"In the name(s) of the moon!": 'Japaneseness' & Reader Identity in Two Translations of *Sailor Moon*

Morgan Sleeper, Daphne Iskos

Abstract: Manga has become increasingly popular in the United States since the 1990s, and over time, the strategies employed in translating these texts for English-speaking audiences have shifted. As translation practices have changed, so too has the status of the sociocultural construct of 'Japaneseness' – a commodified branding of Japanese elements – in translated manga. A striking example of this shift can be seen in two English translations of Naoko Takeuchi's 1991 manga *Bishôjo Senshi Sêrâ Mûn* (Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon) for the U.S. market, released 13 years apart: the 1998 Mixx/TokyoPop translation and the 2011 Kodansha translation. In this paper, we examine the use of four linguistic features – loanwords, honorifics, onomatopoeia, and iconicity – in both translations, and find that each version broadly employs a different strategy to either erase (in the case of the earlier translation) or amplify and actively create (in the case of the later translation) 'Japaneseness' within the text. These strategies in turn afford two different ways for readers to engage with *Sailor Moon*, so following our analysis of the texts themselves, we then examine fan discourse to show how readers construct distinct identities by drawing on salient linguistic features of each translation. The shift from a preference for domesticated reading experiences to a desire for translations to retain as much Japanese character as possible reveals the construct of 'Japaneseness' as central not only to the story of *Sailor Moon* in America, but also to the commodification of Japanese language and culture in both manga publishing and Anglophone fandom more broadly.

Keywords: Sailor Moon, manga, translation, linguistics, language, identity, sociocultural constructs

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Introduction

The story of manga in the United States is one of translation. As an art form, manga has developed a different style than comic traditions in other parts of the world,[1] with a unique visual language and semiotic structure that make its translation into other languages particularly challenging.[2] Given these characteristics, the strategies employed in localizing or translating these distinctive texts for Western audiences, particularly in the U.S., have shifted over time.[3]

Manga and Western comics alike are multimodal texts that draw on many different semiotic systems, from maximally iconic (i.e., drawings) and symbolic (i.e., language) systems to signs situated in between the two, including sound effects, font choices, and panel design.[4] Umberto Eco and Siri Nergaard famously discuss translation as a process involving texts, rather than languages – "passing from a text 'a', elaborated according to a semiotic system 'A', into a text 'b', elaborated according to a semiotic system 'B'"[5] – and the complicating factor of comics' multimodal nature is readily apparent, since multiple semiotic systems elaborate on the text from each side.

While translation practices for comics vary immensely, two approaches from translation theory are particularly important in characterizing the transcultural translation of comics: Eugene Nida's framework of formal vs. dynamic equivalence[6] and Lawrence Venuti's domesticating vs. foreignizing strategies.[7] Nida explains the difference between formal and dynamic equivalence in translation as follows:

> Formal equivalence focuses attention on the message itself, in both form and content ... [This permits] the reader to identify [themselves] as fully as possible with a person in the source-language context, and to understand as much as [they] can of the customs, manner of thought, and means of expression.
>
> ... Dynamic equivalence aims at complete naturalness of expression, and tries to relate the receptor to modes of behavior relevant within the context of [their] own culture; it does not insist that [they] understand the cultural patterns of the source-language context in order to comprehend the message.[8]

Venuti draws a similar contrast between 'domesticating' and 'foreignizing' translation, where domestication represents "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target language

cultural values"[9] while foreignization is "a process that allows the original work to resist integration and to maintain its features."[10]

Since much of the considerable amount of manga consumed by American readers today originated in Japanese, these axes of transcultural translation have been central to the story of manga in the United States. As translation practices have shifted over time, though, so too has the status of the sociocultural construct[11] of 'Japaneseness' – a commodified branding of Japanese elements that readers draw on in order to craft their identities as manga fans[12] – in these translated texts.

Well into the 1990s, Japanese cultural products like manga routinely underwent complete localization – that is, cultural as well as linguistic translation – in order to appeal to American audiences.[13] Around the turn of the millennium, however, the "Cool Japan" phenomenon saw elements of Japanese pop culture become highly marketable in international contexts, with *Pokémon*, *Hello Kitty*, anime, and manga all helping to cement Japan's status as a cultural power positioning itself for global – and especially Western – consumption.[14] Since the rise of Cool Japan, an expanding Western manga readership has begun to express a demand for translations that retain as much of the original Japanese format and culture as possible, leading to the active construction of consumable 'Japaneseness' in more recent manga translations.[15]

A striking example of this shift can be seen in the case of Naoko Takeuchi's seminal 1991 magical girl manga *Bishôjo Senshi Sêrâ Mûn* (translated as *Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon*). Focusing on the adventures of Tokyo schoolgirls with the power to transform into Sailor Guardians, *Sailor Moon* has become one of the most popular Japanese media properties of all time, both in Japan and internationally, and has spun off into multiple anime series and

movies, videogames, toy lines, and more.[16] The manga has also seen translation into many

languages, including several English adaptations, with the first two for the U.S. market

released 13 years apart: first a 1998 Mixx/TokyoPop translation, and later a 2011 Kodansha

Comics translation.[17]

This paper examines the presence and use of four linguistic features – loanwords,

honorifics, onomatopoeia, and iconicity – in these two translations, and finds that each

version broadly employs a different translation strategy to either erase or actively create the

sociocultural construct of 'Japaneseness' within the text. These strategies in turn afford two

very different ways for English-speaking readers to engage with *Sailor Moon*, and so following

our analysis of the texts themselves, we then briefly examine fan discourse around both

translations, in order to show how readers construct their fan identities in terms of the unique

set of affordances[18] created by each translation. Readers draw on these affordances – here,

salient linguistic features of each translated text, from the presence or absence of loanwords

and honorifics to onomatopoeia and iconicity[19] – as they read and comment on *Sailor Moon,*

and this creates two distinct fan group identities: 'Moonies' and 'Cool Japan Fans.' Finally, we

consider how these two translations – and the reader identities each one licenses – reflect the

shifting attitudes, preferences, and priorities of manga fans and publishers in the United

States.

Translational Stance

In order to examine the differences in translation strategies employed by each

translated text in framing the sociocultural construct of 'Japaneseness,' this paper uses the

framework of the stance triangle from sociocultural linguistics.[20] When utilizing this

framework, each of these two translations, plus the translation strategies they employ, constitutes a 'stance' on the original Japanese text – the 'shared stance object' – as illustrated in the diagram below:

Mixx/TokyoPop translation (1998)

Original Japanese text
(*Bishôjo Senshi Sêrâ Mûn*) (1991)

