

**DRAWING THE SELF:
RACE AND IDENTITY IN THE MANGA OF TEZUKA OSAMU**

by

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ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the construction and mutability of the Japanese race and ethnicity in the print comics of Dr. Tezuka Osamu (1928–1989), Japan’s “god of manga” and the creator of such beloved series as *Astro Boy* and *Kimba the White Lion*. By investigating three of Tezuka’s mature, lesser-known works from the 1970s and 80s, I will illustrate how Tezuka’s narratives have been shaped by his consciousness of racial issues and his desire to investigate the changing nature of Japanese identity in the postwar era. First, the works are contextualized within the larger manga history of the 1960s and 70s, specifically the *gekiga* (lit. drama pictures) movement that heralded more mature and sophisticated stories and artwork. Chapter one analyzes *Ode to Kirihiito* (1970–71, 2006 English), and introduces Julia Kristeva’s theory of abjection to show the ways in which Tezuka bestializes his ethnically Japanese protagonists and turns them into a distinct class of subaltern. Chapter two examines intersections between race and war narratives using *Adolf* (1983–85, 1995–96 English), Tezuka’s WWII epic about the Jewish Holocaust. The concept of hybridity is utilized and the case is made that Tezuka ultimately denies his racially mixed characters the benefits of their Japanese identity. Chapter three investigates the manifestation of Japanese masculinity in *Gringo* (1987–89), one of Tezuka’s final works. In this chapter, Japanese identity, masculinity, and sexual ability are linked to the national sport of sumo wrestling. A discussion of diasporic communities is included in order to discuss how the Japanese race is conceptualized as it moves through different geographical and cultural spaces.

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NOTES

All Japanese names in this thesis appear family name first (Tezuka Osamu) to reflect the original Japanese-language order, except when names are included in quotes where Western authors have already reversed the order, or when an author is writing in English and uses the English order.

English translations are my own unless otherwise noted. Foreign words appear in italics throughout this thesis. I have used the Hepburn Romanization System to spell out Japanese names and words. This system utilizes a macron to indicate long vowel sounds (ō, ū). No italicization or macrons are present for proper nouns (Osaka) or words that appear in the Oxford English Dictionary (sumo, manga).

My bibliography is divided into four sections: Works by Tezuka Osamu, English-language sources, Japanese-language sources, and filmed sources. The titles of Japanese-language sources have been translated into English and appear in parentheses next to the Romanized Japanese. When a source has been officially published in English, these translated titles appear in italics.

I utilize the official English titles for those Tezuka manga works which have been published and are commercially available in English (such as *Ode to Kirihito* and *Adolf*). Tezuka Productions often provides their own English titles for many of Tezuka's un-translated works. I have chosen to utilize these titles (un-italicized) in this thesis when no translation exists of the work, even when they are not direct translations of the original Japanese.

Foreign place names and character names appear in *katakana* throughout the Tezuka corpus. When available, I have consulted the English language versions for a suitable translation. For un-translated works, I have opted to Romanize rather than translate the original *katakana* text. In rare cases, Tezuka draws English text into his original manga frames, such as with the surnames “Kaufmann” and “Kamil” in *Adolf* or the place name “Esecarta” in *Gringo*. In these instances, I have reproduced the English as Tezuka originally intended.

In-text citations for specific manga volumes follow the MLA format. Since only one multivolume Tezuka work is discussed in-depth per chapter, I have omitted the author's surname and the work's abbreviated title, shortening the in-text citation to (Volume #: Page #) or (2: 83). When first introducing a manga work, I provide complete publication details in parentheses when I am able to determine them. For example, (1970–71, *Ode to Kirihito*, 2006) indicates the original serialization period in Japan, the work's translated title, and English publication date (if available). There are occasional discrepancies between sources regarding dates for Tezuka's various life events. Dates appearing throughout this thesis are taken from the biographical timeline present in the 1999 reprinting of Tezuka's autobiography *Boku wa mangaka* (I Am a Manga Artist; 274–80).

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INTRODUCTION

“Manga are a treat” “Children love manga” “I want parents and their children to read manga together” – It was decided and I was made to say that sort of stuff. When I left the studio I was always muttering to myself, “Nothing but lies.”

—Dr. Tezuka Osamu (*Mangaka* 206)

To say the name Dr. Tezuka Osamu (1928–1989) is to conjure up images of his most famous bright-eyed and smiling comic characters: A boy robot, a white lion cub, a cross-dressing princess. Tezuka was, and still is, unquestionably regarded as one of Japan’s most influential and prodigious creators of manga (print comics) and anime (animation). He serialized his first four-panel strip, *Māchan no nikkichō* (1946, *The Diary of Mā-chan*), at the age of 17, and in a career spanning over four decades, Tezuka produced more than 150,000 individual pages of manga (Power 4). This is to say nothing of his TV anime, feature films, and experimental animations. However, by the late 1960s, the artist responsible for such beloved series as *Tetsuwan atomu* (1952–58, *Astro Boy*, 2002–04), *Janguru taitai* (1950–54, *Kimba the White Lion*), and *Ribon no kishi* (1953–56, *Princess Knight*, 2011), was growing frustrated with his legacy.

When faced with the advent of a new, more mature and realistic trend in manga storytelling, Tezuka’s plucky protagonists and simplistic tales of good and evil were rendered archaic overnight, and Japan’s “god of manga” dipped in nationwide popularity for the first time in his career (McCarthy 183). Yet, whenever Tezuka agreed to television interviews and was prepared to discuss his views on the changing nature of the manga industry, he was instead instructed to recite stock phrases that championed manga as a medium exclusively for children (Tezuka, *Mangaka* 205–06). Tezuka was fed up. Even more than two decades into his career,

there was still a tendency in Japan to regard his manga as mere escapist stories for young boys and girls.¹

Such a reductive view of the Tezuka corpus could not be more flawed. Tezuka was a messy-haired, un-athletic, and egg-headed young child, who was constantly daydreaming or telling stories in an attempt to become the center of attention. Consequently, he was often tormented at school by older, bigger children (McCarthy 19, Schodt, *Astro Boy* 123). The result was that Tezuka grew up knowing full well the extent to which some of his young readers were bullied, and worked to embed storylines dealing with profound issues, such as race relations, class issues, and discrimination, into many of his most popular classic manga. Take, for example, Tezuka's most famous work *Astro Boy* and its precursor, the short-lived serial *Atomu taishi* (1951–52, Captain Atom, lit. Ambassador Atom). While *Astro Boy* is ostensibly the tale of a good-natured boy robot who protects the earth from harm, one can observe Tezuka's true moral agenda under the science fiction artifice. Using the close proximity between humans and their robot helpers, and the inherent threat this poses to human subjectivity, Tezuka creates a subplot of robot discrimination that runs through the course of the narrative. A similar undercurrent is present in the animal classic *Kimba the White Lion*, in which a clear hierarchy is established not just between human and animal, but between the different species of animals who struggle to survive, die, and sometimes eat each other.

Tezuka is today commonly associated with the term “humanism,” often translated as *hyūmanizumu* or *ningen ai* (lit. human love) in Japanese. The tendency in popular discourse is to use the term's most basic definition to suggest that Tezuka had an unwavering love of humanity.

¹ This tendency to associate Tezuka with his golden-age manga works of the 1950s continues to this day. With the possible exception of *Burakku Jakku* (1973–83, *Black Jack*, 2008–11), Tezuka is still known the world over as the creator of *Astro Boy* and *Kimba the White Lion*.

Indeed, humanism has become so synonymous with Tezuka's legacy that it is now common practice for publishers of Tezuka's works to include a disclaimer touting the author's inner humanism as a means to apologize for potentially racist depictions of certain ethnic characters throughout his manga repertoire. This practice began in 1990 when Japan's Association to Stop Racism Against Blacks began leveling claims of racism at Tezuka posthumously due to his cartoony drawings of African natives in works such as *Kimba the White Lion* (Schodt, *Dreamland* 63–64). Tezuka recalls a humorous exchange with an NBC executive who predicted this controversy. Upon reading the initial script for *Kimba*, the television executive insisted that Tezuka try hard not include any black people, as their depiction could potentially be construed as racist. Tezuka's response was, "Why? There's no such thing as an Africa without Africans!" (Tezuka, *Mangaka* 266).

Even a cursory reading of *Astro Boy* or *Kimba the White Lion* illustrates that Tezuka's narratives frequently interrogate cases of interracial (or interspecies) conflict, where hybridized characters are often pained by their own existence and then invariably destroyed.² Thus, what the TV interviewers of the late 1960s missed about Tezuka's classic narratives was the fact that underneath the veneer of cutesy characters and exotic locations lay frank discussions about discrimination, racial conflict, and ethnic identity, drawn in equal parts from Tezuka's own life experiences and his voracious appetite for knowledge. While Tezuka's works of the 1950s largely recoded these real-world issues in the form of human-robot, interspecies, or, in the case of *Princess Knight*, rival fantasy kingdom relations, the same cannot be said of the works produced during the final two decades of Tezuka's career. Indeed, it is only beginning in the early 1970s that Tezuka brings racial issues to the forefront of his manga, doing away with

² This destruction usually stems from a noble form of self-sacrifice. In the final episode of the *Astro Boy* TV anime, Atom sacrifices his life as he flies a bomb into the sun to save the Earth. Likewise, Kimba sacrifices his own life at the end of the manga to save his human companion Higeoyaji when the two are stranded atop a mountain.

genre-specific allegories and instead directly referencing specific nations, ethnic groups, and global conflicts, in what would become his most artistically experimental and narratively ambitious works.

Despite Tezuka's profound impact on the growth and development of manga and anime, there remains, to this day, a relative lack of academic scholarship published on Tezuka's oeuvre in either the West (North America and Europe) or Japan. Of particular note is the general absence of academic works that introduce theoretical frameworks to critically analyze the themes present in Tezuka's manga.

While any general volume on the history of manga and anime must necessarily include a section on Tezuka due to his sheer influence, to date, Tezuka-specific scholarship in English has been largely limited to biographical accounts of the artist's life or chronicles of his various works throughout different decades. The most recent books in this vein are Helen McCarthy's *The Art of Osamu Tezuka* (2009) and Natsu Onoda Power's *God of Comics* (2009), the latter of which contains a limited analytical component in the final chapter. Both McCarthy and Power are indebted to the earlier work of noted manga translator and personal friend of Tezuka's Frederik L. Schodt, whose classic books *Manga! Manga!* (1983) and *Dreamland Japan* (1996) both contain short sections on Tezuka. Schodt's most recent book, *The Astro Boy Essays* (2007), focuses entirely on Tezuka's most popular work *Tetsuwan atomu*.³

In recent years, there has been a steady increase in the number of academic articles published on Tezuka in English by scholars such as William Benzon, Philip Brophy, Bettina Gildenhard, Thomas LaMarre, Antonia Levi, Sheng-Mei Ma, Ada Palmer, Susanne Phillipps,

³ I forgo an extended biography of Tezuka in this introduction as excellent versions already exist in McCarthy, Power, and Schodt's books.

and Rob Vollmar, among others.⁴ In my study here I am particularly indebted to Dr. Thomas LaMarre and Dr. Ada Palmer for their theoretical approaches to Tezuka's manga. Their academic articles served as useful templates when structuring my own arguments.

Tezuka himself has written a wide variety of books and essays about his life and career in Japanese. The oldest and best-known of these are his autobiography *Boku wa mangaka* (1967, I Am a Manga Artist) and his how-to book *Manga no kakikata* (1977, How to Draw Manga). In addition, Tezuka Productions has compiled the artist's various essays and university lectures into books and released them posthumously as *Boku no manga jinsei* (1997, My Life in Manga) and *Boku no manga michi* (2008, My Manga Road). While the content of these volumes must be regarded with an element of skepticism, as Tezuka was known to embellish stories about his life, I make frequent references to these books throughout this thesis as they provide a unique look into Tezuka's personal philosophy and creative process.

There are considerably more academic works on Tezuka available in Japanese, though they also tend to contain few in-depth textual analyses. A number of semi-biographical books were published shortly after Tezuka's death in 1989, including Ishigami Mitsutoshi's *Tezuka Osamu no jidai* (1989, The Age of Tezuka Osamu) and Sakurai Tetsuo's *Tezuka Osamu: Jidai o kirimusubu hyōgensha* (1990, Tezuka Osamu: The Artist Who Clashed with the Times). Literary and film critic Ishiko Jun has published several books on Tezuka's war manga, including *Manga shijin* (1991, Manga Poet) and *Heiwa no tankyū* (2007, Quest for Peace).

The most noteworthy and influential theoretical work published on Tezuka in Japanese to date has been Itō Gō's *Tezuka izu deddo* (2005, *Tezuka is Dead*),⁵ which seeks to decentralize

⁴ In addition, well-known scholars of Japanese popular culture Jaqueline Berndt, Susan Napier, and Deborah Shamoon all discuss Tezuka in their larger manga and anime projects. For a more comprehensive list, please see the bibliography.

Tezuka as the unequivocal locus of Japanese manga and anime history. Echoes of Itō's project can be found in the writings of manga scholars Natsume Fusanosuke, Ōtsuka Eiji, and Yomota Inuhiko.⁶ Recent books on Tezuka include Motohama Hidehiko's *Tezuka Osamu no Okinawa* (2010, Tezuka Osamu's Okinawa) and Ishii Lasalle and Tatsumi Hisayuki's *Jinsei de taisetsu na koto wa Tezuka Osamu ga oshiete kureta* (2011, The Most Important Things in Life Were Taught to me by Tezuka Osamu). Motohama's book, in particular, includes a theoretical analysis of racial and environmental issues present in those Tezuka works which prominently feature Okinawa as a backdrop. As such, it provides possible evidence for a new wave of more theoretically-minded Japanese scholarship on Tezuka in the future.

Before discussing the specifics of my project, it is necessary to first introduce the *gekiga* movement in order to illustrate the broader shifts that were occurring in the manga industry in the 1960s and 70s and how Tezuka's narratives responded by plumbing the depths of the human condition. Broadly speaking, *gekiga* (lit. "drama pictures") was an older term that had gone out of fashion. It was reintroduced by manga artist Tatsumi Yoshihiro (1935–) in 1957 to describe a new form of more sophisticated manga. By the mid-1960s, the format was at the height of national popularity. *Gekiga* works were characterized by narratives which centered on more mature themes such as violence, politics, and sex; and a newfound visuality which was realistic and complex, often incorporating elements from other media genres, particularly film noir (Kure 399, Shamoan 28).⁷ In Tezuka's own words, Tatsumi and his gang of young manga artists added

⁵ An English-language excerpt from Itō's book (Trans. Miri Nakamura) appears in *Mechademia 6* (2011, The University of Minnesota Press).

⁶ Selected articles from Ōtsuka and Yomota appear in translation in *Mechademia 3* (2008, The University of Minnesota Press).

⁷ Ishiko Jun describes this new art style as containing older, taller, and more angular characters. This is contrasted with short, round, and childlike characters such as Tezuka's Atom. The backgrounds were also detailed with many fine lines so as to emulate a picture (*Shijin* 128).

scenes of psychological realism and a sense of depth (*jūkō ni shita*) in order to heighten the realism of their narratives.⁸ Tezuka notes that with both of these additions, the average age of manga readers rose into their teens, and consequently the popularity of his staple series began to wane (Tezuka, *Mangaka* 212).

By the early 1970s, the always smiling, whimsical, beret-wearing god of manga checked himself into a psychiatric institution. Tezuka's vehement reaction to *gekiga* is slightly ironic given the fact that he played a large role in the development of the format. As an aspiring young manga artist, Tatsumi idolized Tezuka and had the fortune of developing a personal relationship with the artist, as the two lived 20 minutes apart on the Hankyu Railway (Tatsumi 66). In fact, it was Tezuka who showed Tatsumi a copy of his then-unpublished work *Janguru taitei* and encouraged him to try his hand at creating longer manga works which eventually evolved into *gekiga* narratives (85–86). Tezuka would later downplay this negative reaction to *gekiga* in his book *Manga no kakikata*, writing that he saw the appeal and value of the format from the beginning (240–41).

While many scholars attribute the success of *gekiga* with the deterioration of Tezuka's mental health, there were in fact a variety of factors that made the period from 1968 to 1973 the artist's darkest years (McCarthy 183, Power 143). Tezuka's experimental manga magazine *COM* folded in 1971,⁹ and the animation studio he founded, Mushi Production, closed its doors two years later. Tezuka describes the dire situation in his autobiography:

⁸ This parallels the discovery of character interiority which marked the arrival of modern Japanese literature in the late 1800s, with works such as Futabatei Shimei's *Ukigumo* (1887, *Drifting Clouds*) and Mori Ōgai's *Maihime* (1890, *The Dancing Girl*). For more, see chapter two of Karatani's *Origins of Modern Japanese Literature*.

⁹ *COM* began publication in December 1966. While the magazine was formally discontinued in 1971, one additional issue was published in August 1973.

Finally, I reached my lowest point of neurosis and, one day, I tumbled down two flights of stairs. Letters from readers flooded in saying, “you’re stale,” “you’re in a rut” [*manneri da*]; everything I drew was unpopular; and on top of that my assistants were obsessed with *gekiga*. Thinking that my life was already over, I checked in at the mental hospital at Chiba Medical College because I wanted to undergo a psychiatric evaluation. (*Mangaka* 216)

Tezuka would try many different tactics to rid himself of his depression, going as far as to purchase a traditional medicinal tonic made from viper blood. In the end, it was not until *Black Jack* became a national hit in 1973 that Tezuka’s neurosis finally subsided (Tezuka, *Mangaka* 217–19).

Though Tezuka eventually relented to industry pressure and updated his art style to reflect the trends of *gekiga*, the true rejuvenation in Tezuka’s career came in the form of previously unseen narratives which were based on either historical (*rekishi*) or contemporary (*gendai*) realism and primarily functioned to satirize the ideological divides of the time (Ishiko, *Shijin* 133–34). Rob Vollmar notes that one of the main ways Tezuka achieved this satire was to criticize the “outright oppression of people and ideas that did not support the popular narrative of better times” (19). Thus, beginning in the 1970s and continuing to his death, one observes a string of mature works from Tezuka that bring racial discourse to the forefront in time periods as varied as the Allied Occupation and Japan’s bubble economy of the 1980s.¹⁰

This thesis aims to critically examine the construction and mutability of Japanese racial identity through textual analyses of three of Tezuka’s lesser-known mature works of the 1970s

¹⁰ While space does not permit an analysis of all these works in this thesis, there are a variety of long-form series from this time period that deal with themes of class, race, gender, and global conflicts. Some of these include: *Aporo no uta* (1970, *Apollo’s Song*, 2007), *Ningen konchūki* (1970–71, *The Book of Human Insects*, 2011), *Ayako* (1972–73, 2010 English), and *MW* (1976–78, 2007 English). While little has been written about Tezuka’s more mature works of the 1970s and 80s, all of these works are worthy of scholarly attention.

and 80s: *Kirihito sanku* (1970–71, *Ode to Kirihito*, 2006), *Adorufu ni tsugu* (1983–85, *Adolf*, 1995–96), and *Guringo* (1987–89, *Gringo*). In choosing these, I have endeavored to select not only those series which provide a wealth of racial discourse to analyze, but also stand alone as influential and representative works within the larger Tezuka corpus. *Ode to Kirihito* was the first medical manga published in Japan, and is credited with giving rise to the genre. *Adolf*, regarded by most scholars as Tezuka’s final long-form masterpiece, was the first of the artist’s works to be translated and published in its entirety in English. Finally, while *Gringo* remains unfinished due to Tezuka’s death in 1989, nonetheless it arguably serves as Tezuka’s purest prolonged meditation on contemporary Japanese identity, and showcases the true evolution of Tezuka’s storytelling techniques. By utilizing these three influential manga that have hitherto received little to no scholarly attention in either English or Japanese, it is my hope that this thesis will fill a gap in the current literature by introducing race theory to paint a useful, multifaceted picture of Tezuka’s unique relationship with the country in which he was a god.

In this thesis, I conflate somewhat ideas of citizen, race, language, customs, and nation to mirror the complexity and ambiguity of Tezuka’s own narratives. While “race” often marks biological features of those people descended from a common ancestor, and “ethnicity” marks the language, customs, and culture differentiating one group from another, there is an increasing amount of scientific research today to suggest that both are largely socially constructed concepts (Sharp 35–37). Nationality is most commonly used to describe citizenship of a particular country, yet oftentimes the term becomes intertwined with a racial or religious identification, as in the case of the “Japanese race” or the “Jewish race.” In his various interviews and essays, Tezuka repeatedly uses the Japanese words *jinshu* and *minzoku* when discussing racial issues. These terms suggest a degree of ambiguity regarding the distinction between race, ethnicity, and

nationality. *Jinshu* (lit. type of person) is commonly translated into English as both “race” and “ethnic group.” Likewise, *minzoku* (lit. people tribe) is translated as a “race,” “people,” or “nation.”¹¹

Chapter one utilizes Julia Kristeva’s theory of abjection and draws on subaltern studies in order to examine how Tezuka subverts the notion of an ideal Japanese race by bestializing his “white” Japanese and Caucasian protagonists into brown humanoid-dog creatures in *Ode to Kirihito*. Furthermore, Tezuka strengthens his social commentary and reaffirms the lasting legacy of Japan’s wartime imperialism by having his central protagonist fall victim to the brutality of and in turn be liberated by former colonial subjects (in this case the Taiwanese). A central focus of this chapter is on the canine-human protagonists who must continually reassert their humanity by proving their intellectual worth to the larger Japanese scientific community.

