

Manga, Desire, and Power

Lecture 6: March 12, 2003

Comic Books and Identity

- Questions of power:
 - unattainable ideals?
 - fantasy as empowerment?
 - deeper messages?

Sharon Kinsella, *Adult Manga*

- Pop culture in Japan through *manga* (comic books)
- Shift in power in the production of manga
- politics and “how people feel”

(see *Adult Manga: Culture & Power in Contemporary Japanese Society* by Sharon Kinsella)

Kinsella on “Adult Manga”

- Sharon Kinsella is now prof. of sociology at Yale
- focus on the **production side** of manga
- interest in **“cultural politics”**
- note conflicts between editors and artists

“Ghost in the Shell”

See

<http://www.manga.com/ghost/ghost.html>

Kinsella on manga

- manga as “air” (p. 4)
 - i.e., everywhere,
permeates all sectors of
society
- pioneers in early 1950s
- production is unstable
and contested (5)
- “low culture” or source
of national pride . . . ?

Gainax is a large anime
company

See

<http://www.gainax.co.jp/>

Manga as a medium

- publishing companies have more freedom than other mass media
- typical readers=men/boys without much money
 - big consumers read less manga
- very little advertising

Manga as an industry

- not just a cultural object but a business
- Tokyo is where offices are located
- editors are at the center

Shonen Jump, a leading manga

See

<http://www.shonenjump.com/>

Artist - Editor Tension

- Three main sources
 - editors impose work discipline on artists(e.g., “canning” the authors)
 - struggle over contents
 - “product” sold for profit
 - “art” as a form of culture
 - social class
 - working class protest
 - middle-class management

Otaku

- Dangerous fanatics?
- Info managers of the future?
- Where draw the line between healthy and unhealthy attachments to consumer items . . . ?

Gainax: the company fictionalized in “Otaku Video”

See

<http://www.gainax.co.jp/>