Kodansha translation (2011)
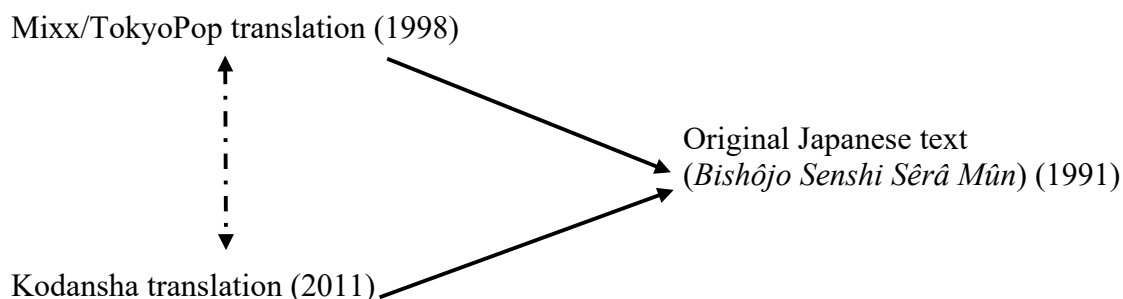
The textual examples that highlight the relationship between the original text and each of these two stances are presented in the form of diagraphs – in other words, diagrammatic structures that reflect "the mapping of resonance relations between counterpart structures across parallel utterances."[21] While diagraphs are usually employed within the framework of dialogic syntax[22] for examining dialogic interactions in spoken or written language, here they serve to highlight resonance(s)[23] between texts instead of utterances. Diagraphs are particularly helpful for examining multiple translations of a single text, as they allow for simultaneous juxtaposition of each translation with both the original text and alternative translated stances. This juxtaposition allows for the comparison of inter- and intra-textual resonance within and across texts, while also highlighting the addition and removal of material from each translation. The horizontal dimension of the diagraphs used here indicates the iconic sequential alignment of language in each text, while vertical alignment indicates resonance between two or more texts, whether through formal or dynamic equivalence.[24]

Linguistic resources

In both the Mixx and the Kodansha translations, the sociocultural concept of 'Japaneseness' is negotiated across four linguistic dimensions: loanwords, honorifics, onomatopoeia, and iconicity. In the sections below, we focus on specific textual examples of each respective element and compare them across both translations – an approach that demonstrates how the varying treatment of these linguistic dimensions in translation can serve to either create or erase the construct of 'Japaneseness' in *Sailor Moon*.

Loanwords

One of the most immediately obvious ways in which language is used to constitute and emphasize 'Japaneseness' in the Kodansha translation is through the use of untranslated Japanese loanwords, as well as the cultural affordances[25] that they both activate and require. The example below occurs early on in the text, when the main character of the manga – named Bunny in the Mixx translation and Usagi Tsukino in the Kodansha translation, and who fights evil under the name Sailor Moon in both versions[26] – introduces one of her classmates. (In this and all following examples, 'OG' represents the original Japanese text, 'MX' the 1998 Mixx translation, and 'KS' the 2011 Kodansha translation. A romanization and morpheme-by-morpheme gloss appear below the Japanese tier, and a full list of abbreviations used is provided in Appendix A.)

(K11[27])
OG;　コイツは　　　　　　　　オタクの　　　海野
　　　koitsu-wa　　　　　　　　otaku-no　　　Umino
　　　this.guy-TOP　　　　　　nerd-ADJ　　　Umino

MX;　　　　　　　　Here's our　class nerd,　Melvin.
KS;　This guy's　　　　　　　{an otaku}[28]　Umino,[29]

While the Mixx translation renders the Japanese "otaku" as "class nerd," the Kodansha

translation leaves the word in Japanese, romanized but unglossed. The most obvious

consequence of retaining an untranslated Japanese loanword like "otaku" in the text is that it

foreignizes the text; that is, it presents a formally equivalent (in sound if not in visual

representation) rendition that indexes "a kind of exoticism."[30] Equally significant is the fact

that there is no explanatory footnote or gloss, meaning that in order to understand the text, a

reader must necessarily be familiar with both this Japanese vocabulary item and its cultural

context. Here, beyond the dictionary definition, a reader would need to be aware of the word's

context and connotations in order to access the cultural affordances of "otaku", including its

relatively recent metalinguistic coinage stemming from the hypercorrect misuse of the

homophonous honorific second-person pronoun by social outcasts, as well as the subcultures

of obsessive, hyper-knowledgeable enthusiasts to which it refers today and its generally

pejorative use in mainstream Japan,[31] as opposed to the neutral or even positive usage of the

English borrowing "otaku" as a self-designation by Western anime and manga fans.[32]

Another instance of untranslated Japanese in the Kodansha translation can be seen in

the following example, where Usagi/Bunny has just met the keeper of a shrine:

(K94a)
OG;   巫女
                                 miko
                                 shrine.maiden

MX;   How cool…   a priestess
KS;   So she's   a miko?

Similar to the case of "otaku" in the first example, here the Mixx translation renders the

Japanese as "priestess," whereas the Kodansha translation leaves "miko" – a term that refers

specifically to Shinto shrine maidens – in romanized Japanese without translation or a

supplemental gloss. The fact that "miko" is left untranslated here emphasizes the foreignness

('Japaneseness') of the Shinto temple and the shrine maiden, and means that again readers

must be familiar with the Japanese term and its cultural affordances in order to access both

the basic meaning of the text and its wider implications, such as the temple's status as a

Shinto – as opposed to a Buddhist or Judeo-Christian – place of worship.

One interesting potential reversal of the Mixx translation's tendency to domesticate

Japanese in the text can be seen in the example below, where the miko/priestess mentioned

above casts a spell on Usagi/Bunny, thinking her to be an evil spirit:

(K93)
OG;   悪霊   たいさーんっっ
        akuryô   taisân
        evil.spirit   disperse

MX;   AKURYO   TAISAN!!*   *This is a Japanese phrase used to exorcise demons
KS;   Evil spirit, be exorcised!

The Mixx translation retains the original Japanese – romanized but untranslated – while the

Kodansha translates the incantation.[33] Taken on its own, this seems to show a positive

construction of Japanese and Japaneseness in the Mixx translation, against its general trend

towards Americanization. However, unlike the "otaku" and "miko" examples from the

Kodansha translation above, the Mixx translation here also includes a footnote explaining the

words' meaning: "*This is a Japanese phrase used to exorcise demons." This explanatory

footnote is an example of the addition of "linguistic or pictorial material which was not there

in the original"[34] as a foreignizing translation practice; a strategy that Heike Jüngst points out

is employed in manga primarily "if Japanese words are merely transferred in order to stress

the 'Japaneseness' of the story."[35]

At face value, then, the above example appears to be a translation strategy more in line

with the Kodansha stance than the Mixx one, as it amplifies the 'Japaneseness' of the text.

However, the next page provides further context that reveals the full indexical function of the

untranslated Japanese and explanatory footnote. After the miko/priestess apologizes,

Usagi/Bunny thinks to herself:

(K94b)
OG;   キレイ
                                       kirei
                                       pretty

MX;   She's so   exotic and   pretty…
KS;   When it's a   pretty girl…

By adding the word "exotic" (which was not present in the original Japanese) to this

description of the miko/priestess, the Mixx translation takes the stance that her Japaneseness

– as evidenced by her use of the Japanese phrase on the previous page – is equivalent to

foreignness. That is, the use of "exotic" here serves to otherize the miko/priestess on the basis

of her speaking Japanese – implying that this is "exotic" both to Usagi/Bunny personally, and

also in comparison to the rest of the story's setting. By extension, this also implies that the

other characters Usagi/Bunny interacts with do not speak Japanese, and that the story does

not take place in Japan. In using the untranslated Japanese alongside the word "exotic" to

emphasize the foreignness of this single character, then, the Mixx translation portrays the rest

of the story's world as non-foreign – i.e., 'non-Japanese' – by comparison.

