2015年度（平成27年度）

博　士　論　文

Media Mix as Adaptation: With Maeda Mahiro's *Gankutsuō* as an Example

2016年３月

京都精華大学大学院
マンガ研究科マンガ専攻

コピローワ オーリガ

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES

LIST OF TABLES

INTRODUCTION

"Media mix as adaptation" is not a transparent phrase. What does "media mix" mean? And how is it related to adaptation? Both these questions do not have simple answers. "Adaptation," though, is more accessible — after all, it is a practice that has pervaded the history of human creativity since its very beginning. Depending on how one understands it, it could include all sequels, prequels, and remakes that have ever been made as well as appropriation of certain characters into new narratives. Such inclusiveness becomes unproductive, however, in the discussions which include other similar, yet distinct phenomena (i.e., intermediality or transfictionality) — so adaptation here is defined as "an announced and extensive transposition of a particular work or works" (Hutcheon 2006: 7), or "a more sustained engagement with a single text or source" that "signals a relationship" with it (Sanders 2006: 6, 26). In this narrower form, it has been studied in Euro-American Academia for at least fifty years. Media mix, on the other hand, is a very local term which came to be widely known (in its current meaning) only in the late 1990s, in Japan (as is explained in Chapter One, the term is even more ambiguous than 'adaptation,' but in this study it is understood in the narrow sense — as a commercial project that involves storytelling). Even the larger category of transmedia franchising, to which media mix belongs, is a relatively new phenomenon which also has been (and continues) developing since 1990s. Despite their young age, transmedia projects, particularly those based on fictional universes and characters, have gained incredible momentum in the last two decades and have had considerable impact on popular culture, as they transformed what is called cultural industry, changed the nature of cultural products and patterns of consumption, consumer-producer relationships, and, among everything else, narratives. Certainly, transmedia fiction[1] deserves closer consideration, and, indeed, papers, monographs, and

[1] In this study, 'transmedia fiction' is used as the broadest category that denotes some kind of narrative unfolding across media only because 'transmedia storytelling' (which is arguably a better

books taking it and the related practices as subjects have formed a steady flow since 2006 in the Euro-American academia. The Japanese translation of Marc Steinberg's extensive inquiry into the media mix published in 2015 (with the afterword by one of the main theoreticians of the otaku culture, Ōtsuka Eiji) serves as evidence of similar interest within Japan.

Jens Eder (who specializes in media and communication studies) identifies four contexts in which transmedia practices (which, it must be noted, he does not limit to fiction-based franchises) have been primarily discussed: adaptation studies, media studies, intermedia studies, and communication studies and economics (Eder 2014: n.pag.). One could add to this list fan studies and what Ian Condry calls cultural anthropology (in Jenkins 2013a: n.pag.) as well as narratology. Obviously, even within each of these fields the subject is viewed from various angles. With adaptation, however, the focus up till now has primarily been on the role it plays in transmedia project development. As an instrument of transmedial propagation of content, adaptation has its specific limitations and functions, which have increasingly drawn the attention of scholars from adaptation studies (Parody 2009) as well as media studies (Dena 2009; Eder 2014). Besides, more and more researchers have taken interest in particular cases of adaptation as part of the franchise (Thoss 2014; Fehrle 2015; Hennig 2015; Burke 2015). A whole new area to be explored opens here, not least because transmedia franchises, transmedia storytelling forms, and adaptation modes are all highly variable, with shape, position, and function of adaptation changing accordingly. The amount of potential combinations is almost infinite. One of them results in a project which does not

---

term) has already been claimed for a more specific phenomenon. 'Fiction-based transmedia project' is used as a synonym when there is need to emphasize the process, rather than the result of the franchise development.

Incidentally, 'transmedia' when applied to composite projects like media mix should not be confused with Werner Wolf's 'transmedial,' which is used to describe "ahistorical formal devices that occur in more than one medium, such as motivic repetition, thematic variation, or to a certain extent even narrativity," or certain element of the content (Wolf 2002: 18-19). To give an example that directly pertains to this study, the entity of the character is a typical 'transmedial phenomenon' in Wolf's classification. 'Trasmedia' in the media studies, on the other hand, indicates not the universality of the element, but the process and the result of certain cognitive concept (in most cases it is either a fictional universe, or a character, though a specific story is also an option) being constructed via multiple media.

simply employ adaptation as a device, but is an adaptation in its own right — a highly unusual case worthy of extended inquiry.

While transmedia franchises, and particularly media mixes starting with adaptation are extremely common, it is a rare occasion that the primary source is excluded from the resulting constellation of works and products. Even more unique is for each constituent of the media mix to address the same precursor text, instead of simply following the core work of the project itself (what is also called the 'mother ship'). In other words, the media mix in question, *Gankutsuō* (2004-2008), is an exception. But its uncommon features bring into light principles that work in the typical media mix. They also allow to look from a different angle on the relationship between the 'media mix' and 'transmedia storytelling', and storytelling in general. Most importantly, cases like *Gankutsuo* reveal a complex interplay of variety and unity of meaning, which go beyond simplistic notions of obligatory continuity (in transmedia storytelling projects) or deliberate discrepancies with the character as a key unifying factor (in the media mix). Adaptation, therefore, becomes a new vantage point from which to engage with the subject.

With all that said, approaching the project in question as an adaptation means putting it in the domain of adaptation studies. But what does this exactly offer the researcher? As of now, the field has yet to develop a common set of analytical tools or a presiding theory. From the beginning, adaptation studies have been the medley of different, often contradicting, theoretical approaches, ways of thinking, and ideologies. Mostly this multidisciplinarity is warranted by the nature of subject of study: more often than not, adaptations involve a shift between media, which necessitates considering the material differences, the semiotic systems, the relationship between the story as a cognitive construct and its material realization, etc. But they also involve multiple other changes for multiple other reasons, which brings into play cultural studies, economics, law, etc. (an extensive, though by no means exhaustive list of disciplines involved can be found in Elliott 2014). At the same time, the theoretical ambiguity of adaptation studies stems from the history of the

field. Since George Bluestone's *Novels into Film* (1957) marked the beginning of systematic inquiries into adaptation process and its results, the focus of the researchers has largely remained on the two title media (the situation has changed in the last two decades, but novels and films still prevail over other types of text). Consequently, most of the research was conducted by people who belonged to (or came from) departments of English and smuggled cinematic adaptations into curriculum either to spark the students' interest in the medium of film, or, on the contrary, to employ "moving pictures" to stir discussions of literary works (Leitch 2007: 3-5; Cartmell 2014). Thomas Leitch and Deborah Cartmell both note (ibid.) that this "primacy of literature" (Leitch 2007: 3, see also Leitch 2003), subordinate position of film, and approaches typical for the literary theory of that days alienated the field from film studies.[2] However, the truth remains that most of the theoretical frameworks and methods of analysis applied by the theorists of adaptation, from formalism,[3] to structuralism, to post-structuralism of the 1970s and onwards, and to the newly emerged disciplines such as postcolonial readings, queer theory, gender studies, etc., have been reflections of current trends in the literary theory and cinema studies.[4] Thus Brian McFarlane (1996) relies on principles of structuralism and narratology as he distinguishes between transferrable narrative units and those which cannot be transposed directly (and thus require adaptation proper), and then follows both processes closely in his case studies; Julie Sanders (2006) looks into adaptation as one of the forms of intertextuality, giving priority to intramedial adaptations and appropriations in her examples; and Linda Hutcheon (2006) and Thomas Leitch (2007) both glide freely through various media and historical periods, throwing light

[2] Nevertheless, Robert Stam places adaptation studies within "cinematic theory and analysis" (Stam 2005: 45).

[3] Formalism as a school of literary criticism and literary theory (associated mostly with the New Criticism movement in the U.S. in the middle of the 20th century) involves decontextualized close readings of isolated texts, with attention paid to the form and expressive devices (see Barry 2002: 29). When adaptation theorists mention "formal analysis," however, they seem to emphasize the attention paid to medium specificity (see, for instance Elliott 2013: 23, 33).

[4] In fact, Leitch characterizes the latter as closely involved with cultural critique brought on by post-structuralists (Leitch 2007: 5). The surge of post-structuralist approaches to adaptations and antagonism to the older, formally and aesthetically oriented research can thus be interpreted as results of a larger theoretical turn in humanities combined with renewed attempts to overthrow the hegemony of literature in the field.

on all aspects of adaptation process: from mode of engagement to marketing policies, from house style to medium specificity, and from the role (principal) that adaptor's personality plays in the interpretation of the source text to the impact it has on the reception of the resulting work. In other words, each researcher seems to bring to the field their own agenda, theoretical and ideological stance, and methodology.

One common denominator, though, is found in profound and universal distaste towards fidelity. This concept has become a veritable boogeyman of the field, to the point that every researcher feels obliged at some point to touch on it (generally to disavow and disprove it). For being so ubiquitously mentioned, fidelity remains a strangely ambiguous term which is treated as self-evident, as if after decades of rejection (starting with Bluestone in 1957,) its explication has become useless, replaced by pure repudiation.[5] This refusal to dwell on the definition of fidelity does adaptation studies a disservice. However, the gist of all arguments against it is that adapting work does not have to, in fact, cannot be identical or even close (in terms of form, tone, or message) to the adapted material and should not be evaluated by this criterion.

And yet J.D. Connor seems to welcome the evaluative connotations as he suggests that "the role fidelity discourse plays in the layman's discussion" is "less the surreptitious evaluation of an adaptation than an attempt at an objective justification of the prior evaluation" (Connor 2007: 15). In other words, Connor emphasizes not the final verdict, but the process of comparison between "aesthetic alternatives," which may in the long run provide a better understanding of the media and reveal some tendencies in "adaptive success and failure" (Connor 2007: 16). Robert Stam seems to acknowledge as much when he remarks that "fidelity discourse asks important questions about the filmic creation of the setting, plot, characters, themes, and the style of the novel" (Stam 2005: 14). More

[5] This indeterminacy of term is not the fallacy of its persecutors only. For instance, *In/Fidelity. Essays on Film Adaptation* (2008), a compilation that aims to redefine (and possibly vindicate) fidelity criticism, has been criticized for its failure to fix the concept: "the degree of infidelity in the case studies has stayed more or less the same throughout the book; it is mostly the authors' readings (and more importantly perhaps, their definitions of fidelity) that are changing" (Van Parys 2013: n.pag.).

importantly, Connor points out that "fidelity discussions are the stalking horses for questions of authority, questions that might be (and are) answered sociologically or anthropologically or economically" (Connor 2007: 17, see also Kranz 2007: 99). This is a very important point directly related to the phenomena this thesis focuses on. For even if the theorists bemoan fidelity discourse, the producers might be much more inclined to take it into account. Revealing on this part is Liam Burke's *The Comic Book Film Adaptation* (2015), a remarkably rounded account of the eponymous phenomenon. Having acquiesced to the general dislike of fidelity in adaptation studies, Burke proceeds to explain that the notion cannot be discounted so easily when one deals with fiction which more often than not already has vast and often vociferous fandom (see also Hutcheon 2006: 122-23, 127). If Clare Parody in her more general account of adaptations within transmedia franchises connects the issue of fidelity with fan expertise, and, consequently, empowerment and confirmation of one's "subcultural identity" (Parody 2011: n.pag.), Burke paints a more complicated picture. While it is true that fidelity provides the ground for producers and fans to engage into a dialogue and gives fans an opportunity to participate in the production and promotion of the new texts, there is a darker side to this interaction. Companies seek to colonize the fans' productive energy and the power of the "word of mouth"; even as they encourage fan participation and cater to the demands for fidelity, they threaten to put ramifications on fans' activities.[6] Fans, on the other hand, are just as eager to abuse their influence and put undue pressure on the workers involved in the production.[7] Additionally,

[6] Similar process is described in Jenkins 2006, ch.4, "Quentin Tarantino's *Star Wars?* Grassroots Creativity Meets the Media Industry." Additionally, Thomas Leitch offers an engaging account of the ways that fans' demands for fidelity and inclusion can be exploited in Leitch 2007, ch.6 "Exceptional Fidelity."

[7] Problems of this kind can also be found in Japan, as is evident from the incident with director Morita Hiroyuki. During the production and the first TV run of the anime version (Gonzo, April-September 2007, 24 ep.) of Kito Mohiro's *Bokurano* (『月刊 IKKI』, 2004-2009, 11 vol.) Morita actively conversed with the viewers on his personal blog. In doing so he received multiple criticisms with regards to discrepancies between the anime and still-running manga. Morita did not react well, stating that he hated the original (「アニメーション版「ぼくらの」の監督は原作が嫌いです」) and suggesting that the fans of the source work should quit watching the anime. Predictably, he then faced

in fiction-based transmedia franchises the concept is at least partially mirrored by the principle of continuity and consistency, which has become a definitive category of a sort.[8]

Besides the potential value of the fidelity discourse as one of the factors of influence in adaptation practice and transmedia franchising, the problem with aversion to the concept is that at times it is extended to comparative studies in general. They are found to be boring at best (Leitch 2008: n.pag.), and to privilege the source text (meaning first and foremost literary texts) reaffirming its superior status at worst (Hutcheon 2006: xiii; Leitch 2007: 4; Stam 2005: 15). Theorists like Thomas Leitch and Robert Stam have sought the salvation from the yoke of fidelity and work-to-work comparisons in the theories of "posts" and their theoretical predecessors. So Leitch refers to Mikhail Bakhtin's 'heteroglossia' as he rejects "a one-to-one correspondence" between adaptation and the source work (2003: 164) and insists that "adaptation study requires […] sensitive and rigorous attention to the widest possible array of a film's [many other] precursor texts" (2003: 165). These ideas are even more radically articulated in Stam's much cited "Introduction: the Theory and Practice of Adaptation"[9], as he rejects the notion of a "transferrable core" on the premise that

> [a] single novelistic text comprises a series of verbal signals that can trigger a plethora of possible readings. An open structure, constantly reworked and reinterpreted by a boundless context, the text feeds on and is fed into an infinitely permutating intertext, seen through ever-shifting grids of interpretation (Stam 2005: 15)

---

violent backlash and was forced to apologize. This is a vivid illustration both of the fans' notions of fidelity and of the environment in which adaptors have to work. The link to Morita's post: http://blog.goo.ne.jp/moriphy/e/cb2cbcaea460d892deedc3d77685dd3e
The news about the incident on the Anime News Network: http://www.animenewsnetwork.com/news/2007-06-14/bokurano-helmer-changes-story-due-to-dislike-of-manga

[8] Thus transmedia storytelling proper is supposed to follow this principle, while Marc Steinberg finds that storytelling in the media mix is specific precisely because it is actively and deliberately divergent.

[9] In *Literature and Film: A guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation,* 2005.

and replaces "a dyadic source/adaptation model" with ideas of Julia Kristeva's and Roland Barthes' intertextuality, and Bakhtin's "dialogism" (2005: 27). In other words, adaptation is doubly emancipated from any perceivable influence of the source work (which cannot even be called such at this point): by the infinity of possible personal readings and by the traces of multiple other texts, utterances and discources which are its building material.[10] But viability of universal intertextuality for the field is questionable, to say the least. It does destroy all hierarchy and privilege any work can hold over others. But if all texts are taken as intertexts generated "in an endless process or recycling, transformation, and transmutation, with no clear point of origin" (Stam 2006: 31), and thus no priority can be attributed to any single prior work (or several works), then the very notion of adaptation is devoid of meaning.[11] Consequently, the field of adaptation studies "loses its identity," to borrow Kranz's words (2008: 98).[12] Leitch, for one, seems content with such state of things, as he dreams of the new, larger discipline of "Textual Studies […] incorporating adaptation study, cinema studies in general, and literary studies […] and much of cultural studies as well" (Leitch 2003: 168). This desire for convergence of disciplines is, however, not shared by other researchers — nor is the eagerness to let adaptation dissolve in the primordial soup of intertextuality.

[10] Interestingly, Stam then proceeds to apply Gerard Genette's interpretation of intertextuality to the discussion of adaptations. But intertextuality as Genette understands it, and even the broader category of 'transtextuality,' which subsumes it, are not the same as the one proposed by Kristeva and Barthes. The latter coined the term to identify "an intrinsic, universal attribute of texts," while Genette's intertextuality is limited "to the interplay of identifiable texts" (Moraru 2008: 257). One can also argue that while it is fine to adopt Genette's terms such as 'hypotext' (an anterior one) and 'hypertext,' they can be attributed the same implicit hierarchy as 'source/precursor work' and 'adaptation.'