Chapter two introduces the concept of racial hybridity in *Adolf* in relation to the two main characters of Adolf Kamil (a German-Jewish refugee living in Kobe, Japan), and his childhood friend Adolf Kaufmann (the half-Japanese, half-German son of a Nazi Party member). First, *Adolf* is situated both within the Tezuka corpus and the larger context of Japan’s war and remembrance manga of the time. An argument is then made that, within the context of his transnational narrative, Tezuka positions the Japanese racial and cultural identity as an oftentimes beneficial construct within the narrative for the hybridized Adolfs. Yet, by ultimately making this Japaneseness forever elusive for the main characters, Tezuka openly examines whether the postwar Japanese identity can ever be truly extricated from the specter of wartime atrocities.

Finally, chapter three examines the representation of Japanese masculinity and self-identity in one of Tezuka’s final works, *Gringo*. Set during the height of the bubble economy, the

¹¹ “Jinshu” and “minzoku.” *Kenkyusha’s New College Japanese-English Dictionary*. 5th ed. 1998.

central protagonist, Himoto Hitoshi, is a paragon of Japanese economic superiority and technological modernity. However, by strategically displacing Himoto and his mixed race family to a politically unstable country in South America, Tezuka examines the ways in which Japanese identity manifests itself in different social and national contexts. Drawing on a discussion of the diasporic community of Japanese Brazilians, an argument is made that when freed from the trappings of modernity, Himoto's identity and masculinity manifest themselves through the rituals and pageantry of sumo wrestling, Japan's national sport.

This thesis concludes with thoughts about what these three works demonstrate about Tezuka's attitude toward race and humanity in the later decades of his career. Specifically, I propose that the conservative treatment of racially hybridized characters and ethnically Japanese characters in *Ode to Kirihito*, *Adolf*, and *Gringo* necessitates a re-evaluation of Tezuka's widely venerated "humanism."

CHAPTER 1

Can the Subaltern Bark? (*Kirihito sanku*)

A dog has the soul of a philosopher.

—Plato

Julia Kristeva describes marginalized social groups and the process in which they separate themselves or are forcibly separated from the majority in terms of “abjection.” Existing in a liminal space between life and death, object and subject, the abject is somewhat broadly described as “[that which] disturbs identity, system, order. [That which] does not respect borders, positions, rules. The in-between, the ambiguous, the composite” (Kristeva 4). Interestingly, Kristeva views literature as one of the prime sites for the expression of abjection. She writes, “It is within literature that I finally saw (abjection) carrying, with its horror, its full power into effect” (207). If literature presents the ultimate “unveiling of the abject,” one could conclude that fictional characters who challenge the boundaries of the human and the ways in which identity is conceptualized might illuminate new truths about abject groups within a given dominant society (208).

In this chapter I am primarily concerned with the construction of the animal-human hybrid and the society of postwar Japan in Tezuka’s medical manga masterpiece *Kirihito sanku*¹² (1970–71, *Ode to Kirihito*, 2006; hereafter *Kirihito*). Here, the story centers on protagonist Dr. Osanai Kirihito¹³ (hereafter Osanai) who contracts a mysterious disease and is transformed into a

¹² The Japanese word *sanku* translates directly to “eulogy.” Thus, Tezuka gave the work the translated title of *Eulogy to Kirihito* during its original serialization in Japan.

¹³ In Japanese, the name Kirihito is one *katakana* character and thus one syllable off from Kirisuto (Christ). Given the Christian imagery and biblical passages presented throughout the manga in connection to Sister Helen, it is likely that Tezuka purposefully included this wordplay to heighten the religious allegory.

“dog-man” (Figure 1). The textual significance of this human to animal metamorphosis in *Kirihito* can be explained with Deleuze and Guattari’s theory of “becoming-animal.” They write:

Becomings-animal are neither dreams nor phantasies. They are perfectly real. But which reality is at issue here? For if becoming animal does not consist in playing animal or imitating an animal, it is clear that the human being does not ‘really’ become an animal any more than the animal ‘really’ becomes something else.

Becoming produces nothing other than itself. We fall into a false alternative if we

say that you either imitate or you are. What is real is the becoming itself, the block of becoming, not the supposedly fixed terms through which that which becomes passes.

(Deleuze and Guattari 238)



Figure 1. Dr. Osanai transforms into a “dog-man” (*Kirihito* 1: 127). ©Tezuka Productions. Reproduced with permission.

For Deleuze and Guattari, becoming-animal does not include imitating or identifying with an animal (239). Nor does it include “really” becoming an animal. In this sense, Tezuka’s narrative marks a clear

departure from the theory since a number of

characters do physically transform. However, as is articulated in the second half of the passage, it is the process of becoming that presents a valuable way of conceptualizing the self beyond the standard division between human and animal. Or, in the words of Christine Marran, “Becoming-animal is a way of living differently, identifying differently with others or at least beginning to invent new ways, or re-imagining old ways, of being in relationship with others” (44). Thus,

Tezuka's specific form of becoming-animal illustrates the ease with which Japanese identity can be negated when one's physical appearance changes.

This chapter argues in favor of reading Tezuka's dog-men and dog-women not as fantastical manga monsters, but rather as a distinct class of subaltern. Throughout this chapter I define subaltern broadly as "subordinated classes and peoples" (Young, *Postcolonialism* 6). Like Robert Young, Joanne Sharp also broadly defines subaltern as "the poorest classes, women, tribal groups and other marginalised people" (Sharp 110–11). Such definitions are at odds with the more specific way postcolonial theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak advocates using the word to refer to a group outside the hegemonic discourse.¹⁴ However, a broad definition is necessary in order to encompass the many varied ways in which Tezuka's dog-women and dog-men parallel subjugated groups both inside and outside Japan.

In animalizing his protagonists in this way, I argue that *Kirihito* can be read as a work in which Tezuka complicates notions of the colonizer and the colonized while grappling with the legacy of Japan's empire. First I examine the significance of turning men into dogs, linking Tezuka's negatively-charged bestialization of the Japanese with Allied propaganda during World War II. Next, I draw parallels between the depiction of Tezuka's dog-humans and the way in which certain subaltern groups were portrayed in turn of the century ethnographic media and conceptualized in racial thought. Here my argument focuses on the subaltern as diseased, the subaltern as spectacle, and the subaltern as incapable of speaking for itself. Finally, I draw on Tezuka's own personal philosophy to suggest a possible path for empowering subaltern groups.

¹⁴ For more on Spivak's ideal usage of the term subaltern, see de Kock 46.

1.1 DOG DOCTORS AND THE FIRST MEDICAL MANGA IN JAPAN

Kirihito was first serialized in the *seinen* manga magazine *Big Comic* from April 1970 to December 1971 and later republished as a two-volume stand-alone special edition by Tezuka's own COM¹⁵ Comics in 1972. While often overshadowed by Tezuka's subsequent episodic series *Burakku Jakku* (1973–83, *Black Jack*, 2008–11), about a morally ambiguous genius surgeon, *Kirihito* is noteworthy in that it is said to have both originated the genre of medical manga (*iryō manga*)¹⁶ in Japan, as well as to have introduced Japanese readers to their first heroic “surgeon” in Dr. Osanai.

I use the title surgeon judiciously as Osanai is in fact a formally trained internist. However, like his spiritual successor Black Jack, he functions as a kind of super-doctor, as comfortable performing pancreatic surgery on an ailing village elder while barricaded in a cave as he is caring for a starving newborn in the Middle Eastern desert (2: 105–07, 2: 150). In their study of 173 medical manga published in Japan as of December 2008, Kishi et al. observed that 77% of the main characters featured in storylines were doctors (134 cases), and approximately 53% of those doctors were classified as surgeons (71 cases) (677). This study, while published four decades after *Kirihito*, testifies to the enduring popularity of the surgeon hero archetype in Japanese medical manga and medical dramas on TV. This popularity can be traced directly to *Kirihito*, which pioneered the depiction of invasive surgical procedures in order to heighten the dramatic tension of the narrative for the reader (Ishii 543, Kishi et al. 677).

¹⁵ Tezuka's Mushi Pro production company began producing the short-lived experimental manga magazine *COM* (1966–71, 73) in response to industry pressure to create more mature and edgy *gekiga* stories. While the vast majority of works serialized in *COM* were Tezuka's own creations, some notable amateur manga artists got their start in this magazine as well (Power 104).

¹⁶ *Iryō manga* is a contemporary genre classification. Tezuka himself referred to *Kirihito* and *Black Jack* more literally as “doctor manga” (*isha no manga*) (Tezuka, *Manga jinsei* 82).

Tezuka has written relatively little in his essays and autobiography about his reasons for turning a man of medicine into a beast. What has been written about the series illuminates more about the seemingly impromptu story progression than it does the central speculative device of the animal-human. Specifically, Tezuka explains that he originally envisioned a prolonged sequence in which Dr. Osanai and female performer Reika travel to the Middle East as a “modest incident” (*uchiwa na jiken*); however, ancillary characters began appearing in great numbers. Tezuka was initially hesitant about these character additions but allowed his imagination to run wild and brought the sequence to a satisfying conclusion (Tezuka, *Manga michi* 30).

Even without a clear statement from the author regarding the origins of *Kirihito*, it is clear that this improbable medical drama is the product of Tezuka’s life experiences. Specifically, one can see how Tezuka’s career as a medical student might have informed the naturalistic portrayal of university life and intradepartmental conflicts as presented in *Kirihito* (and later *Black Jack*). In addition, Tezuka’s time spent as a medical student conducting scientific research likely aided in the refinement of the anatomically realistic renderings of the human body and sophisticated and accurate medical language which would become a hallmark of his medical manga (Ishii 543).

In addition to serving as a reflection of Tezuka’s medical interests and experience, the composition of *Kirihito* is also indicative of the author’s voracious reading habits and penchant for drawing from various popular cultural media. Thematically and visually, *Kirihito* seems to borrow from a number of popular texts, both foreign and domestic. While Tezuka vehemently denied the allegations, critics charged that he lifted the central narrative conflict of two warring factions of doctors set at a medical school in Osaka directly from Yamasaki Toyoko’s novel *Shiroi kyotō* (1965, *The White Tower*) (Power 145). Tezuka scholar Natsu Onoda Power also

notes how Tezuka's frequent use of a montage effect in which character emotions are represented as abstract images and inanimate objects echoes the visuality of Sergei Eisenstein's 1925 silent film *Battleship Potemkin*, which first debuted in Japan in 1965 (146).

Tezuka entered Osaka University School of Medicine in 1945 at the age of 17 and began residency at Osaka University Hospital two years later.¹⁷ His decision to enter the medical field is often attributed to the fact that he came from a family of doctors: his great-great-grandfather Tezuka Ryōsen was a doctor and his great-grandfather Tezuka Ryōan was the first army doctor in Japan (McCarthy 15).¹⁸ Also likely instrumental in influencing Tezuka's decision to attend medical school was an experience in 1944 where he contracted the fungal infection ringworm in both arms while undergoing strenuous physical education at the Ichiriyama Health Training Center for boys. A doctor saved Tezuka's arms from amputation, and this experience is said to have engendered his lifelong admiration for medical practitioners (McCarthy 23). Tezuka himself acknowledges that he was indeed eager to follow in his great-grandfather's footsteps, but also notes that when faced with the proposition of fighting in active combat, the idea of treating injured soldiers from the safety of a tent, and with a nurse doing most of the preparations, was far more desirable (Tezuka, *Manga jinsei* 68).

Osaka University features as a prominent location in a number of Tezuka's autobiographical manga, such as *Gachaboi ichidaiki* (1970, *Gachaboi's Record of One Generation*), in which Tezuka drops an ink jar down the stairs during a medical school lecture and is disciplined for drawing manga in class (reproduced in Tezuka, *Manga jinsei* 70–71). Similarly, shots of "M University" in *Kirihito* make it clear that Tezuka is visually replicating the

¹⁷ Due to the shortage of medical doctors following the war, a special medical college system was established which allowed young students, like Tezuka, to enter medical school straight from middle school (Tanaka n.p.).

¹⁸ Tezuka's *Hidamari no ki* (1981–86, *Tezuka's Ancestor Dr. Ryoan*, lit. *A Tree in the Sun*) is a fictionalized autobiography of these ancestors told during the final days of the Tokugawa Shogunate.

campus architecture of his alma mater, despite utilizing the common modern Japanese literary practice of substituting single Roman letters for specific character and place names.

Tezuka graduated from Osaka University in 1951 and became a licensed physician in 1952. However, upon receiving his medical license, he subsequently moved to Tokyo, choosing to draw manga instead of pursuing a career in medicine (Power 37, 61). Tezuka would later return to school in 1958, this time at Nara Medical University, and graduate with a Ph.D. in medicine in 1961. His dissertation was titled *A Microscopic Study of the Membrane Structure of Heterotypic Spermatozoa* and examined the sperm production of Japanese pond snails using an electron microscope. Tezuka's dissertation project and research is significant in so far as it likely contributed to the refinement of his medical illustrations. By 1960, an electron microscope like the one Tezuka was using to examine spermatozoa was capable of producing images 100,000 times clearer than traditional models, and this newfound fidelity through which Tezuka could observe minute organic life likely enhanced the already near-photographic medical illustrations he was publishing in the *Journal of Biophysical and Biochemical Cytology* between 1957 and 1960 (McCarthy 28, Power 101–02).

Tezuka scholar Susanne Phillipps situates *Kirihito* as part of what she labels as Tezuka's "Horror-Gothic Period" (the 1970s). Her classification is derived from the fact that works during this period tend to represent a thematic break from Tezuka's earlier binary worldview of good and evil and instead feature morally ambiguous characters in tales involving the fantastic and the grotesque. On a visual level, Phillipps notes that characters now possess more realistically drawn faces and body proportions and often have stylistic features, such as an eye-patch, that indicate their more ambiguous moral character (82–83). Noted manga critics Natsume Fusanosuke and Kure Tomofusa likewise contextualize *Kirihito* as the representative work during Tezuka's

gekiga-inspired period (roughly the 1970s). Natsume writes that *Kirihito* is drawn in such a way as to strike just the right balance between the “Tezuka-style line” and “*gekiga*-style line” (*Tezuka teki na byōsen to gekiga teki na byōsen to ga chōdo kinkō suru tokoro de egakareteiru*; 196).

Likewise, in his essay serving as an afterword to volume one of the book version of *Kirihito*, Kure concurs that more so than Tezuka’s early forays into *gekiga*, such as *Chikyū o nomu* (1968–69, *Swallowing the Earth*, 2009) and *Aieru* (1969–70, I.L.), *Kirihito* was the work that most accurately exemplified the vivid changes during this point in Tezuka’s career (400).

For Natsume and Kure, certain visual and narrative elements serve to distinguish this work from what came before. In terms of visuality, both critics note a drawing style in which many of the lines have become finer and darker, creating a greater sense of contrast between the black ink and white page (Kure 400). Thematically, this black and white duality is present in the narratives as well. Natsume categorizes the characters as “realistic people” (*riaru na jinbutsu*) who “hold back emotions” (*hyōjō o osaeru*; 195–96). Kure paints the overall work as “serious” (*shinkoku*) and lacking the comedic “breathers” (*ikinuki*)¹⁹ common in Tezuka’s more light-hearted works from the 1950s and 60s (401).

Film theorist Stephen Neale suggests that genre conventions are informed by two types of verisimilitude. The first kind is “generic verisimilitude,” that is, the rules of the genre. The second is a broader social or “cultural verisimilitude,” which deals with the accepted rules of society and culture outside of the fiction. Neale explains:

Certain genres appeal more directly and consistently to cultural verisimilitude:

Gangster films, war films and police procedural thrillers, certainly, often mark

that appeal by drawing on and quoting “authentic” (and authenticating) discourses,

¹⁹ Here Kure is referring to Tezuka’s frequent insertion of gags into his manga, such as the nonsensical comedic pig-gourd-like creature Hyōtantsugi (“Gourdski” in English), who often appears out of the blue and whose only purpose is to break up the dramatic tension and make the reader laugh (401).

artefacts and texts, maps, newspaper headlines, memoirs, archival documents, and so on. But other genres, such as science fiction, Gothic horror or slapstick comedy, make much less appeal to this kind of authenticity, and this is certainly one of the reasons why they tend to be despised, or at least “misunderstood”, by critics in the “quality” press. (Neale 47)

In addition to what Phillipps, Natsume, and Kure identify as a more representative art-style and a more mature, serious story, *Kirihito* also simultaneously adheres to both Neale’s concepts of generic and cultural verisimilitude. I would contend that it is primarily this aspect that makes the work unique among Tezuka’s more mature responses to *gekiga*. Regarding generic verisimilitude, *Kirihito* draws not on the rules of any one genre, but rather on Tezuka’s own established work involving metamorphosis. Indeed, shape-shifting and animalized characters are a staple of Tezuka’s manga. For instance, Tezuka wrote the satirical *Ningen konchūki* (1970–71, *The Book of Human Insects*, 2011), which metaphorically compared the publishing world of Akutagawa Prize-winning author and con-woman Tomura Toshiko²⁰ to the insect world. While writing *The Book of Human Insects*, Tezuka was simultaneously serializing another mature series, which contained a more literal manifestation of transformation as focalized through a mysterious shape shifting woman named I.L. Finally, the literary works of Franz Kafka and Edgar Allan Poe were a source of inspiration to Tezuka as well and he created his own series of short stories titled *Metamorufōze* (1974, 1976–77, *Metamorphose*), which examined the effects of transformation in both the literal and metaphorical sense (Phillipps 84).

Phillipps argues that metamorphosis functions to heighten the psychological complexity of Tezuka’s characters and make them more interesting for mature readers. This is because, “the

²⁰ Here we find yet another instance of Tezuka drawing on popular culture. While the character of Tomura Toshiko is entirely fictional, it seems likely that Tezuka is alluding to famous real-life novelist Tamura Toshiko (1884–1945).

more ambiguous (the characters) are, the more terrifying they become” (84). *Kirihito* manages to adhere to the generic conventions of Tezuka’s earlier “metamorphosis manga” by presenting a psychologically rich portrayal of the morally ambiguous and physically terrifying dog-man Dr. Osanai. Tezuka simultaneously grounds his narrative in the cultural verisimilitude of the medical drama, by rendering realistic operations and including appropriate medical language.

As I will show in the subsequent analyses of *Adolf* and *Gringo* in later chapters, while Tezuka’s narratives were always guided by a unique speculative question, he gradually did away with overt science fictional and fantastical elements in favor of adding historical and psychological realism. In *Kirihito* one sees the beginning of this process: the mysterious origin of the disease which turns humans into dogs is ultimately illuminated through modern scientific know-how and technology. In this way, with its strange juxtaposition of the medically authentic and the fantastically bizarre, I believe *Kirihito* functions perfectly as a work that bridges the gap between Tezuka’s more overtly fantastical works of the 1950s and 60s, and the historical realism that would come to define the final decade of his career.

1.2 OF DOGS AND MEN: A SUMMARY

Ode to Kirihito is the tale of a 27-year-old internist from M University School of Medicine, Dr. Osanai Kirihito, who contracts *monmō*²¹ disease, becomes a canine-human hybrid, and seeks to regain his humanity and restore his good name through many trials and tribulations. Also central to the narrative is a clash of ideologies between two factions of doctors at M University in Osaka: one, led by Dr. Osanai and his best friend Dr. Urabe, who wish to prove that *monmō* is an endemic disease; and the other, led by Osanai’s elderly mentor head physician

²¹ Transliterated as “Monmow” in the English-language version (Tezuka, *Ode to Kirihito* 21; capitalization in original).

Dr. Tatsugaura, who staunchly believes that the disease is viral and extremely contagious.

The story begins with Osanai bidding farewell to his fiancée Izumi as he is sent to the mountainous village of Inugamisawa (Doggoddale)²² in rural Tokushima Prefecture to determine whether *monmō* is endemic or viral. It is not long before Osanai contracts the disease himself and begins to show the first signs of turning into a dog. Osanai flees the village but is abducted and put aboard a cargo ship heading to Taipei.

In Taiwan, Osanai finds himself a slave to an eccentric Taiwanese millionaire Man (pronounced “Mahn”), who recruits unusual entertainment acts for his twisted banquets. Osanai eventually escapes with the help of Reika, a fellow entertainer famous for her “human tempura” escape act where she is rolled in batter and submerged in hot oil, only to escape unscathed.