Honorifics

Another way in which the two translations take different stances on *Sailor Moon* is in

their treatment of the honorific suffixes used in the original Japanese text. As a language,

Japanese features a rich and deeply indexical system of honorific address terms, including the

honorific suffixes often employed by characters in *Sailor Moon*. This system of address

suffixes indexes and enacts social relationships between speakers, addressees, and third

persons, and are selected on the bases of age, gender, hierarchical/social standing, and

interpersonal intimacy, among other factors.[36] In the following examples, four different

characters address Usagi/Bunny in four different ways, as indexed in the original Japanese

and the Kodansha translation by honorific suffixes (or the lack thereof):

(K11a – Teacher addressing student)
OG;   月野さんっ
       Tsukino-san
       Tsukino-HON

MX;   **Bunny!**
KS;   **Tsukino-san!**

(K11b – Male student addressing female student deferentially)
OG;   うさぎさん   テスト どうでした?
              Usagi-san   tesuto   dô   deshita
              Usagi-HON   test   how   COP.PST

MX;   Hey   **Bunny**   How'd you do on the quiz?
KS;   **Usagi-san**   {How did you do on the test?}[37]

(K11c – Female student addressing female student on equal footing)
OG; うさぎ-ったら   信じらんないっ   早弁   なんて
     Usagi-ttara   shinji-ran-nai   hayaben   nante
     Usagi-EXCLAM   believe-be.able.to-NEG   eat.before.lunch   EXCLAM

MX;   **Bunny**   {I can't believe   how much you pork out}[38]
KS;   **Usagi!**   {I can't believe you,}   Eating like a glutton![39]

(K19 – Male friend addressing younger female friend affectionately)

OG;   **うさぎちゃん   また制服で**
         Usagi-chan   mata   seifuku-de
         Usagi-FHON   again   uniform-in

MX;   **Bunny!**
KS;   **Usagi-chan!**   {You're still in uniform,} [40]

By including the untranslated Japanese address suffixes in its English text, the Kodansha translation allows for the indexation of these four specific relationships between characters in the above examples.

The inclusion of these honorifics in English is significant because, in the text as in spoken discourse, they constitute – rather than simply reflect – the above relationships. Honorific suffixes are an example of a linguistic unit with "indexical creativity," creating the different categories of participation in the represented speech event. Michael Silverstein writes that indexically creative forms like honorifics are "the very medium through which the relevant aspect of the context is made to 'exist'." [41] Crucially, the relationships indexed by these honorifics are specifically Japanese; not only do the untranslated honorifics create a linguistic barrier of entry that necessitates familiarity with Japanese in order to access the nature of these relationships, they also create particular relationships among the characters, which would be foreign from an English-speaking American perspective.

In addition to contributing to the construction of 'Japaneseness' in the Kodansha translation by the relationships that they index, the presence of Japanese honorific suffixes in the otherwise English text is significant in that they introduce elements of Japanese grammar into English discourse. The result is similar to the effect of travel writers using non-native English forms to indicate that a person is in fact speaking a foreign language, [42] and also to the concept of a 'mock' or 'pseudo' language, such as Mock Spanish as described by Jane Hill. [43]

Just as the -*o* and -*a* endings of Spanish morphology form a part of the 'sound' of Mock Spanish, Japanese honorific suffixes sound recognizably Japanese to non-speakers in the United States, having been associated with Japanese in the popular consciousness through film.[44] And just as the use of Mock Spanish by the white Americans in Hill's study indexes a cosmopolitan identity, the usage and comprehension of Japanese honorifics in the English text indexes its readers' command of the variety of psuedo-Japanese that modern American manga readers have come to both appreciate and desire.[45]

In contrast to the Kodansha translation's attempt at formal equivalence, the Mixx translation takes a domesticating approach to honorifics by removing them entirely. In the four examples above, for instance, all of Usagi/Bunny's distinct appellations in the Japanese original are leveled to the single "Bunny," and the reader is left with no means of accessing the Japanese relationships created by the honorifics in the original text. Instead, the Japanese speaker-addressee relationships indexed by the honorifics are erased entirely, leaving the reader to assume unmarked American equivalents.

Onomatopoeia

The translation practices surrounding onomatopoeic language in comics are rich and varied, and this is especially true in manga translated from Japanese, a language rich in sound symbolism.[46] In the original Japanese text of *Sailor Moon*, onomatopoeia is almost always rendered in katakana, one of Japanese's two syllabic scripts, commonly used for emphasis, loanwords, and sound symbolism. In contrast with the calligraphic curves of hiragana – the other Japanese syllabic script used throughout the original text – katakana is understood to index an "edgier" look through its sharp angles and straight lines.[47] The indexical value of

these writing systems is important in translation because, as Federico Zanettin points out,

words in comic books are not interpreted as words alone, but also have "graphic substance,

forms, colours, or layouts which make them 'part of the picture,'" and this applies to different

writing systems as much as to different typefaces.[48] The translation strategies employed for

onomatopoeia by the Mixx and Kodansha translations reflect and reinforce their treatments of

'Japaneseness' in each text, as in the following example:

(K8)

OG;	MX;	KS;
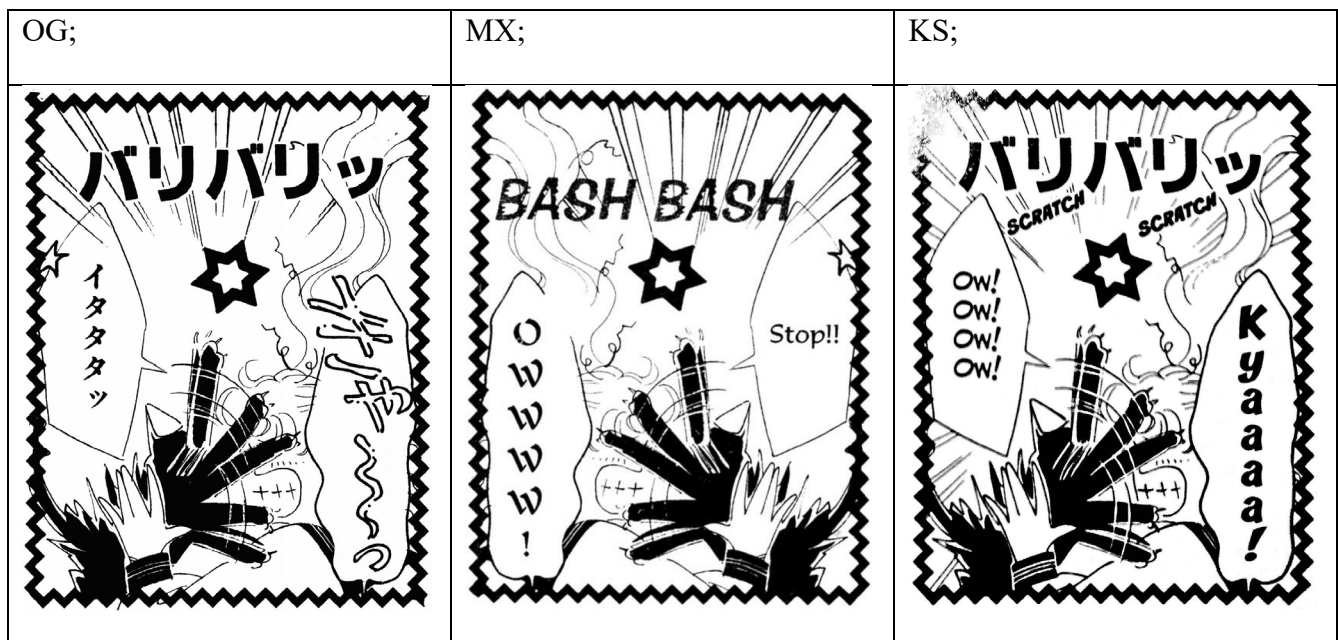
The original Japanese panel features the onomatopoeia バリバリ (bari bari, indicating

tearing, ripping, or scratching). The Mixx translation applies a domesticating strategy,

translating the expression into an (near-)equivalent for American audiences with "BASH

