movement in early twentieth-century Japan, during the Taishō and Shōwa periods. Artists of this school advocated the principles of "self-drawn" (自画, jiga), "self-carved" (自刻, jikoku) and "self-printed" (自刷, jizuri) art, placing an emphasis upon the artist and his

desire for self-expression, as the sole creator of art. This moved away from the traditional collaborative system from which earlier *ukiyo-e* were created, where the artist, carver, printer, and publisher engaged in division of labor, almost like the assembly line system used by American comics today (unlike modern Japanese *manga* which are the work of one creator).

Taishō Period (大正時代): The Taishō Era (1912-1926) is the epoch directly following the chaotic Meiji Restoration period (明治時代) (1868-1912) and preceding the movement toward Japanese militarism during the Shōwa period (昭和時代) (1926-1989).

Tokugawa Era (徳川時代): The Tokugawa Era, or Edo period (江戸時代), was established in 1600 C.E. by Shōgun Tokugawa Ieyasu (徳川•家康) and continued until the 1868 Meiji restoration (明治維新). This period is commonly referred to by either name: the name Tokugawa denoting the ruling shōgunal family or Edo which signifies the capital during that era.

Ukiyo-e (浮世絵): *Ukiyo-e*, which literally translates to mean "pictures of the floating world," is genre of Japanese woodblock print art that flourished from the seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. *Ukiyo-e* was created for prosperous merchant class in Edo.

Wakon yōsai: 'Japanese spirit, Western leaning'

Yamato-e (大和絵): *Yamato-e* is a style of Japanese painting considered to be the classical Japanese style.

Yaoi: Yaoi, or "Boys' Love," *manga* is a popular sub-genre of *shōjo manga*. These works are usually created by female *mangaka* for a female audience. *Yaoi* center on homosexual romances and homoerotic or homoromantic male sexual relationships.

Yōkai, (妖怪): The word *yōkai* combines two *kanji*, or Chinese characters, that translate as "uncanny" or "eerie." The term has been used since the Meiji period to refer to supernatural phenomena, eerie feelings or sounds, and animal or human characters. Monsters in Japanese art and literature may also be described with the terms *bakemono* (化物), *henge* (変化), and *mononoke* (物の怪).

Yukata (浴衣): A *yukata* is a traditional Japanese garment, usually made of cotton, with straight seams and unlined, and worn as a casual summer *kimono* or robe.

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