Osanai and Reika are abducted (yet again!) on their way to a nearby port and become prisoners in a mountaintop village. Osanai, with the help of both a Taiwanese doctor and Reika, successfully performs pancreatic surgery on the ailing village elder in order to earn their freedom. The Taiwanese doctor makes flight arrangements for Osanai and Reika to leave Taiwan, but their plane is hijacked and the pair end up in Syria.

After wandering through the desert for a number of days, Osanai and Reika stumble upon the small town of Kolibasura.²³ Reika attempts to earn travel money for their return to Japan by performing her human tempura act, but the trick goes awry and she is killed in the process. Devastated by the loss, Osanai remains in Kolibasura and eventually becomes accepted by the local community, serving as the town doctor and even performing operations with his canine face uncovered.

²² The town’s name is a play on the word *inugami* or “dog spirit” / “dog god” from Japanese folklore tales common in Hokkaido and Shikoku. The town’s name is translated into English as “Doggoddale,” effectively losing the folkloric connection (Tezuka, *Ode to Kirihito* 14).

²³ Translated as “Kolibasra” in the English-language version (Tezuka, *Ode to Kirihito* 596).

The story ends with Osanai returning to Japan. He visits Inugamisawa and the village chief confesses into a tape recorder that Tatsugaura paid him 3 million yen to imprison Osanai so that he would contract *monmō* and die. Armed with the truth, Osanai appears at the voting hall where Tatsugaura is about to be elected president of the Japan Medical Association (JMA). Osanai presents his findings to the medical association representatives in the hope of swaying their opinion of Tatsugaura.

It is revealed that Tatsugaura has also contracted *monmō* and has been hiding his symptoms. Osanai confronts Tatsugaura over his insistence that *monmō* is a viral disease. After a thorough scientific analysis of rock samples taken from Inugamisawa's Tanigawa River, it is revealed that geologic platelets from the cretaceous period were poisoning the water with small crystals that bring about the disease.

While the tests clearly show that *monmō* is not infectious, Tatsugaura holds true to his viral theory and later succumbs to respiratory paralysis. Osanai is invited to speak in front of a large group of sick patients. He recalls key moments from his adventure and states that he feels as if he has regained his humanity and now has no apprehension about walking the streets with his face uncovered. The story ends with Osanai returning to Syria to resume his post as town doctor.

The main subplot involves a romance between Dr. Urabe and a South African nun named Sister Helen Friese. Helen suffers from a Rhodesian variant of *monmō* known as *kuone kuorare*,²⁴ so her appearance, like Osanai's, resembles a dog.²⁵ Helen is brought to Japan and exhibited as Tatsugaura's patient at M University's Conference for Contagious Diseases. After

²⁴ Translated as "Kuonay Kuoralay" in the English-language version (Tezuka, *Ode to Kirihito* 793; capitalization in original).

²⁵ Interestingly, since Sister Helen is a Caucasian woman from South Africa, she takes the form of a blonde (white) dog. Osanai, on the other hand, is always depicted as dark brown when in dog form.

her humiliation at the medical conference, Helen moves to a small mining slum outside Osaka and devotes her life to treating patients with Kashin-Beck disease.²⁶ She gives birth to a healthy, human child fathered by Dr. Urabe.

1.3 JAPANESE DOGS

For well over a century, Western science fiction narratives have mediated their social criticism through the practice of racialized animalization.²⁷ In its most basic form, “animalization” is the process of depicting someone as an animal or imposing animal characteristics on something (LaMarre, “Speciesism I” 75). Animalization need not be inherently negative. Indeed, immediately before beginning work on *Kirihito*, Tezuka drew on Western folklore and experimented with a more playful form of animalization in his *shōnen* gag series *Banpaiya* (1966–9, *The Vampires*), about a boy-vampire named Toppei who can transform himself into a wolf.

However, when racial characteristics are assigned to animalized characters, portrayals tend to dehumanize and displace. As David Sibley notes, “Claiming animal attributes for others is one way of legitimating exploitation and exclusion from civilized society, so it is unsurprising that it is primarily peripheral minorities, indigenous and colonized peoples, who have been described in these terms” (27). It is my argument that Tezuka strategically utilizes this more

²⁶ Tezuka purposefully takes cues from the real life bone and joint disorder known as Kashin-Beck disease when creating *monmō*. An endemic disease to Tibet and certain Chinese provinces, Kashin-Beck involves stunting of the limbs and stiff, deformed joints in the hands and feet. Within Tezuka’s narrative, Sister Helen initially mistakes Kashin-Beck patients for fellow *monmō* patients due to the similarities between the diseases (2:251).

²⁷ I am thinking here of the lineage of social science fiction narratives that toy with established notions of racial hierarchy through animalization, such as *The Island of Doctor Moreau* (1896, Wells), *The Most Dangerous Game* (1924, Connell), and *Planet of the Apes* (1963, Boule), just to name a few.

negative form of bestialization²⁸ in order to graphically abuse his protagonists and give the reader a visceral experience of difference that brings racial discrimination to the fore of the story.

Japanese visual culture scholar Thomas LaMarre notes that Japanese wartime animation involving animals was often meant to legitimize the national coding of imperialist expansion as pan-Asian liberation and co-prosperity. In order to accomplish this goal, these animations often “expanded on the logic of companion species, offering scenarios of species engaged in playful rivalry or cooperative endeavors” (“Speciesism II,” 57). LaMarre borrows the term “companion species” here from Donna Haraway. One can see clear echoes of the plucky, cooperative animal allies of Japanese wartime animation in Haraway’s description of companion animals as “horses, dogs, cats, or a range of other beings willing to make the leap to the biosociality of service dogs, family members, or team members in cross-species sports” (Haraway 14).

Two of the most famous examples of wartime “companion species” anime both featured Momotarō the peach boy, a hero from Japanese folklore. *Momotarō no umiwashi* (1942, Momotarō’s Sea Eagles) was a short animation for children that recreated the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, except with Momotarō leading a naval unit consisting of several different animal species. Three years later, another Momotarō propaganda film, *Momotarō umi no shinpei* (1945, Momotarō, Divine Soldiers of the Seas), was released as the first full-length feature animation in Japan (LaMarre, *Anime Machine* 28). Like *Umiwashi*, *Umi no shinpei* also employed helpful animal naval soldiers of different species to aid in a glorified animated rendition of the liberation of the peoples of Asia.²⁹ Tezuka in fact saw *Umi no shinpei* in 1945 and writes in his

²⁸ While the terms “animalize” and “bestialize” are often used interchangeably, the latter carries a more negative connotation and so I use it to emphasize how Tezuka’s dog-men and women often appear frightening and grotesque in the eyes of non-afflicted humans.

²⁹ There is a tendency to read certain animal species in these films as corresponding to particular ethnic groups (for example dogs as Koreans). However, LaMarre cautions against such a direct comparison, stating that it is “difficult

autobiography that he was “moved to tears” by the film, despite the fact that he loathed the wartime propaganda present underneath the veneer of companion speciesism (Tezuka, *Mangaka* 32–33).

In addition to the Momotarō films, one finds a historical precedent in manga and anime for the Japanese representing themselves as dogs. Predating the Momotarō films, Tagawa Suihō’s *Norakuro* (Stray Black, 1931–81) originally began as a comic strip in *Shōnen Club* but was later adapted into a series of animated shorts, the most famous of which is *Norakuro nitōhei* (1935, Stray Black, Second-Class) (LaMarre, *Anime Machine* 27). Norakuro, the titular character, is a loveable black dog soldier who constantly stumbles and bumbles his way through army duties, often failing in a comedic manner to complete his tasks (LaMarre, “Speciesism I” 87–88). By contrast, when Tezuka’s dog-man Dr. Osanai surmises that he will be unable to save the life of a starving newborn in the middle of the desert,³⁰ he begins to strangle the child to death as a mercy killing while Reika screams that he is behaving like a wild animal (*yajū*) (2: 149).

As even this short sequence indicates, Tezuka’s bestialization is at complete odds with the aforementioned cutesy “companion species” trend in Japanese wartime animation. Rather, the dehumanization of the Japanese doctor and the seemingly unbridgeable chasm between the motherly and nurturing Reika and the savage, devolved Dr. Osanai more closely parallels Allied propaganda which routinely depicted the Japanese as beasts in order to facilitate their mass-killing. John Dower notes that a characteristic feature of anti-Japanese propaganda produced by the Allies (primarily America) was that it resorted to “nonhuman or subhuman representation, in

and probably impossible to sustain an allegorical reading based on a one-to-one correspondence between an animal species and a people or nation” (“Speciesism I,” 90).

³⁰ While wandering through the Middle Eastern desert, Osanai and Reika come across a newborn baby and his recently deceased mother in a cave. At first Osanai wishes to strangle the child to death as a mercy killing but Reika convinces him to spare the child’s life since it is struggling so hard to survive. The child ultimately dies a few days later of starvation, prompting Osanai to question the purpose and effectiveness of doctors (2: 147–58).

which the Japanese were perceived as animals, reptiles, or insects” (81). In addition, the Japanese were also represented as monkeys, baboons, gorillas, mice and rats, vipers and rattlesnakes, cockroaches, vermin, or, more vaguely, “the Japanese herd,” bees and ants (both possessing a hive mind and serving a queen), cattle, sheep, and, last but not least, dogs (Dower 81).³¹

By far the most common bestialization in Allied propaganda was to equate the Japanese with apes and monkeys: first representing the Asian foe as a threatening, yet primitive King Kong-like beast, and subsequently transforming this representation into a domesticated pet chimp after Japan’s surrender (Dower 186–87). While not as common as apes and monkeys, many phrases that served to dehumanize the Japanese as dogs were in common parlance between Churchill, Roosevelt, and Secretary of War Henry Stimson. Common phrases included “mad dogs,” “yellow dogs,” “whipped puppies,” and “Japanese dogs” (Dower 82–83). While Tezuka is not drawing directly on this Allied racist imagery, his narrative does evoke many of these same kind of animalistic pejoratives in order to liken Osanai’s appearance to a variety of animals and creatures, including dogs (*inu*), wild dogs (*yama inu*), raccoon dogs (*tanuki*), beasts (*kedamono*), wild animals (*yajū*), and werewolves (*ōkami otoko*).

Dower concludes that Allied definitions of the Japanese national character ultimately centered on three portrayals: The Japanese as a primitive and tribal people; the Japanese as immature children, and consequently the Allies as the “parental” nation tasked with keeping this delinquent child in line; and finally the Japanese as mentally and emotionally ill (Dower 122). While not a direct mapping of the three categories of subalternity I will discuss in the following sections, one can certainly see an overlap between these three portrayals of the Japanese and the subaltern broadly characterized as a diseased, silent spectacle.

³¹ In addition to verbally equating the Japanese with animals, some 2000 Japanese Americans were physically treated like animals as well. They were forced to sleep on sacks of straw in converted pigpens and cattle stalls in Washington State’s Puyallup Fairground and other locations across the west coast (Dower 82).

1.4 SICK AS A DOG

When one catches Tezuka's mysterious *monmō* disease parts of the body become numb, bones begin to change shape, the chin sharpens and the backbone becomes arched, the limbs become stunted and one can no longer stand upright. Eventually the victim dies from respiratory paralysis (1: 18–19). While Science³² ultimately diagnoses the disease to be an endocrine disorder accompanied by skeletal deformities, *monmō* is consistently coded as shameful and abject. Furthermore, as Osanai's initial dismissal of his *monmō* symptoms as a common cold suggest, the disease is also portrayed as completely unbecoming a technologically advanced and well-educated nation like Japan (1: 79).

In a meeting with Dr. Urabe in South Africa, Professor Ferdinand from Rhodesia National University reveals cases of a *monmō* variant affecting local people. In addition to Tezuka's own imagery, which explicitly equates *monmō* patients with primitive, hut-dwelling Bushmen tribes, Professor Ferdinand quickly dismisses the idea that the disease could affect Caucasians. She states, "That's impossible! Caucasians could never contract such a disease!" (*Sonna hazu wa arimasen! Hakujin ga anna byōki ni kakaru hazu ga arimasen wa!*; 1: 88). A similar story is told by Dr. Manheim of Frankfurt University, who explains that the abbot of Sister Helen's South African monastery attempted to murder her because it was "unacceptable for a Caucasian woman to take the form of a dog or cat" (*Hakujin ga inu ya neko no yō na sugata ni nariateru koto wa yurusarenakatta no desu*; 2: 56).

One of the primary symptoms of *monmō* that foreshadows one's transformation into a beast is a craving for raw meat. Within the narrative, Tezuka clearly aligns the practice of eating raw mammalian flesh with prehistoric humans and tribal cultures. After first ingesting raw meat,

³² I use capital "S" Science here to playfully reflect Tezuka's utilization of a full-page montage of generic, yet impressive looking supercomputers, beakers, and test tubes to uncover the truth behind the illness (2: 378).

Osanai writes in his journal that he has heard of tribes in Congo and New Guinea that still eat raw meat dripping with blood and likens himself to a “primitive man who ate raw meat like a wild beast” (*Genshijin wa mōjū no yō ni niku o hi ni mo kakezu ni tabeta no darō*; 1: 95).

Julia Kristeva writes that “food loathing” is perhaps one of the most elementary and archaic forms of abjection (2). Her argument centers on an infant’s rejection and expulsion of certain foods, which violate the child’s corporeal boundaries. In this sense, by vomiting or spitting out the food, the infant is attempting to establish a distinct corporeal identity from the



Figure 2. Dr. Osanai craves and consumes raw meat as part of his transformation (*Kirihito* 1: 93). ©Tezuka Productions. Reproduced with permission.

parents. Kristeva writes, “I expel *myself*, I spit *myself* out, I abject *myself* within the same motion through which ‘I’ claim to establish *myself*” (3; italics in original).

Kristeva’s concept of food loathing is of use in examining Osanai’s transformation into the subaltern through the abject consumption of raw meat.

Osanai’s first taste is simultaneously satiating yet horrifying. Hunched over on

all fours, he rips apart the raw flesh with his

bare hands (Figure 2). Osanai is both appalled by his own actions, yet powerless to stop the act.

His sweating, quivering body evokes Kristeva’s description of the birth of abjection: “During the course in which ‘I’ become, I give birth to myself amid the violence of sobs, of vomit” (1: 92–93, Kristeva 3). While Osanai does not appear to physically expel the raw flesh, and thus momentarily maintains his corporeal integrity, his psychological integrity becomes irreparably

fractured the moment he first ingests the raw meat. This is evidenced by the fact that, immediately following the episode, Osanai's first question to the village maiden Tazu is, "has my face changed?" (*ore no kao kawattenai ka*; 1: 94). Clearly Osanai fears that his primal behavior has turned him into an abject other.

As noted earlier, one of the central themes in *Kirihito* is a battle between doctors Osanai and Tatsugaura over whether *monmō* is a viral or endemic disease. While the disease is ultimately revealed to be endemic, the vast majority of urbanites flee Osanai's general vicinity due to an irrational fear of infection. David Sibley writes, "Disease is a more potent danger if it is contagious. The fear of infection leads to the erection of the barricades to resist the spread of diseased, polluted others. The idea of a disease spreading from a 'deviant' or racialized minority to threaten the 'normal' majority with infection has particular power" (25). While it is unlikely that Tezuka was referring to any specific ethnic or cultural minority group in *Kirihito*, certainly many allegorical readings could be attached to the fictional *monmō* disease which turns educated and upstanding citizens into subalterns.³³ Furthermore, while it is unclear if Tezuka intended for this double meaning, *monmō* is also a homophone for "illiteracy" in Japanese. This might further play into the notion of an uneducated or primitive subaltern.

In addition to utilizing a fear of infection to evoke racial difference, *Kirihito* also unconsciously addresses one of the central questions of late nineteenth century racial thought: namely, could different races, often thought to be difference species, interbreed? Robert Young writes that "from the 1840s onwards ... the generally accepted test for distinct species ... was that the product of sexual intercourse between them was infertile" (Young, *Colonial Desire* 7). At the conclusion of the narrative, Sister Helen gives birth to a healthy human child fathered by

³³ Some such parallels with socially outcast groups in Japan could include the indigenous Ainu people, the *burakumin* (descendants of Japan's feudal caste system), lepers, or AIDS patients. Interestingly, a subplot surrounding an AIDS epidemic in a South American village features prominently in *Gringo* (see chapter three).

Dr. Urabe shortly before he commits suicide. However, despite evidence proving the endemic nature of her disorder, Helen is still haunted by nightmares that her newborn child will be a puppy and thus inherit her racial (species) impurities and be born into a subaltern status (2: 417–18). Since Sister Helen gives birth to a healthy human child in the end, her case most closely approximates the “amalgamation thesis” of hybridization from the late nineteenth century which claimed that “all humans (could) interbreed prolifically and in an unlimited way; sometimes accompanied by the ‘melting pot’ notion that the mixing of people produces a new mixed race” (Young, *Colonial Desire* 18). Sister Helen’s birth of a human child suggests that Tezuka did not view subalternity as an inescapable class identity. Rather, he chose to craft a narrative in which the children of subalterns possess the ability to transcend their parents’ social class.

1.5 HOW MUCH IS THAT DOGGY IN THE WINDOW?

In her writing on the tradition of ethnographic spectacle in cinema, film scholar Fatimah Tobing Rony suggests that indigenous people are often visualized and exhibited in a process which involves “titillation, capture, spectacle, and death” (186). While animal zoos and menageries have long been associated with displays of imperial power, the type of ethnographic exhibition presented in *Kirihito* takes on the more sinister tone of subaltern as entertainment spectacle (Vint 173).

After his dog-like appearance is discovered at a local Japanese hot spring, as noted above, Osanai is abducted and put on a freighter to Taiwan, where he is then imprisoned by Man and made to perform perverse circus acts for the millionaire’s enjoyment. One recalls the character of filmmaker Carl Denham in the classic adventure monster movie *King Kong* (1933, Cooper and Schoedsack), who, upon raising the curtain on a different captive and shackled sci-fi subaltern,

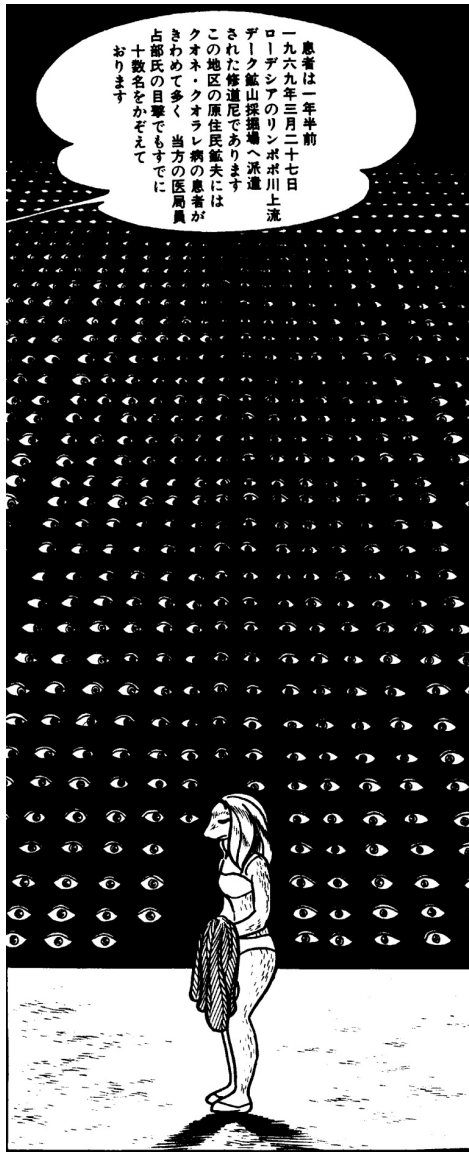


Figure 3. Sister Helen is exhibited at the M University Conference for Contagious Diseases (*Kirihito* 2: 43). ©Tezuka Productions. Reproduced with permission.

proudly proclaims: “He was a king and a god in the world he knew. But now he comes to civilization. Merely a captive. A show to gratify your curiosity” (qtd. in Rony 184).

Tezuka’s spectacle centers on presenting the subaltern as erotic and animalistic through staged performance. As Osanai rises up through the floor on an elevated platform into Man’s caged arena, he is made to appear in a loincloth, immediately evoking images of tribal peoples. In a later scene he is severely beaten while shackled in the nude (1: 222). In fact, Osanai will remain nude or scantily clothed throughout the entirety of his imprisonment in Taiwan until his eventual escape via cargo plane. Likewise, Sister Helen is forced to appear onstage at the M University Conference for Contagious Diseases in her undergarments. Tezuka devotes one entire frame to showcasing Helen’s breasts (2: 42). The reader’s sense of the audience’s penetrating gaze and voracious

desire to visually consume the subaltern is heightened by Tezuka’s representation of the conference attendees solely as disembodied eyeballs (2: 43) (Figure 3).³⁴

It is interesting to note that Osanai and Sister Helen do not actively protest being exhibited in an eroticized, near nude state. Rather, it is being asked to perform as an animal that

³⁴ This visualization occurs again when Sister Helen looks out from her hospital room window and imagines the reproachful gaze of society as disembodied eyeballs (1: 265).

causes a crisis of subjectivity and brings them great anguish. In one such scene, Man orders Osanai to “become a dog in front of me and lick my feet” (*Washi no mae de inu ni nare. Soshite washi no ashi o nameru no da*), and it is this act of degradation that prompts Osanai to fly into a fit of rage and attempt to strangle his captor (1: 219–21).³⁵ Similarly, while Helen weeps silent tears as she unbuttons her robe and steps onstage, it is Dr. Tatsugaura’s request for her to “crawl on all fours” (*Te o tsuite kudasaran ka*) that prompts Helen’s only vocalized refusal throughout her own exhibition (2: 47).