BASH." By domesticating the onomatopoeia, the original Japanese is erased from two

separate semiotic systems in the Mixx translation: language (where "BASH BASH" is an

English onomatopoeic expression, and "bari bari" is not) and the iconic significance of the

katakana syllabary, here replaced by the Roman alphabet. In the Kodansha translation,

however, the katakana is maintained as an iconic reference to the 'Japaneseness' of the

original text, alongside an additional English translation ("SCRATCH SCRATCH"). This

'hybrid' solution provides a dual foreignizing function: the addition of an English equivalent

allows readers to infer that there is important, perhaps 'untranslatable' Japanese

onomatopoeia in the source material, and also – as with the "exotic" affordances added to the

miko above – serves to reinforce the 'Japaneseness' of the text, while the (untransliterated)

katakana retains the formal equivalence of the Japanese, providing a direct index of the

foreign writing system from the original text.[49] By leaving Japanese onomatopoeia in

katakana instead of presenting it in a romanized form, the Kodansha translation imbues them

with a visual, rather than verbal function, highlighting the source's Japanese origins rather

than carrying any semantic meaning for English-speaking readers.[50]

Another example of the two translations' different approaches to onomatopoeia and the

construction of foreignness can be seen in the following line of dialogue, in which an unnamed

woman is praying for her missing daughter's return at a Shinto shrine:

(K95)

OG;

ウチの　みいが　帰ってきますように　　パンパン

Uchi-no	Mii-ga	kaette-kimasu-yôni	panpan
1S-POSS	Mii-SUB	return-ASP-wish.for	(clap)

MX; Lord,	please bring		Mimi	home to us...	amen
KS;	Please, guide	my daughter	Mii	back to me!	パンKLAP
					パンKLAP

In the Japanese original, the woman's prayer is accompanied by the onomatopoeia パンパン

(panpan, representing a clapping sound). Clapping twice and bowing after a prayer is part of

Shinto shrine etiquette. The Mixx translation replaces this onomatopoeia entirely with the

dynamically equivalent exclamation "amen," indicating a Judeo-Christian prayer, and

prefaces the woman's request with "Lord," an addition that essentially turns the (foreign)

Shinto shrine into a (non-foreign) temple or church.

By contrast, the Kodansha translation leaves the Japanese katakana intact along with

an additional gloss ("KLAP KLAP") – a semi-dynamically equivalent translation representing

the English onomatopoeia for clapping, but one that still represents an affordance that

requires familiarity with Shinto ritual to understand. In comparison with "SCRATCH

SCRATCH" above, however, this gloss is notable for its non-standard spelling in English – a

feature that serves to further emphasize the foreignness ('Japaneseness') of this affordance.

Importantly, while this spelling indexes 'foreignness' in its use of <k> instead of <c> in "clap",

the sequence <kl> does not actually appear in natively romanized Japanese. One possibility

for its usage here is that <k> could be meant to evoke the initial ク <ku> kana of a Japanese

transliteration of the English word 'clap': クラップ (kurappu). Another possibility is that the

<kl> is simply serving as a sort of "eye dialect"[51] – a non-standard spelling meant to foreignize

the text without specific recourse to the Japanese source, which would be an example of

translation strategy going beyond even formal equivalency in an attempt to appear "more

Japanese" to English-speaking readers than a standard spelling of the translation would

allow. In either case, this non-standard spelling represents an addition in which

'Japaneseness' is not only highlighted, but also actively constructed in the translation process,

thus pointing toward its importance in the aesthetic value of the translated text.

Iconicity

As noted previously, comics are multimodal texts, with meaning expressed through multiple sets of semiotic systems, including the visual representation of words and pictures on the page. In addition to these words and pictures, the actual, iconic arrangement of the pages themselves represents another way in which language is used to highlight or erase 'Japaneseness' in these two translations.

The original Japanese text of *Sailor Moon*, like most Japanese manga and literature in general, reads from right to left. The right-to-left page order acts as an iconic representation of the Japanese writing system, which traditionally is oriented vertically and read from top to bottom, right to left. The Mixx translation is presented in mirror image, with the artwork flipped, so that pages, panels, and dialogue are all read from left to right, as in Western comic books. The Kodansha translation, however – as is common in modern manga translations – retains the original page and panel format of the Japanese text, with the artwork unaltered, so that pages and panels are scanned from right to left, even as the English text in speech bubbles within those panels is read from left to right. (For a visual representation of the different reading conventions discussed here, see Appendix B.)

These two distinct approaches to the iconic representation of text in translation represent two stances on the original Japanese work. In the Mixx translation, the right-to-left iconicity that recalls the Japanese orthography is reversed completely, minimizing any non-native aspects of the reading experience. In the Kodansha translation, however, the right-to-left page orientation takes on a wholly iconic significance. By organizing individual speech bubbles of left-to-right text in panels and pages read from right to left, the Kodansha translation adds the iconic representation of the Japanese writing system to the unaltered, left-to-right direction of the English text. Frederik Schodt has reasoned that this system

allows readers to feel as if they are consuming the manga in "as 'original' a format as possible (without, of course, having to learn Japanese)."[52] Even though the result is a reading experience entirely different from both Japanese and traditional English reading processes, the presumed 'Japaneseness' of the right-to-left iconicity is actively marketed as "authentic" to American manga readers today, as proclaimed on the back of the Kodansha translation: "Authentic manga is read the traditional Japanese way – from right to left, exactly the opposite of how American books are read."[53] This particular reading practice – where pages are scanned from right to left, while text is read from left to right – is a practice unique to the community of Western manga fans.[54] Just as with the 'pseudo-Japanese' hybrid created by the addition of honorific suffixes to English text, the hybrid, mixed-direction reading experience indexes 'Japaneseness' in the text specifically from (and for) the English-language reader's point of view, and is appreciated by fans who consider this new reading mode to be central to the "authentic" act of reading manga.[55]

Finally, iconicity intersects with another issue of translation practice – proper names – in a feature of language specific to manga: dialogue markers. These small, stylized portraits of different characters are intratextually cohesive visual representations used to identify the speaker for a certain line of dialogue when that speaker does not appear in the panel – when they are "off stage," so to speak. These are iconic representations of the character, so that, for instance, when Luna (a talking cat) speaks in a panel in which she is not depicted, a small picture of a cat face accompanies the text. These dialogue markers are present in the Japanese original as well as in both the Mixx and the Kodansha translations, as shown in the examples below, in which Luna and Usagi/Bunny both speak:

(K64)

OG;	MX;	KS;
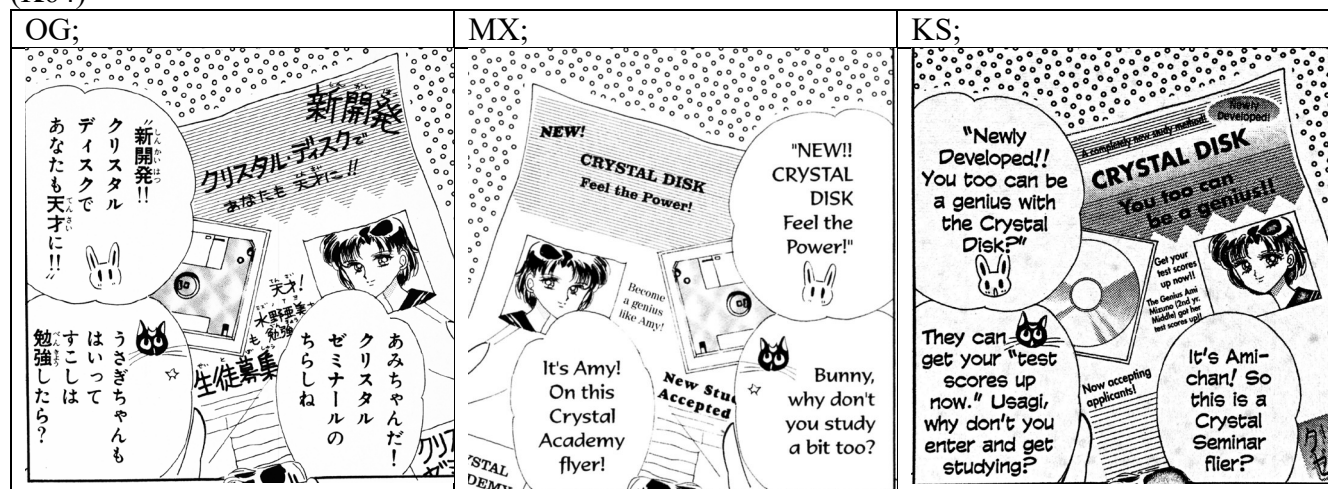
In the Mixx translation, the secondary iconicity of the main character's dialogue marker is readily apparent precisely because of the domesticating translation stance that preserves the meaning of her name but not the form – i.e., her name is Bunny (from the Japanese "usagi," or "rabbit"), and a picture of a rabbit represents her speech. The Kodansha translation, however, employs a foreignizing translation strategy for most names, so that the main character's name is romanized but otherwise left untranslated as Usagi. This preserves the form but not the meaning of the name, so that accessing the secondarily iconic meaning of her dialog marker (icon of a rabbit → rabbit → usagi → Usagi) requires a certain degree of Japanese linguistic ability. It is important to note that even without knowing the meaning of usagi, an association between the main character and the rabbit dialogue marker remains intact in the Kodansha translation – that is, readers could infer the connection from the marker's presence in Usagi's introduction – but the nature of that relationship changes as a result. Unless readers are familiar enough with Japanese to know that "Usagi" means "rabbit," the link between the character and the specific pictorial representation of a rabbit in this dialogue marker becomes an arbitrary one, which could easily be replaced by a star or a heart

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– in other words, it becomes symbolic, rather than (secondarily) iconic.[56] Thus, a recourse to Japanese vocabulary is necessary in order to understand the full significance of this dialogue marker.

Reader identity

The shift in translation practices and stances between these two representations of *Sailor Moon* – from the Mixx translation's domesticating approach, which obscures or erases Japanese elements of the original, to the foreignizing strategies employed in Kodansha translation that serve to highlight and even add to the 'Japaneseness' of the text – is particularly important in that it represents a shift in the affordances available for manga fans to draw on as they engage with *Sailor Moon* as an aesthetic object, and from there, constitute their community of practice. In other words, this shift in translation practices can also be considered indicative of a significant shift in what it means to be a manga reader.

Before the rise of Cool Japan in the early 2000s, manga readers in the United States were primarily comic book readers looking for something outside the superhero mainstream most readily available to them.[57] Manga like *Sailor Moon* have a distinct visual language, with a greater focus on subject-to-subject and aspect-to-aspect panel transitions that sets them apart from American comics,[58] and in addition, Takeuchi's art style and the aesthetic qualities of *Sailor Moon* stand out even further from mainstream American fantasy and comic book art. Further, Sailor Moon herself embodies traits of both traditionally masculine and feminine heroes in a way that was then unheard of in Western comics.[59] In this context then, at the time of the Mixx translation's publication, readers engaged with *Sailor Moon* as a text that was already drastically different from American comics, even when translated with the

domesticating strategies outlined earlier in this paper. For these readers, then, the appeal of engaging with *Sailor Moon* stemmed from its unique aesthetics and storytelling, rather than any particularly conspicuous 'Japaneseness' present in the original text. As a result, this group of readers can be seen first and foremost as *Sailor Moon* fans, and form part of the international fan community of self-identified 'Moonies.'[60]

By the time the Kodansha translation was released in 2011, however, American readers' engagement with manga had shifted. Today, rather than being viewed primarily as a subset of comics with distinctive art styles and stories, manga is marketed and consumed as a mainstream category of graphic texts in its own right,[61] indexically distinct from both 'comic books' as well as the readership that label implies. Readers of manga are also increasingly engaging specifically with the Japaneseness of these texts, with many modern manga fans constituting their community identity through in-group practices such as learning and using basic Japanese, including honorific suffixes and katakana, and familiarizing themselves with certain aspects and affordances of Japanese culture.[62] Some modern manga fans may even self-identify as 'otaku' – an indexically distinct Western use of the term discussed earlier in this paper, without the negative connotations of the original Japanese designation[63] – or in extreme cases, may be labeled 'weeaboos' or 'weebs'[64] – a derogatory Western coinage for anime and manga fans who are "obsessive in their fandom to the point of distancing themselves from all other forms of media."[65] These contemporary readers' engagement with *Sailor Moon*, then, draws specifically on the affordances created by the foreignizing strategies of the Kodansha translation as well as the consumption of the 'Japaneseness' it highlights within the text, and so they can be referred to as 'Cool Japan Fans': that is, fans not only (or even primarily) of specific properties like *Sailor Moon*, but also of Japanese culture and

media more broadly – i.e., the exports of 'Cool Japan.'

One place in which we can see these two reader identities play out contemporaneously is in Amazon.com reader reviews for the 2011 Kodansha translation. In this public forum, multiple readers from each group evaluate the two translations directly, and in these evaluations, the domesticating and foreignizing strategies discussed above play into how they construct their identities as either Moonies or Cool Japan Fans. Below, we briefly examine a selection of these reviews to demonstrate how this discursive identity work is performed.