[11] Adaptation, after all, is recognized as such precisely because it is connected with a specific, traceable other narrative. Otherwise it is consumed (by unknowing audiences, for instance) as an ordinary isolated work. It is, of course, possible to employ a much broader, more inclusive definition of adaptation which would include real events, non-narrative materials, appropriations, etc. This, however, does not solve the problem because it also dilutes the concept to the point where it loses any practical applicability.

[12] Indeed, the same phenomena are the subject of several other fields of research such as intermedia or translation studies, and theoretical frameworks such as transfictionality (not to mention intertextuality). One could suggest that it is precisely multifaceted comparative analysis that distinguishes adaptation studies as a separate field.

Linda Hutcheon defines adaptations as "deliberate, announced, and extended revisitations of prior works" (Hutcheon 2006: xiv) — the set of conditions also applied by Julie Sanders (2006: 6, 8) and David Kranz (2008: 98).[13] To be familiar with the prior work (or works) and to experience an interplay of the expected and the new are necessary conditions for engaging with adaptation as adaptation (Hutcheon 2006: 6, 120-21; Sanders 2006: 22). This deliberately constructed connection between particular texts is not simply the defining factor — it is "an interrelation between texts which is fundamental to their existence and which at times seems to get to the heart of the literary, and especially the reading, experience" (Sanders 2006: 8). In other words, quite often being aware of changes made to the source work influences the interpretation of the text at hand — and this influence is more significant than that of "a plethora of textual, intertextual, and contextual elements" the audiences might find in the work (Kranz: 89). Indeed, extensive relationship with a specific text, according to Hutcheon, is precisely "what keeps under control the "background noise" […] of all the other intertextual" references in the adaptation (2006: 21). Finally, comparisons play another important role — they are part, or maybe even the core of the appeal of adaptation. This point is particularly relevant in the context of this study, since at least part of transmedia fictions are similar in this regard. Hutcheon's description of experience with adaptation as a "repetition but without replication, bringing together the comfort of ritual and recognition with the delight of surprise and novelty [which] involves both memory and change, persistence and variation" (2006: 173), can be just as well applied to most media mixes.[14] To summarize, juxtaposing adaptation with the source work is inherent in thinking of it as adaptation, is instrumental in understanding its meaning, and is a

[13] Incidentally, Hutcheon and Sanders frequently resort to those dyadic comparisons Stam hopes to avoid. Yet no one could accuse these scholars of conservative inclinations or narrow-mindedness (as a matter of fact, Thomas Leitch in 2008 found their books to be one of the most valuable additions to the writing on adaptation). It seems that in actual analysis limitless intertextuality is neither productive nor necessary.

[14] It is better to refrain from attributing this type of attraction to all transmedia franchises, though, for some of them facilitate the pleasure of investigation (when the story is gradually reconstructed from the franchise constituents) or exploration (of the fictional universe).

crucial part of the pleasure it offers. Comparative study seems to be the most natural and logical way to approach adaptation. It is hard to deny that it might turn out delimiting or end in simplistic evaluations, but as Kranz rightfully notes, any oversights in inquiry can be covered and new aspects of analysis added (2008: 85-86). If the practice is lacking, it needs to be enhanced, not discarded.

Nevertheless, there remains a question what to compare and how. In my previous research, which focused on manga adaptation of Kyōgoku Natsuhiko's *Hundred Stories* series (『巷説百物語シリーズ』, 1997-2010)[15], I applied McFarlane's methodology of isolating transferrable and non-transferrable narrative units (the concept and classification of those borrowed from Barthes' "An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative," 1966, Eng. trans. 1975), and then concentrated on the transformations that the nontransferable elements as well as general narrative categories (such as interiority or type of narration) underwent during the shift. However, this approach was applicable only because of the nature of the analyzed subject. Hidaka Tateo's manga *Hundred Stories* (2008-2013) can be classified as 'transposition' (Cartmell and Whelehan 1999, cited in Sanders 2006: 20), 'transformation' (Burke 2015, Introduction, section "Adaptation Studies and the Comic Book Movie"), or 'traditional translation' (Cahir 2006, ch.1 "The Nature of Film Translation: Literal, Traditional, and Radical"). In other words, it reproduces the fabula of Kyōgoku's novels very closely (but without being slavish to the letter). In cases like this, it is possible to invoke the analogy of translation[16] between distinct semiotic systems (in this case,

[15] *Graphic Novel Adaptations of Literary Works (with Natsuhiko Kyōgoku's 'Hundred Stories' as an example)*. MA Thesis, Utsunomiya University, 2012.

[16] Predictably, there is no consensus on the validity of translation analogy in the field. For Leitch, who ascribes "a wider variety of cultural tasks" to adaptation practice (2008: 71), and Stam, who denies existence of equivalences in expressive means of different media (2005: 19), the analogy does not seem to work. Hutcheon accepts it with provision that translation is understood as a "transaction between texts" (2006: 16). Linda Constanzo Cahir (2006) redefines adaptation as translation in order to underscore the inevitable transformation of the material and self-sufficiency of the resulting text. As Cahir's classification of "translations" includes the 'radical' one, which transforms the content of the precursory work in "extreme and revolutionary ways," it does not fully conform to the contemporary understanding of translation. Neither does "strip-mining" for the material the adaptor can use in his own work, or adding personal commentary on the "translated" content, as Leitch points

the novel and the manga) and then focus on the expressive means employed by the media in question.[17] With *Gankutsuō*, however, such approach is impossible: there is no point in looking for analogies or equivalences in the means of expression when the story itself changes so radically. On the other hand, these changes result in bold re-reading of the adapted novel, *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1844-45), which deserves attention in its own right. Besides, while this study argues that the *Gankutsuō* media mix is a multilayered network bound by intertextual and material links, first and foremost links between its works exist on the level of story aspects (characters, sequences of events, and places). Therefore, in the current study translation model, with its focus on the medium specificity, is replaced by a less linear exploration of *Gankutsuō* franchise and the ways its constituents are related to each other and to the two "outside" works (Alexander Dumas' *The Count of Monte Cristo* and Alfred Bester's *Tiger! Tiger!*), with comparisons made mostly on the level of contents.

Before addressing *Gankutsuō* as a network, however, there is need to understand the context which shapes it. As has been stated at the beginning of this introduction, *Gankutsuō* stands apart from more traditional media mixes, but simultaneously draws attention to the inherent ambiguity of the phenomenon (in regard to storytelling strategies and other types of transmedia projects) and its potential to develop in an unexpected direction. To see this, however, one needs to be acquainted with the larger picture. What are media franchises, of which media mix is a subtype? What is transmedia storytelling and how is it opposed to media mixes (or is it even possible to directly compare the two?). How are transmedia

---

out (2008: 71). One might remember, though, that translation theory has also been changing over centuries, and there were times and places when the term was applied to what now would be seen as radical adaptations. If "translation" is therefore understood in a very broad sense, Cahir's terminology is valid simply because it allows for all kind of transformations. Alternatively, it is possible to reserve translation analogy for those adaptations that do not introduce huge changes on the level of fabula and story.

[17] With *Hundred Stories*, the analysis is also streamlined by the proximity of production processes of the media involved. Unlike film or TV series, manga is made by a very limited number of people (even when one takes into account the input by the assistants and the editor), in many cases — by the mangaka alone. Another important factor was relative closeness between Hidaka's and Kyogoku's target readership. While it is certainly possible (and probably more interesting) to conduct formal comparison between media radically different in this regard, such proximity of works reduces the influence of extratextual factors and allows one to focus on the specifics of storytelling evident in the texts.

projects developed and theorized in different cultural contexts? And what is the state of research on this relatively new subject? The aim of Chapter One is to answer these questions by taking first the broadest category of fiction-based transmedia franchise (section 1.1) and then zeroing-in on the media mix (section 1.3). Another vector in the first chapter is conditioned by the priority of storytelling (in contrast with, for example, marketing) in this study. Transmedia franchises started to proliferate in Japan and in the U.S. almost at the same time — so did the theoretical accounts on them. However, in the writing of Japanese researchers, reflections on the role and form of storytelling in the franchise were quickly replaced by inquiries into other related subjects, especially the ontology of character. At the same time, Japanese discussions of the media mix gravitate towards economics and marketing, or sociology: they consider either the specifics of production and promotion of media mixes and their constituents, or the ways consumers' (that is, otaku's) sensibilities shape media mix products and vice versa (section 1.3 attempts to explain how this predilection was formed). In Euro-American[18] studies, however, much more attention has been paid to the ways narrative is constructed and to the functions of story in such projects. Therefore, section 1.2 summarizes the pertinent research (and most influential models of transmedia fictions which have been established so far) before moving to media mix proper. The overview of the related writing by Japanese scholars and critics is followed by the discussion of Marc Steinberg's work on the subject. The ordering is not random: on the one hand, at present Steinberg's account of the media mix, its history, operating principles, and appeal for consumers is the most detailed and rounded, within and without Japan; on the other hand, Steinberg clearly follows the Japanese discourse introduced in the section (and ultimately contributes to it through his last book). Besides, since Steinberg is the first researcher after Ōtsuka Eiji to theorize storytelling in the media mix,[19] his writing serves as a

[18] The main bulk of the related research has been done by the U.S scholars, but arguably the most comprehensive account on transmedia practices up-to-date comes from Australia (Dena 2009).
[19] Mostly he does it in "Condensing the Media Mix: *Tatami Galaxy*'s Multiple Possible Worlds" (2012). It is important to note that Otsuka wrote on this topic twenty-five years ago, when media mix

bridge to the last part of the chapter. In sections 1.3.5-7 an attempt is made to rethink certain tenets of the discourse around media mix and to re-evaluate the role of story in it as well as the relationship between the media mix and transmedia storytelling. This sets up the theoretical background for discussing *Gankutsuō*.

Chapter Two addresses the immaterial aspects of *Gankutsuo* franchise — that is, the structure of the network and its status as adaptation. As an independent cluster of works, *Gankutsuo* media mix stems from the anime, and it is the anime that enters into the most extensive and tense dialogue with Dumas' novel, sets up the stage for the whole project to unfold on (influenced by Bester's novel), and tells the fullest version of the story. Therefore, at first the anime is discussed as an adaptation in its own right, with specific attention paid to the context in which it was produced, to the factors that contributed to the transformations of the source material, and to the nature of these changes (sections 2.1 and 2.2). After that, all other constituents of the media mix are introduced. Their place within the whole structure is identified from several angles. First of all, there is the level of independency to consider: some of these works do not stand on their own right while others tell a more or less self-sufficient (though never quite complete) story. Second, while *Gankutsuo* network has a simple radial structure (where the anime takes the central position and all other works address it), there are direct links between particular constituents on the level of content. Finally, all *Gankutsuō* works contain intertextual references to *The Count of Monte Cristo* (and occasionally *Tiger! Tiger*!) that bypass the anime. This last point is one of the most singular features that distinguish this media mix — it is also the primary reason the *Gankutsuō* media mix can be taken as a complex adaptation project. For this reason, intertextual relations between *Gankutsuō* works and the novels are analyzed in greater detail in the second part of section 2.3, with attention also paid to the ways they combine with variations of contents (typical for the media mix) and influence the re-reading of Dumas

---

was still nascent, and the principles he proposed back then no longer hold the central position in the theory and practice of media mix development.

offered in the anime. At the end of the chapter, an outline is given of *Gankutsuō* as a multilayered network, with different types of links on every level. The implication this structure has for the meaning of *Gankutsuō* as adaptation as well as for its functioning as a fiction-based transmedia project are also considered.

Focusing on the contents only would not suffice, though, in the analysis of adaptation or the media mix.[20] Therefore, Chapter Three explores the material side of *Gankutsuō* works, foregrounding their specific mediality. Medium specificity as understood in this study is far from the notion that there is correlation between the medium and the types of stories it can — is allowed to — tell.[21] Enough argument has been made already against such delimiting position. No one would disagree, however, that means of expression are different in distinct semiotic systems (and in the media[22] which combine several of those), moreover, there are such factors as conventions that cling to a certain medium in a certain historical period and, consequently, expectations of the consumers to be fulfilled or subverted, there are intricacies of production, there is, after all, the pure materiality of the media, which, all in all, *is* part of the message.[23] Thus a huge part of the impact the anime *Gankutsuō* has on viewers is the direct result of the producers' unconventional handling of the visuals. Combined with equally non-standard organization of the mise-en-scène, they

[20] After all, if adaptation into another medium causes in the knowing consumer pleasurable anticipation mixed with anxiety (in varying proportions), with transmedia fictions the whole point of the project and its main attraction factor lies in the intermedial transpositions of the content.

[21] Understood as such, medium specificity is deemed as essentialist and much criticized (see, for example, Stam 2005: 19; Leitch 2003: 150-154). Meanwhile, narratology supports the notion of more flexible but still crucial role of the medium in the adaptation process: as Mieke Bal (cultural theorist and critic) notes, when explaining her tripartite division of the narrative into fabula, story, and text, "the fabula […] is not exclusively language-based," but "only the text layer, embodied in the sign system of language, visual images, or any other, is more or less directly accessible" (Bal 2009: 6-7). Narratology, then, offers an alternative to Stam's radical rejection of a "transferrable core" — there is a set of elements which can be abstracted from the text and thus form a basis to be moved into another work. But this basis will inevitably change either on the level of story (what other theorists call the 'plot,' or 'suzjet'), or when it is expressed in actual text (regardless of whether trasmposition is inter- or intramedial).

[22] "Media" in this thesis is used as a plural form of the "medium" and does not denote a different concept.

[23] This understanding of medium specificity seems to coincide with that of Hutcheon with proviso that Hutcheon separates media (as the material means of expression), modes of engagement, and the communicative context (2006: 24, 26), while this study, following Marie-Laure Ryan, takes all three as different dimensions of the medium (Ryan 2014: 29).

define the anime's memorable aesthetics. At the same time, narrative conventions of the TV anime series presumably have had as much impact on the changes in the story of Monte Cristo as any personal interpretation on the part of the producers. Likewise, the content of the novelization is quite clearly defined by the typical patterns that emerged at the time in the corresponding sector of the otaku market — while the manga, on the contrary, seems to consciously break away from the divisions historically set in the medium (e.g., between shōjo and shōnen) to accumulate a collection of expressive techniques that range from meticulously detailed page-sized illustrations to almost storyboard-like sequences. Mediality of *Gankutsuō* texts does not simply contribute to their final shape and meaning: one (and the most stable) set of links between them exists on the material level. Besides, at times medium specificity becomes the basis for additional intertextual links that go beyond *The Count of Monte Cristo* or *Tiger! Tiger!*

A reservation must be made here about intertextuality in order to avoid misunderstandings. As has been already mentioned, there is difference between 'intertextuality' as it was developed by Kristeva and Barthes — the 'universal' inherent quality of all texts in all media — and the 'limited' intertextuality which is less highly theoretical but arguably more applicable. The problem here is essentially the same as with intertextuality in adaptations discussed earlier, summarized in David Kranz's acerbic remark that "[the] post-structuralist vision of infinite connections to other texts and contexts is, from a practical standpoint, the height of academic silliness" (2008: 89). Post-structuralist view is not necessarily that impractical, because it can still serve as a framework for analysis — as demonstrated by Roland Barthes himself. However, looking at the text through the prism of universal intertextuality requires certain premises: one has to reject the possibility of any stable, inherent meaning within a text as well as possibility of retrieving from the text any kind of message or intention of the author. In fact, the author himself cannot control the proliferation of meanings even as he writes: the text is "woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages […] antecedent or contemporary, which cut across it

through and through in a vast stereophony" (Barthes, *Image—Music—Text*,1977; cited in Allen 2000: 69) and are born directly from "a plurality of voices, of other words, other utterances and other texts" (Allen 2000: 72). Moreover, all traces found in the text lead only to the new openings, new explosions of meaning — there is no final point to arrive at (Allen 2000: 66-67, 73-74). Specific intertexts, then, become insignificant, as they are all subsumed by the "entire cultural code" (Allen 2000: 74; Piegay-Gros 2008: 77). In the engagement with this code, the production of meanings depends solely on the reader, who "writes" the text (Allen 2000: 68). This meaning-making and the engagement with intertextuality are, of course, highly arbitrary and subjective — "writing" the text and writing *about* the text thus becomes an exercise in erudition and memory (Allen 2000: 87-88; see also Piegay-Gros 2008: 56, 58, 60).