For Osanai and Sister Helen, being forced to perform as an animal is threatening precisely because it negates the tenuous claim the main characters have to their own humanity. As Reika notes, “Humans walk upright and wear clothing, but underneath all that we’re nothing but monkeys” (*Ningen nante nihon ashi de fuku kiteru kedo hitokawa mukeba saru to onaji sa*; 1: 207). Drawing on Yomota Inuhiko’s analysis of human subjectivity in Tezuka’s manga, one finds that nonhuman or hybridized characters possess a constant need to be designated as human by society and that this is an integral theme stretching back to Tezuka’s more lighthearted manga of the 1940s and 50s. Drawing a further parallel with Osanai and Helen’s disgust at being likened to animals, Yomota continues, “Why is it that the moment this act of [human] designation ceases, [hybrids] always lapse into uncontrollable anxiety and eventually chaos?” (108).

Finally, it must be noted that Osanai’s imprisonment and torture comes entirely at the hands of the Taiwanese, focalized first through Man’s sadistic banquet and subsequently through his capture, yet again, by mountain hunters, who drag his naked body through the streets, cage

³⁵ Here, Osanai’s imprisonment at the hands of the sadistic Man evokes the true story of Ota Benga, a Chirichiri man from what is modern-day Zaire, who was caged and exhibited as spectacle at the Bronx Zoo in 1904. Benga was exhibited as a “missing link” between man and ape and was forced to pose for pictures holding props such as a monkey or a club (Rony 157–58).

him, and beat him senseless. This is in contrast with Sister Helen who is primarily victimized by Japanese medical professionals throughout the narrative. Tezuka’s depiction of Japan’s first and longest-held overseas colony is anything but straightforward. On the one hand, Taiwanese villagers are often portrayed as lying, deceitful, and generally ignorant. One of the villagers tricks Osanai into leaving the safety of his mountaintop cabin by professing his love for the Japanese people, only to turn around and assail our hero with rocks (1: 300, 304). In another

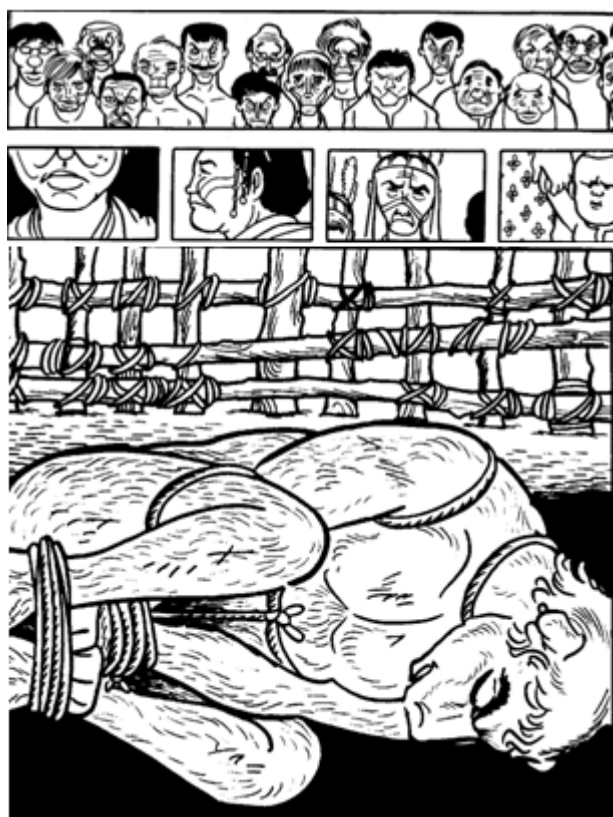


Figure 4. Taiwanese villagers gaze at a bound and caged animal (*Kirihito* 1: 307). ©Tezuka Productions. Reproduced with permission.

scene, the seemingly ignorant villagers blare celebratory horn music as the village elder is carried by palanquin to a cave for pancreatic surgery. Osanai barks (pun intended), “This isn’t a festival, knock off the weird music!” (2: 97). However, at the same time, Osanai’s ultimate emancipation is granted thanks to an educated Taiwanese doctor who recognizes Osanai’s medical talent and intellect and arranges for his release and transport out of the country.

It becomes difficult to categorize this portrayal of the Taiwanese using the binary of

positive or negative. One surmises that by inverting the roles of colonizer and colonized, Tezuka’s larger goal is to reverse the gaze and allow the colonized (Taiwan) to gaze at their former colonizer (Japan) without the colonizer having the ability to gaze back. This also allows Taiwan to metaphorically seek revenge on Japan without fear of retaliation. Describing this

unidirectional gaze in animalistic terms, John Berger writes, “Even if the animal is up against the bars, less than a foot from you, looking outwards in the public direction, *you are looking at something that has been rendered absolutely marginal*” (24; italics in original). One can observe a clear visual manifestation of this unequal power differential in the scene in which a helpless Osanai is bound and caged as Taiwanese villagers look on from a distance (Figure 4).

1.6 “DEBARKED”

I know my appearance is grotesque, my figure repulsive, my features bestial, my smell sickening, the colour of my skin disgusting. I know the sight of this ridiculous body of mine offends you, but I also know I am addressing the wisest and most learned monkeys of all, those whose minds are capable of rising above mere sensory impressions and perceiving the essential substance of a being beyond his wretched material exterior ... I can think, and I can talk, and I can understand what you say, just as well as what I enunciate myself ... not only am I a rational creature, not only does a mind paradoxically inhabit this human body, but I come from a distant planet, from Earth ... It is up to you now to decide whether I should be treated like an animal and end my days in a cage after such astonishing adventures. (Boulle 144–46)

I begin my discussion of speech and the subaltern not with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak’s founding postcolonial essay “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (1988), but rather with the words of journalist Ulysse Mérou, the central protagonist from Pierre Boulle’s science fiction novel *Planet*

of the Apes.³⁶ For characters such as Ulysse and Dr. Osanai, both human men regarded as unintelligent beasts by their captors, the capacity for speech is a prerequisite for proving their very right to exist as a species (Sharp 111). This is because, while human beings are routinely differentiated from each other and categorized based on the diversity of their languages, capacities of speech, language, and metaphor have long been denied in non-human animals as a means to uphold a clear species boundary (Vint 71).

Thus, within science fiction narratives such as *Planet of the Apes* and *Kirihito*, the bestialized subaltern must speak in the language of science, technology, and modernity in order to prove their intellectual equality and rise above their abject appearance. Joanne Sharp notes a similar phenomenon among actual subaltern groups, writing, “In order to be taken seriously – to be seen as having knowledge and not opinion or folklore – the lifeworld of the subaltern is translated into the language of science, development or philosophy, dominated by western concepts and western languages” (111). What emerges is a narrative pattern in which Tezuka momentarily validates a subaltern character as capable of speaking the language of science, medicine, and modernity, only to immediately subvert the claim and reinforce the character’s true alterity. Thus, unlike Spivak’s subalterns who famously “cannot speak,” Tezuka comments on the fickle nature of human identity by granting his dog-men and women a voice, if only to immediately silence them or render their words ineffectual (Spivak 308).

In Osanai’s case, we see that he is hailed as a “great doctor” (*rippa na isha*) by a Taiwanese medical practitioner who negotiates his release so that he may operate on an ailing village elder (2: 93). Even while the two successfully perform pancreatic surgery and save the elder’s life, villagers burst into the cave with guns and cause the elder to suffer a heart attack and

³⁶ Originally published in French as *La Planète des Singes* in 1963, the work was translated into English the same year and released under the widely known title *Planet of the Apes* in the United States. The novel was released in the United Kingdom as *Monkey Planet* in 1964, and first translated into Japanese as *Saru no wakusei* in 1968.

die. Thus, while Tezuka momentarily validates Osanai's humanity, he is quick to rescind the offer, allowing the sentiment of the simple-minded villagers who, "can't stand the sight of that dog-man wearing human clothes and putting on airs" to win out over the capable man of medicine (2: 109). Similarly, while Osanai appears at the voting hall when Tatsugaura is about to be elected president of the JMA and delivers an oratory against his corrupt mentor, Tatsugaura is still elected by a three-vote margin, effectively reinforcing that when the subaltern attempts to speak, few listen.

This pattern of silencing racial others is not limited solely to the subaltern characters; it afflicts the normal Japanese as well. For instance, when Dr. Urabe first arrives in Johannesburg, South Africa, he initially assumes he is meant to sit in a waiting room for colored scholars (*yūshoku jinshu no gakusha*), yet the doorman directs him to the Caucasian waiting room professing that Japanese are "honorary whites" (*tokubetsu hakujin*; 1: 87). However, the tenuous nature of Urabe's "whiteness" becomes apparent when, on a cab ride over to a mining site, Professor Ferdinand describes the Japanese as a backwards people who eat human flesh (*jinniku o taberu*) and perform hara-kiri (ritual disembowelment) (1:157). Once they arrive at the mine the situation only worsens as the Caucasian site manager mistakes Urabe for Chinese and refuses him entry, stating, "This is a white man's mine. We don't need any yellow guys hanging and snooping around" (*Koko wa hakujin no kōzan da ze. Kīroi renchū ni urochoro sarete shirabete hoshikunēn de ne*; 1: 162). Scenes such as this allow Tezuka to comment on the persistence of anti-Asian sentiment and discrimination, as well as the tendency to conflate different Asian ethnicities in the global postwar era.

One cannot help but read in similarities between the negation of Dr. Urabe's "honorary white" status and the rejection of Japan's request for a "racial equality clause" during the

founding of the League of Nations at the Paris Peace Conference in 1919. A clause, which, in addition to ensuring equal and just treatment for all members, would have validated Japan's position as a modern, westernized nation (Dower 204). By strategically forcing his modern, Westernized Japanese protagonists to endure discrimination at the hands of foreign peoples and "uncivilized" former colonial subjects, Tezuka's narrative functions to illuminate both the hypocrisy of and inherent problems with attempting to establish racial hierarchies of any kind.

1.7 AN OLD DOG'S NEW TRICKS

Throughout his career, Tezuka repeatedly defined his core message as "the dignity of life" (*seimei no songen*), or a belief that all life on earth has an inherent value (Tezuka, *Manga jinsei* 73). While Tezuka was a licensed physician he never considered himself a doctor. Tezuka writes that he never handed out business cards indicating he was an M.D. and considered himself just another ordinary member of society (175). Much of this might have stemmed from Tezuka's open dislike for issues and politics surrounding academic rank, status, and title (*katagaki*), specifically with regard to the medical profession. Tezuka draws a clear distinction between doctors who are preoccupied with personal fame and fortune and those who truly work to benefit the greater good. Tezuka writes, "There are those doctors (like Black Jack) who untiringly treat poor and unfortunate patients for decades. There are also those who work for decades as the only doctor present on a small, remote island ... these are the kinds of people I love" (174).

The closing pages of *Kirihito*, which find Sister Helen at peace caring for Kashin-Beck patients in a small Japanese mining slum and Osanai boarding a flight back to Syria, set to resume his duties as the lone doctor in the town of Kolibasura, give a clear sense of Tezuka's intended path towards empowering the subaltern. For Tezuka, the subaltern is at peace only

when helping other subaltern groups make the most of their abject circumstances. This is the permutation of Tezuka's "dignity of life" theme, which is at the heart of *Kirihito*.

Some might lament the fact that Osanai leaves both Japan and his fiancée Izumi behind at the end of the narrative and that Sister Helen must likewise distance herself from the Osaka metropolis in order to find peace. It is said that the editors at *Big Comic* wished for Osanai to return to human form by the end of the narrative but that Tezuka felt this would spoil the intrinsic message of the work and repeatedly refused writing such an ending (Nagai 199). Indeed, Osanai and Sister Helen are never cured. For Tezuka it is unnecessary that the dog-man become a prince. What is important is that the dog-man, shaped by his experiences as spectacle and speechless other, teach the rest of humanity his new tricks.

CHAPTER 2

A Jew and a Nazi Walk Into an *Izakaya*... (*Adorufu ni tsugu*)

We can never become just Netherlanders, or just English, or representatives of any country for that matter, we will always remain Jews, but we want to, too.

—Anne Frank

In his first letter home since being made to travel to Germany and enroll at the Adolf Hitler School (hereafter AHS), half-Japanese, half-German Adolf Kaufmann boasts to his Japanese mother, Yukie, of his role as the de-facto Japanese cultural ambassador among his German schoolmates. He writes, “My friends here are always asking about Japan and my Japanese mother. This Christmas, it’s been decided that I will sing five Japanese songs!” (1: 305).

This small example illuminates the first half of a major theme in Tezuka’s war comic masterpiece *Adorufu ni tsugu*³⁷ (1983–85, *Adolf*, 1995–96): namely, that “Japaneseness” holds the innate power to benefit characters in uniquely positive ways. As I use it, “Japaneseness,” refers to the state of being Japanese, or of displaying myriad Japanese characteristics. I purposefully utilize this somewhat broad term in order to encompass the many varied ways that Tezuka positions “Japan,” the nation, and “Japanese,” the larger culture and ethnicity, as beneficial constructs within the narrative.

Returning to the passage above, it is clear that Kaufmann’s status as a racial hybrid has positioned him as an exotic and special “Other” within the context of his foreign school environment. Kaufmann receives a medal for his school achievements and is selected to dine with the Führer over lunch, the result of which is that he is chosen as Hitler’s personal secretary specifically due to his unique racial makeup (1: 388–89). That is, Hitler wishes to understand the

³⁷ While a literal translation of the title would be “To Adolf,” I will use the work’s official English-language title *Adolf* throughout this chapter as it is more widely known.

national character of Japan and Kaufmann, being half-Japanese and half-German, provides the perfect vehicle through which to comprehend Germany's exotic, oriental ally.

By the time Yukie receives her son's second letter home, the boy's tone has changed considerably. It appears that celebrating his Japaneseness has begun to lose its appeal in the racially intolerant environment at AHS. Kaufmann laments: "One thing that has come as a shock is that my friends surprisingly don't know much about Japan ... Mama, am I Japanese? Am I

German? If possible, I would like to be German ...



Figure 5. Adolf Kaufmann struggles to accept Hitler's representation of the Japanese people in *Mein Kampf* (*Adorufu* 1: 398). ©Tezuka Productions. Reproduced with permission.

In the Führer's *Mein Kampf*, it says that Japanese people completely lack creative power and are a second-class race!" (1: 397–98). As Kaufmann formulates this passage, he envisions the Japanese citizenry as freakish mutants in accordance with Hitler's description in *Mein Kampf* (Figure 5). The issue troubling Kaufmann is whether the very Japaneseness that sets him on a pedestal also serves to further alienate him from Hitler's global goal of Aryan racial purity. Thus, the second half of the theme is revealed. That is, while Japaneseness holds an innate power to benefit one in uniquely positive

ways, Tezuka repeatedly creates scenarios wherein the promised benefits of Japaneseness never materialize.

This chapter will examine the intersection of Japanese war narratives and race by focusing on Adolf Kamil and Adolf Kaufmann's (hereafter Kamil and Kaufmann) search for and

ultimate denial of Japaneseness. By centering *Adolf* on the plight of two hybridized³⁸ characters who straddle national and cultural boundaries, Tezuka is able not only to condemn war and ideology on a global scale, but also reflect on Japanese identity under the weight of war memory. In doing so, Tezuka reveals both his inner optimism and pessimism regarding postwar Japanese identity. This theme becomes central in *Gringo* and will be discussed in detail in chapter three.

2.1 A TALE OF THREE ADOLFS: A SUMMARY

The curtain rises at the 1936 Summer Olympics in Berlin and falls in Jerusalem in 1983. The tale is told as a flashback by an elderly Tōge Sōhei (hereafter Tōge), who begins the story as a Japanese reporter in his late-twenties sent to Berlin to cover the Olympics. No sooner does Tōge arrive in Germany than he is contacted by his younger brother Isao, a Japanese college student studying abroad, regarding a secret document proving that Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) is in fact Jewish.³⁹ Isao hopes that by releasing this information to the world, it will bring about the downfall of the Nazi Party. Tōge arrives at his brother's dormitory to find Isao murdered, having already mailed the secret document to an undisclosed recipient in Japan.

Meanwhile, in the port city of Kobe, Japan, young Adolf Kaufmann and Adolf Kamil are the best of friends. Kaufmann is the half-Japanese, half-German son of Wolfgang Kaufmann, a German consular official and member of the Nazi party, and his Japanese wife Yukie. Kamil is the German-Jewish son of Isaac and Marte, an Ashkenazi (Eastern European Jewry) refugee

³⁸ “Hybridity” refers most basically to a “making one of two distinct things,” yet the process can also consist of a “severing of a single object into two” (Young, *Colonial Desire* 26). Since both characters were born in Japan, I refer to both Kaufmann and Kamil as hybrids throughout this chapter due to their mixed race characteristics.

³⁹ This widely-held conspiracy theory is visually reproduced in the first volume of *Adolf*. As will be discussed below, Tezuka learned of this theory from an academic book about Adolf Hitler. The theory holds that Hitler's paternal Grandmother Maria Anna Schicklgruber was raped by the son of her employer, a wealthy Jew named Frankenberger, while working as a servant for the family in Graz, Austria. The resulting illegitimate child was Hitler's father Alois, thus making Adolf one-quarter Jewish (1: 282–83).

couple who run a local bakery named Blumen (German for flowers). Wolfgang dies suddenly of shock following the revelation that his young son has learned the secret of Hitler's Jewish heritage. In the aftermath of his father's death, Kaufmann is sent against his will to Germany where he begins his education at AHS.

Tōge eventually returns to Japan and comes into contact with Ms. Koshiro Noriko, Isao's former grade school teacher and the actual recipient of the secret document. In a clear reference to Japanese consul Sugihara Chiune (1900-1986), the so-called "Japanese Schindler," who helped thousands of Jewish refugees receive transit visas to escape Nazi persecution in Lithuania during WWII, Kamil's father, Isaac, is selected by the local Jewish community and sent overseas to arrange Japan transit visas for 500 Jewish students. However, upon arrival, Isaac is apprehended by the Nazis and, in a cruel turn of events, executed by Kaufmann as part of the boy's Hitler Youth training.

One day, while on patrol, Kaufmann meets (and immediately falls in love with) a young Jewish girl named Eliza Gutheimer.⁴⁰ Kaufmann arranges for Eliza's family to travel to Japan, where he believes they will be free from persecution. However, in one of the rare negative Jewish stereotypes represented in *Adolf*, Mr. Yitzhak Gutheimer insists on returning to his home with his wife and young son in order to transfer a hidden sum of money to his Swiss bank account (2: 273). The result is that the family are all apprehended and transported to a concentration camp. Eliza is the only one who does not return to the old house and thus is safely smuggled out of the country.

⁴⁰ Tezuka has a leitmotif in the form of a persecuted Jewish girl character reminiscent of the historical Anne Frank. In addition to Eliza, Tezuka draws Elise in *Aporo no uta* (1970, *Apollo's Song*, 2007). Paralleling Kaufmann, the central protagonist from *Apollo's Song*, Shogo Chikaishi, similarly falls instantly in love with Elise and helps her escape from a cattle car while en route to the concentration camp (Tezuka, *Apollo's Song* 49, 57).

Upon arriving in Kobe, Eliza begins life anew and gradually becomes romantically involved with Kamil. Tōge, likewise, meets and falls in love with Yukie, who renounces her German citizenship and remarries him as a Japanese woman. Kaufmann is promoted to a lieutenant in the SD (the security intelligence arm of the SS) and sent back to Japan with the mission of destroying the secret document and killing all those who know of its existence.

As the war nears its conclusion, U.S. air raids devastate the city of Kobe, killing Kamil's mother and fatally injuring Tōge's newlywed wife. Yukie dies giving birth to their daughter. Kaufmann arrives in Kobe and begins courting Eliza, but she does not return his feelings. In an ironic turn of events, Kaufmann manages to successfully unearth the secret document at the exact moment that Hitler commits suicide, rendering the secret of the Führer's Jewish ancestry effectively meaningless.

After a time jump, the main story arc concludes in Israel in 1973, with Kaufmann then a member of the PLO and Black September terrorist organization and Kamil a soldier with the Israeli military. The two engage in a brutal shootout where Kamil ultimately kills his former best friend. Returning to the frame narrative, an elderly Tōge visits the adult son of Kamil and Eliza 10 years later, where it is revealed that Kamil was himself killed in a suicide bombing. Tōge has recorded the lives of the three Adolfs in a manuscript titled "To Adolf" (*Adorufu ni tsugu*).⁴¹ He gives this to the Kamil family in the hope that the story will be read by "millions of Adolfs all over the world." The narrative ends with Tōge visiting the grave of Adolf Kamil to pay his final respects.