One of the most illuminating examples can be found in a review from "Brad," titled "A+ for presentation, C- for Adaptation." A self-identified Moonie, Brad expresses concern about the Japanese words present in the Kodansha translation, stating:

> Makoto addresses her teacher as "Sensei" even though "Sir" could have been used
> or sensei removed completely without affecting the meaning of what she said (which
> was actually done in the original TokyoPop[/Mixx] adaptation), [and] the characters
> refer to each other with Japanese honorifics even when it sounds completely unnatural
> in English.[66]

Here Brad states that *Sailor Moon* fans like themselves prefer the domesticating translation strategies used in "the original TokyoPop[/Mixx] adaptation," and that the Japanese honorifics and loanwords present in the Kodansha translation are undesirable additions, sounding "unnatural" in English. It is important to note that this reviewer in fact displays significant linguistic knowledge about Japanese when discussing individual translation decisions throughout the review, as in the following excerpt:

> When [Usagi] sees Tuxedo Mask ... instead of whispering something along the
> lines of (from the Japanese "Suteki!") "He's so handsome!" we get a simple "How
> wonderful...!" and when she's kicked out of class due to being late, the original
> Japanese "Mo....." which is basically the equivalent of "Oh man!" or "This sucks!"
> gets interpreted as "Oh, honestly!"[67]

Thus, rather than stemming from an unfamiliarity with linguistic devices like honorifics, Brad's negative evaluation of the Kodansha translation comes instead from a specific

preference for the domesticating strategies of the Mixx translation, which highlight '*Sailor Moon*-ness' instead of 'Japaneseness' within the text.

A contrasting example can be found in a review from "Amanda," titled "Amazing and about time!" Amanda writes:

> "I love the literal translation! It sounds weird to Americans but I would rather it be translated exactly how it was written [than] translated for people who are not really into manga itself, just Sailor Moon."[68]

Here, Amanda makes a distinction between ordinary 'Americans' on the one hand, and manga fans like themselves on the other, who presumably possess the familiarity with Japanese cultural affordances and linguistic vocabulary necessary to consume this 'literal translation' 'exactly how it was written' – in other words, including untranslated Japanese, honorifics, katakana, and a right-to-left reading direction. Importantly, in addition to casting their enjoyment of this translation in opposition to the tastes of mainstream 'Americans,' this reviewer also specifically contrasts their ideal of a manga translation (the foreignizing strategies of this Kodansha version) against a translation meant for people who are 'into Sailor Moon' but not 'into manga itself.' In doing so, Amanda constructs a reader identity not as a Moonie, but as a Cool Japan Fan: someone interested in the 'Japaneseness' of 'manga itself.'

It is also worth noting that within the specific subculture of modern American manga fans, the translation strategies that have been referred to as "foreignizing" here and in other studies of comics in translation may in fact be fulfilling a function closer to Venuti's definition of domestication, or the "ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target language cultural values."[69] Certainly if the target audience for these translations is the mainstream English-speaking American reading public, then practices such as untranslated Japanese words

(otaku, miko), unexplained honorific suffixes, un-transliterated katakana, and unfamiliar

reading conventions all create barriers to entry that fit the prototypical definitions of

foreignizing translation strategies and formal equivalence. If, however, the readership of the

Kodansha translation is primarily composed of dedicated American manga fans like Amanda

– "ultra-otaku," in the American sense of "anime and manga fan" – as Schodt has suggested,[70]

then familiarity with Japanese loanwords, honorifics, katakana, and a hybrid right-to-left

reading direction are all in line with the cultural values of this community, and these

strategies could actually be considered as 'domesticating' the text for consumption in this

particular community of practice.

Conclusion

This analysis of two English translations of *Sailor Moon* shows how loanwords,

honorifics, onomatopoeia, and iconicity are all mobilized in service of diverse goals in these

two translations, which represent not only two different approaches to translating manga

(characterized broadly as domesticating and foreignizing), but also two different stances on

the original Japanese text. In brief, the earlier Mixx translation takes the evaluative stance

that the Japanese elements of the original text are undesirable for its English-speaking

audience, and thus something to be erased in translation, while the later Kodansha translation

takes the evaluative stance that 'Japaneseness' is a desirable component of the original text

that when preserved, accentuated, and even added to in translation, contributes positively to

the aesthetic value and experience of the translated text for readers. To that end, while the

Mixx translation uses certain linguistic resources to Americanize the setting, culture, and

characters in the story, the Kodansha translation instead uses these same resources to

emphasize and reinforce the 'Japaneseness' of each of these elements, creating a reading experience that presupposes familiarity with Japanese linguistic and cultural affordances.

Crucially, neither of these approaches is representative of a 'more accurate' or 'better' method of translating manga. But, as we have demonstrated here, each translation allows for readers to construct different identities by drawing on the unique affordances created by its particular linguistic features, and this in turn means that these approaches invite very different value judgements (i.e., "how it was written," "unnatural") from fans and industry stakeholders alike. And while both translations – and both styles of translation – have their fans and detractors, it is also important to consider the value of these works within the contexts of their original releases.

For instance, in the United States at the time of the Mixx translation, the prevailing publisher sentiment was that Japanese properties needed to be heavily 'Americanized' in order to succeed in (and as) translation; and, whether true or not, this idea was responsible for what would become American cultural touchstones like the *Mighty Morphin' Power Rangers* – a hybrid television production that spliced together clips from the Japanese sentai show *Go Ranger* with newly-recorded live-action sequences featuring American actors in order to re-set the show in a Californian junior high school.[71] From a publisher perspective, then, the domesticating strategies used in the Mixx translation would have represented a 'safer' marketing bet in 1998. By the time the Kodansha translation was released in 2011, however, both *Sailor Moon* and manga in general already enjoyed established American fanbases, who – thanks at least in part to the post-millennium popularity of properties like *Pokémon*, *Naruto*, and *Yu-Gi-Oh!* – would have been more familiar with Japanese media, and accordingly (from a publisher perspective) required less 'Americanization' in the texts they

consumed. So while some particularly conspicuous examples of Americanization have since been canonized as sources of mocking humor in modern manga and anime fandoms – such as the "jelly-filled donuts" (originally onigiri) of *Pokémon* becoming internet shorthand for excessive localization[72] – it is perhaps directly thanks to the success of these earlier domesticating translations that later audiences are able to enjoy manga with words like 'otaku' and 'miko' present in the English text.

This shift in strategies and in the overall stance taken towards 'Japaneseness' between the two versions of *Sailor Moon* examined here, then, is indicative of more than simple idiosyncratic differences between translators or publishers. In fact, it represents a change in the way manga readers in the United States consume and engage with these translated texts, shifting from a preference for a culturally-adapted, domesticated reading experience focused on the story itself, to a desire for more formal equivalence, wherein translated manga retain as much of their 'Japaneseness' as possible.