It is not within the scope of this study to argue against this radical approach to interpretation of texts.[24] The truth, however, remains that humans need some fixed meanings, certain constants, in their lives in general, and in their writing and reading, in particular. If hyperactive fandoms of nowadays, which, on the one hand, adamantly press the producers for fidelity and dig their favorite books and shows for information, and, on the other hand, produce an avalanche of derivative works, have proved anything, it is that the reader can engage with the text as a repository of fixed messages and meanings and then proceed to subvert these meanings, play with them, or simply ignore them. Likewise producers,[25] critics, and researchers still often choose to address texts as if they contained some kind of code that could be interpreted in some ways but not the other. And as soon as one allows for some recoverable, sharable meaning in the text, one is forced to step away from the radical

[24] Though it might be worth mentioning that Barthes himself distinguishes between 'writerly' texts and 'readerly' ones, which suppress their intrinsic plurality of meaning (Allen 2000: 79). Furthermore, he posits that no text can be completely writerly (2000: 81) — something that Robert Stam prefers to overlook or think insignificant.

[25] Indeed, very telling is reaction of Mary Snyder (who writes about adaptation studies from a vantage point of an actual creator) to Stam's "Introduction: the Theory and Practice of Adaptation." While Snyder is dissatisfied with almost all the books she reviews, it is evident from her writing that she takes Stam's claims (about non-existence of "the point of origin" and insignificance of authorial intention) as personal attack (Snyder: 12-14).

universal intertextuality. The creators cannot directly affect the reading of allusions, citations, and appropriations they weave into the work, but they still construct their texts with a certain strategy in mind (Piegay-Gros 2008: 78). As with adaptations, these deliberate connections with particular other texts often play the defining role in the interpretation of the text in question. But the opposite is also true: certain intertextual links only become meaningful when they are strategically planned (2008: 81).[26] Spontaneous reminiscences and personal associations as well as traces of discourses are hence considered less important than deliberate and identifiable references to other texts (Piegay-Gros 2008: 71-72) and can be ruled out by the "application of probability"[27] proposed by David Kranz (2008: 88-89). Following such logic, this study considers only the texts that are openly and unequivocally evoked in *Gankutsuō*. The discussion of the additional nodes of intertextuality that employ the medium specificity of *Gankutsuō* works and the manner in which they contribute to the reading of the media mix closes Chapter Three.

This introduction ends with several points that need to be clarified before moving to the main topic. Discussing *Gankutsuō*, and particularly the ways it transforms *The Count of Monte Cristo*, I frequently cite interviews with the members of production team, especially with the director (and the initiator of the project) Maeda Mahiro and the head writer and scenarist Kōyama Shūichi. In doing so, I might be accused of intentionalism. I will not deny taking authorial intention into consideration. As has just been explained, the rejection of the personalized originator of meaning in text went hand in hand with the renunciation of fixed meaning itself — if the latter has been reinstated to a point, it makes sense to do the same courtesy to the former. One could argue that formalist movements like British 'practical criticism' and American 'New Criticism' did away with the author forty years prior to the

[26] One could think, for instance, of the database in otaku culture. Its elements, freely reshuffled, often derive from a particular cultural background (e.g., Christian cross), but they are not always employed meaningfully, so to say.

[27] "Probability suggests that only intertextual connections which are sustained or foregrounded will be recognized and possibly have a significant effect on the understanding of any given [text]" (Kranz 2008: 89).

post-structuralists (Barry 2009: 29). Decontextualised close readings preferred by the New Criticism, however, have fallen out of fashion since 1970s. In adaptation studies, at least, there are repeated calls for paying more attention to the context of production. It is strange to ignore the producer, who is definitely one of the key parts of this context. This position is evidently shared by Linda Hutcheon, who argues that adaptors' personal reasons to get involved with the work and their attitude to it (and the corresponding interpretation) should be taken as one of the factors that greatly influence the process and the result of the adaptation (2006: 92, 106, 108). Hutcheon astutely points out that "political and historical intentionality" is readily embraced in the academia — but other kinds of personal motivations continue to be dismissed (2006: 94-95). She also notes that the bias is uneven across the disciplines: feminist, postcolonial, or queer studies are eager to pay attention to the "individual agency," while "*Auterist* film critics, musicologists, and art historians" (original emphasis) feel free to appeal to the personal motives of the artists, but in literary — and in adaptation studies — the situation is different (2006: 94, 107). Hutcheon's conviction that the "sense of literary critical embarrassment about intention and the more personal and aesthetic dimensions of the creative process" should be reconsidered is echoed by Sanders (2006: 2-3) and Piegay-Gros, with regard to the analysis of intertextuality (2008: 81). Incidentally, Hutcheon argues that the creator's personal motives and aesthetic considerations can be accessed in two ways: they leave traces in the work, and they can be delivered in the form of "extratextual statements" (2006: 109). Surely any explications the authors offer need at all times be checked against actual text. However, true as it may be that the creators cannot be the ultimate arbiters on the interpretations of the text, that they sometimes contradict themselves, misinform, or even lie — all information one gets from them can enhance the analysis and offer new perspectives on the texts involved and their relationship to each other.[28]

[28] For instance, if the author ends up betraying their own initial intentions, it seems an important fact which should be included into the consideration of the work. One can then ask what factors

If adaptation studies could benefit from being less wary against intentionality, persona of the author (or its equivalent) cannot really be ignored in the studies of media franchises. In contemporary popular culture, where digital technologies and participatory fan communities constantly threaten to bury both geographical and hierarchical distances, the creator is no more a God-like figure of absolute authority, nor is he or she an obscure entity to be removed from the picture completely. Authors nowadays are easily accessible, almost within reach: very often they are eager to engage in the dialogue with the fans (even if their motivations to do so may vary), to argue, clarify, contemplate on the tricky questions and suggested ideas, etc. In many respects they are like fans — but subtle yet distinct line between the two positions still remains. This distinction is mostly vivid in the relationship between fans, cultural producers, and 'canon.' In fact, this matter warrants an extended explanation.

Canon, as well as all related concepts, such as 'continuity,' 'fanon,' or 'retcon' ('retroactive continuity'), bears a clear meaning for any researcher involved in fandom studies, or, for this matter, contemporary media studies. However, for a scholar with the background in literary studies the word can become, quite on the contrary, misleading, because of 'literary canon,' which has become an established and pervasive notion (the misunderstanding is still more likely to happen because partially this thesis deals with literary works). It is thus worth claiming from the very start that the only type of "canon" addressed in this thesis is what can be called a 'media canon,' employed by fans and workers of cultural industry. It is different from its literary counterpart in several crucial ways, though several similarities (especially in the application of the concept and certain connotations inherent in it) can also be traced.

---

conditioned this betrayal and so on.

Originally a theological concept, ‘canon’ (the word derives the Greek κανών, meaning "any straight rod or bar; rule; standard of excellence"[29]), denoted a body of writings considered to be sacred or authoritative in a certain religion (e.g., Bible, Talmud and Torah). These connotations of fundamentality and regulation linger in the concepts of traditional literary, and media canon. The former is a selection of texts of recognized artistic merit and value that are supposed to define a particular culture and be representative of it.[30] As for the latter, it encompasses all information considered “true” for a fictional universe and a particular storyline, “what fans agree "actually" happened,”[31] as well as resources of this information (films, TV series, guidebooks, and so on). [32]

The application of the concept in both cases is intrinsically bound to the practices of the respective community. As is evident from the etymology of the word and genealogy of the concept, canon has a prescriptive function, it influences the related discourse and helps create an evaluation scale. With regard to literary texts (and their creation, appreciation, and criticism) it sets a standard of what is “good” (“the best” even[33]). Whenever critics or scholars seek to reconfirm or disprove the status of “canonical” texts, the very arguments they use, the types of reading they offer become guidelines for analyses of a broader range of works, and resultant techniques, vocabulary, and points of reference allow a wider range of people to participate in the discussion. Media canon can function in the same way: when, for instance, fellow critique of a fan work is based on its compatibility with the canonical texts.[34]

---

[29] http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=canon

[30] Analogous, but smaller-scale canons can be assembled for a certain genre or time period.

[31] http://fanlore.org/wiki/Canon

[32] Mark J.P. Wolf notes that the “idea of canon, that certain things are “true” for an imaginary world (that characters, locations, and objects exist, and that events have happened within that world), demonstrates the desire for authenticity from the point of view of the audience, who are often concerned with demarcating what is “official” for a world or franchise” (Wolf 2012: ch.7, section “Levels of Canonicity”).

[33] As Mike Fleming explains, “the traditional canon centred largely on issues of quality,” and “[t]raditional arguments in favour of a canon focused on the need to preserve the best of a nation’s cultural heritage” (Fleming 2007: 3).

[34] Corresponding questions could include such as those: “Are the characters “in character”?”; “Could the author successfully weave her story in the canonical fabula?”; “Does the story refer to the definitive themes found in the canonical texts?”; etc. As is evident from this list, at times a fan work (particularly in the text format) can be considered in terms strikingly close to the discourse of fidelity

On the other hand, canon itself often becomes an object of meticulous research, and debates about the status of works are a common site. Similarities like this between fan practices and "the knowledge-production that occupies the academy" (Jenkins 1992: 88) have been repeatedly commented upon. But one specific implication is worth attention here in regard to the functions of canon. Henry Jenkins, referring to David Bordwell, brings up "the institutional basis of academic interpretation," that is, "conventional ways of producing interpretations shared by most, if not all, scholars". These are necessary preconditions for any specific interpretations to be discussed meaningfully (1992: 91). Likewise, "interpretive conventions" exist in fandom (as well as smaller groups within it), and canon serves as one of them: as a basis for productive exchange of readings, emotional responses, and fan works. This is especially important in fandoms where officially produced content spans a range of discrete media, works, and products. For many fans, only part of the content thus remains available due to the financial or time constraints; personal preferences (not all people have necessary skills to play a video game or literacy required to read comics); and accessibility (some products are only released locally, and fans from other countries have to deal both with international shipment and language barrier).[35] It is crucial in such circumstances that some common ground is established. In his seminal study of media fandom (its interpretive and creative practices, and social structure), *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (1992), Henry Jenkins confirms repeatedly that the inherent part and purpose of being in fandom is communication. Fandoms come to be and persist for such a long time because they allow the participants to connect with each other in meaningful ways (see, for instance, Jenkins 1992: ch.2, section "Fan Gossip"). The information everyone

---

so much bemoaned by the scholars involved in adaptation studies. While such approach is possible, though, it is definitely not the only one, nor is it prevalent. Perhaps the only requirement persistently raised in the otherwise flexible and fanciful media fandom is to avoid writing 'out of character' ('OOC').

[35] One could also imagine a franchise based on a video game, where officially issued content runs parallel to the infinity of personal narratives that result from private experiences of every player with the game (the situation is even more exacerbated when the game is an RPG and offers multiple choice at certain points). In this case, too, the canonicity of certain parts of the game and especially of its outcomes becomes ambiguous.

agrees to share as true and relevant becomes a means for creating and sustaining this connection.

Another obvious common point between two canons is that they both have to do with the relationships of power and authority between those who invoke them. To generalize, one's status with regards to canon is based on two premises. First, a person's position depends on the degree to which they have researched and mastered the canon. Second, a person either belongs to a group that can define canon, or not (obviously, in the former case their status within the concerned community rises).

With literary canon, these conditions lead to the authority of critics, who define what canonical works are and how they should be read.[36] Since these works are also considered the hallmarks of quality and good taste, knowing and appreciating them becomes beneficial to casual readers as well.[37] Similarly, within the fan communities the fans who have mastered the canon are considered experts whose opinion can be trusted (this plays out in different ways: for instance, a person can serve as an arbiter in the arguments about the quality of fan works, or become a consultant for his or her fellow fan authors). At times, even official producers and creators come to rely on such fans' intimate knowledge of the canonical content. Obviously, this state of affairs changes quite drastically depending on the particular fandom: the authority of an expert rises significantly when officially issued materials are plentiful and complicated in form; and when a given segment of fandom considers it necessary to know the canon intimately before expanding on it or introducing variations. Correspondingly, when fans simply extract characters from officially produced work(s) and play with them freely, mastering any other type of canon (or even the characters' personalities, for that matter) should not be necessary. While traditional literary canon is also

[36] This "privilege of socially authorized professionals and intellectuals" over the interests of popular readers and textual consumers" is described extensively in Jenkins' introduction of "scriptural economy" by Michel de Certeau (Jenkins 1992: 25).

[37] "Belonging to the canon confers status, social, political, economic, aesthetic, none of which can easily be extricated from the others. Belonging to the canon is a guarantee of quality, and that guarantee of high aesthetic quality serves as a promise, a contract," by which the selected work can and is expected "to be enjoyed as an aesthetic object" (Landow, n.d., n.pag.).

changed, contested, or outright rejected in response to the cultural and ideological climate, as well to the current trends in academia,[38] the status of the canon in fandom is much more fluid at any given time.

Likewise, the second condition that defines one's status (that is, the ability to form the canon) applies to both canons, but functions very differently in each of them. As has been said already, defining traditional literary canon is the prerogative of scholars and critics.[39] Neither casual readers nor authors of the works selected (or excluded) have a say in this process. Media canon, however, is put together, expanded and transformed by the official producer: it can be an actual creator (of the story, fictional universe, or character), or an intellectual property holder.[40] Issues regarding canonicity can arise even in series produced within one medium by one author. Mark J.P. Wolf describes various strategies a creator can use to deal with discrepancies within a series: for instance, newer texts tend to rule over over the preceding works; texts of larger scope (like novels) are more likely to be regarded as canonical than minor ones; and sometimes an incongruous fact from an older text is explained diegetically and thus becomes a part of the canon in a different status (see Wolf 2012: ch.7, section "Originator and Main Author").

[38] "The debate about the canon has often been fierce, particularly in the United States where in the 1980s and 1990s there was first an attack on the traditional canon and then a 'conservative backlash' against attempts to broaden it to make it more representative of society (Altieri, 1990: Guillory, 1993)" (Fleming 2007: 3).

[39] It is worth mentioning, though, that this authority is shared by workers of education in general. As George P. Landow puts it: "a chief enforcer of the canon appears in middlebrow anthologies, those hangers on of high culture that in the Victorian period took the form of pop anthologies like *Golden Treasury* and today that of major college anthologies in America. To appear in the Norton or Oxford anthology is to have achieved, not exactly greatness but what is more important, certainly — status and accessibility to a reading public" (Landow , n.pag.).

[40] The material can also be added by the media license holder, but then its canonical status has to be confirmed by the IP holder: "while media license holders pay intellectual property owners for the right to participate in the multiplication of production, neither licensed creative laborers nor creative laborers working directly for the intellectual property holder enjoy any claim of ownership over their contributions" (Johnson 2013: ch.1, section "Apples or Oranges"). Similarly, Marc J.P. Wolf indicates that "for a work to be canonical requires that it be declared as such by someone with the authority to do so; authorship alone is not sufficient to determine the work's status" (Wolf 2012: ch.7, section "Levels of Canonicity"). He adds, however, that the works "that typically possess the highest degree of canonicity are those which come from the innermost circles of authorship, which surround the originator and main author of a world" (ibid.).

If just one author can cause quite a conundrum of contradicting facts and varyingly canonical works within their oeuvre, situation gets still more contrived with transmedia fictions, and particularly transmedia franchises discussed in this thesis. In such a franchise, the original creator might relinquish the intellectual property rights to a corporation, or even be absent altogether. The content is more often than not developed across different media by different people,[41] making it all the harder to sustain continuity, that is, the consistency of facts between the franchise constituents. The right holders can also take very different approaches towards the canon, from setting up minimum requirements[42] to developing a complicated tier system of canonicity. The most famous example of the latter is probably the Holocron: a five-level database of the Star Wars universe that production company Lukasfilms had used before it was acquired by The Walt Disney Company in 2012.[43] The database covered all the material ever produced as part of the Star Wars franchise, ranging it from the most canonical G-canon to the noncanonical N-canon (for a detailed explanation, see Wolf 2012: ch.7, section "Levels of Canonicity"). A simpler option is to acknowledge as canonical only a number of works within a franchise, excluding the others; or to establish several canons, granting equal official status to the alternative developments of the content in different media.