⁴¹ By using the same title for both the overarching manga series and the specific manuscript within the narrative, Tezuka implies that we, the reader, have successfully read and passed Tōge's story onto subsequent generations.

2.2 THE FANTASTICAL AND HISTORICAL ORIGINS OF *ADOLF*

Adolf was originally serialized in 10-page installments in *Shūkan Bunshun*, a weekly literary newsmagazine for adults, from January 6, 1983 to May 30, 1985. Tezuka was rushed to the hospital with hepatitis while writing the later installments for serialization and was forced to cut some material from the initial run. However, he later revised and expanded these sections when the work was published as a four-volume hardcover set in 1985 by *Bungei Shunjū* (McCarthy 225).

It is clear that *Adolf* was regarded as literature first and “manga” second from the project’s initial inception. It is reported that the editor-in-chief of *Shūkan Bunshun* did not conceive of *Adolf* merely as mindless entertainment, instead directing Tezuka to create a “thoroughly serious historical drama” (*tetteiteki ni shiriasu na taiga dorama*) (“Adorufu ni tsugu: Kaisetsu” n.p.). Tezuka’s ultimate success in crafting a narrative that accurately and humanely addressed the horrors of war is evidenced by the fact that *Adolf* was originally serialized not in a manga magazine for children but rather in a literary magazine for adults akin to *The New Yorker*. Consequently, when it was rereleased in bound form, *Adolf* became the first manga to be sold in the literature section of Japanese bookstores, and, in 1986, it received the prestigious Kōdansha Manga Award (Schodt, *Dreamland* 248–49).

The publication history of *Adolf* abroad is equally noteworthy. In 1995, the work became the first of Tezuka’s to be translated into English and published in its entirety in the United States (trans. Yuji Oniki). The manga was split into five volumes, each with an original English subtitle such as, “An Exile in Japan” or “The Half-Aryan” (Schodt, *Dreamland* 252). The exact reasoning behind translating *Adolf* before Tezuka’s more popular children’s manga such as *Astro Boy* and *Kimba the White Lion* is unknown. However, the commercial success and critical

acclaim of Art Spiegelman's Pulitzer Prize-winning Holocaust graphic novel *Maus* (1992) may have influenced this decision.

In a DVD documentary titled *Tezuka Osamu: Sōsaku no himitsu* (2008, *Tezuka Osamu: Secrets of Creation*, NHK Enterprises), Tezuka sheds light on the inspiration for *Adolf*, recalling how a book initially sparked his imagination:

There was a section in a book. There was a line quoting some American scholar who talks about the suspicion that Hitler had some mixed Jewish blood. That gave me the idea. After that I just added everything else. I was always interested in [Soviet intelligence officer Richard] Sorge⁴² ... This isn't a normal connection to make. But that's the way with fiction. The best part is being able to make things up. This is the way my ideas work. An interesting idea emerges from crazy combinations. It's the same as *rakugo* [Japanese traditional comedy] with its technique of bringing three random concepts together. Hitler and Sorge were people with absolutely no connection with each other but by making a third person it is possible to connect the two of them and make a story. This was my conception.

While the plot of *Adolf* was inspired by fantastical historical pairings, personal quotes suggest that Tezuka never once envisioned his manga as overtly fictional. Rather, his primary goal in crafting *Adolf* was to tell a “frank and open” (*kyoshintankai*) war story (qtd. in Ishiko, *Shijin* 117). Tezuka viewed the central anxiety underlying modern society as motivated by a fear over the outbreak of future wars. He reasoned that this anxiety caused a sense of despair and hopelessness in the populace as global events seemed to invariably become global conflicts.

⁴² Richard Sorge (1895–1944) was a Soviet communist spy who collected intelligence from Germany and Japan during WWII. He appears in *Adolf* as the leader of a spy network in Japan, and is contacted by the heroes to disseminate the truth about Hitler's Jewish ancestry to the global community, a mission in which he ultimately fails.

With this anxiety as his central theme, Tezuka hoped to utilize a sense of pessimism to counteract what he saw as the over-“conceptualization” (*gainenka*) and over-“narrativization” (*setsuwaka*) of war stories in the 1980s. Tezuka detested the fact that many of these war stories were crafted by critics and artists under 40 who had never directly experienced war (Tezuka, *Manga jinsei* 92).

While *Adolf* is undeniably a fictionalized tale, it is useful to think of the series as what Bettina Gildenhard calls “faction,” or a mixture of fact and fiction which seeks to entertain as much as educate readers (97). In addition to crafting an entertaining yarn, it is clear that Tezuka also viewed *Adolf* as a personal war diary (*senchū nikki*); a repository for memories of death and destruction from his war-torn childhood (Tezuka, *Manga jinsei* 90). To this extent, when Tezuka discusses adding a “third person” to forge a *rakugo*-style connection and complete the narrative basis for *Adolf*, it is clear that he envisions himself as a stand-in for Tōge, metaphysically describing his own involvement as the story’s true *kyōgen mawashi* (supporting character) (*Manga jinsei* 93).⁴³

Some scholars question the degree to which Tezuka was successful in his goal of producing an authentic war narrative. Author Sheng-Mei Ma, for instance, labels *Adolf* an “action thriller” in which “the history of World War II constitutes merely the backdrop to a highly improbable plot involving three Adolfs” (188). Similarly, Gildenhard writes that Tezuka’s “emphasis on authenticity and commitment to historical truth does not fully convince” (103). While it is undeniable that the characters and scenarios are highly fictionalized and purposefully entertaining, the historical framework used to present the narrative is sound. Thus, I align myself

⁴³ A *kyōgen mawashi* is a subsidiary character in a kabuki play who is essential for the development of the plot. Gildenhard shares my conclusion that Tezuka envisions himself in the role of narrator Tōge Sōhei, though she finds the comparison problematic given the difference in age and personal experiences between the two men (103).

with manga critic and translator Frederik L. Schodt in asserting that Tezuka's manga is in fact far more historically accurate than a cursory glance may suggest (Schodt, *Dreamland* 251–52).

As a means of assessing the historical verisimilitude of *Adolf*, it is useful to examine two of the perhaps more dubious historical constructs central to the functioning of the narrative: first, that a Jewish refugee family could successfully integrate into Japanese society and run a profitable business in wartime Japan; and second, that those Jewish refugees in Japan could live relatively free of discrimination and persecution. It is through Tezuka's naturalistic portrayal of Jewish life and his inclusion of historically authentic plot points that racial politics come to the fore of narrative.

By 1940, during the height of refugee immigration, there were over 1000 Jews living in Japan. The vast majority of these refugees were German and Austrian Jews, who, not needing transit visas due to the Axis alliance, came to Japan (via Shanghai) between 1938 and 1939 (Sakamoto 43–44). In addition, because Japan never wholly ascribed to Nazi Germany's project of Jewish annihilation, Jewish refugees were not actively barred from entering Japan. Even though they were technically members of an "enemy race," since transit visas were based solely on one's nationality, and made no mention of religious affiliation, Jewish refugees from other countries were simply viewed as "foreigners" and could immigrate relatively freely until Japan revised its immigration laws in 1942, following the attack on Pearl Harbor (Sakamoto 152). The result of these policies was that a sizeable Jewish community flourished in Kobe. Kobe was also home to Japan's only officially recognized Jewish body: The Jewish Community of Kobe (abbreviated as Jewcom). Jewcom, the very organization of which Isaac Kamil is an executive member in *Adolf*, lobbied for transit visas for relatives of refugees and acted as the general liaison between the local governments and the refugee community (Sakamoto 93–94).

By 1941, there were only several hundred “longtime” Jewish residents left in Japan. The decrease in the Jewish population was due to the fact that most refugees did not want to stay in Japan for the long-term, despite having the ability to easily extend their initial two-week transit visas almost indefinitely. Instead, most refugees quickly sought out destination visas for other countries, primarily the U.S. (Sakamoto 93–94, 138). Of those longtime residents who remained in Japan in 1941, some indeed were professionals, such as Joseph Rosenstock, who conducted the Nippon Philharmonic Orchestra. Another such Jewish refugee was Ukrainian pianist Leo Sirota (1885–1965), father of the famous translator and Japanese postwar constitution drafter Beate Sirota Gordon (1923–), who immigrated to Japan during the war and taught music at the Tokyo University of the Arts (Sakamoto 151). Thus, it appears that Blumen, the Kamil family bakery which features prominently in *Adolf*, would not have been unheard of within the historical Jewish refugee community of Kobe.

The firsthand recollections of refugees testify to the fact that Jews were treated with warmth and kindness upon arriving in Japan. In the words of the refugees themselves, Japan was a “fairyland” that was “superb,” “humane,” and “safe” (Sakamoto 141–42). Ironically, the beauty and safety of Kobe was destined to be shattered by incendiary bombs in 1945; however, for the time being, Japan provided a dreamlike interlude in the midst of wartime horror. The American consulate in Kobe even wrote in an official report in 1941, “There have been no cases reported of discrimination against Jewish refugees, and newspaper comment has not been unkind” (Sakamoto 142).

It is perhaps unsurprising that Tezuka was able to render such an historically authentic portrayal of Jewish refugee life during World War II. Tezuka’s family moved to Takarazuka City (Hyōgo Prefecture) in 1933, and he describes the nearby prefectural capital and port city of Kobe

as having an “attractive exoticism” which fascinated him as a child (Tezuka, *Manga jinsei* 90). Frederik Schodt notes that Tezuka may have come into contact with Jewish refugees who had similar backgrounds to his fictional Adolfs while visiting Kobe (Schodt, *Dreamland* 252). When choosing a setting for the narrative, Tezuka immediately gravitated towards Osaka and Kobe due to the strong impressions the cities left on him as a youth.

When it was first published in bound form, *Adolf* entered a Japanese literary scene inundated with books, which, according to Schodt, contained “bizarre, fantastic theories about Jews ... with subject matter ranging from recycled American and European anti-Semitic tracts,

to claims that Jews are a superior race” (*Dreamland* 252).⁴⁴

The literary trend

Schodt writes of here transformed a national sense of unease

regarding Japan’s perceived



Figure 6. Tezuka’s stereotypical caricature of orthodox Jewish men contrasts sharply with his characterization of Adolf Kamil (*Adorufu* 1: 391). ©Tezuka Productions. Reproduced with permission.

victimization by the United States into an international Jewish conspiracy bent on destroying the island nation. Jews proved an easy scapegoat for an increasingly dissatisfied and overworked middle-class during Japan’s burgeoning bubble economy (Goodman and Miyazawa 223–24).

Books were written by Japanese religious fundamentalists, academics, and politicians with titles such as Yamamoto Shichihei’s *The Japanese and the Jews* (1981; published under the

⁴⁴ In his article “Three Views of the Rising Sun,” author Sheng-Mei Ma misquotes this passage from Schodt’s *Dreamland Japan*, incorrectly stating that Tezuka’s *Adolf* inspired the anti-Semitic trend in Japanese literature in the mid-1980s (Ma 191–92).

pseudonym Isaiah Ben-Dasan), Yamakage Motohisa's *The Jewish Plot to Control the World* (1985), and Uno Masami's *If You Understand the Jews, You Will Understand the World* (1986), the last of which became a national bestseller, selling over one million copies in less than six months (Goodman and Miyazawa 227–28). While Goodman and Miyazawa do not specifically mention *Adolf* in their analysis, in an ironic and completely unforeseen turn of events, one of the works best poised to stand as a powerful counterexample to this new wave of anti-Semitic literature was Tezuka's historical fiction manga about two boys named Adolf. To highlight just one small example, Tezuka's inclusion of stereotypically depicted orthodox Jewish men hovering over Adolf Kaufmann clashes strongly with the normative appearance of Kamil (Figure 6). This juxtaposition serves to both highlight the ludicrousness of such anti-Semitic representations in Japanese cultural media, as well as draw attention to the racial and ethnic diversity within the Japanese population.

2.3 ONE MAN'S WAR: SITUATING *ADOLF* WITHIN THE TEZUKA CORPUS

Tezuka's published a number of war comics (*sensō manga*) between 1957 and 1986 as short to medium-length stand-alone "one-shot" stories in weekly manga magazines for young boys.⁴⁵ *Adolf* represents Tezuka's sole full-length war comic. Though Tezuka's war comics were by no means all autobiographical, two of his most widely discussed stories do deal with formative personal war experiences. *Kami no toride* (1974, *The Paper Fortress*) recounts Tezuka's experience of the firebombing of Osaka in 1945, which he experienced from a lookout tower while working at a munitions factory as a middle school student (*Manga jinsei* 52, 56).

Tezuka describes the neighborhood streets as a "sea of flames" (*hi no umi*), and recalls glimpsing

⁴⁵ While Japanese scholars Ishiko Jun and Natsume Fusanosuke utilize the term *sensō manga* to refer to works such as *Adolf*, it is unclear whether Tezuka himself ever adopted this terminology. Most often, Tezuka simply referred to his more mature works such as *Kirihito* and *Adolf* as *seinen* manga, or manga targeted at adult men (ages 18–30).

a “mountain of human corpses” (*shitai no yama*) indiscriminately mixed with the blackened, charred remains of horses while fleeing the incendiary bombs (58).

Tezuka recalls walking along the Hanshin Railway towards his family’s home in Takarazuka after the bombing and regarding the otherworldly red glow of Osaka as befitting a dream (*Manga jinsei* 59). Starving along the way, he barged into a random home and began begging for food. Tezuka was greeted by an old woman who, taking pity on the young student, fixed him two giant rice balls (*onigiri*) despite the nationwide food rations. Tezuka was so grateful that he burst into tears while eating. Tezuka remembers matter-of-factly that in the next two or three days another round of incendiary bombings had consumed the area and reduced the old woman’s house to rubble (61). Drawn from personal experiences such as this, starvation, as well as racial and cultural misunderstanding, become central themes in Tezuka’s other famous autobiographical war comic *Sukippara no burūsu* (1975, Empty Stomach Blues). In the comic, Tezuka draws a caricature for an African American GI in exchange for food rations during the Allied Occupation. When the African American GI’s soldier buddies mock and tear up the piece of artwork, Tezuka is unable to protest effectively in English, and winds up getting pummeled by the larger and stronger Caucasians (*Kami no toride* 228–31). Life experiences such as this are often credited with having helped to solidify Tezuka’s lifelong abhorrence for discrimination of any kind.

Literary and film critic Ishiko Jun writes that the hallmark of these one-shots is their ability to draw the reader into the misery of a specific moment in time, and thus convey the “futility of war and preciousness of life” on a personal, micro-scale, often by involving animals or other supernatural creatures (*Shijin* 112–13). Ishiko divides Tezuka’s war comics into six distinct subcategories and situates *Adolf* within the category she titles “Japan’s War” (*Nihon no*

sensō). This category contains those narratives expressly dealing with the Pacific War and its aftermath, touching on issues such as food shortages, war orphans, and social conflicts during the Allied Occupation (*Heiwa* 141–44). Ishiko’s other five subcategories are: “The Postwar War” or stories that describe hidden weapons developed during WWII; “The Vietnam War;” “Other Wars,” such as the Korean War or Sci-Fi wars; “The Pain of War” which encompasses stories dealing specifically with emotional trauma and war memory; and “Nuclear War” (*Heiwa* 141–49).

Susanne Phillipps offers a competing contextualization by positioning *Adolf* as the representative work from what she labels as Tezuka’s “Historical Realistic Period,” which she dates from the mid-1970s until his death in 1989. In addition to the fact that racial issues become a central and highly visible theme in many of these works, Phillipps notes that Tezuka abandons his longstanding “Star System”⁴⁶ in favor of creating original, morally ambiguous characters who “age, sometimes change their personality, and cannot be simply typecast as either completely good or evil” (85–86).

I would contend that neither typology fully encapsulates *Adolf*. While Phillipps states that Tezuka abandons his Star System in his “historical realistic” works, this is not entirely accurate. In fact, two of Tezuka’s villainous stars, Acetylene “Lamp” and Ham Egg, appear as central characters in *Adolf*.⁴⁷ Similarly, filing *Adolf* under Ishiko’s category of “Japan’s War” does not account for the variety of transnational locations visited or ideologies espoused in this ambitious work. Spanning over 1200 pages, 50 years of world history, and crossing multiple national

⁴⁶ Tezuka’s “Star System” mimicked the Hollywood studio model. Tezuka, as “director,” repeatedly cast dozens of his most popular characters as “actors” in a wide variety of roles in many different manga stories. He often typecast his characters as heroes or villains based on their outward physical appearance (Phillipps 76–77).

⁴⁷ The villainous Lamp is cast as a Gestapo intelligence officer and Ham Egg plays the role of Detective Akabane. Several characters from Tezuka’s Star System also make an appearance in later volumes of *Phoenix* which postdate *Adolf*, further complicating this classification. This suggests that even in his most serious works, Tezuka could not do away with these characters completely.

boundaries in the process, the manga begins with the 1936 Berlin Summer Olympics and ends with the current territorial dispute between Palestinian and Israeli forces in the Middle East. Indeed, the sheer length and narrative complexity of the work have challenged frequent attempts at categorization.

2.4 THE FIRST WAR COMIC TO TRULY ACKNOWLEDGE THE WAR?

While undoubtedly a noteworthy and complex war epic within Tezuka's own oeuvre, *Adolf* was equally revolutionary within the larger framework of Japan's war and remembrance manga of the time. By specifically comparing it with the works of two other widely-known artists crafting war comics in the postwar era, Mizuki Shigeru (1922–) and Matsumoto Reiji (often Romanized as “Leiji”) (1938–), I will argue that *Adolf* was revolutionary in that it rendered scenes of Germans executing Jews and Japanese soldiers slaughtering Chinese villagers. In so doing, *Adolf* accomplished what no other war comic at the time had done: it openly depicted wartime atrocities and, more importantly, clearly assigned blame to specific nations.

In an oft-quoted passage from her book *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle* (2005), anime scholar Susan Napier writes, “the Japanese version of World War II may generally be described as a ‘victim's history’ ... Consequently, both official and cultural versions of the war have played down citizens' involvement with the actual machinery of combat and aggression” (162). A contrasting viewpoint is presented by Japanese academic Yoshida Yutaka, who argues that the 1980s “saw a significant shift in Japanese political rhetoric toward an acknowledgment of wartime aggression and atrocities.” Moreover, Yoshida credits manga such as *Adolf* with “ending the silence surrounding Japan's wartime past” (Yoshida 166–69).

Born in Osaka in 1922, but moving shortly thereafter to Tottori Prefecture, Mizuki Shigeru was drafted at age 21 and sent to a small village in the South Pacific. After losing his left (dominant) arm in an Allied air raid, and re-teaching himself to draw with his right, Mizuki returned to Japan and began work as an illustrator for *kamishibai* (storytelling with picture cards, lit. “paper drama”), before transitioning to manga in the late 1950s (Suzuki 231). While he is most widely known for popularizing *yōkai* (Japanese folklore creatures) in his work *GeGeGe no Kitarō* (1959–69 manga, 1968–9 TV anime in Japan), Mizuki also drew war comics, the most representative of which is his semi-autobiographical World War II memoir *Sōin gyokusai seyo!* (1973, *Onward Toward Our Noble Deaths*, 2011).

Roman Rosenbaum notes that even while visually depicting the horrors of war he experienced firsthand, Mizuki has a tendency to “emulate, subvert and satirize” the memories (356). Expanding on Rosenbaum’s claim, CJ Suzuki argues that Mizuki’s subversion often takes the form of downgrading his human characters to the level of *yōkai* in order to critique the irrationality of war or, in this specific case of his memoir, the irrationality of *gyokusai* (suicide charge).⁴⁸ In *Noble Deaths*, Mizuki depicts a soldier named Maruyama who is slowly dying from a gunshot wound towards the end of the manga. His appearance gradually begins to resemble that of a grotesque monster as his face and voice become increasingly distorted beyond the point of recognition as human (Mizuki 355–56). Thus, while Mizuki bears witness to the horrors of war through the frame narrative, it could be argued that he does so several degrees removed from reality, transforming his humans into monstrous hybrids in order to comment on the social and political situation of wartime Japan. Unfortunately, in doing so the result is that, to quote Jaqueline Berndt, “the horror has become digestible, the intended provocation harmless” (294).

⁴⁸ The term *gyokusai* refers to an “honorable suicide attack,” wherein Japanese soldiers would charge the enemy even in the face of complete destruction (Suzuki 237).

Matsumoto Reiji was born in Fukuoka in 1938. The son of an officer in the Imperial Air Force, and a self-described “technology *mania*” (fan of technology), Matsumoto is best known for the exquisitely detailed spaceships and weaponry from his iconic sci-fi TV anime series *Uchū senkan Yamato* (1974–75, *Star Blazers*, 1979–84) (Penney 170–71). However, beginning in 1973, Matsumoto began to draw his *Senjō* (1973–78, *Battlefield*) series of short war stories for serialization in weekly boy’s comic magazines (Schodt, *Manga!* 188).