Appendix A: List of Abbreviations

1	first person
PL	plural

| ADJ	adjectivizing suffix
ASP	aspect marking construction
HON	honorific
FHON	familiar honorific
COP	copula
EXCLAM	exclamation
NEG	negation
POSS	possessive
PST	past
SUB	subject marker
TOP	topic marker

Appendix B: Reading Direction

In the following diagrams, the larger red arrow represents the direction in which pages are read, the smaller yellow arrow represents the direction in which panels on a page are read, and the smallest blue arrows represent the direction in which the text itself is read, while the numbers next to the blue arrows indicate the order in which speech bubbles are read within a panel.
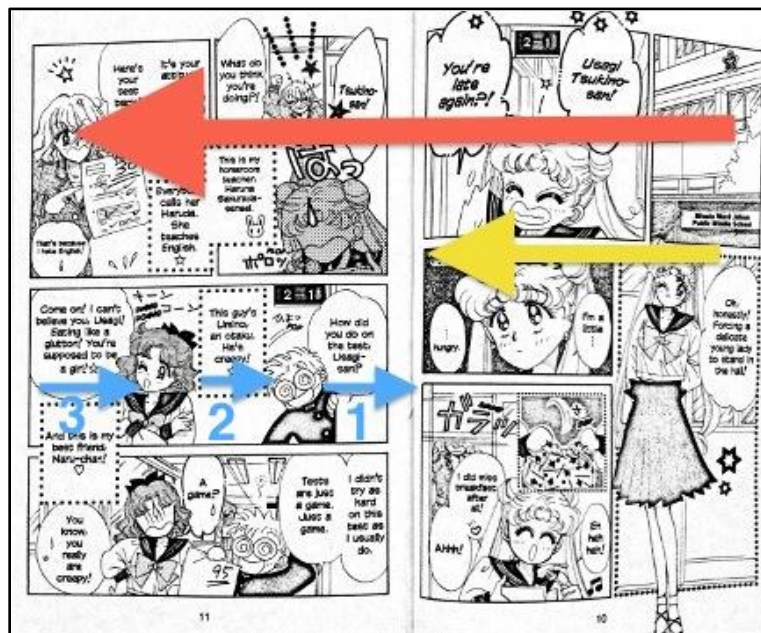
Original text (*Bishôjo Senshi Sêrâ Mûn*):

Mixx translation (*Sailor Moon*):
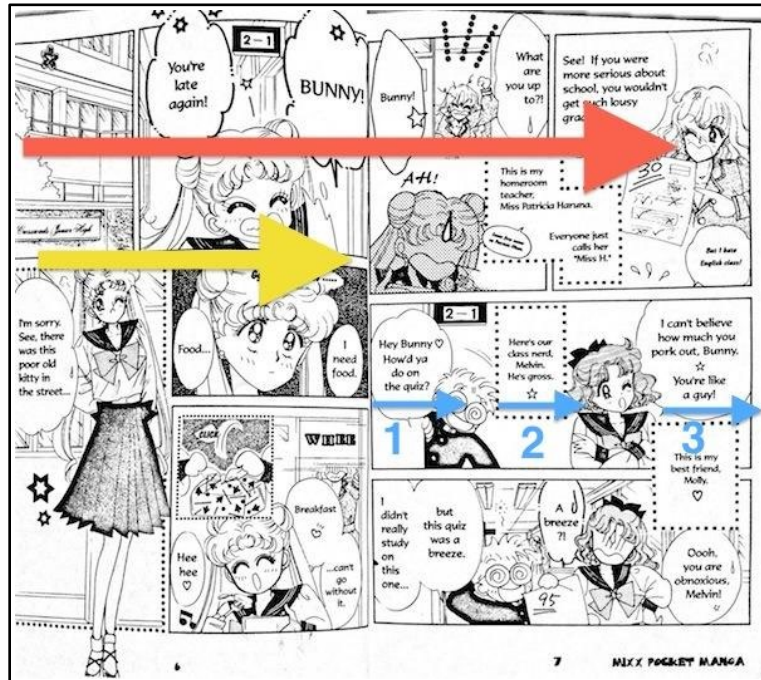
Kodansha translation (*Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon*):

1   Scott McCloud, *Understanding Comics: The Invisible Art* (New York: Harper Collins, 1993), 44.
2   Heike Jüngst, "Japanese comics in Germany," *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* 12, no. 2 (2004): 85, https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2004.9961493.
3   Heike Jüngst, "Translating Manga," in *Comics in translation,* edited by Federico Zanettin (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2008), 51.
4   McCloud; Charles Peirce, "On the algebra of logic: A contribution to the philosophy of notation," *American journal of mathematics* 7, no. 2 (1885): 180-196, https://doi.org/10.2307/2369451.
5   Umberto Eco and Siri Nergaard, "Semiotic approaches," in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, edited by Mona Baker (London: Routledge, 1998), 221.
6   Eugene Nida, *Toward a Science of Translation* (Leiden: Brill, 1964).
7   Lawrence Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* (London: Routledge, 1995).
8   Nida, *Toward a Science of Translation,* 159.
9   Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility*, 20.
10 Valerio Rota, "Aspects of Adaptation: The Translation of Comics Formats," in *Comics in translation,* edited by Federico Zanettin (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2008), 84.
11 Lev Vygotsky, *Thought and Language* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986); Alessandro Duranti, "Sociocultural dimensions of discourse," in *Handbook of discourse analysis* 1 (1985): 193-230; James P. Lantolf and Steven L. Thorne, "Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning," in *Theories in Second Language Acquisition*, edited by Bill van Patten and Jessica Williams (Mahwah, New Jersey: Erlbaum, 2007), 201-224.
12 For more on the commodification of language, see Monica Heller, "The commodification of language," *Annual review of Anthropology* 39 (2010): 101-114, https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.anthro.012809.104951, a review article that explores language commodification in translation, tourism, art, and education, among other spheres.
13 Anne Allison, "Sailor Moon: Japanese superheroes for global girls," in *Japan Pop! Inside the World of Japanese Pop Culture*, edited by Timothy Craig (New York: M. E. Sharpe, 2000), 259-278; Wendy Siuyi Wong, "Globalizing manga: from Japan to Hong Kong and beyond," *Mechademia* 1, no. 1 (2006): 23-45, https://doi.org/10.1353/mec.0.0060.
14 Douglas McGray, "Japan's gross national cool," *Foreign policy* 130, no. 1 (2002): 44-54.
15 Frederik Schodt, *Dreamland Japan: writings on modern manga (*Berkeley, CA: Stone Bridge Press, 2011).
16 Allison, "Sailor Moon"; Schodt, *Dreamland Japan*.
17 Naoko Takeuchi, *Bishôjo senshi Sêrâ Mûn* (Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon), 18 vols (Tokyo: Kodansha. 1991-1997); Naoko Takeuchi, *Sailor Moon,* vol 1, translated by Anita Sengupta, (Los Angeles: Mixx, 1998); Naoko Takeuchi, *Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon*, vol 1, translated by William Flanagan, (New York: Kodansha USA, 2011). A third English translation for the U.S. market was also released in 2018, and although this analysis focuses on comparison between the first two (best-selling) translations, future work could investigate these same linguistic factors in the newest translation.
18 James Gibson, *The ecological approach to visual perception* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1979); Alan Costall, "Socializing affordances," *Theory and Psychology*, 5 (1995): 467-481, https://doi.org/10.1177/0959354395054001.
19 The concept of 'affordance' comes out of environmental psychology, where James Gibson coined the term to describe "what [the environment] offers the animal, what it provides or furnishes, either for good or ill" (Gibson, 127). The concept has since been taken up and expanded in many fields, including sociocultural linguistics, where it is used (as here) to refer to any aspect or property of our social world or objects in it (including language) which provide the possibility of social action (Costall, "Socializing affordances").
20 John Du Bois, "The stance triangle," in *Stancetaking in discourse: Subjectivity, evaluation, interaction*, edited by Robert Englebreston (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2007), 139-182.
21 John Du Bois, "Towards a dialogic syntax," *Cognitive Linguistics* 25, no. 3 (2014): 359-410, https://doi.org/10.1515/cog-2014-0024.
22 Du Bois, "Towards a dialogic syntax", 362.
23 Ibid., 372.
24 For a full discussion of diagraph conventions, see Du Bois, "Towards a dialogic syntax."