Whichever strategy is employed, official canon always has to stand scrutiny by the fans. Fans do not accept without question all content provided by the franchise developers —

[41] Liebler and Chaney offer a classification of types of authorship in mass cultural production, which includes single author, single creator/multiple co-authors, multiple authors, corporate authorship, and collaborative authorship (2007: 9). Another classification is offered by Wolf who distinguishes several levels of delegated authority in fictional universe creation (2012: ch.7 "Circles of Authorship").

[42] This is what Akahori Satoru (who not only wrote novels, light novels, and manga scripts, but actively promoted their transmedia development) did, when he decided to put the baseline at the level of characters: "When they adapt my works into other media, I interfere only when there is a risk that a character will come out wrong. As for the story itself, I do not care at all what they will come up with"; 「僕がほかのメディアでやってもらうときに、「これは止めてください」というのは、キャラクターが違っちゃう恐れがあるときだけなんだ。ストーリー的にはどんなものを持ってこられても、それはぜんぜんかまわない」(in Kawasaki and Iikura 2009: 25; trans. mine).

[43] The Expanded Universe, which included all the Star Wars-related content apart from the saga films (seven of them released at the moment) and *Star Wars: The Clone Wars* animated TV series (Lucasfilm, 2008-2013, 121 ep.), was declared non-canon on April 25, 2014. The official announcement: http://www.starwars.com/news/the-legendary-star-wars-expanded-universe-turns-a-new-page

instead they examine available options closely and sometimes reject certain materials and products as non-canonical. In doing so, they employ criteria that are very different from the ones applied to the works selected as literary canon. As Raizel Liebler and Keidra Chaney point out, with literary canon "the focus is not on the internal content of the works themselves, but if the work as a whole has outstanding, lasting merit and relevance as a work of art," when with media canon the content itself is important (Liebler and Chaney, 2007: 3). As a rule, a certain work, the one around which the fandom was originally built (notably, with media franchises this need not be the first work to appear chronologically), is used as a touchstone for any subsequently issued material.[44] What parts of new content are considered crucial depends on what is particularly appreciated in a given fandom. Fictional universe, characters, and the story are naturally the most important elements, but even they can be treated unevenly, depending on which one functions as the staple of the franchise (this factor is usually determined by the producing side) and what group of fans is concerned.[45] There are multiple possible criteria (some of them mutually exclusive), and it is thus not surprising that fans do not always agree between themselves about which set of works to label as canonical. It is evident, however, that the quality of work or its ability to function as a storytelling standard is not a decisive factor in the fans' judgement.[46]

---

[44] Jenkins describes how fans "form generalizations about […] characters and their world reflecting the sum total of their knowledge about the series," and these extrapolations assume an institutional status within fandom (1992: 103). Likewise, Wolf explains that by releasing a work the producer makes a sort of "a statement or a kind of social contract with the audience; there is the tacit assumption that a work tells us something about the world in which it takes place, and that [the producer] has committed to certain narratives, designs, and so forth" (Wolf 2012: ch.4, section "Retroactive Continuity (Retcon) and Reboots").

[45] To elaborate, fans fascinated with exploration of the fictional universe want it to remain consistent, so that the new information would add up to their prior discoveries instead of invalidating them. Fans emotionally invested into characters naturally expect to encounter either the entity that attracted them in the first place, or its logical development. And fans pulled mostly by what Geoffrey Long call 'hermeneutic codes' (the elements in the text that pose questions and puzzles, and encourage interpretation) expect some of the remaining gaps to be covered and, possibly, some new suggested. Additionally, fans might expect new extensions to be in tune with atmosphere or ideology of the touchstone work, to retain the established formulae, etc.

[46] Obviously, this does not mean that fans cannot appreciate the artistic qualities of the work — it is simply that in many (but not all!) cases their priorities lie elsewhere. Furthermore, the quality of the material added can still be a significant, albeit secondary, factor. This factor also tends to become the

To summarize, canon in media fandom is born from interaction between the two parties. Cultural producers, unless they follow a very well thought-out and elaborate plan, eventually face the necessity to sort out the discrepancies that have accumulated in the material, and determine which constituents of the franchise are to be considered canonical. Fans can resist their decisions, though, by rejecting parts of the officially proclaimed canon altogether or adopting them selectively.[47] Close communication between fans and producers is replete in tensions and often leads to conflicts[48] — the possibility always remains that fandom itself might change the creator's personal stance towards the story or its elements. The two parties do not operate on equal terms, though. Fans can shun some works, as well as appropriate and manipulate information culled from others, but their options are severely limited: they can only choose from what the right holders offer them. The fans are, of course, free to come up with their own ideas, and often extrapolate on the given canonical facts in stunningly veritable ways. Some of these speculations are so convincing or appealing that they become 'fanon,' shared by numerous fans and regularly invoked. But as a specific separate term testifies, they still would not be considered a part of canon until the creator or the right holder acknowledges them as such (preferably in some tangible form). The official creator, on the other hand, has an automatic claim to canon formation — evident from what is jokingly called the "Word of God."[49] Therefore, the power relationships between fans and

---

more important the less new information is given — thus expectations can get exceedingly high towards adaptations of the familiar content.

[47] A brief summary of the ways fans can affect canon is found in Wolf 2012: ch.7, section "Elaborationists and Fan Productions."

[48] As Henry Jenkins notes, the "fans' response [to cultural products they consume] typically involves not simply fascination or adoration but also frustration and antagonism, and it is the combination of the two responses which motivates their active engagement with the media" (Jankins 1992: 24, 32-33).

[49] This term denotes all kinds of statements and suggestions made by official creators and producers outside of officially released material (http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Main/WordOfGod). Admittedly, there is contention about whether the paratextual information (twits, interviews, remarks in private correspondence, production notes, etc.) should be considered canonical. Many fans, taking "New Critics'" approach, share the opinion expressed in the essay "Canon Versus Fanon Versus Authorial Intent": "Authors change their minds, or events happen that change things for them. Until it's written, until it's broadcast, until it out there somehow, it didn't happen, at least not in canon" (Merlin Missy, 2007; http://firefox.org/news/blogs/20/Canon-Versus-Fanon-Versus-Authorial-Intent.html). Others, however, still consider the Word of God substantial enough to treat it as canon

cultural producers are dynamic, but nevertheless uneven: only producers can actively contribute to the canon formation.

Just as correlation between the mastery of the canon and personal status, this imbalance of power exists only within fandoms where canon in one form or other still plays a crucial role. This is not always the case: in fact, the common opinion is that in Japanese fandoms attachment to canon has been replaced by the free play with characters and the database of various character- and story-related elements (to be explained in detail in section 1.3.1 of Chapter One). However, I contend that even in Japan the modes of engagement with franchises typical for the older otaku generations are not entirely extinct. Furthermore, as is discussed in the sections 1.3.3 and 1.3.4 of Chapter One, the power relations described above may still be found in the media mixes clearly distinguished by lack of continuity — in fact, it is precisely deliberately introduced inconsistencies that allow the producers to maintain their position. This warrants attention both to the intentions of the creators and to the canon formation.

Finally, an explanation is due about three terms found throughout this study — 'story,' narrative,' and 'text.' Since these terms are usually used interchangeably in non-specialized conversations, they are likely to cause confusion. However, it seems necessary to distinguish between them in the discussion of the transmedia storytelling, media mix and adaptation process, where there is need at times to separate the material elements from the abstract ones, and where the products are connected with each other on different levels. Story here is taken as the most abstract of the three — indeed, in narratology a 'story' is defined as a "mental image, a cognitive construct" (Ryan 2008: 347), reconstructed by the recipient of the narrative text. This mental image includes a certain order of things (a 'diegetic world') populated by agents (characters). The state of this world (and, consequently, the position of agents) changes as a result of the series of physical events (which can be

---

until disproved. At any rate, fans are "acutely and painfully aware" of the existing imbalance (see Jenkins 1992: 24).

either significant accidents or actions of the actors). These changes and events are connected with each other causally and temporarily — at the same time they are related to the mental states of the agents.[50] A 'narrative text' (as opposed to non-narrative texts) is then a "semiotic object, whatever the medium, produced with the intent to create a response involving the construction of a story" (Ryan 2008: 347).[51] As 'narrative' is used here in the same sense as 'narrative text,' adding 'text'[52] as a separate term to the list may seem excessive and unnecessary perplexing. The point is, however, that not all texts in transmedia franchises (and, consequently, media mixes) are narratives. For instance, production books or guide books can contribute significantly to the world-building (what is called the 'worldview' — 世界観 — in Japan) or provide the background for some characters, but they offer pure, factual information only, and not narratives. Likewise, the narrativity of games developed within franchises may vary greatly. Therefore, the three terms can be organized as shown in Figure 1.

[50] A more detailed outline of the 'story' can be found in *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*, entry "Narrative" (Ryan 2008: 344-348). Mieke Bal denotes the same concept with the term 'fabula.' For the explanation of relations between the 'text,' 'narrative,' and 'fabula' see Bal (2009: 5-9). Different elements of the story ('fabula') are minutely described in Mieke Bal's *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative*, ch. 3, "Fabula: Elements" (2009: 189-224).

[51] As the notion of 'narrative' is directly connected with that of 'story' (the former can be said the physical rendering of the latter) it is no surprise that the definition of story given above actually coincides with the requirements of 'narrativity' (events should change the order of things, etc.). These requirements, however, can be loosened (events and/or changes are not physical, but mental; the agents are no individuated; the connectivity between the events either lost or not clear). For the conditions of 'narrativity,' see Bal (ibid.) and Schmidt (2010: 1-12).

[52] The term 'text' is used occasionally instead of 'narrative' in phrases like "textual reading," because this type of analysis belongs to literary studies and is different from the analysis of narrative. A reading of text is primarily concerned with the interpretation of meaning, while in narratology structure itself becomes a major issue (though these two types of analysis overlap as a result of meaning and structure inevitably influencing each other).

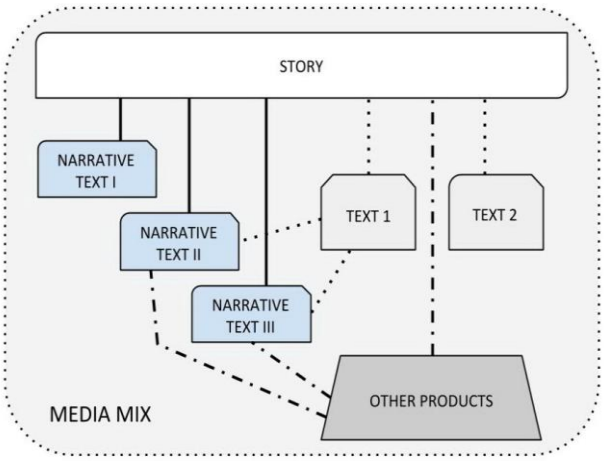


Figure 1. The story in the franchise.

On the higher, most abstract level resides the story, or stories — a chain of causally connected events that involve certain agents (characters) and unfold across time in certain settings (though nowadays it is more common to put the fictional universe, or so-called "imaginary world," on the highest level — the matter discussed in detail in Chapter One). On the next level one finds the material renderings of these events — the narrative texts, or narratives. In many cases each narrative corresponds to a separate self-sufficient story. But one story may unfold across multiple narratives (for instance, key events that define the unfolding of the story in the game can be related in a comics prequel, or a book written after the successful run of a TV series can cover omitted plotlines). Conversely, it is possible that several narratives in the transmedia franchise tell essentially the same story. Non-narrative texts are naturally situated on the same level as the narrative ones, but they do not relate stories — instead they offer additional information on the fictional world or the characters. It is also important to note that franchises are not limited to texts — they include other types of products, such as toys. The level of products is therefore the broadest one.

This set of definitions marks the end of the preliminary discussion — it is time to move to the main subject.

CHAPTER 1. TRANSMEDIA PRACTICES AND RELATED THEORY. JAPANESE MEDIA MIX AND STORYTELLING

Placing the focus of the study on the media mix and adaptation in conjunction automatically evokes the well-known concept of 'transmedia storytelling'. It is in the studies of this phenomenon by non-Japanese researchers that one finds templates and theoretical frameworks for analyzing the Japanese media mix from aesthetical, narratological, or structural points of view. Furthermore, the definition of 'transmedia storytelling' and its relation to the typical contemporary media mix are not unproblematic and require further discussion. Therefore the inquiry into how narrative is developed within transmedia projects — the basis for adaptation — will start with 'media franchise' and follow from there to the aforementioned concepts, explaining their relationships with each other and identifying controversies which surround them.

1.1. (Trans)media Franchise and Media Mix: an Overview. History of Concepts and Practices

Media franchise is a relatively new term that became immensely popular in the 1990s, and especially in the early 2000s. While 'franchise' as a marketing term has been used since late 1950s,[53] in the late 1980s it gained a new connotation.[54] Media, or more

[53] See Derek Johnson 2013: ch.1 "Imagining the Franchise," section "The Business and Culture of Franchising," for a detailed account of how 'franchising' in its initial sense was recognized as a business model and acquired certain cultural meanings and ideology. Johnson also identifies the first case when "franchising" was first used more or less in its contemporary sense in 1953, with regards to television series *Romper Room*. The *Romper Room* case combined the licensing of intellectual property with serialized production (ch.1, section "Making Meaning of Multiplication"), but the attractiveness of the strategy was not widely acknowledged until much later.

[54] Johnson lists several crucial differences between older franchising for retail outlets and new franchising in media industry. The most obvious point is that the old model is concerned with the distribution of products and services (convenience store chains such as Lawson or Family Mart serve as a good example), while media franchises are structures first and foremost busy with *making* products. Likewise, while the aim of retail franchising is to multiply the sites of distribution and to facilitate mass production, media franchising (ideally) ensures the proliferation of production sites and serial production, where differentiation is the key (see Johnson 2013: ch.1, section "Apples or Oranges"). At the same time, economic and relational continuity with retail franchising remains to

popularly transmedia, franchise was connected to the intellectual property (often, though not exclusively, in the form of a fictional character and/or universe) and its realization in multiple works and products.[55] Similar practices started long before the term appeared — with repeated adaptations or serialization of popular works or characters, production of ancillary products with the aim to cash in on successful premiere, spin-offs, occasional cross-promotion, and even — as evidenced by Marvel comic books — sustained interweaving of narratives across different titles. In the late 1990s, however, media industries embraced a new approach towards production, promotion and distribution of content, associated with deliberate and coordinated efforts to expand it across multiple interconnected works. At the same time, a very strong impulse was shared by the producers to venture into new markets established around different media — thus the new concept, 'transmedia franchising'. Though technically, 'media franchising', which is sustained by a single medium, is both possible and practiced, the appeal of 'transmedia franchising' still perseveres.

In Japan, the variant of this phenomenon is known as 'media mix'. The most comprehensive definition of the media mix has been provided by Marc Steinberg:

> The anime media mix within popular discourse refers to two intersecting phenomena: the translation or deployment of a single work, character, or narrative world across numerous mediums or platforms (also known as repurposing) and the synergetic use of multiple media works to sell other such works within the same franchise or group (Steinberg 2012a: 142).

---

some extent in the form of licensing agreements still used (though too a much smaller extent) by franchise developers to propagate their intellectual property via new channels (when, for instance, a group of professionals is asked to develop an alternative reality game (ARG) — practice that has gained popularity in the recent years and is extensively discussed by Christy Dena, 2009).

[55] In more technical terms, Johnson describes media franchise as "shared exchange of content resources across multiple industrial sites and contexts of production operating in collaborative but contested ways through networked relation to one another (frequently across boundaries of media platform, production community, and geography)" (2013: Introduction, section "The Context for Franchising).