Schodt describes Matsumoto’s war comics as neither pro-war, nor anti-war. Rather, they represent a “romantic / existentialist view of the human struggle to survive” (*Manga!* 188). Matthew Penney prefers to label them “war fantasy,” inasmuch as they “sketch out alternate war histories or purely imaginative re-visionings of past wars.”⁴⁹ Like Schodt, Penney also notes the element of “romance” in Matsumoto’s stories, specifically highlighting how German weapons and technologies often figure prominently into each individual storyline (171).

As an artist with a self-proclaimed “romantic view” of Germany stemming from a childhood love of the country’s technologies, Matsumoto is ill-equipped to pen war stories that honestly bear witness to the horrors of Nazi Germany. Rather, Penney writes that in Matsumoto’s *Senjō* series, “Germany is (thematically) associated with nobility and the tradition of the knight,” and German heroes are envisioned as “tall and suitably dashing” (172). Thus, Matsumoto appears to romanticize an imagined Germany in which the specter of genocide never materializes.

It is worth noting that Matsumoto’s romanticized Germany may have been symptomatic of a more widespread fetishization of the German military by some in Japan in the 1980s. Tezuka himself notes that this trend finds its roots in WWII, at a time when Nazi Germany was

⁴⁹ For a further discussion of war fantasy, see Matthew Penney’s article “‘War Fantasy’ and Reality” (full listing in bibliography).

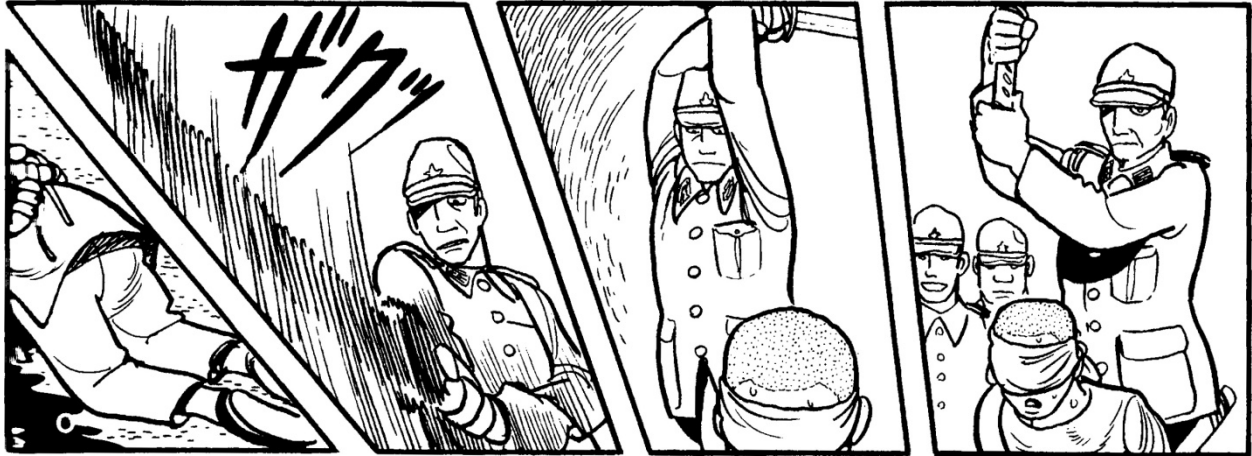


Figure 7. A Japanese officer is shown beheading a Chinese civilian during the Rape of Nanking (*Adorufu* 1: 262). ©Tezuka Productions. Reproduced with permission.

thought of as a “very cool country” (*taihen kakkō no ii kuni*) and the Hitler Youth in particular were admired (*akogareta*) by young Japanese (Tezuka, *Manga jinsei* 90).

While the above examination of Mizuki and Matsumoto’s war comics is by no means comprehensive, what emerges from this cursory comparison is a sense of just how revolutionary *Adolf* was when it was first published in 1983. Indeed, only Tezuka was courageous enough to honestly depict and openly condemn Germany, Japan, Israel, and the U.S. for their shared role in wartime atrocities, without the dehumanizing distancing of Mizuki’s *yōkai* or the subtle romanticism of Matsumoto’s imagined Germany (Figure 7).

2.5 ADOLF KAMIL AND THE QUEST FOR COUNTRY

Adolf Kamil’s textual introduction is a dramatic one. The boy literally leaps onto the page in order to aid his bullied friend Kaufmann. The stronger and more street-smart Kamil is able to successfully dispatch the gang of Japanese children who had been pestering Kaufmann with taunts of “whitey” (*shirakko*) and “foreigner” (*ijin*; 1: 112). Kamil is quick to diagnose Kaufmann’s problem. According to him, his friend’s status as an outcast stems from the fact that he attends the Kobe Christian School and only socializes with other German children. The

natural remedy for this, as suggested by Kamil, is for Kaufmann to transfer to a Japanese school like him and make friends with other Japanese children (1: 113).

This short interaction alone establishes that Kamil is acutely aware of the benefits accruing to Japaneseness within the established racial hierarchy of the neighborhood children. While one might naturally assume that Kamil, with his participation in the Japanese educational system, is immune to the discrimination that beleaguers Kaufmann, this is in fact not the case. In a later scene, Kamil himself is denied the role of “colonel” in a neighborhood game of soldier. The rationale given by the other “native” children is that a Japanese colonel with blonde hair and blue eyes would simply be too “strange” (1: 143).⁵⁰ The authenticity of Kamil’s Japaneseness is furthered challenged by Kaufmann’s “pure” Japanese mother Yukie, who verbally dismisses her son’s best friend as a “vulgar” (*gehin*) other (1: 234).

While quick to propose that Kaufmann simply change schools, Kamil comes to the sobering conclusion that his own situation cannot be so easily remedied. In a heart-to-heart discussion with his grade school teacher, Ms. Koshiro, following his rejection as colonel, Kamil clearly identifies his problem as a lack of homeland. He ponders aloud, “Why am I the only one who is at a disadvantage? It’s because I am the son of a Jew. There are Jews in all different countries, but in the end, papa says that Jews have no country of their own” (1: 144). In another meeting with Ms. Koshiro later in life, Kamil’s feelings have apparently not wavered, as he similarly states, “Where on earth should we Jewish people go?” (2: 179).

Japaneseness presents the unique ability for Kamil to achieve his goal of a homeland. As a nation accepting of Jewish refugees, both historically and in the manga, Kamil acknowledges that he will be able to live in peace and harmony within Japan’s geographical borders. He boasts

⁵⁰ It is also interesting to note that as a blonde-haired Jew, Kamil is certainly a visible minority within his own racial and ethnic group as well.

to Kaufmann, “Here isn’t Germany, it’s Japan! The Nazis can’t lay a finger on us [Jews] here!” (1: 134). Thus, Kamil is ascribed with Japaneseness by residing in Japan. It is worth noting that Kamil is not solely interested in personal safety; he also seeks the comradeship of countrymen steeped in the same national ideology. At one point, Kamil, seemingly oblivious to the fact that Germany and Japan are wartime allies, states his desire to fight the Nazis from Japan, referring to himself as having, “blue eyes but the Yamato spirit” (1: 144–45, 2: 391).

In Kamil, Tezuka has crafted a truly tragic character who performs Japaneseness more dutifully than any of the ethnically Japanese characters in the manga, yet never reaps the associated benefits. Perhaps sensing this tragic irony himself, Kamil laments aloud, “But I’ve really been trying my best to become Japanese” (1: 144). Indeed, Kamil has been trying his best. Throughout the narrative, Kamil’s lines are written in the appropriate Kansai regional dialect, an overt reminder that he is a linguistic equal with the locals, and more socially integrated than Kaufmann who speaks standard Japanese throughout. Moreover, Kamil repeatedly dedicates his time and energy to help his Japanese countrymen. During childhood he is shown helping clean up after a typhoon while Kaufmann watches from afar (1: 236). As an adult, Kamil serves as the leader of the neighborhood fire prevention brigade (3: 210).

Despite being born and raised in Japan and dedicating his life to the people of Kobe, a moment of wartime panic is all it takes for Kamil to be stripped of his tenuous Japaneseness and reduced to the status of other. As U.S. air raids assault the city of Kobe, a young-adult Kamil emerges from the rubble with a face blackened in ash. Neighbors quickly surround him and shout, “Kill him! Kill the Yankee!” To which Kamil yells, “I’m Adolf from the bakery! Can’t you differentiate between friends and enemies you nearsighted fools!!” (3: 294). In an instant, Kamil’s societal contributions are completely devalued in favor of linking his outward

appearance with that of the Caucasian enemy. In this way, Tezuka clearly shows the fleeting benefits and general instability of Japaneseness for racially hybridized characters.

When Kamil's mother is killed in a blast a few pages later, he curses the Jewish-American pilots for killing fellow Jews, shouting, "There are Jews among you up there right? ... You killed the same Jews (down here). In the end, it will be all of you who burn in the flames of hell!!" (3: 298). This scene illuminates an interesting shift in Kamil's subjectivity, as he now regards his mother's death as a Jewish casualty within a larger Japanese war. A far cry from the "blue eyed boy with the Yamato spirit," it is here that Kamil finally accepts the unattainability of his idealized homeland and renounces his Japaneseness once and for all. When Kamil resurfaces at the end of the manga, he does so as an adult soldier with the Israeli army, fighting for a Jewish homeland on entirely different terms.

2.6 ADOLF KAUFMANN AND THE FORAGE FOR FAMILY

Wolfgang Kaufmann asserts to his son, "Your mom is Japanese and your dad is German; in you are both types of blood. However, you are a citizen of your papa's country. You are a respectable German with red blood and an iron will" (*akai chi to tetsu no ishi*; 1: 159). On the other hand, Yukie states, "Half of your body is Japanese ... your mama's true feeling is that she would like to raise you as Japanese" (1: 234). As is clear from the passages above, Kaufmann is denied the ability to exist in both racial-cultural spheres and hence his subjectivity becomes irreparably fractured from a young age. As a direct result of this fracture, Kaufmann's central underlying motivations throughout the narrative become his need for parental acceptance and desire to create a stable and nurturing family.

Kaufmann reveals that his ideal Japanese family scenario involves living with his mother, maintaining a friendship with Kamil, and helping to work in a family-run German restaurant in Kobe. Even at a young age, Kaufmann identifies Japaneseness as uniquely beneficial for these personal goals. First, by physically residing in Japan, Kaufmann is able to maintain his friendship with Kamil. This is of primary importance to the boy as evidenced by his gleeful response to his mother's suggestion of converting his dual citizenship back to Japanese: "In that case, I'd be able to continue being Adolf's friend forever!" (1: 234). Also, by ideologically aligning himself with the Japanese nationalism of his mother as opposed to the Nazi fascism of his German consular official father, Kaufmann reasons that he will no longer be viewed as a pariah by the local Jewish refugee community and can instead enlist their help with his family restaurant project (1: 136).⁵¹

However, Kaufmann's status as a racial hybrid necessitates that the benefits of Japaneseness remain unattainable. Upon returning to Japan at the end of the manga, Kaufmann is greeted by his new step-father Tōge⁵² in German, a subtle indicator that he is, at least linguistically, already isolated from his imagined Japanese family. To make matters worse, the German restaurant dreamt of as a child is now very much in existence, however with his step-father as a founding member. When Kaufmann reunites with his childhood friend Kamil, he is slapped across the face by the latter's fiancée Eliza (3: 219). Stripped of his authoritative power in a native country he can no longer call his own, Kaufmann responds to this act of disrespect not by rounding up the local Jewish population as he did in Berlin, but, in true Tezuka fashion, by

⁵¹ It is worth further emphasizing that Japaneseness alone holds this transformative power for Kaufmann. In one scene, Kamil suggests that Kaufmann convert to Judaism in order to sever his Nazi Party ties. Kaufmann responds by immediately changing the subject of conversation (1: 226–27).

⁵² Tezuka is famous for his "narrative coincidences." Here, Hitler sends Kaufmann to Japan to assassinate key members working to overthrow the Nazis, including Tōge. However, Tezuka reveals that Tōge has in fact remarried Yukie and fathered her unborn child, thus artificially enhancing the drama of Kaufmann's homecoming.

luring Eliza to his home and raping her (3: 247–48).⁵³

Kaufmann's homecoming concludes with fistfights with both his former childhood best friend and his new step-father. Tezuka allows Kaufmann to beat Kamil, but, in another direct nod to the instability of Japaneseness, Kaufmann is in turn vanquished by the "pure" Japanese male Tōge. Indeed, while Tōge goes through many trials and tribulations throughout the narrative, this 100% ethnically Japanese man appears to be the one character who can fully utilize Japaneseness to positive effects within the narrative. In this sense, perhaps Tezuka only problematizes issues of race and ethnicity for the hybridized characters in *Adolf*.

Spurned by everyone he once held dear, for Kaufmann, the promise of a stable and nurturing Japanese family is no longer a reality by the end of the manga. Thus, he severs all ties with his homeland and leaves the country forever. Unlike Kamil, who responds to the denial of his Japaneseness with the adoption of a new, stronger national and cultural identity, in this case Jewish Israeli, Kaufmann renounces country and ideology completely. However, prior to leaving Japan, Kaufmann returns to his mother's bedside at Osaka Hospital and attempts to rekindle his Japanese family one last time. During the car ride over Kaufmann is clear to distinguish that he is going to the hospital to visit Toge's wife and has no feelings of filial piety. However, upon seeing Yukie's comatose body, he cries "Mom...say something!! Forgive me or say something.....Mom!!" (*Mama...nanka itte kureyo!! Boku o yurusu toka nantoka itte yo.....Mama!!*; 3: 368). Thus, the reader's final impression of Adolf Kaufmann is that of a troubled young man deeply in need of a family to call his own (Figure 8).

⁵³ In his critical essay serving as an afterword to volume three, titled "Drawing a Grand Tale of Tumultuous Modern History," critic Kawamoto Saburō posits that Kaufmann and Eliza's relationship parallels that of Kaufmann's own parents (Kawamoto 443). This is because it is revealed that Eliza is in fact third generation Chinese from Hong Kong and thus racially Asian, mimicking Kaufmann's mother Yukie (2: 222). Kawamoto further argues that Eliza's rape is a manifestation of the Oedipus complex in which one murders his father and marries his mother (441).



Figure 8. A Japanese family remains unattainable for Adolf Kaufmann as he cradles his comatose mother Yukie (*Adorufu* 3: 368). ©Tezuka Productions. Reproduced with permission.

2.7 AND THE MORAL OF THE STORY IS?

Reflecting on *Adolf* in a lecture given at Osaka's Baika Women's University in 1988, one year before his death, Tezuka explains how one specific theme has continued to both consciously and unconsciously permeate his work: "I've made a theme of 'boy, aren't humans stupid!' There's nothing but foolish war and the completely meaningless killing of each other ... At any rate, whether it is the earth, or tiny living things, or all of humanity, why can't we reflect more? This is the theme I continue to draw" (Tezuka, *Manga michi* 171).

While *Adolf* can certainly be read as a prototypical antiwar story with an underlying message of racial and religious tolerance, I would argue that there is indeed more at stake than this simple reading allows. Within the context of the manga, Tezuka positions Japaneseness as a beneficial narrative construct, while simultaneously ensuring that the benefits remain unattainable for his main characters. In doing so, I believe Tezuka reveals both his inner optimism and pessimism regarding what it means to be Japanese under the weight of war memory.

Tezuka scholar Ada Palmer writes, "The cruel fate of Tezuka's universe is neither thought experiment, nor a simple vehicle for drama. It's the world he experienced" ("God of Manga" 34–35).⁵⁴ Following Palmer's logic, a number of scholars have attempted to link Tezuka's various life experiences to specific textual phenomena in his manga. For example, a common interpretation put forth by scholars⁵⁵ regarding textual phenomena, like "unattainable Japaneseness," which ultimately punish hybrid characters and deny harmonious endings, holds that they stem from Tezuka's real-life experiences during World War II. That is, Tezuka denies

⁵⁴ For more, see Ada Palmer's other article, "All Life Is Genocide: The Philosophical Pessimism of Tezuka Osamu."

⁵⁵ See for example, Frederik L. Schodt, *Dreamland Japan* (251); also, Thomas Lamarre, "Speciesism, Part II," (63).

his characters the benefits of Japaneseness as a projection of his own inability to dissociate Japaneseness from a legacy of wartime atrocities and imperialism.

Ishiko Jun adds that, by 1983 when *Adolf* was first published, Tezuka himself had become increasingly impatient waiting for peace in the midst of continuing global conflicts (*Heiwa* 156). Thus, one concludes that the unattainability of Japaneseness may have stemmed from Tezuka's own pessimism, fueled by both his experiences during the War in childhood, and also his adult frustrations regarding war's continuance on a global scale.

By contrast, the positioning of Japaneseness as beneficial under certain circumstances might be interpreted as a textual manifestation of the hope and optimism within Tezuka's own heart. Through Adolf Kamil and Adolf Kaufmann's personal quests, Tezuka is forging his own idealized Japan, and attempting to reclaim the concepts of a Japanese homeland and family from their negative wartime associations and sacrifices. This sense of optimism is perhaps seen most clearly observed in the birth of Tōge's daughter.

Adolf winds to a close with Tōge holding his newborn daughter Yū as Yukie, the wife and mother, slowly dies. The overtones of rebirth and redemption, for both the main characters and for Japan as a nation, are not lost on the reader. Tōge proclaims that he wants "millions of Adolfs all over the world" to read the manuscript we have just finished reading (3: 434). The manga is structured so that the first page mirrors the last, emphasizing the cyclical nature of both time and memory. The first and final frames are the same: a Jerusalem cemetery lit under midday sun. The image evokes light and darkness, life and death. Tezuka leaves it up to the reader as to whether optimism or pessimism will ultimately prevail.

CHAPTER 3

***Dosukoi!* Or, How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying (*Guringo*)**

Three things matter in life: sumo, business, and war. Understand one, you know them all.

—President Nobu Toshikazu, *Memoirs of a Geisha* by Arthur Golden

Dosukoi is defined in Japanese as a “nonsense refrain.”⁵⁶ It is a vocalization meant to summon a wrestler’s inner strength as he grabs his opponent’s belt and attempts to throw him to the ground or force him from the ring. In short, it is a phrase specific to the world of contemporary sumo wrestling, but ultimately devoid of any literal significance. In his provocative book *Empire of Signs* (1970), French philosopher Roland Barthes writes of sumo, “The match lasts only an instant: the time it takes to let the other mass fall. No crisis, no drama, no exhaustion, in a word, no sport: the sign of a certain hefting, not the erethism of conflict” (40). Barthes’ failure to observe in sumo anything other than a unique and elaborate form of Japanese pageantry is a reaction not limited to foreign spectators. Rather, it speaks to a series of public debates about sumo’s traditionalism since it began to be classified as a “national sport” in 1909. Is the sport an embodiment of Japanese national and cultural identity? Or is it merely a commercialized display of giant naked fat men, as evidenced by the wrestlers’ unofficial title of “naked ambassadors” (*hadaka taishi*) during Japan Sumo Association (hereafter JSA) sponsored exhibition trips abroad (Tierney, “Sumo Ring” 210)?

The answer is of course “both,” depending on the historical context. However, scholars Richard Light and Louise Kinnaird note that after baseball was introduced to Japan in 1872 during the Meiji period (1868–1912), sumo began to lose favor as it was seen to be a reminder of Japan’s development lagging behind the West. They write, “With its distinctly feudal rituals and

⁵⁶ “*Dosukoi*.” *Kōjien* [Japanese Dictionary]. 5th ed. 1998.

customs, and competitors wearing nothing more than a *mawashi* (belt), sumo was denounced as ‘uncivilised’. It was viewed as unsuitable for a modern nation and a hindrance to rapid social and economic development” (151). Sumo scholar Kenji Tierney writes that, “Given the exorbitant ticket cost and the daytime scheduling, only the very rich or well connected, such as high corporate executives, can afford to attend” (“Gottsan” 110). Tierney further cites a 2002

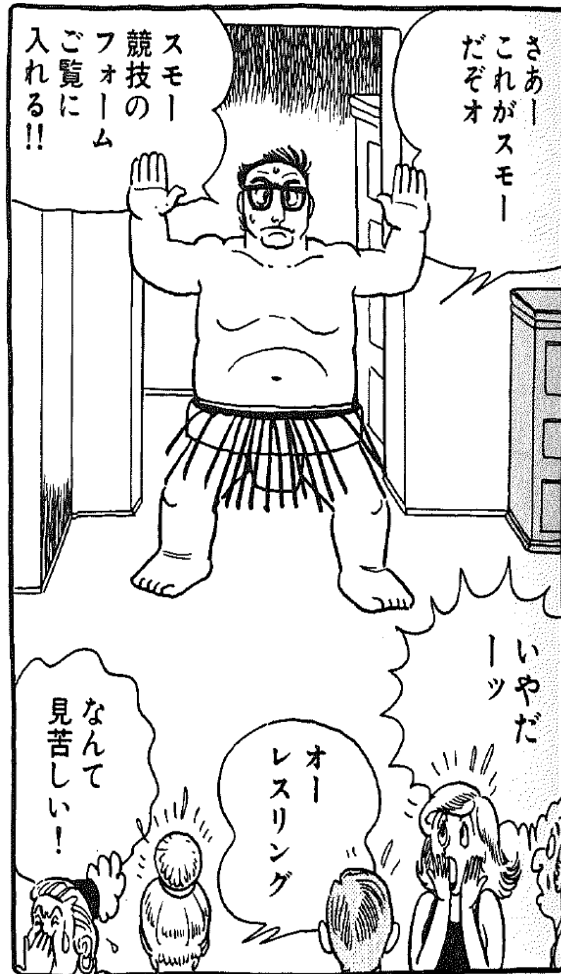


Figure 9. Himoto greets his dinner guests in traditional sumo attire (*Guringo* 305: 97). ©Tezuka Productions. Reproduced with permission.