25 Gibson; Costall; Laurence Kaufmann and Fabrice Clément, "How culture comes to mind: From social affordances to cultural analogies," *Intellectica* 46 (2007): 221-250, https://doi.org/10.3406/intel.2007.1286.

26 It is worth mentioning that the decision to translate the 'sêrâ' in *Sêrâ Mûn* as simply "sailor" in both versions is intriguing in itself. The English word calls to mind images of the navy or individuals sailing a boat; and while the Japanese sêrâ *can* refer to someone working aboard a ship, the word is equally evocative of the uniform worn by junior and senior high school girls in Japan (Allison, 269). Thus, while the original Japanese plays on both definitions of sêrâ – Bunny/Usagi is essentially a schoolgirl by day and a superhero (adjacent to a soldier, such as a naval sailor) by night – this dual nuance is less accessible in the English rendering for readers unfamiliar with the word's associations with schoolgirl uniforms.

27 Example numbers refer to the page number on which they appear in the Kodansha translation.

28 The use of braces (i.e. '{word}') indicates that the enclosed word or phrase has been moved from its original sequential position within the text in order to highlight resonance within the limitations of the diagraph notation, following Du Bois. In these cases, the original text is given in endnotes.

29 Original: "This guy's Umino, an otaku."

30 Jüngst, "Translating Manga", 68.

31 Hiroki Azuma, *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals,* translated by Jonathan Abel and Shion Kono (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009).

32 Jüngst, "Japanese comics in Germany", 99.

33 A reviewer points out that this same character – later revealed to be Sailor Mars – uses this untranslated Japanese incantation in the otherwise heavily Americanized 1995 dub of the *Sailor Moon* anime. Though beyond the scope of this paper, examining parallels in the translation strategies seen in the manga and across the many English-language versions of the *Sailor Moon* anime – which include the 1995 dub, a 2014 dub, and various subtitled releases between 2003 and 2016 – would be an excellent focus for future research.

34 Klaus Kaindl, "Thump, whizz, poom: A framework for the study of comics under translation," *Target. International Journal of Translation Studies* 11, no. 2 (1999): 278, https://doi.org/10.1075/target.11.2.05kai.

35 Jüngst, "Japanese comics in Germany", 96.

36 Leo Loveday, *Explorations in Japanese sociolinguistics* (Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1986), 7.

37 Original: "How'd you do on the test, Usagi-san?"

38 Original: "I can't believe how much you pork out, Bunny."

39 Original: "I can't believe you, Usagi! Eating like a glutton!"

40 Original: "You're still in uniform, Usagi-chan!"

41 Michael Silverstein, "Shifters, Linguistic Categories, and Cultural Description," in *Meaning in Anthropology*, edited by Keith Basso and Henry Selby (Albuquerque: School of American Research, 1976), 34.

42 Michael Cronin, *Across the Lines: Travel, Langauge, Translation* (Cork: Cork University Press, 2000), 42.

43 Jane Hill, "Language, race, and white public space," *American anthropologist* 100, no. 3 (1998): 680-689, https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1998.100.3.680.

44 Jüngst, "Translating Manga", 68.

45 Ibid., 60.

46 Hiroko Fukuda, *Flip, slither, & bang: Japanese sound and action words* (Tokyo: Kodansha International, 1993), 7.

47 Jüngst, "Translating Manga," 61.

48 Federico Zanettin, Federico, "Comics in Translation: An Overview," in *Comics in translation,* edited by Federico Zanettin (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2008). 13.

49 See for instance Carmen Valero Garcés, "Onomatopoeia and Unarticulated Language in the Translation of Comic Books: The Case of Comics in Spanish," in *Comics in translation,* edited by Federico Zanettin (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2008), 239.

50 Cf. Nadine Celotti, "The Translator of Comics as a Semiotic Investigator," in *Comics in translation,* edited by Federico Zanettin (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2008), 41.

51 George Philip Krapp, "The psychology of dialect writing," in *A Various Language: Perspectives on American Dialects*, edited by Juanita V. Williamson and Virginia M. Burke (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1971) 22-29.

52 Schodt, *Dreamland Japan,* 358.

53 Takeuchi, "Pretty Guardian Sailor Moon."

54 Jüngst, "Translating Manga," 59.

55 Adele D'Arcangelo, "'Slime Hero from the Swamp': The Italian Editions of Alan Moore's Horror Saga The *Swamp Thing*," in *Comics in translation,* edited by Federico Zanettin (Manchester: St. Jerome, 2008), 144.

56 Peirce, "On the algebra of logic."

57 Schodt, *Dreamland Japan,* 313.

58 McCloud, *Understanding Comics,* 78.

59 Allison, "Sailor Moon", 273.

60 Not to be confused with the term "Moonies" as used colloquially to describe members of the Unification Church (also The Family Federation for World Peace and Unification), as founded by Sun Myung Moon.

61 Casey E. Brienza, "Books, Not Comics: Publishing Fields, Globalization, and Japanese Manga in the United States," *Publishing Research Quarterly* 25 (2009): 101-117.

62 Schodt; Jüngst, "Translating Manga."

63 Jüngst, "Japanese comics in Germany," 99.

64 Originating from a Perry Bible Fellowship comic strip (https://pbfcomics.com/comics/weeaboo/) completely unrelated to Japan, the term 'weeaboo' and its shortened form 'weeb' have come to refer to anime and manga fans so obsessed with Japanese media that they fetishize Japanese people and culture and "take their love for the medium too far" (Michael Yergin, *Shared Enthusiasm: Social Cohesion within Anime Fandom* (MA Thesis, Northern Illinois University, 2017), 35). In many ways, the Western use of the term 'weeb' parallels the Japanese use of the term 'otaku,' encompassing the negative connotations of excessively nerdy, out-of-touch fans that the latter term has lost in English but still retains in Japanese.

65 Yergin, *Shared Enthusiasm,* 46.

66 Brad, "A+ for presentation, C- for Adaption," (September 13, 2011), https://www.amazon.com/review/R1EE17DLW8H4F5.

67 Ibid.

68 Amanda, "Amazing and about time!" (October 8, 2011), https://www.amazon.com/review/R3MRIPKRNQ09AL.

69 Venuti, *The Translator's Invisibility,* 20.

70 Schodt, *Dreamland Japan,* 358.

71 Allison, "Sailor Moon", 263-265.

72 "Brock's Jelly Doughnuts," https://knowyourmeme.com/memes/brocks-jelly-doughnuts

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