The conditions for the emergence and proliferation of media mix are similar to those that accompanied the wide implementation of transmedia franchise in the U.S. and include diversification of platforms for the content distribution (Tanaka 2009: 49) in line with the fragmentation of the media market (Kawasaki and Iikura 2009: 22) and the increasing segmentation and specialization of the targeted consumer groups (ibid.: 23). Another contributing factor, and one point distinguishing media mix as a subtype of transmedia franchise is the development of the initially anime/film-related 'production committee system' (製作委員会方式), under which "various companies related to production, distribution, licensing and promotion of a media product" (Joo and Denison 2013a: 11) combine their efforts and investments to develop a media mix or, on some occasions, a single full-budget movie or animated film (see also Steinberg 2012a: 172; Matsutani 2006: 69; Tanaka 2009: 47). This type of cooperation allows to decrease financial risks on the part of the small-scale participants and to promote the product in more diverse and integrated ways (Joo and Denison 2013a: 12; Tanaka 2009: 47; Hirota 2006: 72-73). Besides, the involvement of the different segments of the media market preconditions the transition of contents to different platforms. As a result, the production committee system has become intrinsically bound to the media mix. The changes in the anime market are taken as another substantial factor, since this medium (along with various "otaku goods") has played the central role in the promotion of the media mix strategy. The appearance in the 1980s of adult consumers with higher spending power (Hirota 2006: 97; Kawasaki and Iikura 2009: 29) resulted in a growing number of sponsors interested in new anime projects and at the same time instigated the development of the media mix strategy (as the very aim of the sponsor companies was not the production of a particular anime title, but the promotion of title-related products). The number of potential consumers expanded further with the spread of satellite television in the mid1990s (Tanaka 2009: 49) and the inclusion of previously unavailable time slots[56] (connected with the

[56] Ibid. Also, Kawasaki and Iikura: 29.

rise of "UHF anime"[57] , produced for independent television stations[58]), in particular late night slots (深夜枠), which were opened for anime broadcasting in the late 1990s (Joo and Denison 2013b: 19-20; Kawasaki and Iikura 2009: 29).

Media mix and (trans)media franchise developed in the same period, and several parallels can be found in their respective histories: both can be interpreted as a reaction to the arrival of post-Fordism[59]; both are used to name the more coordinated and imaginative application of much older practices; with both so-called "cultural resources"[60] are employed in increasingly complex ways[61]; and the shift in the meaning of the respective term[62] is evident. As media and especially transmedia franchises gained popularity, with intellectual property and content getting prioritized, it became clear that the most profitable technique to develop and sustain a franchise was 'transmedia storytelling'. This phenomenon was identified and described by non-Japanese scholars on the material of the American and European franchises, but, as this study argues, it finds its counterpart (albeit not identical) in Japanese media mix practice. The rest of this chapter is concerned with both of these topics, but before moving to a detailed discussion, there is need to clarify some basic terminology.

---

[57] https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/UHF アニメ

[58] http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Independent_station

[59] Detailed accounts on the changes in the economic conditions and, consequently, in the media industries in the U.S. and Japan are given by Johnson (2013), and Steinberg (2012a) respectively.

[60] Johnson 2013: ch. 1., section "Structures, Social Relations, and Cultural Work."

[61] Johnson describes the efforts of players in different media markets (comic book publishers, film studios, and television networks among others) to meet the demand for content in the late 1970s-80s by taking first steps in the direction of transmedia franchising. These were, however, limited to serializations (creating inter-title connections within one medium (Marvel), or repurposing of content (as with Hollywood films). Likewise, the strategy taken by Kadokawa Haruhi (Kadokawa Books) in 1976, which Steinberg describes as the first acknowledged media mix, involved the repurposing and redistribution of the material (books, their firm adaptations, and soundtracks). In both cases, further development saw the increase in collaborations between companies, and, more broadly, different media markets, and, importantly, diversification of content. It must be noted, however, that apparently Kadokawa adopted cross-promotion between different cultural products and made steps towards conglomeration (founding Kadokawa Film) fifteen years before the same trends gained momentum in the U.S. See Steinberg 2012: 149-153, 171-175, and Johnson 2013: ch.2 "From Ownership to Partnership."

[62] While 'franchise' at first referred to the practices associated with retail outlet system, 'media mix', officially adopted as a marketing term in 1953, originally referred to the coordinated use of multiple media in advertising. Nowadays both terms are closely connected with different phenomena, but they also have retained some of the connotations associated with their old usage (such as licensing practice, or reliance on cross-promotion among media). For the history of media mix, see Steinberg 2012a, 138, 149-153, 171-176.

1.2. The Theory of Transmedia Practice. Key Concepts and Main Approaches

As a term, transmedia storytelling (TS) most probably became a buzzword after it was introduced by Henry Jenkins in his seminal book *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide* (2006). Jenkins, as will be explained later, understood TS in a rather narrow sense (as a result of his ideological approach to the new tendencies in media environment outlined in the same book). However, he firmly connected TS with the media industry. Thus began the conflation of TS with (trans)media franchise. But these terms are not synonymous. Johnson, aggravated by their interchangeable use in popular discourse, argues that a) not all franchises that rely on serialized narratives are transmedia (one can just remember any series that remained within the confines of one medium), b) not all franchises meet the strict aesthetic and structural criteria set by Henry Jenkins for TS[63] (to be discussed in detail later), and c) TS and media franchise have different connotations: while the first evokes participatory culture and creative processes, the later emphasizes the economy and structure of cultural production (ibid.). One might add to this that a transmedia narrative can be realized as a private project and thus without a franchise. Another point to make here is that as concepts, 'franchising' and 'storytelling' not only have different connotations, but actually belong to different planes. The first denotes the marketing strategy adopted by companies with the aim to secure markets and increase profit — and "franchise" is the result, that is, the established brand and all related products. The second is, just as it says, "storytelling" — it can be employed in franchising for its effectiveness, to cultivate devoted consumers.[64] In other words, media industry workers can (and most of the time do) employ

[63] As Johnson puts it, "TS envisions a unified, serialized, and centrally authored mode of franchising, but provides less insight into decentralized, episodic, and non-narrative modes of multiplied industrial production." (2013: ch.1, section "Franchising Beyond Transmedia"). Interestingly, in his 2011 blog post "TS 202" Jenkins makes largely the same argument, but from the opposite perspective.

[64] Marie-Laure Ryan explains this mechanism through the "return of cognitive investment" — having mastered a narrative, or a storyworld, to some point, reader than wants to return to it, secure in her knowledge (Ryan 2013). Ryan finds the same drive in consumers of transmedia fiction and serials alike. Henry Jenkins, on the other hand, describes how "under the flag of affective economics," marketers "seek to expand consumer's emotional, social, and intellectual investments [into the brand — which nowadays may just as well be a storyworld, or a group of characters] with the goal of shaping consumption patterns" (2006: 62-63).

the storyworld, characters, and stories to build a franchise. Likewise, the storyteller can use a franchise as a platform. With these reservations made, the franchises mentioned in this study are all transmedia (unless the opposite is explicitly indicated) and involve TS and vice-versa.[65]

But how exactly does one define TS? Are there differences between transmedia franchises and media mixes from the storytelling point of view? While it is possible to conceive of differences between non-Japanese transmedia franchise and Japanese media mix in terms of the industrial structures (the way that production, promotion, and distribution are legally organized and controlled), discrepancies are also found in the conceptual basis for their respective development. It is important to note here, that these differences seem to be primarily reflected in the discourse surrounding the two phenomena, particularly in the writing of scholars and critics concerned with these subjects. In practice, the narrative content and the relationships between works are not always different, but as Johnson notes, actual practice and its reception are shaped by the surrounding discourse — besides, this difference in approach will become crucial later, when the whole structure of the *Gankutsuō* media mix is discussed. So what distinguishes the typical approach to the TS from the popular take on media mix? There is the issue of consistency and continuity, and of the entity central to the project, though these are actually interconnected. Ultimately, this leads to the different ways the development of stories is theorized and evaluated in the writing around TS and media mixes, respectively. The following section introduces the prevalent

[65] It must be noted that terminological conundrum in the research of transmedia projects is staggering. There are "transmedia storytelling" (Jenkins 2011, Long 2007), "transmedia networks" and "cross-sited narratives" (Ruppel 2009), "transmedia practice" and "transmedia fictions" (Dena 2009), and "transmedial multitexts" (Eder 2014). Dena's and Eder's terms denote a broader range of practices and intentions, however, in actual discussion all these variants are mostly used in connection with fiction-centered projects (for instance, *The Matrix* is mentioned in practically every study on the topic, including those listed here). Likewise, the works involved are called "compositions" (Dena 2009), "sites" (Ruppel 2009), and "texts" (Eder 2014; with "text" used in a broad semiotic sense). Obviously, the terminology changes according to the interests of the writer and the focus of the study. The preferred terms for this study are 'transmedia project' as a more neutral term (though 'transmedia practice' is also used to emphasize the set of activities) and 'works,' 'texts' and 'constituents' for the separate units that constitute the transmedia project (the media mix, particularly speaking).

views on the subject, starting with Western scholarship. There are two reasons for such ordering. First of all, Anglophone sources offer a considerable bulk of information on the storytelling techniques and creative strategies used in transmedia projects. Japanese authors have generally been more concerned with defining key elements of media mix, namely worldview and characters, paying less attention to the structure. At the same time, it is in these key elements and principles of their implementation that most significant differences are found. Additionally, as has been metioned already, the most rounded account on media mix up-to-date has been made by Marc Steinberg, who openly contrasts principles that shape the media mix with those Henry Jenkins applies to TS.

1.2.1. Specifics of Transmedia Storytelling as a Transmedia Practice

The first extended account of TS in the Western theory was given by Henry Jenkins' in *Convergence Culture*. In the third chapter, "Searching for the Origami Unicorn: *The Matrix* and Transmedia Storytelling" Jenkins analyzes how *The Matrix* franchise was constructed, and how this influenced fans' activities and appreciation of the works involved. For Jenkins, *The Matrix* serves as an exemplary case of TS — a specific strategy involving multiple works and multiple media that "add up to one compelling whole" (Jenkins 2006: 101)[66]. Ideally, the following points are also included (2006: 95-96):

- Each product makes a valuable contribution to the whole franchise.
- Each medium employs its advantages and strong sides in telling the story and enhancing the users' experiences.
- Each work is self-contained and can be enjoyed separately.
- Each product is a point of entry into the franchise.

[66] In his blog post "TS 101" (March 2007) Jenkins defines it more extensively as "a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically across multiple delivery channels for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience."

Additionally, Jenkins suggests that TS works best when a "single creator or creative unit" (2006: 106)[67] supervises all the production. Such encompassing involvement is crucial, since the ultimate goal is the construction of a non-contradictory, rounded fictional world (2006: 114). Such fictional world allows for the development of multiple storylines, which may come together directly, like pieces of a puzzle, or may add to the main story, shifting the accents, subverting already known truths, or suggesting new interpretations. As a result, the conglomeration of works provides the effect of synergy, where "the whole is worth more than the sum of its parts" (2006: 102.)[68] . Jenkins contrasts this new type of storytelling with the earlier practices of "licensing." Under licensing, "the central media company […] sells the rights to manufacture products using its assets to an often unaffiliated third party; the license limits what can be done with the characters or concepts to protect the original property" (2006: 105). Jenkins describes licensing practices as flawed, since they generally result in franchise constituents that are either "redundant" in the sense that they do not offer significant new information; "watered down," meaning a very direct (and thus dull) transposition of the story from one medium into the other; or "riddled with sloppy contradictions" (ibid.). These characteristics are quite telling — they define Jenkins' transmedia storytelling by exclusion. Adaptations are obviously very much banished from the practice for the risk of incorporating at least one of the three fallacies. Also noticeable is the dislike of any kind of inconsistency and discontinuity. These parameters seem to be defined as much by Jenkins' aesthetic stance, as by the larger agenda of his book (which also reflects his views on media industry and fan culture).

[67] Interestingly, Steinberg mentions the "integration of multiple streams of the media mix into a single company" or, in later years, into the committee production system, as one of the key features of the media mix. But for Steinberg the importance of all production consolidated under one creative unit lies elsewhere. The committee production system exists not to ensure maximum consistency across the franchise, but to allow "for a synergetic cross-fertilization between texts and the integration of advertising for one media series within another" (Steinberg 2012a: 172).

[68] As is evident from Jenkins' blog post "Transmedia Storytelling 101" (2007), this synergy on the level of the audiences' experience echoes "synergy" as applied by media scholars, the productive interactions between divisions of the same horizontally integrated company (on "horizontal integration": http://www.quickmba.com/strategy/horizontal-integration/).

Jenkins sets it as his goal to describe the influence of "convergence thinking" on American popular culture, with special attention paid to "the ways it is impacting the relationship between media audiences, producers, and content" (2006: 12). The three key concepts he introduces and illustrates to do so are "media convergence, participatory culture, and collective intelligence" (2006: 2). "Media convergence" denotes a new state of the media market, characterized by "the flow of content across multiple media platforms, the cooperation between multiple media industries, and the migratory behavior of media audiences."[69] "Participatory culture" is the new form of interaction with media, where consumers actively "seek out new information and make connections among dispersed media content" (2006: 3). This way of accumulating knowledge collectively and sharing it with other members of the community is described under the term of "collective intelligence," originally coined by Pierre Lévy (2006: 4). Examples that Jenkins gives to illustrate a wide range of relationships newly formed between various media, and between the media and their users, include reality shows, election campaigns and fan videos. However, it is easy to understand why out of all possible variants of storytelling, he was attracted by *The Matrix* model. Since Jenkins essentially tried to describe a new type of consumers who were active, engaged, and greedy for information, he needed such products of cultural industry that would pose an adequate challenge for such fans. A detailed, sprawling network of closely connected narratives skillfully distributed across multiple platforms[70] offered this new audience a chance to work collaboratively and pool knowledge and expertise in solving

[69] That is, precisely the set of conditions that instigated the emergence of transmedia franchise and media mix.

[70] One could argue though, that definitive features of *The Matrix* franchise boil down to a) the composition of the core narrative, and b) the status of other installments. That is, the most common franchise model sees a primary work, which becomes the backbone of the unfolding network, and narratives that branch away from it as extensions of the story or as explorations of the fictional world. The primary work, which is at the same time the main entry point into the franchise, is enriched by these narratives, but can stand on its own. In *The Matrix*, however, more pronounced and ostensible gaps were left in the core narrative — not to the point that it was incomprehensible, but enough to push more active audiences to investigate. As for the status of franchise constituents — with licensing, the level of canonicity tends to change depending on legal agreements and on the proclaimed position of official creators. With *The Matrix*, however, the Wachowskis were involved with all works to some extent and endorsed all of them as canon.

riddles, following the clues, piecing information together, etc. In other words, Jenkins perceived in *The Matrix* a novel type of storytelling that inspired active engagement and interpretative activity on the part of fans.[71] Following this logic, repetitive content would not spark investigative interest, and discrepancies in the universe or the story itself would discourage the fans interested in exploring, since inconsistencies render any uncovered information insignificant. It is possible to ask, of course, what term applies to less consistent, more disjointed franchises that still tell stories. Besides, not only is the type of storytelling found in *The Matrix* relatively rare — even Jenkins himself was forced to acknowledge that the Wachowskis[72] might have overtaxed the audiences. On the one hand, the works in their franchise were too tightly interconnected to allow each one be fully appreciated on its own. On the other hand, the majority of the viewers were not the part of Lévy's "knowledge communities" (2006: 27) and thus could not rely on other people's research — nor did they have motivation to do so. [73]

Even though Jenkins took a rather radical example (as it was in 2006) and delineated quite restrictive rules, he also provided a basis and the most common point of reference for

[71] Jenkins directly identifies *The Matrix* as a type of artwork that responds to the demands of the audiences Lévy envisions (2006: 95). Incidentally, Jenkins' take on the media as the working material for increasingly active fans is shared by Ian Condry, as is evident from Condry's *The Soul of Anime: Collaborative Creativity and Japan's Media Success History* (2013). The "soul" in the book title refers to the "collective social energy" that "emerges in the space between people and media" (2013: 2), as a result of actions and interactions and reflection of the "value" (the "value" being something considered important by the specific participants in particular contexts) (2013: 29- 30). Anime, and the accompanying media mix, are seen as "portable creative platforms" (2013: 2) which are made and work via the "collaborative creativity" of the parties involved in different stages of production, distribution, and consumption (2013: 3). In other words, the important point for Condry is the effect anime-like media have on people, and the possibilities they offer. Typical elements of the media mix, such as worldview, or characters, become in this context the "touchstones for anime creativity," allowing for new kinds of relations between the media and the creative process not necessarily rooted in the narrative-building (2013: 58, 70).

[72] Andy and Lana (formerly Larry) Wachowski.