Mainichi Shinbun survey that found that only 1.5% of the Japanese population had seen sumo live in the previous year as compared to 15.3% for baseball (qtd. in “Gottsan” 122). While sumo has undoubtedly gone through periods of high and low popularity in the past decades depending on the celebrity of the active wrestlers, it is fair to say that the sport is distanced from the everyday lives of today’s Japanese citizenry.

The prevailing view during the Meiji period of sumo wrestling as uncivilized and anachronistic is visually represented in the pages of *Guringo*⁵⁷ (1987–89, hereafter *Gringo*), one of Tezuka’s final manga works. After being angered by a South American dinner party guest’s misconception that judo is the Japanese national sport, central

protagonist Himoto Hitoshi undergoes a quick clothing change and reemerges wearing nothing

⁵⁷ *Guringo* is the Japanese pronunciation of the Spanish word “gringo,” a derogatory term used to refer to Caucasians and foreigners similar to the Japanese word *gaijin* (304: 184).

but a *mawashi*. He strikes a wrestling pose and states, “So, this is sumo. Behold the form of sumo, the national sport!!” His dinner guests shriek and avert their eyes at the sight of Himoto’s near-naked body (305: 96–97) (Figure 9).

The significance of this scene is not simply that sumo is central to the characterization of Himoto, but moreover that Tezuka’s 35-year-old protagonist is a wildly successful businessman and the newly appointed president of Edo Shoji trading company’s branch in the fictional South American city of Kanivaria in the Republic of Rido.⁵⁸ *Gringo* was serialized during the height of Japan’s bubble economy, and the work deals overtly with the emergence of Japan as a global economic superpower and centers on contemporary, real-world issues such as international trade and the commoditization of natural drug cures. At the same time, sumo tournaments and their associated rituals exist as a constant throughout the narrative, begging an analysis of how these seemingly incompatible spheres of capitalist modernity and traditional sport intersect.

While *Adolf* addressed issues of Japanese identity and racial hybridity through the lens of WWII, Tezuka conceptualized *Gringo* as a work that would examine, critique, and critically reflect on what it meant to be Japanese in the twentieth century. Tezuka discusses his initial plans for the series in a 1987 interview:

In my works up until now, I have been drawing different facets of Japanese people from the point of view of this era or that era – there’s this type of Japanese person and that type of Japanese person. However, this time I want to question what exactly is the Japanese race [*nihonjin to iu minzoku*]? Or, what is this thing called Japanese identity [*nihonjin to iu aidentiti*]? ... For example, if a Japanese person was suddenly thrown into a place without electronics, cars, or TVs, how

⁵⁸ With the exception of Colombia, all South American place names in *Gringo* appear to be fictional. They are all written by Tezuka in *katakana* or occasionally in English. I have Romanized them as they appear in the text (without italics), rather than attempting to translate them.

would that person exhibit their Japaneseness [*nihonjin rashisa*]? That is what I want to question. (Tezuka, “Intabyū” 200)

This chapter makes the argument that Tezuka advocates for an incredibly mutable form of Japanese ethnicity, one that is not fixed but rather socially and situationally constructed. Furthermore, to the extent that Japaneseness and Japanese masculinity are present in *Gringo*, I will argue that they are not manifested through the economic influence and technological innovation that stereotypically defined Japan of the late 1980s, but rather through the practice of sumo, a sporting tradition that harkens back to Japan’s past and even serves to bind together Japan’s transnational diasporic communities.

3.1 CRAFTING HIMOTO HITOSHI, CRAFTING THE JAPANESE

Adolf is regarded as the last major work Tezuka completed before his premature death from stomach cancer at the age of 60 on February 9, 1989. Tezuka’s famous last words, according to his wife, Etsuko, were “Please, please let me continue to work....” (qtd. in Schodt, *Astro Boy* 166; ellipsis in original). Tezuka’s diehard work ethic is supported in a short manga coda to *Gringo*, in which the author draws an emaciated caricature of himself in his Tokyo hospital bed arguing with his nurse and wife over his desire to draw manga as a form of rehabilitation (306: 202–03). Suffice it to say, Tezuka was actively producing comics up until the day he died. At the time of his death, Tezuka was simultaneously serializing three very different works: *Gringo*, *Ludwig B*,⁵⁹ and *Neo Faust*, all of which remain unfinished to this day. *Gringo* first appeared in *Big Comic* from August 1987 to January 1989.⁶⁰

⁵⁹ Ludwig van Beethoven narrowly beat out Walt Disney to become the subject of Tezuka’s subsequent biographical manga project after he completed *Buddha* in 1983 (Chūjō 503).

In many ways, *Gringo* represents Tezuka's most distilled and direct meditation on race relations and racial identity, incorporating and perfecting many of the narrative and character devices first experimented with in *Kirihito* and *Adolf*. As with *Adolf*, Tezuka draws inspiration from topical current events to craft an entertaining and international epic in *Gringo*. In particular, Himoto's trials and tribulations at the hands of South American guerillas are said to have been based off the real life story of Japanese businessman Wakaōji Nobuyuki.⁶¹ Wakaōji was the then acting president of the Manila branch of Mitsui Corporation when he was abducted by members of the Philippine's communist New People's Army in 1986. Wakaōji was held for four months before being released unharmed. It is unknown whether Mitsui paid his ransom ("Guringo: Kaisetsu" n.p.).

Noted manga critic Natsume Fusanosuke argues that in his three unfinished works, Tezuka swaps long-held ideas like a single, exclusive Takarazuka-like utopia for an emphasis on an ecological pan-life worldview (*hanseimeiteki na sekaikan*) that is inclusive of a wide variety of characters. It is through this pan-life worldview that Natsume believes works like *Gringo* comment on the composition of the modern world (282). For example, Himoto's family alone includes French Canadian wife Ellen (from Grizzly Bear, Quebec, Canada) and their six-year-old mixed race daughter Rune, who holds Japanese citizenship but attended a school for foreigners. Other supporting characters include Japanese nationals residing in South America such as former guerilla turned Edo Shoji office clerk Onigasoto Kazu⁶² and a call girl named Togakushi Miho.

⁶⁰ For the purpose of this chapter, I treat *Gringo* as a self-contained work and make no speculation about how Tezuka might have concluded the narrative had he lived to finish it. Manga artist Tanaka Keiichi (1962–) began serializing a sequel to *Gringo* titled *Gringo 2002* in *Trauma Manga Magazine* (2002, Eichi shuppan). *Gringo 2002*, which had the official support of Tezuka Productions, continued Himoto's story against the social backdrop of the bursting of Japan's bubble economy. The series was cancelled after just three issues.

⁶¹ Coincidentally, Wakaōji died on February 9, 1989, the same day as Tezuka ("Guringo: Kaisetsu" n.p.).

The inclusion of Himoto's Caucasian wife can be read as a byproduct of the times and Japan's rapid economic growth, illustrating what Millie Creighton, writing in 1997, observes as a popular trend in Japanese print and television advertisements of the early 1990s where white foreigners were strategically used to "highlight the economic dominance and world prominence of Japan" (Creighton 220).

Containing a cast of characters that surpasses the impressive list of mixed race individuals present in *Adolf, Gringo* is a work in which Tezuka moves beyond mediating his criticism through the lives of culturally and historically distant Jewish refugees in Japan to discuss contemporary Japanese nationals and Japanese diasporic communities. Thus, in addition to testing the boundaries of Japanese ethnicity, I would argue that the real-time global events which underpin *Gringo* endow the characters with a sense of immediacy not found in Tezuka's World War II epic.

Tezuka scholar Natsu Onoda Power argues that *Gringo* is yet another representation of how Tezuka's *seinen* manga (manga targeted at adult men) often "'exoticized' what seems familiar, and familiarized what may otherwise be 'exotic'" for a Japanese reader. She concludes that Tezuka achieves this exoticization by "extracting an image of Japaneseness from stereotypes and displacing it in a foreign context" (151). In the previous chapters I have highlighted several examples where ethnically Japanese characters were misunderstood when placed in a foreign context: Dr. Osanai is caged in Taiwan despite his declaration that he is an educated Japanese doctor; and Adolf Kaufmann is bullied by his German and schoolmates because his mixed race status does not allow him to assimilate into the dominant racial group. However, while both Osanai and Kaufmann are ethnically Japanese, they are saddled with genre-specific

⁶² Kazu's surname literally means "demons out." This is a humorous reference to a popular chant, "Demons out! Luck in!" (*oni wa soto! fuku wa uchi!*) spoken during the Japanese spring festival *Setsubun*.

characterizations. Osanai is a beast and Kaufmann is a racially hybridized Nazi SS officer. These additional character traits alter the way the men are perceived by other characters within the narrative, and may also diminish their ability to function effectively as satirical symbols. While Tezuka regarded satire (*fūshi*) as one of the essential characteristics of manga, the oftentimes morally grotesque behavior of Osanai and Kaufmann might make it difficult for some readers to identify with the characters' inner-humanity (Tezuka, *Kakikata* 243).

By contrast, Tezuka's visual representation of Himoto centers around a strategically essentialist⁶³ portrayal of the Japanese stemming from Allied wartime propagandic depictions of short, plump, Japanese males with thick rimmed glasses and buckteeth (Yoshimura et al. 82).⁶⁴ Tezuka mixes all these trademarks (sans buckteeth) with additional visual elements from the Japanese businessmen archetype of the late 1980s. The composite is a business suit-clad short, fat, Japanese man in glasses. Himoto's short stature in particular becomes a running joke throughout the series, with Edo Shoji branch office ladies gawking during his initial arrival, and rebel leader Jose Garcia repeatedly using diminutive pejoratives such as "shorty" (*chibi*) and "Tom Thumb" (*Tomu Tamu*) to refer to the protagonist (304: 12, 240).

Another element that firmly locates Himoto as a satirical Japanese character is his name. Himoto Hitoshi is represented in *kanji* (Chinese characters) as 日本人. These are the same characters used to write the word *nihonjin* or "Japanese person." Tezuka uses a superscript gloss over these characters to indicate that they read as "Himoto Hitoshi," a humorous and unconventional Japanese male name. Thus, I would argue that it is not until Himoto that Tezuka

⁶³ Coined by postcolonial theorist Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "strategic essentialism" refers to a practice in which a diverse ethnic or minority group may purposefully present a simplified, homogenous group identity in order to achieve specific social goals.

⁶⁴ Tezuka is not alone in drawing ethnically Japanese characters in this style for a desired narrative effect. Contemporary manga artist Urasawa Naoki (1960–) has used many of the same stereotypes when drawing Japanese businessmen characters in works such as *20th Century Boys* (Yoshimura et al. 46).

creates a hero who is both visually and textually aligned with contemporary Japanese stereotypes, while remaining devoid of those negative genre-specific character traits that plagued Osanai and Kaufmann.

3.2 YOU SAY *GAIJIN*, I SAY GRINGO: A SUMMARY

The real action in *Gringo* begins when Himoto is demoted as branch president of Edo Shoji and he and his family are forced to transfer to the branch in Esecarta City in the politically unstable Republic of Santaruna. Himoto intercepts a secret Japanese embassy document that indicates that rare metals indispensable to the manufacture of Japanese electronics are found within a mine on Mt. Montetonbo. Since the mountain sits in Fuego Province, which is territory currently controlled by rebel leader Jose Garcia, Himoto and his sole company employee Onigasoto Kazu enter into an exclusive contract with Garcia and begin mining the rare metals.

After running the business operation for just a year, Himoto becomes a wealthy man and relocates his wife Ellen and daughter Rune to the most affluent neighborhood in Esecarta. However, Himoto's operation eventually goes under and, due to his fragile and unsanctioned alliance with anti-governmental rebels, his family is forced to flee the city (along with Onigasoto, Garcia, the call girl Miho, and Japanese tabloid reporter Kondō).

The group travels through the mountains and the small port town of Puerto Negros. However, due to the ongoing civil war, they cannot stay in one place long. Eventually they are accepted into the indigenous Yanomamo tribe.⁶⁵ The tribal land is overrun with an AIDS epidemic, but the tribesmen attribute the sickness to a demonic infestation and invent a medicine which is purported to destroy the demons and thus cure AIDS. Himoto is initially interested in

⁶⁵ This is yet another reference that proves Tezuka's penchant for mixing historical realism and narrative fantasy. The Yanomamo tribe is a real indigenous group in the Amazon rainforest.

analyzing the medicine and developing large-scale production as a business venture until that he discovers that the active ingredient in the compound is the ground-up bones of mummified tribal heroes. Himoto recalls that both he and his daughter Rune had drunk this strange elixir a few nights earlier and fears that if they are made to drink anymore, they might contract AIDS.

Thus, the group flees the tribe and eventually arrives at a curious Japanese village near the Colombian border. Tokyo Village (*Tōkyō-mura*), as it is named, is in fact an immigrant colony home to undocumented Japanese citizens. Since Tokyo Village only welcomes ethnically pure members, Himoto's French Canadian wife Ellen and light skinned daughter Rune are forced to live on the village outskirts and Rune is prohibited from attending Japanese school. When Himoto and his family arrive, the village is experiencing a rice shortage due to a major drought.

The village chief, refusing to acknowledge modern meteorology, instead insists on holding a grand sumo tournament in order to pray for rain. This textual detail taps into the larger mythical Shinto origins of the sport, which will be discussed below. It is decided that if Himoto wins the tournament he will be crowned village champion and Rune will be allowed to attend school. Himoto begins training for the tournament when two professional sumo wrestlers, "Tairetsu" Tamesaburō and "Ishinoyama" Takezō, arrive from out of town to compete. They are known for "accidentally" killing their opponents during matches. *Gringo* ends abruptly due to Tezuka's death. The final scene is that of Himoto waking up on the morning of the tournament, ready to compete for his family's honor.

3.3 WHEN THE GOING GETS TOUGH, THE TOUGH *DOSUKOI*

Sumo wrestling is synonymous with Japan and it is unquestionably marketed both domestically and internationally as Japan's national sport and a key manifestation of the

“Japanese spirit.” In the words of sumo critic Kojima Noboru, “The essence of sumo is Japanese ... it is a unique product of the nation, manifesting itself unchanged since ancient times and transcending social change, having been continuously defended by the Japanese people” (qtd. in Tierney, “Sumo Ring” 215).

While the JSA claims an unbroken 2000-year history of the sport, the true degree to which sumo defines Japanese national and cultural identity remains in debate to this day. There is evidence that a form of sumo wrestling existed as an agrarian and religious ritual during the Yayoi and Kofun periods (approx. 300 BC–538 AD). This wrestling tradition is said to have arisen from a tale in the *Kojiki*, in which the ancient gods Takemi-Kazuchi and Takemi-Nakata battled for control of the Japanese islands (Light and Kinnaird 144–45). Thus, it was believed that the victor in ancient agrarian sumo tournaments would have the favor of the gods and be rewarded with a strong harvest. In addition to sumo of religious and agrarian origins, there was also a traditional commoner form of popular sumo street fighting, known as “grass sumo” (*kusazumō*), which was widely practiced during the Edo period (1603–1868). This is described by Light and Kinnaird as a tug-of-war style event in which local strongmen would travel and compete for the honor of their village (145).

While Light and Kinnaird acknowledge forms of sumo dating back to ancient Japan, they note that most of the rituals and pageantry commonly associated with contemporary sumo tournaments was strategically added in the late 18th and early 19th centuries. This was done to situate the sport within the Shinto tradition at a time when the indigenous Japanese religion was gaining national prominence (141). Furthermore, it was not until Emperor Meiji attended a sumo tournament in 1884 that public opinion on the sport began to shift. Before this act linking the imperial family to the sport, sumo was largely regarded as uncivilized a mere decade earlier due



Figure 10. Himoto dreams of his days as a *kusazumō yokozuna* (*Guringo* 306: 23). ©Tezuka Productions. Reproduced with permission.

to its apparent clash with Japan’s rapid modernization. The construction of a national sumo stadium in Ryōgoku, Tokyo in 1909, named the Kokugikan or “Hall of National Skill,” further emphasized the sport as an important practice inextricably linked to a sense of national and cultural identity (151–52). In this sense, while one might regard sumo as an indigenous Japanese ritual, one could equally contend that its status as a national sport was largely artificially constructed.

While it is unknown if Tezuka actively researched the history of sumo while

drafting *Gringo*, he does manage to incorporate both forms of historical sumo wrestling (agrarian and grass sumo) into his narrative framework. Agrarian sumo manifests itself in the form of Tokyo Village’s grand sumo tournament, which is designed to end the drought and produce a strong rice harvest. Likewise, grass sumo becomes linked to Himoto’s characterization. As the narrative progresses, it is revealed that Himoto competed under the wrestling name Mamenishiki and was himself an amateur grass sumo champion (*kusazumō yokozuna*) in his hometown of Sugio, Ibaraki Prefecture. Himoto moved to Tokyo in the hopes of joining the senior sumo ranks, but was disqualified due to his short stature and forced to clean the stables instead of compete on the national stage (304: 24–25) (Figure 10).

Kenji Tierney describes ideal sumo recruits as tough and raw boys from the Japanese countryside (*inaka*). He explains the recruitment process:

[Stables] want boys from poor circumstances, so that they are not used to luxury or being catered to. Being from the countryside, they cannot easily board a train and go back home, a major problem in sumo. Also, they are thought to have natural strength from a rural upbringing, which coincides with the beliefs of many professional coaches who look down on the weak youth of the city.

(Tierney, “Sumo Ring” 214)

Tezuka’s stereotypical businessman Himoto becomes a particularly interesting lens through which to examine issues of Japaneseness and Japanese masculinity as epitomized by sumo. This is because Himoto’s adult life, characterized by financial success, rapid promotions, and high social standing, appears largely at odds with the traits Tierney observes as desirable among young recruits in the sumo world.

I would argue that sumo functions to affirm Himoto’s Japanese masculinity in two main ways: physically and sexually.⁶⁶ The most overt references to strength and manliness come in the form of intense physical exertion. *Gringo* is replete with scenes where Himoto, despite his comically short height, exhibits supernatural feats requiring great strength. Small examples can be seen when Himoto jumps in the water and pushes his family’s canoe away from a jagged rock wall (305: 173), or when he dislodges a sink with his bare hands in an attempt to escape his holding cell in Tokyo Village (306: 52). Yamaguchi Masao notes a historical association for the seemingly supernatural strength Himoto exhibits while exerting himself in the sumo style. “The performance of sumo is identified with the image of a god playing in the ring ... The *yokozuna*

⁶⁶ In addition, Himoto also gains emotional support from sumo as well. Himoto repeats *dosukoi* throughout the narrative, almost as a personal mantra, to buildup inner-strength. However, this emotional buildup is ultimately used as a means to an end and manifests itself physically in the form of a sumo push or slap.

[the highest rank of wrestler] perform the most essential *kata* ... thought to introduce cosmic energy into the ring and hence into the world” (Yamaguchi 20).

Each time physical exertion is required Himoto yells a resounding *dosukoi* and thus firmly anchors his display of strength within the tradition of sumo. When Himoto battles a group of street thugs after they mistake his racial identity for Chinese,⁶⁷ he goes as far as to remove his suit in the process to achieve the desired intimidating effect while brawling. Himoto’s underwear takes on the form of a makeshift *mawashi*. In the process of shedding his suit, Himoto momentarily sheds his ties to the business world and fully embraces the form of the sumo wrestler (*rikishi*) (305: 40–41).

All of these elements crystallize in one scene that I believe fully articulates Tezuka’s positioning of sumo as a manifestation of Japanese masculine physical prowess. When Tezuka’s ragtag group of heroes are welcomed into the Yanomamo tribe, Himoto is instructed by the tribal chief to burn his glasses, since demons are thought to reside in the reflective lenses (305: 204–05). One recalls that Tezuka’s stated overarching thematic goal for *Gringo* was to examine how a Japanese person might exhibit Japaneseness in a foreign land devoid of personal electronics and consumer goods (Tezuka, “Intabyū” 200–01). I interpret Himoto’s relinquishing of his glasses to the tribal chief as symbolic of him ridding himself of the comforts of Japanese modernity and progress. One such comfort is the modern medical and scientific techniques that allow for the diagnosis of vision problems and the manufacture of corrective lenses. This rejection of medical modernity is only further underscored in Tezuka’s subplot involving a traditional tribal medicine thought to cure AIDS manufactured from the corpses of villagers.

⁶⁷ Tezuka first travelled abroad to the U.S. in 1964 to screen an episode of the *Astro Boy* TV anime at NBC Studios in New York City. Tezuka was reportedly amazed at the racial and linguistic makeup of the city (McCarthy 158). While Tezuka does not describe any personal experiences of mistaken racial identity, such scenes feature prominently in a number of his mature manga. Particularly common are instances where ethnically Japanese characters are mistaken for being Chinese, such as Himoto in *Gringo* and Dr. Urabe in *Kirihito*.



Figure 11. When everything is stripped away, Himoto's Japaneseness manifests itself through sumo (*Guringo* 305: 212). ©Tezuka Productions. Reproduced with permission.

Per Tezuka's thematic experiment, once Himoto has been stripped of his glasses, and by virtue his metaphorical ties to a burgeoning economic superpower, the true form of his Japaneseness manifests itself. Unsurprisingly, Himoto and the tribe's best warrior engage in a primitive form of sumo wrestling to see who can knock the other over with a large stick (305: 212–13) (Figure 11). The fact that that Tezuka chooses to have sumo play a deciding role in Himoto's acceptance into the tribe, and the fact that the Japanese male vanquishes the tribesman

in the match, further evidences the masculine power of sumo.⁶⁸

3.4 FUCKING (WITH) JAPANESENESS

The second function of sumo within Tezuka's narrative is that it endows Himoto with the ability to sexually assert his Japanese masculinity. Whenever Himoto has sex with his wife Ellen, he assumes a sumo pose and rushes towards her while screaming *dosukoi* (304: 74–75). While these scenes are no doubt meant to represent a comical take on having sex, they nonetheless serve to link sumo and Himoto's sexual identity (Figure 12). This linkage becomes clear when, on a separate occasion, Himoto fails to achieve an erection and lands on top of his wife with a

⁶⁸ In contrast to masculine sumo, textual evidence suggests that feminine power is at times manifested through traditional Japanese culinary practices. Tezuka includes several scenes that show how Ellen displays more outward Japaneseness than the ethnically Japanese Miho. This is due to the fact that Ellen holds an instructor title with the Urasenke Tea School and also cooks flawless Japanese food such as *nabe* (stew) and *yōkan* (sweet red bean jelly), much to the chagrin of Miho (305: 81, 87).



Figure 12. Himoto has “sumo sex” with his wife Ellen (*Guringo* 304: 75). ©Tezuka Productions. Reproduced with permission.

thud, unable to channel his inner *dosukoi*. Himoto cries “No matter how many times I try, it won’t do the trick tonight” (*nando yatte mo umaku ikan kon’ya wa...*; 304: 198).

Beyond simply empowering Himoto in bed, it is suggested that Himoto’s sexually fueled sumo might have the power to reactivate a character’s inert Japaneseness. By the midpoint of

the narrative Himoto begins to have an affair with Togakushi Miho, the Japanese call girl and the girlfriend of rebel leader Garcia. Miho initially becomes interested in Himoto due to the fact that she no longer feels a sense of homesickness for Japan. Believing that this is a sign that she has ceased to be Japanese, Miho sexually targets Himoto, stating, “I feel like you are the person who will return me to being Japanese” (*anata ga atashi o nihonjin ni modoshite kureru hito da to kizuita no*; 305: 23). The second night they meet, Himoto, though initially hesitant to do so, now validates Miho’s idea that he is capable of restoring her true identity, stating: “I will return you to a genuine Japanese” (*ore ga kimi o kissui no nihonjin ni modoshite yaru zo*; 305: 43).

In his analysis of sumo characters in modern manga series, Yamaguchi argues that younger readers might relate to sumo wrestler anti-heroes in manga because they achieve a sort of rebel status by refusing to adhere to the strict sporting rules and etiquette that reflect the

modern Japanese working world (25). Himoto, while not included in Yamaguchi's survey, is an interesting counterexample as he is a rebel character who is as comfortable cheating on his wife as he is proposing a business merger.

Tierney notes that the 1980s and 1990s were a time of increasing internationalization within sumo. While progress has certainly been made in terms of racial acceptance for non-Japanese *rikishi*, multiculturalism in the sumo world continues to be a highly contested issue. Hawaiian wrestler Akebono became the first foreign *yokozuna* in sumo history in 1993 and 1998 saw the lifting of a previously held ban prohibiting the recruitment of foreign wrestlers in Japan ("Sumo Ring" 215). As another example of life imitating art, *yokozuna* Takanohana II gained national media attention for his short-term engagement to the half-Japanese, half-Dutch supermodel and actress Miyazawa Rie in 1992 (Tierney, "Sumo Ring" 216). In this way, I would argue that the true innovation of *Gringo* is that it manages to capture the various forms of sumo masculinity, from the traditional *kusazumō* and agrarian sumo practices, to the more contemporary lifestyles of internationalized sumo wrestlers in the late twentieth century.

3.5 WILL THE REAL JAPANESE PLEASE STAND UP?

In addition to meditating on issues surrounding Japanese identity, it appears that Tezuka also conceived of *Gringo* as a possible social intervention. In a tape-recorded interview conducted in 1987 from his Tokyo hospital bed, Tezuka describes *Gringo* as a message to a Japanese citizenry he views as increasingly insular and unwilling to associate with foreigners abroad or accept them domestically into Japanese households. Thus, by strategically transplanting his Japanese protagonists into an unknown South American land, Tezuka hoped to create a narrative imperative in which his characters were forced to associate with and rely on the

local people (*genchi no ningen*), while simultaneously maintaining their distinct Japaneseeness (Tezuka, “Intabyū” 201). It is my argument that Tezuka achieves this goal only by advocating for a highly malleable understanding of Japanese ethnicity.

The first Japanese national stereotype that Tezuka critiques is the image of the Japanese race as technologically advanced, economically superior, and poised to take over the world. This would have been a particularly resonant image for the Japanese citizenry in the late 1980s, when *Gringo* was serialized. Upon first arriving in Kanivaria, antigovernment demonstrators attack Himoto’s limousine. Himoto doesn’t understand the behavior, rationalizing that the protestors have no reason to hate the Japanese because Japan donates billions of dollars in aid annually and produces electronics that are used regularly throughout the country (304: 35). It is only later that Onigasoto explains to Himoto that companies such as Sony and Toyota have no brand recognition in a poor third world country such as the Republic of Rido (304: 134–35).

Next, Tezuka turns his attention to the ways in which one’s perceived Japanese ethnicity can change depending on the specific social and situational conditions present. He accomplishes this through placing Himoto, Ellen, and young Rune in two conflicting settings: the Yanomamo tribe, in which their Otherness allows them to successfully assimilate into the society; and the Tokyo Village, in which it prevents them from doing so. During their initial encounter, the Yanomamo tribesmen brandish spears and are poised to kill the Himoto family due to their perceived Caucasian ethnicity. While Ellen is outwardly Caucasian, it is interesting to note that Himoto is also considered white due to the fact that his skin tone appears lighter when compared to that of the tribal members. However, Himoto is quick to profess their collective Japanese ethnicity, strategically professing it along national lines in an attempt to save his family. Himoto yells, “This woman here is my wife!! She is now becoming a member of my country” (305: 201–

02). This explanation satisfies the Yanomamo and the family is welcomed into the tribe with a giant feast.⁶⁹

Creighton's definition of *soto* and *uchi* Others are of use when analyzing the Himoto family's reception within the Yanomamo tribe. In the Japanese context, Creighton defines a *soto* Other as an "outside person," linking it to the abbreviated slang *gaijin* which is most commonly used to refer to Caucasian foreigners from Western countries (212). By contrast, in Creighton's view an *uchi* or inside Other more closely corresponds to the formal word *gaikokujin*, which is often used to denote those minority groups within Japan's own national cultural space, such as the indigenous Ainu people or Koreans residing in Japan (214). By defining his family's Japanese-ness along national rather than visual boundaries, Himoto is able to successfully conceal his wife and daughter's true racial makeup and market his family as *uchi* Others, or minorities who share some sort of cultural proximity to the South American tribe.

The second setting that Tezuka places his characters in is the anachronistic Tokyo Village near the Colombian border. Once again Tezuka creates an historically authentic backdrop for his characters by modeling the village and its inhabitants on the largest diasporic community of Japanese abroad: Japanese Brazilians. Latin American historian Jeffrey Lesser validates one of the more seemingly dubious aspects of Tezuka's narrative, namely that a group of Japanese expatriates could live in complete ignorance of the fact that Japan lost WWII. Lesser writes:

The idea of Japan's defeat had little resonance among immigrants and Brazilian-born rural dwellers because the Japanese education system (in both Japan and Brazil) taught national invincibility. This combined with a ban on Japanese-language newspapers in Brazil and the poor circulation of Brazilian newspapers in

⁶⁹ It is during the welcome feast that Himoto is asked to burn his glasses by the tribal chief. Since the Yanomamo is a patriarchal tribe, Ellen and Rune are prohibited from attending the festivities due to gender and not racial reasons.

rural areas. Newsreels of the surrender ceremonies were never seen by Japanese farmers who had no access to cinemas, and those in rural areas often received their news about the war from hidden short-wave radios, clandestine newspapers, or neighbors' oral reports. ("Short History" 11)

More specifically, Tezuka's Tokyo Village inhabitants closely approximate a secret Japanese society known as Shindō Renmei (lit. League of the Subjects' Way), which emerged in Brazil after a 1945 coup ousted then President Getúlio Vargas (1882–1954). Shindō Renmei's membership, which exceeded 50,000 by the end of 1945, was primarily composed of retired Japanese army officers, furious at Brazil for becoming an Allied nation during the war (Lesser, "Short History" 11). According to Lesser, Shindō Renmei's primary goals were to "maintain a permanent Japanized space in Brazil through the preservation of language, culture, and religion among Nikkei [people of Japanese descent], and to reestablish Japanese schools" ("Short History" 11). It is important to note that the society was always concerned with establishing a suitable Japanese sphere within Brazil, and as such had no apparent desire to repatriate to Japan.

According to Lesser, none of the approximately 50,000 members of Shindō Renmei believed that Japan lost the war.⁷⁰ In fact, by mid-1946, the society went as far as to alter photographic evidence to produce an image of President Truman bowing to Emperor Hirohito, as well as craft fake press reports claiming that Japanese troops had invaded the U.S. and were marching from San Francisco towards New York (Lesser, "Short History" 11, *Negotiating* 140). Tezuka includes a comic distortion of this historical fact in *Gringo*. Japanese tabloid reporter

⁷⁰ Tezuka recounts the humorous fact that he himself did not initially believe Japan had lost the war. Unable to properly hear the Emperor's declaration of surrender over the radio, it was not until Tezuka was onboard a train later in the day on August 15th, 1945, that he overheard other passengers discussing Japan's defeat and realized that the war was over (Tezuka, *Manga jinsei* 62).

Kondō is recruited in Tokyo Village as a newspaper writer and is tasked with producing false articles that celebrate Japan's success in the final days of the war (306: 71–74).

By the end of 1946, the Shindō Renmei community had largely splintered into two groups: the *kachigumi* (victorists) and *makegumi* (defeatists) (Lesser, *Negotiating* 138). The influence of Shindō Renmei gradually waned as some members were convicted of criminal activity. Also, Japanese celebrities and athletes began touring internationally in the 1950s, and some expressed great shock when, upon arriving in Brazil, they were presented with the seemingly absurd notion that Japan had won the war (Lesser, *Negotiating* 145).

While Himoto, Ellen, and Rune's *uchi* alterity allows them to successfully assimilate into the indigenous Yanomamo tribe, they are curiously unable to gain access to the Tokyo Village. Far from being rewarded for their Japaneseness, the family is imprisoned upon arrival on the suspicion of being Chinese. The village authorities feed Himoto *takuan* (pickled radish), and gauge his reaction, reasoning that only a true Japanese will be able to stomach the dish (306: 48–49). Although Himoto passes the test, the villagers remain unconvinced.

Himoto and his family are eventually released from their holding cells and forced to reside in a cottage at the edge of the village. This is because village Lieutenant Yamazato Shinichirō has prohibited Ellen and Rune from traveling into town or attending school due to the fact that they appear outwardly white and thus do not conform to the stereotypical visuality of the Japanese ethnicity. Yamazato orders Ellen, “If you want to be in this village, become a Japanese woman. Dye that blonde hair black!” (*moshi kono mura ni itakereba nihonjin no onna ni nare. sono kinpatsu o kuroku somero!*; 306: 89). In a scene harkening back to the racial discrimination Adolf Kaufmann experienced as a young boy in *Adolf*, when Ellen and Rune disobey Yamazato's orders and visit the local school, the administrators refuse to accept Rune as



Figure 13. Himoto questions what it means to be Japanese (*Gringo* 306: 103). ©Tezuka Productions. Reproduced with permission.

a student, and the school children throw rocks at the mother and daughter due to their unconventional appearance (306: 98–99). The scene ends with Himoto embracing an injured Rune while yelling, “Are we not Japanese? Well then...who the hell are the Japanese?” (306: 103; ellipsis in original) (Figure 13).

This tragic juxtaposition of a Japanese man questioning what it means to be Japanese succinctly captures the central speculative question of *Gringo* and illustrates how Tezuka destabilizes commonly held notions about contemporary Japanese ethnicity and singles out Himoto and his family as Others, even within a social group comprised of their own countrymen. Through the narrative device of the ahistorical Tokyo Village, Tezuka illustrates a rupture between contemporary Japanese

identity, as represented by Himoto and his Caucasian wife Ellen, and the imperialist and nationalist values that defined Japan a mere four decades earlier. For Tezuka, Himoto is clearly meant to function as a stand-in for the Japanese nation as a whole. Therefore, perhaps the underlying moral is that all it takes is a simple change of scenery to devalue superficial achievements and bring one’s identity into question.

The irony in the decision to house Himoto, Ellen, and Rune in a primitive, secluded cottage and village environment is that it provides the characters with a gratifying approximation of traditional Japanese life. This is especially meaningful for Rune, who has spent most of her

young life living abroad. Himoto is revealed to be a master at lighting the *irori* (traditional sunken Japanese cooking hearth) and Ellen prepares fresh vegetables for a *nabe* (stew) dinner (306: 92). In this way, as with sumo wrestling, Tezuka's ultimately advocates for the manifestation of Japaneseness through traditional food preparation and lifestyle choices rather than contemporary business reasoning.

CONCLUSION

The day after Tezuka Osamu died, the editorial in the *Asahi Shinbun* newspaper asked the question, why do the Japanese seem to love manga considerably more than people from other countries? The answer given was that those countries did not have Tezuka Osamu (“Tetsuwan Atomu no messēji” 5). How times have changed. Today, well over 20 years after his death, there are an abundance of manga and anime lovers throughout the world, yet it is Tezuka’s name and legacy that remain largely unknown outside of Japan. Perhaps this is to be expected. When Walt Disney died in 1966, Tezuka remembers thinking it was odd that major Japanese newspapers only carried small stories consisting of three or four columns. Meanwhile, newspapers in the U.S. and Europe carried full page obituaries (Tezuka, *Mangaka* 268).

While it is easier today than ever before to obtain a wide variety of Tezuka’s manga in English, the vast majority of the author’s works and essays are still only accessible to those who read Japanese. To this end, one of the most basic goals of this thesis has been to introduce and critically analyze three of Tezuka’s less well-known works both inside and outside Japan. I believe it is only through a more comprehensive examination of the wide variety of historical time periods, themes, and characters in Tezuka’s narratives that one begins to grasp the true meaning of his epithet, “god of manga.”

A central limitation of this, or any, scholarly study of Tezuka is that it must necessarily focus on one or a few specific works and attempt to draw larger conclusions. Tezuka’s over 150,000 page corpus necessitates that few definitive conclusions can be drawn about the artist’s personal philosophy or body of work. Future research must therefore utilize an expanded scope to cross-examine racial issues in a wider subset of Tezuka’s manga in order to paint a clearer picture of the larger trajectory and evolution of Tezuka’s racial politics.

However, even without reading the complete works of Tezuka, it is still possible to identify repeated themes, character archetypes, and storytelling techniques throughout his various manga. For example, Dr. Osanai cradles a dead newborn in the Middle Eastern desert and screams to the heavens about the uselessness of doctors. Several years later, the same scene is replayed in the jungle in *Black Jack*. Ethnically Japanese neighborhood children throw rocks at the racially mixed Adolf Kaufmann, and Tokyo Village school children do the same to Rune and her Canadian mother Ellen in *Gringo*. The list goes on.

It is clear that certain themes fascinated Tezuka and were addressed again and again in his various works. One such theme was racial identity, and it has been the goal of this thesis to examine racial discourse and racial politics in three of Tezuka's manga from the 1970s and 80s: *Ode to Kirihito*, *Adolf*, and *Gringo*. Each of these works contain a key speculative question related to issues of race and identity: What makes someone identify with a particular racial or cultural group; how does that self-identification change depending on the location or circumstances; can an animal be ascribed to a particular racial identity; will a Caucasian boy born in Japan ever feel truly Japanese; can the makeup of the modern-Japanese family be considered to include mixed race parents? These are the sorts of questions that fascinated Tezuka and are at the core of some of his most interesting mature works. What, when all is said and done, do the narratives analyzed in this thesis suggest about Tezuka's construction of race, ethnicity, nationality, and identity?

As I have demonstrated, Tezuka seems to have been primarily concerned with teasing out the complexity of postwar Japanese identity in his manga works. While foreign characters and countries do often play an important role in a variety of Tezuka's works, they primarily exist to stand in opposition to the ethnically Japanese or mixed race characters and highlight the ways in

which their Japanese identity is called into question. To recall *Gringo*, Tezuka sends Himoto and his family to South America not to transplant the story to an exotic location, but rather to show how this new environment destabilizes their self-identity and in turn affects their behavior.

This preoccupation with challenging conceptions of Japanese identity makes sense given that the artist's life almost perfectly brackets the Shōwa period (1926–1989). As such, in his 60 years of life, Tezuka experienced great changes in both Japan as a nation and the Japanese as a people. His childhood was steeped in the imperialistic rhetoric leading up to the war. When he serialized his first four-panel comic, it was already the immediate postwar period and Japan had become a defeated nation, occupied by its former enemy. It was during this time that Tezuka was exposed to death and starvation, and also developed some of his strongest antiwar and antiracist sentiments. Finally, Tezuka crafted some of his most ambitious narratives during the 1970s and 80s. This was a time that was categorized not only by conflicts internationally, but by a polarized Japan, in which the country's burgeoning economic might and global influence did not affect all segments of society equally. Tezuka clearly maps some of his works onto these specific time periods: *Adolf* with WWII, *Ayako* with the postwar Occupation, and *MW* with the return of Okinawa to Japan by the U.S. in 1972 (Tezuka, "Intabyū" 200).

It can also be concluded that Tezuka had a complex, and at times deeply pessimistic view of the Japanese race. This pessimism is at odds with Tezuka's trumpeted humanism and love for all living things. Perhaps it is better, then, to understand Tezuka's humanism not as a love for all life, but rather as a deep-rooted fascination with the intricacies and boundaries of life. In *Kirihito*, Tezuka is not above bestializing his educated Japanese doctors into a distinct class of canine-human subaltern. In *Adolf*, Tezuka positions Japaneseness as an oftentimes beneficial construct within the narrative, yet denies his racially mixed characters the ability to benefit from it. Finally,

in *Gringo*, Tezuka strips Himoto of the conveniences of modern Japanese technology and economic superiority and instead forces him to exert his masculinity through sumo wrestling.

None of the works examined in this thesis end particularly happily. One does not end at all. Time and again, Tezuka draws groups, communities, and nations that are unwilling or unready to accept racial difference. These are as varied as an indigenous South American tribe, a small neighborhood in Kobe, or the entire nation of Japan. Yet, in each of the narratives examined in this thesis, there exist those characters who reaffirm Tezuka's inner-optimism: Sister Helen's human child; Tōge's newborn daughter Yū; Himoto's daughter Rune. Tezuka holds out the hope that these hybrid characters might transcend their parents' abject circumstances and make the world a better and more accepting place for racial and cultural minority groups.

However, even given the vastness of his imagination, Tezuka simply could not capture an image of racial harmony in his manga that would honestly reflect the current state of Japan or the world. There were, and are, simply too many things wrong in the real world. It is for this reason that Tezuka's narratives do not provide a method for transcending abjection. Indeed, while the characters discussed in this thesis all remain abject, Tezuka ensures that they find a way to live out their abject lives with dignity. In the end, this was the best he could do. Tezuka would craft manga until the day he died, always searching for the ending he truly desired.

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