[73] This outcome does not prevent Jenkins from celebrating the aesthetic potential of what he perceives as the novel type of storytelling. A contrary opinion, much more pragmatic, was offered by Jee Gomez, the CEO of Starlight Runner Entertainment, Inc. (http://www.starlightrunner.com/about), who specializes in transmedia branding and transmedia storytelling, and can be considered one of the key players in the field. During his masterclass on constructing transmedia franchises at Cinekid festival, 2010, Gomez characterized *The Matrix* as an unsuccessful project precisely because it failed to provide necessary keys to the non-savvy audiences, or get them engaged enough to start exploring on their own.
http://www.argn.com/2010/11/jeff_gomez_reveals_secrets_to_transmedia_franchise_development_at_cinekid/

further discussions of the phenomenon. Certain points defined by Jenkins have become the staples of transmedia research. Scholars and critics interested in transmedia practices continue to cite him, argue with him, and expand on him.

1.2.2. The Dynamics in the Theory of Transmedia Practice and Transmedia Fictions

Geoffrey Long (2007), for instance, pushes Jenkins' narrow definition of TS even further. While Long concedes that continuation of TV series in the form of novelizations, or printed sequels could be considered a form of TS (2007: 32), he excludes from the TS category franchises where content (such as events of the story or the role of characters) transforms across the works (2007: 152, 154)[74]. The ideal TS project, according to Long, should be designed as such from the start, with special attention paid to the three aspects of TS aesthetics: canonicity of all components,[75] well-rounded world, and carefully inserted spots of negative capability (2007: 68). The first parameter, the canonicity, reflects Long's aversion to inconsistencies and discontinuity in the transmedia narrative (2007: 48, 123, 138). Debates about the canonical versus the apocryphal in sprawling franchises like *Star Wars* are taken as something to be avoided, with extensions ambiguous in status automatically decreed "bad" (2007: 34). "Bad" here means being "optional" (2007: 164): the work rendered non-canon cannot contribute to the audience's experience with the rest of the franchise. Needless to say, Long understands "experience" in a very limited way, excluding, for instance, the pleasure of engagement with a favorite character, or the entertainment value of alternative storylines.[76] The prevalence of the fictional world in TS projects is an idea inherited from

[74] Notably, the description of such transformations within Mike Mignola's *Hellboy*, where "each version varies from the original source material in ways that make each of them serve, again, as their own independent interpretations of Hellboy's life story" (Long 2007: 154), closely resembles a typical media mix.

[75] "in true transmedia narratives […] each component of a transmedia story is designed as canonical from the outset" (2007: 40).

[76] Long's warnings are nevertheless well grounded, because, admittedly, Western fans tend to react negatively to continuity breaks. However, speaking from personal experience (with reservation of course that this experience is rather limited), fans become really upset only when they are first promised a world rich and thought-through and then discover "sloppy work." Apparently, it is a jarring experience for a fan to be presented with a timeline covering some 1000 years of significant

Jenkins, though Long pushes it even further, stating that "the story of the franchise is the story of the world" (2007: 48). This shift of focus also allows Long to celebrate the potential of the fictional world to host multiple characters and stories and still insist that each work in the franchise should stand as component "of some larger shared narrative arc" (2007: 24). In other words, if the real focus of transmedia narrative is its universe, even disjointed stories can be understood as contributing to the larger whole. The last parameter, 'negative capability,' is one of the key concepts developed by Long, which designates a strategy of leaving gaps in the narrative in order to sparkle the audiences' curiosity and imagination (2007: 53, 59), to grab their interest, to establish possible vectors for future extensions, and, ultimately, to shape the characters and the world 'open' to further development (2007: 133, 167). Such diegetic clues are, however, only one way of promoting the franchise. If Henry Jenkins' ideal is the proactive, collaborative consumer who navigates the increasingly complicated webs of interconnected works, Long's ideal lies in technology. He suggests that digitization may enhance the effectiveness of TS projects, with online tools, maps, and digital models of the franchise guiding consumers and encouraging their enthusiasm (2007: 142-150).

To summarize, Long elaborates on Jenkins' ideas to offer a narrow definition of TS and more stringent terms of its development. A prerequisite for a proper extension is to contribute to the fictional universe by adding relevant new information, consistent with everything that has accumulated to that point. "Parallel universes," remodellings, and intermedial transpositions (or adaptations) are all excluded from the list. The agency of the audience is downplayed compared to Jenkins' model — as is evident from Long's

events in the fictional world, a detailed map, and numerous small inquiries into different aspects of local culture only to realize later that the writers cannot manage the central characters' biographies. So the indignation may be directed at the broken promise rather than lack of integrity as it is.

suggestions to integrate extradiegetic guidelines into TS projects, but also from his emphasis on continuity.[77]

Long's insistence on continuity is reinstated, though from a somehow different angle, by Christy Dena. Dena has authored the most extensive monograph (Dena 2009) up-to-date on what she calls transmedia practices. As is evident from this term, Dena's interests are not limited to popular culture or media industry, specifically narratives or games. Rather, she tries to look at the processes of constructing meaning across different modes[78] and media, and deduce common principles that make transmedia practices unique.[79] Transmedia storytelling as envisioned by Jenkins or Long is therefore just one type of a larger phenomenon — 'transmedia fiction' (2009: 147). However, it is also arguably one of the most well-known and ubiquitous forms and thus remains one of the main topics of discussion. In explaining TS Dena follows Jenkins and Long's logic of "continuity," but shifts the focus from what she calls the "end-point" (the resulting collection of works and products) to the processes of meaning-making in collaborative transmedia projects (2009: 98, 109, 125-126). Dena needs to do so because the end-point definition of the TS by Jenkins and Long is based on the principle of expansion and thus necessarily limits the number of possible formats (2009: 102). To elaborate, such view only allows for works that add new and unique parts to the narrative. Dena, on the other hand, understands transmedia practices as including a whole range of strategies that can result in different types of works. Expansion as it is does not signal transmedia storytelling, because it characterizes only the relationship of the work towards others content-wise, but says nothing about its status or the ways it was

[77] One of the arguments Long makes against ST projects like *Hellboy* is that multiple variants of the story are too difficult to make sense of and could scare off the newcomers (2007: 153). This argument effectively downplays the navigational abilities of the newcomers, but, more importantly, it ignores one forte of such officially developed "parallel universes": one can choose between them according to personal tastes and inclinations. This offers fans more freedom in their relationship with the canon, albeit within certain ramifications.

[78] Dena considers "game" and "narrative" two different modes, and it is mostly the ability of both to function in transmedia projects that she is concerned with.

[79] For Dena, transmedia practice is "the employment of distinct media (and environments) for creative expression" (2009: 4). She thus separates the subject from pure marketing practices, and, on the level of design, from multimedial (in other words, plurimedial) forms (2009: 4, 19).

created. So for Dena the crucial factor is that the work (all works) is "intended to be a part of meaning making process" (2009: 109) and "has a role in defining, in creating, a fictional world"[80] (in other words, it is created or approved by original creators or the right-holders and thus has the status of canon). Conversely, if there is no coordinated effort to sustain continuity at the very early stage of the transmedia project, one cannot speak of transmedia practice.[81] This is a very important point, because Dena draws the line between those producers who hold the intellectual property but do not maintain the consistency throughout the project, and those who make dedicated efforts to "observe the logic of the fictional world" (2009: 122, 127, 133-134). The fictional world thus becomes central for Dena's argument as well, though in a different manner: it is privileged not because it is an ultimate source of new content for expansion, but because it is potentially transmodal (2009: 204) and subsumes transmodal elements such as setting, characters, and events (2009: 198). Those elements are not mode-specific and not medium-specific, which means that they can be implemented at the very early stage of the project,[82] assuring continuity of the creative vision across distinct modes (such as game or narrative) and media[83] as well as "distinct mono-medium practices, professions and cultures" (2009: 68). In order to explain the principles of the fictional world continuity, Dena refers to Lizbeth Klastrup and Susana Tosca, who conduct their own research in the area from game studies' point of view.

Klastrup and Tosca do not limit their inquiry to game theory, but their focus lies first and foremost on what they call "transmedial worlds" per se. These worlds are defined as

[80] 2009: 21. In a broad sense, Dena defines fictional world as "the sum of all the content and expressive planes (all compositions) that are constructed to adhere to the same internal logic" (2009: 23). "Composition" here denotes "a work, or in some cases the equivalent of a game, installation, film, book or painting" (2009: 103), because the broadness of Dena's inquiry calls for non-medium-specific terms.

[81] "If writers and designers (including strategists and producers) are not conceiving and developing projects for the expression of a fictional world across distinct media, there is no transmedia practice" (2009: 125).

[82] It is at the early stages that most work is done by what Dena calls "above the line" roles and duties": writers, producers, designers, project managers, etc. — in short, by people who define the shape of the future project and then supervise its realization (2009: 124-127).

[83] "The actual production of each composition entails distinct production processes, knowledge and skills, but the world abstraction is becoming more and more a shared semiotic resource that unifies modes, media, artforms, industries, and practitioners" (2009: 213).

"abstract content systems from which a repertoire of fictional stories and characters can be actualized or derived across a variety of media forms. What characterizes a transmedial world is that audience and designers share a mental image of the "worldness" (a number of distinguishing features of its universe)" (2004: n.pag.). The core elements of transmedia storyworlds, and the ones that can help evaluate the level of continuity in their various material realizations, are 'mythos', 'topos', and 'ethos'. Mythos is concerned with the lore of the storyworld and provides the global backdrop for everything that happens within it. As Klastrup and Tosca put it, one needs to know mythos "to interact with or interpret events in the world successfully" (ibid.). Topos combines the geography of the world, specifics of setting (such as time period or technology), and physical laws. As for ethos, it determines the ethics of the world and its inhabitants. In the line with previously mentioned researchers, Klastrup and Tosca identify transmedial worlds as existing beyond any specific story, whether it is told in one medium or across several. In fact, stories are something that emerge from such worlds but are not prerequisite for their existence. If for Jenkins and Long storytelling is ultimately a priority (and the fictional world — a necessity), Klastrup and Tosca already separate the two: "For us, even if a transmedial world can have narrative, it is not the sole defining characteristic, or will not always be there in a recognizable plottable form" (ibid.).

An even more radical stance is expressed by Maj M. Krzysztof, who proposes "two major types of transmedia": transmedia storytelling and transmedia world-building (Krzysztof 2015: 85). Krzysztof insists that the former is subject to the latter, rather than otherwise. After the first version of the world (which is, indeed, most often presented in a narrative form) gets abstracted, and "worldness" (Klastrup and Tosca 2004) is formed, it becomes "the primal and legitimate field of reference" (Krzysztof 2015: 85) for any subsequent storytelling. At the same time, fictional worlds inspire all kinds of non-narrative activities on the part of creators and fans alike: "cross-referencing research, gathering data, exploration, and other strategies" (2015: 86), which are generally not required to follow the

plot, but are necessary to form and elaborate on "worldness." The driving power behind such activities is what Jenkins, quoting Janet Murray, calls the "encyclopedic impulse" (Jenkins 2009: 1; Murray 1997: 87), the desire to explore, but also master the fictional universe. Krzysztof explains this as "an unquestionable urge for world-building content," which results in proliferation of "standalone fictional encyclopedias or 'encyclopedish' fictions" (Krzysztof 2015: 90). But the same drive is evident in what Jason Mittell (from the studies of film and media culture) calls "forensic fandom," (Mittell 2014: 273) busy with drilling into texts and building extensive databases (though, admittedly, Mittell describes this tendency with regards to the story exclusively). Likewise, Long's negative capability functions for the same reasons, as is evident from his classification of "hermeneutic codes."[84] So Krzysztof, in fact, follows the line of thought in media studies, and in studies of transmedia projects in particular, that started with Jenkins[85]: a tendency to separate fictional world per se from narrative content, or diegesis, and to emphasize consumers' interactions with such worlds.

1.2.3. Transmedia Fiction and Narratology

Interestingly, in recent years, the fascination with "transmedia worlds" and world-building has attracted the attention of narratologists, such as Marie-Laure Ryan (2013; 2014) and Jan-Noël Thon (2009). A whole section of *Storyworlds Across Media: Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology* (2014) co-edited by Ryan and Thon is devoted to "Transmedia

[84] Long borrows hermeneutic codes from Barthes, as parts of a text "that produce, further, and conclude the mysterious elements running throughout the text" (2007: 61), which are directly connected to negative capability. He divides them into six classes (2007: 63-65): cultural, character, chronological, geographic, environmental, and ontological (this last type relates the existential nature of the story, posing questions like "how much of what happened was real?"). It is obvious that most of those questions are related to the world-building rather than a story, and that they are intended to instigate exploration or (if there is not yet material to research) speculation.

[85] Which is why Krzysztof's decision to develop his argument in opposition to Jenkins (2015: 24) is hard to understand. Neither in his book, nor in his blog posts did Jenkins ever conflate transmedia storytelling with transmedia universes. Furthermore, nowhere did he suggest that fictional universe could be constructed only top-down and only via narrative texts. If anything, his discussion of world-building in "Searching for the Origami Unicorn" indicates the precedence of the world-making over the storytelling (Jenkins 2006: 114-15). In "Transmedia Storytelling 101" (2007) Jenkins explicitly says that transmedia stories are not always based on complex fictional worlds, and in "Revenge of the Origami Unicorn" (2009) he gives several examples of "intradiegetic" paraphernalia produced to help the consumers experience the fictional world rather than tell about it.

Storytelling and Transmedial Worlds," with contributors discussing franchises like *Lost* (Mittel 2014) or *The Game of Thrones* (Klastrup and Tosca 2014). Such interest is understandable, since "storyworld" is one of the narratological concepts. However, there is a difference between scholars in media studies and narratologists regarding the notion of "world," most evident, again, in the narrative-storyworld hierarchy. In cognitive narratology, storyworld is defined as a mental model reconstructed by the reader on the basis of textual cues (much like the story itself), a "mentally and emotionally projected environment" (Herman 2008: 569-570). Ryan calls storyworlds "mental simulations of the development of the plot" (Ryan 2013: n.pag.). Storyworld requires narrative content (Ryan 2014: 32) and is found in both factual and fictional stories (2014: 33) — thus it must be distinguished as a term from 'fictional world.'

The difference between media studies scholars and narratologists becomes clearer if one compares components of the storyworld defined by Ryan with core elements of Klastrup and Tosca's 'transmedial world.' According to Ryan, a storyworld includes existents (characters and objects significant for the plot), setting (space where events unfold), physical laws (which depend on genre), social rules and values (that influence the characters), events, and mental events (the characters' mental and emotional activity) (2014: 34-36). Evidently, two lists partially coincide ('topos' incorporates in itself setting and physical laws, while 'ethos' is equivalent to social rules and values). It is the diverging points that are telling: Ryan's existents and events are two main constituents of narrativity. Mental events are attributes of existents, which can also catalyze their actions. As for the absence in Ryan's model of mythos — the extended background (in the form, for instance, of the local folklore) is not crucial for the narrative, though it is very important for world-building as a separate activity. Indeed, it is illustrative that at one point Ryan refers to travel guidebooks and ethnographic reports as opposed to the narrative texts, explaining in the former one finds "a world," and in the latter — the storyworld (Ryan 2014: 32-33). Yet, it is precisely these guidebook-like texts (officially issued and fan-produced "xenoencyclopedias") that

Krzysztof evokes when explaining the concept of transmedial world-building as both evidence of the encyclopedic impulse and its material results (Krzysztof 2015: 90).

Despite this discrepancy in understanding of the concept, there appears to be some gradual movement towards common ground. One of the tools that might be applied to this end is 'transfictionality.' Initially developed by narrative theorist Richard Saint-Gelais in French, the concept was introduced in Anglophone scholarship by Ryan. Saint-Gelais himself explains that transfictionality "may be considered as a branch of intertextuality," but it "neither quotes nor acknowledges" the sources (Saint-Gelais 2008: 612). Texts in transfictional relation to each other share "elements such as characters, imaginary locations, or fictional worlds" (ibid.). 'Fictional world', however, means 'storyworld', which is distinguished not only by narrative content per se, but also by medium and authorship. As has been discussed earlier, in media studies fictional world is understood as "medium- and mode-agnostic" (Dena 2009: 146). It is also not necessarily a property of one creator or a group of creators: various contributions are considered canon if authorized. Ryan, however, in her latest article on the subject ("Transmedial Storytelling and Transfictionality," 2013) explains that while works of the same author in the same medium can share the same world, the change in author entails a change of storyworld (Ryan 2013: n.pag.). This approach is confirmed by Saint-Gelais: "Major modifications in a character's attitude are likely to be accepted as new twists or behavior when they are made by the original author, whereas faithful versions, when written by somebody else, will probably be taken as apocryphal" (Saint-Gelais 2008: 613). Likewise, "transmedial adaptation" inevitably projects a different world since it employs a completely different set of clues for its audience to reconstruct from (Ryan 2013: n.pag.). Statements like this signal a strong orientation towards literary works, while the situation in the media industry is obviously quite different. Indeed, Saint-Gelais himself notes that "in mass-media fiction […] authorial considerations do not weight as much as they do in literature proper" (Saint-Gelais 2008: 613). Altogether these conditions and remarks lead to the conclusion that transfictionality is not compatible with the notion of

fictional world as an abstract concept independent from and — from a certain point — preceding the narrative. However, one could also argue that it provides a narratologist with the necessary lexicon to discuss the structure of transmedia projects (that is, the relationship between works) as well as levels of canonicity. In Chapter Two, the applicability of this model is discussed in more detail. For now, suffice it to say that this increasing attention towards transfictionality indicates that media studies and narratology (as well as adaptation studies, for that matter) have come to share the object of interest.

1.2.4. Transmedia Storytelling Reconsidered. Adaptation and TS

As is evident from this overview, world-building and continuity were largely embraced as the essentials of the transmedia storytelling. Other features and restrictions suggested by Jenkins have, however, been negotiated over the years. The first characteristic to be challenged was the equality of all works in the TS project. Jenkins suggested that ideally each work should be able to stand on its own and make a valuable contribution to the story. However, almost all of the researchers afterwards acknowledged the necessary division between works in terms of importance.[86] Jason Mittel, for instance, admits at the beginning of his "Strategies of Storytelling for Transmedia Television" (2014) that non-hierarchic structures are hardly possible in this domain, since "the financial demands demand that core medium of any franchise be defined and privileged, typically emphasizing the more traditional television form," where transmedia extensions serve the marketing purpose and reinforce the audiences' experience with the central platform (Mittell 2014: 255). Dena connects differences in status like this with the practice of 'tiering,' "the addressing of different audiences with different content in different media and environments" (Dena 2009: 239). Tiering is necessary because with extended TS projects, not all of the consumers have the necessary skills, time, resources, and level of interest to pursue all works. Thus, as a

[86] This is evident from terms like "primary elements" and "secondary elements" (Long: 40); the "narrative core," or the "macrostory" (Scolari 2009: 598); "a core of canonical documents," or a "central text," and "supplementary documents" (Ryan 2013).

typical solution, creators organize a hierarchy of works "in terms of what is essential for coherence" (2009: 243), where new content is considered canon but is "of secondary importance" to the primary story" (2009: 242).[87] The independent status of secondary works might also be compromised in the process: there is difference between establishing a fictional world and adding to it.[88] That is to say, another frequently mentioned model of storytelling, which Dena calls "intracompositional transmedia fiction," removes hierarchical relations completely by distributing segments of one story between distinct media. A TS project in this case amounts to one single transmedia work (Dena 2009: 163-170; see also Dena 2011; Long 2007: 17-18). While it might be considered the epitome of transmedia storytelling, the intracompositional project is unlikely to become the structure of a typical franchise (though intracompositional fiction, such as ARG, might be included as one of its elements).

Another concession in relation to Jenkins' initial definition concerns the origins of the TS project. Ideally, it should be conceived as such from the very start. In practice, however, transmedia franchises tend to grow around successful works and not always in coordinated manner. As this does not preclude meaningful additions to the initial story and world-building, both types of projects can be considered TS (Ryan 2013; Dena 2009: 39; Dena 2011). A more accurate classification was offered by Long, who divided transmedia projects into 'hard' (what Dena calls 'proactive transmedia'), 'soft,' and 'chewy' (which Dena would call 'retroactive transmedia'). With 'soft' type, spin-offs, sequels, etc. spawn around a successful project in a less coordinated manner (thus they might not be

[87] Interestingly, Long provides similar reason — 'media form inertia,' or audiences' being reluctant to switch between media and modes — when he argues for "increasing the narrative value of each component" of the TS project (2007: 67). Long connects this value with his negative compatibility — questions that titillate the audience but are not crucial for understanding the central story. It is obvious though that choosing the opposite path and distributing essential parts of the story across all the media will immediately alienate part of the audience.

[88] Klastrup and Tosca's explanation of the transmedial world seems to confirm this point: "a specific world's worldness mostly originates from the first version of the world presented, but can be elaborated and changed over time" (Klastrup and Tosca 2004: n.pag.). In other words, even though transmedial world is an abstract system that can be elaborated and even redefined in the course of time, it still has an originating point, usually in the form of a work of fiction. After this initial image of the world is formed, each following work would need to engage in the dialogue with it.

interconnected), but still contribute to the canon. 'Chewy' TS project is also initiated only after the success of a single isolated work, but is coordinated similarly to 'hard' projects, with close relations between its components (2007: 20-21).

Another issue, however, has remained a subject of contention even up-to-date, with scholars taking opposing positions in regard to it. It is the status of adaptation in TS projects. Franchises and adaptations have been going hand in hand since the appearance of the former phenomenon, because adaptation is the most obvious means to expand abstract property, such as narrative, into a separate medium. As a result, however, the reputation of adaptation as practice was hurt by not-so-good film adaptations and, arguably even more so, by novelizations of popular blockbusters and television series. It is no doubt this unfavorable view on adaptation in general that led Henry Jenkins to ban it from transmedia storytelling on the grounds of being redundant. Jenkins reconfirmed this attitude three years later, in 2009: while he conceded that adaptation had the potential to offer new insights or reshape a story, it was simply not good enough. Again, this approach was fully supported by Long, who contended that "adaptations do not stand as distinct components of some larger shared narrative arc" (2007: 24). Interestingly, guidebooks, which are arguably not distinct parts of narrative per se, are not excluded as potential components of TS project.[89] Furthermore, Long's statement that "the same characters are depicted doing essentially the same things, speaking essentially the same dialogue in essentially the same places, although they are 'deformed' by the varying inherent characteristics of each form" (2007: 23) demonstrates a very narrow understanding of adaptation practices. Adaptation theorists and critics have

[89] It is true, though, that guidebooks and production books generally add immense amount of information in relation to the narrative as well as to the fictional world. It might be useful to remember that in narratology, narrative texts are distinguished from descriptive texts. The former, broadly defined, contain a change of state or situation (Schmid 2010: 2) in their simplest form, or "a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors" (Bal 2009: 5). The latter represent states (Schmid 2010: 5) and ascribe features to objects (Bal 2009: 36). Both Bal and Schmid point out that while descriptive texts can exist separately, narration necessarily contains description at least to some extent (Schmid 2010: 5; Bal 2009: 35-36). So if one wants to follow Long in defining the conglomeration of works in TS project as an "overarching narrative," one could probably consider guidebooks or various fictional organization and company sites accompanying games and TV series 'descriptive parts' of the overarching narrative.

argued time and again that change in medium entails a range of possibilities, including opportunities for addition. The story does not need to be transposed step by step and, in fact, rarely it is. One could say that one of the central goals of adaptation studies for decades has been to disprove such statements. A whole range of reworkings of the source material occur in adaptations. Taxonomies abound. Thus, Deborah Cartmell and Imelda Whelehan's categories of adaptation include 1) 'transposition,' which can be generic or intermedial, and/or entail the relocation of the original story in cultural, geographical and temporal terms; 2) 'commentary,' which usually relies on the change of perspective and/or addition of new material; and 3) 'analogue,' which is the most loose category, where the source work is no more than a base for a new story (Cartmell and Whelehan 1999; qtd. in Sanders 2006: 20-23). Similarly, Linda Constanzo Cahir identifies three modes of the novel-to-film-adaptations: 1) 'literal translation,' which sacrifices originality to stay as close as possible to the letter of the book; 2) 'traditional translation,' which "maintains the overall traits of the book (its plot, settings, and stylistic conventions)," but introduces various changes conditioned by the producers' reading of the source work and/or various production-related considerations; and 3) 'radical translation,' which transforms the book in extreme and revolutionary ways" (Cahir 2006: n.pag.). It is obvious that even the most moderate categories in these classifications, transposition and literal translation, evoke the change of the content (at the very least of its material realization). Meanwhile, Thomas Leitch (who is also mostly concerned with novel-to-film adaptations) suggests a "grammar of hypertextual relations [between works] as they shade off to the intertextual" (Leitch 2007: 95), which covers a range from adaptation to allusion, and includes, among others, such modes as 'celebrations' (trying to transpose the given material with as little change as possible, or in a flattering manner); 'adjustment' of the content (including such categories as 'updating' of the story and 'superimposition' of various factors of production on the borrowed material, which can include decisions of coauthors, genre requirements, a house style, etc.); revisions that "seek to alter the spirit of the source work"; colonizations, which "see the progenitor texts as

vessels to be filled with new meanings"; and analogues, already too far removed from the other work to be considered adaptation proper (they invoke the characters and the storyworld of the other work only in episodic manner) (Leitch 2007: 96-123). Isolating from the complete list only those modes that still result in an identifiable adaptation leaves one with fourteen types and subtypes, only four of which imply the minute transposition of the source content. Many of these categories are actually redundant, and in practice they form all sorts of combinations or converge all together in one project. This is the predictable result, since Leitch does not use any uniform underlying principle when he introduces these variegated transformations of content possible in the adaptation process. The resulting chaos, however, is precisely what Leitch intends, as his ultimate goal is to prove that "[there] is no normative model for adaptation" and that "intertextuality takes myriad forms that resist reduction" (Leitch 20017: 126). To summarize, attacks against adaptation being inherently redundant have no ground whatsoever.

One might nevertheless argue that a broader approach to adaptation still goes against the initial set of "rules" proposed by Jenkins. No matter what mode of engagement with the source material, the work is at its best when it does not blindly follow, but actively reinterprets it progenitor(s) and demonstrates a unique creative stance. But adaptation that changes the source work in profound ways automatically causes the breach in continuity, and is therefore incompatible with TS proper. However, such reasoning easily ends up with a vicious circle: adaptations are not allowed into transmedia storytelling projects because they are redundant, but they are redundant because transmedia storytelling does not allow them to be otherwise. In truth, though, this logic does not hold against practice: one of the lessons taught by narratology is that the same sequence of events can be radically transformed as it is organized into a narrative. One can just imagine the situation when producer preserves all the facts and details of a certain happening, but changes the point of view from which it is described. This example seems the most self-evident and, indeed, has been suggested before — for example, by Johannes Fehrle (2015: 8). However for some reason it was ignored by

Long and, at least for some time, by Jenkins. Besides, it seems that even possibility of more complicated approach to adaptations, in fact, the existence of adaptation studies itself warrants for some researchers the exclusion of this practice from discussion. Thus Colin A. Harvey states: "Transmedia storytelling cannot refer to the process of adaptation, as we already have a complex lexicon to describe that particular process, and the often connected but distinct process of dramatization" (Harvey 2014: 281).

This rejection of adaptations has not gone uncontested. Christy Dena vehemently protects adaptation as one of the possible techniques in transmedia practice. First of all, Dena points out that Jenkins, Long and others are concerned with structural position of adaptation within the TS network, that is — with its relation to other works. The work's significance, however, lies in the function of its content, in "the effect or role it has" (2009: 148, 155). This is essentially the same argument towards versatility and potential of adaptation, and its ability to add meaningful information.[90] Secondly, Dena suggests that in transmedia practices, adaptation can be undertaken in a special manner — by designing one of the works to be adopted into another (2009: 156). Obviously, such precaution can seriously influence the resulting composition. However, this argument holds better when applied broadly (which is precisely what Dena does), but seems less relevant for TS as practiced in media industry, where a) most projects are still based on successful single work, which might or not be designed with adaptation in mind (admittedly, nowadays many works are); b) adaptations are used to jump-start the "second wave" in what Long calls chewy transmedia franchises. Dena's last argument might be the most crucial one since it is directly connected with specifics of the practice. This is the question of accessibility — what Dena addresses as tiering of the audiences (Dena 2009: 157, 162). The majority of potential consumers are selective with regards to media and inert. Not only do different platforms reach different

[90] The same argument is made by Mehrle in his 2015 article "Leading into the Franchise. Remediation as (Simulated) Transmedia World. The Case of Scott Pilgrim." Jens Eder also emphasizes in "Transmediality and the Politics of Adaptation: Concepts, Forms, and Strategies" (2014) the fact that different platforms can function as "mutually supplementary elements of a larger complex of media texts," precisely because they bring different experiences to consumers (2015: n.pag.).

segments of the audience — their accessibility also varies. Adaptation therefore can serve a very important function — as an alternate entry point. This is why film adaptations have been so popular for more than a century despite all the criticism and denigration. This is also why anime is almost an obligatory component of the media mix. Moving pictures reach wider audience and have higher chances in drawing people into the franchise (incidentally, the same applies to the role anime usually plays in media mix development). Another reason why adaptation is especially effective as an entry point lies, ironically, in the repetition of content. As has been said before, there is difference between establishing the world and adding to it. While a character's blog that can be accessed online can add hugely to the experience of the TV show fan, it is not so clear whether it might interest the unaware passer-by. If adaptation tells the story compellingly, it can become a huge bait for newcomers. Additionally, what makes this approach attractive for Dena is that it can be understood as a step towards the "heterarchy" of all compositions, "where each medium is an equal expression of a possible single essential but intangible element" (2009: 158).

Notably, Henry Jenkins was convinced by Dena's arguments: in "Transmedia 202: Further Reflections" (2011) he reassessed the role of adaptations in transmedia storytelling and acknowledged the ways such works may contribute to the whole project both story-wise and through the fortes of medium. Nevertheless, the attitude towards adaptations in this area of media studies remains ambiguous.

A more optimistic attitude is found on the other side: adaptation theorists have been increasingly interested in transmedia franchises. In part it is connected with diversification of research subjects: more and more researchers focus on adaptations into and from media that were previously ignored. In part this enthusiasm towards franchises is sparked by the promise it holds for the researchers in terms of both numbers of adaptations and their quality. It is not a coincidence that Clare Parody won the *Adaptation* Essay Prize[91] in 2011 with her

[91] "The *Adaptation* Essay Prize is a new innovation from the journal, launched in 2011 to encourage the best new scholarship in the field."
http://www.oxfordjournals.org/our_journals/adaptation/essayprize.html

"Franchising/Adaptation." The essay itself offers an overview of questions for adaptation researchers to consider with the rise of transmedia franchises. There are many of those, and Parody lists them in such a concise and precise manner that it would be pointless to cite all of them here. It is worth noting, however, that while many of the questions raised coincide with lines of inquiry in media studies, Parody's considerations refer to "a palimpsest of a story world and its inhabitants built-up over time from repeated remakes, reimaginings, and remediations" as much as transmedia storytelling in a narrow sense. Such broad approach allows her to talk about un-coordinated franchises with brewing conundrum about "canonicity, continuity, and authority," or about "remakes, and similar re-versionings and re-visionings" being "simply facets of an overarching entertainment experience." Similarly, Liam Burke, in his study on comic book adaptations, suggests that the emergence of TS practice did not only spark interest in comic serials as promising material, but, in fact, was much facilitated by a "serial aesthetic" of comics and producers such as Marvel, with its experience in cross-platform promotion, extensive net of connections between titles, and vast shared fictional universe (Burke 2015, n.page). But Burke also includes comics' "amenability to reinvention" that has facilitated the "rebootings" of franchises (which often include major changes in the parameters of the world, circumstances of the hero, and general atmosphere). One could therefore conclude that scholars involved in adaptation studies are much more interested in transmedia franchises in general than in TS practice as such. This is most clearly evident in almost all-encompassing approach Jens Eder demonstrates in his discussion of transmediality and adaptation, as he states that the latter "is not restricted to professional productions in fictional narration, art and entertainment," but "includes also non-fictional and amateur forms, journalism, advertising, and educational productions" (Eder 2014: n.pag.). This interest in adaptation as a process where "not only whole texts or their whole worlds or stories can be adapted but also other kinds of content and form" (ibid.), and celebration of transformations of the content can be taken as an incentive to move beyond rigid schema initially laid out by Jenkins, towards a broader, more inclusive model of

transmedia storytelling. Such a move might be not simply stimulating, but necessary — especially when one thinks about practices like media mix, to be discussed next.

1.3. From Transmedia Storytelling to Media Mix

To summarize the main points discussed up till now: the last two decades of the 20th century saw the rise of transmedia franchise — the type of structural organization in media industry centered on intellectual property and its realization in multiple platforms, involving multiple production sites and markets. One of the strategies widely adopted in transmedia franchise development is transmedia storytelling — a specific way of developing fictional narratives across distinct media. Central to TS practices are world-building and continuity as well as its coordinated nature: supervised by a single creator or creative unit, TS project results in a network where all units are meaningfully connected with each other. Each work contributes to the central story and/or expands fictional universe. From this definition follow limitations: most scholars do not accept as TS proper projects that have developed over time in spontaneous manner, the ones that do not follow the principle of continuity, and those that rely on adaptations. Which brings forth the question: how does media mix relate to transmedia storytelling?

Before going into specific differences there is the immediate need to clarify the terms. One can discuss how different story elements are treated and how components are related in media mix and transmedia storytelling, respectively, but it still does not explain how the two phenomena are related to each other. The thing is that media mix and transmedia storytelling as terms cover different planes of meaning. Media mix is a practice — as such it is defined by the researchers (Steinberg 2012; Kawasaki and Iikura 2009; Tanaka 2009). But media mix denotes also the result of this practice — which is why it is possible to say "*Gankutsuō* media mix." Transmedia storytelling is also a practice, a process — but at the same time it is a set of principles, a strategy. It is defined and distinguished by these principles as much as it embodies them. Media mix is defined more by its cultural and geographical background (it is a term specifically used in Japan), by the industrial structure (multiple producers and promoters who form a production committee), and by the content produced (mostly cultural products aimed for otaku market). With regards to storytelling per

se media mix does not have rules — only tendencies. It is possible to call some these tendencies principles (e.g. "principle of variation"), but they are not the essence of media mix. Consequently, one can imagine media mix that employs transmedia storytelling. Conversely, one could say that TS project is realized in the form of a media mix. It might seem that relationship between media mix and transmedia storytelling is very much like the relationship between transmedia storytelling and transmedia franchise. But it would be a mistake to conflate media mix with transmedia franchise, because the latter is a much broader term. All in all, the relationship of various phenomena could be represented visually as following (Figure 2).

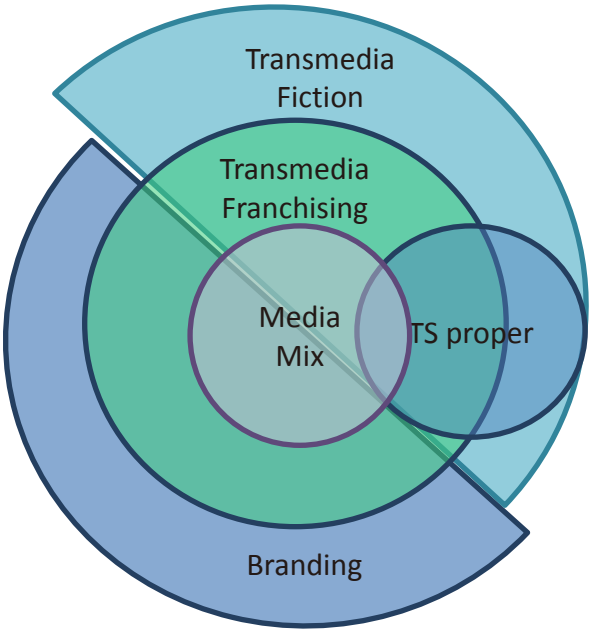


Figure 2. Transmedia franchise and related phenomena.[92]

To summarize, media mix (as understood here) is a type of transmedia franchise that always involves some form of transmedia fiction. Transmedia storytelling results in a specific form of transmedia fiction that can be realized within a franchise. At times, it even occurs within a media mix (depending on how loosely one defines TS, many franchises can

[92] On relationship of transmedia storytelling and branding see Scolari 2009: 599-600; Harvey 2014; Parody 2011. On media mix (and characters in particular) and branding see Steinberg 2012a: 190-191.

be said to involve it to some extent). With this in mind, it is possible to outline the similarities and differences between a typical media mix and transmedia franchise based on Jenkins' TS.

On the one hand, media mix projects have usually been run by a single conglomerate (Kadokawa) or by the production committee — which implies coordinated production. While it is usual for media mix to start as a second wave of interconnected works based on the popular title, recently there has been increase in original transmedia projects[93] — at any rate, by Long's classification most of these franchises are designed as either 'hard' or 'chewy.' Yet, media mix is in many ways the opposite of TS practice. It very often uses adaptation as a way to spread across media. The continuity is by no means a priority — the story often diverges in different works, creating multiple "parallel" worlds, and sometimes not just events, but the setting changes with the change of the medium. While some media mixes are built on a unique and detailed fictional universe, many do take place in the setting close to the consumers' actual world, and even when a special fictional location is introduced, it is not always explored. One of Geoffrey Long's key conditions for evaluation of the TS component — "does the extension maintain the character of the world (does the tone match, or is it jarring?)" (2007: 92) — is also often ignored, as franchises may include parodies and stories set in alternate reality[94] that invoke radical changes in style. Even so, media mixes definitely involve storytelling, which in most cases does not boil down to simple reiterations or random changes of the story. Unity can still be found in media mix, even if on levels different from those typical for TS projects.

One of the questions left to answer before proceeding to the more detailed discussion of principles that organize media mix production is: how does one distinguish the media mix from a series of unconnected adaptations? The other is — which of many factors that define

[93] Steinberg 2015, section 「トランスメディア対メディアミックス」; Kawasaki and Iikura: 28.
[94]「最近のアニメやゲームでは、オリジナルの作品とほぼ同時に、そこからキャラクターだけ引き抜き、異なる設定のなかに投げこんで作られた関連作品が制作されることがあるが、それらはいわば（矛盾する表現だが）オリジナルの二次創作とでも言える作品である」(Azuma 2007: 38).

media mix is the determinant? That is, if the franchise has been developed in Japan and involved platforms like manga and anime, does it automatically become a media mix? It does not help that, as Steinberg notes, "media mix" has become too vague a term that is used to denote all kinds of shifts of content between media: from complex projects to a simple novel-to-film adaptation.[95] Obviously, such lack of boundaries is counterproductive for a discussion of the phenomenon.

Maybe the time period should be the factor: when works are released during a relative short time span, one of the central media mix premises — cross-promotion — becomes evident. Thus it seems quite self-evident that when Takemiya Keiko's *Toward the Terra* (『地球へ…』[96]) was adapted into a radio drama,[97] animated movie,[98] and TV anime series,[99] respectively, those were separate works that did not form a media mix. On the other hand, *Death Note* media mix looks the following way:

Table 1. Officially produced Death Note works.

Manga	*Death Note* (『DEATH NOTE』) , written by Oba Tsugumi, illustrated by Obata Takeshi (12 vol.)	December 2003-May 2006
Novel	*Death Note Another Note: The Los Angeles BB Murder Cases* (『DEATH NOTE アナザーノート ロサンゼルス BB 連続殺人事件』), written by Nishio Ishin	August 2006
Live-action film	『DEATH NOTE』, Nikkatsu Satsueijo, directed by Kaneko Shūsuke, written by Ōishi Tetsuya	June 2006
Anime TV series	『DEATH NOTE』, Madhouse, directed by Araki Tetsurō, written by Inoue Toshiki (37 ep.)	October 2006-June 2007
Live-action film	*Death Note 2: The Last Name* (『デスノート the Last name』), Nikkatsu Satsueijo , directed by Kaneko Shūsuke, written by Ōishi Tetsuya	October 2006
Guide book	*Death Note 13: How to Read* (『公式ガイドブック『DEATH NOTE HOW TO READ 13 真相』』), Shueisha Inc. (guide book to manga with bonus	October 2006

[95]『メディアミックスという言葉は、小説を映画にするといった単純な翻案を指すこともあるが、ぼくが興味を引かれるのは、メディアを超えた物語やキャラクターの拡大と変形についての部分だ』(Steinberg 2015, Introduction, section「メディア・コンバージェンスとトランスメディア」).

[96] Serialized in *Manga Shōnen* (『マンガ少年』), January 1977-May 1980.

[97] NHK FM Broadcast, July 1979.

[98] Toei Animation, directed by Onchi Hideo, April 1980.

[99] Minamimachi Bugyōsho, directed by Yamasaki Osamu. April 2007-September 2007, 24 ep. Was followed by a two-volume manga spin-off by Hayashi Fumino, 『地球へ… ～青き光芒のキース～』 (GFantasy Comics 『月刊 G ファンタジー』, September 2007; April 2008).

	pilot chapter, etc.)	
Game	*Death Note Kira's Game* (『DEATH NOTE -デスノート- キラゲーム』), Nintendo DS	February 2007
Game	*Death Note: Successor to L* (『DEATH NOTE -デスノート- L を継ぐ者』), Nintendo DS	July 2007
Anime television film	Death Note: Relight 1: Visions of a God (『ディレクターズカット完全決着版 ～リライト・幻視する神～』), Madhouse, directed by Araki Tetsurō, written by Inoue Toshiki	August 2007
Novel	*Death Note: L: Change the World* (『L change the WorLd』), written by M (novelization of the film)	December 2007
Live-action film	*L: Change the World* (『L change the WorLd』), Nikkatsu Satsueijo, directed by Hideo Nakata, written by Kobayashi Hirotoshi (sequel to the Death Note 2: The Last Name)	February 2008
Manga one-shot	*L: The Wammy's House/One Day part of L FILE No. 15* (released with the live-action film)	February 2008
Game	*L: the Prologue to Death Note: Spiraling Trap* (『L the proLogue to DEATH NOTE -螺旋の罠（トラップ）』), Nintendo DS	February 2008
Anime television film	*Death Note: Relight 2: L's Successors* (『ディレクターズカット完全決着版 ～リライト 2 L を継ぐ者』), Madhouse, drected by Araki Tetsurō, written by Inoue Toshiki	August 2008
Television drama	『DEATH NOTE』, Nippon TV, directed by Inomata Ryūichi and Nishimura Ryō, written by Izumi Yoshihiro (11 ep.)	July-September 2015
Musical	*Death Note The Musical* Written by Frank Wildhorn, lyrics by Jack Murphy (translated by Takahashi Ako), Nissa Theater, Tokyo	April-May 2015

As is evident from the list, *Death Note* was developed as a model media mix, with anime, live action film, a game, and a guide book released within half a year after the successful manga series came to end. The content was transformed somewhat within the anime and the movie, and different colors designate further development of these divergent stories into sequels and re-editions. The last two titles, however, were produced seven years later and are overtly connected only to the manga series, which they adapt. Clearly, they are part of the franchise, but should they be included into the media mix formed by the preceding works?

The same question could be asked about Arakawa Hiromu's Fullmetal Alchmeist, the manga series that ran in *Monthly Shōnen Gangan* magazine (『月刊少年ガンガン』) from

2001 to 2010. It was adapted into the eponymous anime series in 2003, followed by *Fullmetal Alchemist the Movie: Conqueror of Shamballa* (『劇場版 鋼の錬金術師 シャンバラを征く者』), seven games for three platforms, and numerous related goods. April 2009 saw the start of the new anime adaptation, *Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood* (『鋼の錬金術師 FULLMETAL ALCHEMIST』), with addition of the animated film *Fullmetal Alchemist: The Sacred Star of Milos* (『鋼の錬金術師 嘆きの丘（ミロス）の聖なる星』), four games, and various merchandise. Additionally, a six-volume spinoff novelization of the manga series and four game novelizations (two of them based on the latest games) were published from 2003 to 2010. Again, all these various texts without a doubt constitute one franchise, which would mean one media mix. But it was formed by two distinct "waves" of narratives and products. Should these two waves be taken as two separate media mixes?

The easiest solution would seem to consider that all the works in the franchise, regardless of when and where they were produced, comprise one media mix. But this brings into question cases like Kyōgoku Natsuhiko's *Hundred Stories*. *The Hundred Stories Series* (『巷説百物語シリーズ』) started in 1997, with serialization in the quarterly magazine *KWAI* (『怪』), followed by『続巷説百物語』 in 1999 and other related stories, the last of which came out in 2007. The series became popular enough to be adapted into two TV dramas (2000, 2005-2006), an anime (2003), and manga by two different artists.[100] At the same time, Kyōgoku himself participated in most of these works. He wrote a scenario for three episodes in the first TV series and appeared in episodic roles in both live-action dramas. He also wrote a preface to the first manga adaptation. While the second manga series did not receive such open support, it emphasized the connection with Kyōgoku via paratexts (e.g., by putting his photograph and short biography on soft covers) and offered the closest

[100] *Hundred Stories: the Manga* (『漫画・巷説百物語』), Morino Tatsuya, 単行本コミックス―Kwai books (Kadokawa Shoten), 2001.
Hundred Stories, Hidaka Tateo, SP Comics (Leed), 2007-2010, 4 volumes.『後巷説百物語』, Hidaka Tateo, SP Comics (Leed), 2011-2013, 3 volumes.

translation of his novels into other medium. Therefore almost all these texts were connected through the source work and through the conspicuous figure of the author, but none of these versions directly referred to each other. So how does one define this development of *Hundred Stories* across media?

There is apparently no decisive criterion by which to decide. The inquiry into the limits of media mix and into how far they can be pushed can probably become the basis for a whole another study, should one find the need to pursue these questions. Ultimately, it is probably more the matter of terminology and of the goals set by a particular researcher. For the purpose of this study, it seems to be that the most effective way to define media mix is through the producing entity. That is, works to be included into the media mix must have been produced either under the supervision of one production committee, or by the same group of creators (which means, for instance that all of Anno Hideaki's *Evangelions* should be considered parts of one media mix).

1.3.1. Media Mix: the Theory

In the last two decades, media mix has firmly established itself as a content production and promotion strategy in the East and Southeast Asian media markets. This ubiquitous practical application stands in sharp contrast with the lack of theoretical discussion. Marc Steinberg notes that perhaps the sheer popularity of the strategy has rendered it invisible (Steinberg 2015, Introduction, section 「遍在するメディアミックス」). The available research inquiries tend to focus on the evolution of marketing strategies, on the specifics of production, or on fan practices, rather than on the specific ways the stories are developed and organized. As Yokohama Yūji rightfully notes, the discussion of media mixes generally follows two trends (Yokohama 2006: 51). In the first case the media mixes are described from the perspective of the content industry with a focus on statistical data or production conditions. This tendency is represented by publications such as Tanaka Ema's

article “Industrial Structure of «Japan Cool»: Co-existence of media-mix and diversity of contents by production commission systems in Japan” (2009), Kawasaki Takuto and Iikura Yoshiyuki’s 「ラノベキャラは多重作品世界の夢を見るか？」(2009), or the “Manga Movies Project Report.”[101] This trend is self-explanatory: there is always need to document the development of the phenomenon and the external factors that contribute to it — it is the first step before moving to more abstract categories. Relevant facts provided by this line of research are summarized at the beginning of this chapter.

The second line of research outlines general principles that underlie the expansion of media mixes and their success with the consumers. The writings in this segment generally go beyond the phenomenon itself (or even only touch on it as one part of a larger picture), such as publications by Ōtsuka Eiji, Azuma Hiroki and Itō Gō, and, to some extent, Marc Steinberg (2012, 2015). They are more relevant to this study, because they often explicitly deal with the points of attraction inherent in the media mix (namely, with “desire” and “pleasure”), and they also refer to the actual narrative texts, if only occasionally, to support their argument. Moreover, most of them touch upon the structure of media mix at least to some extent, which is important for an analysis of the media mix as a meaningful conglomeration of texts.

Additionally, looking at the most prominent representatives of the discourse on media mix as well as otaku culture (the two being closely interrelated in Japanese writings) allows one to see why narratives have been deliberately excluded from the discussion (on most occasions). Consequently, the bulk of Japanese publications on these two subjects (or related areas) is reviewed in the next section, followed by a detailed account of Steinberg’s writings on media mix. Altogether these sources form the background necessary for a discussion of the relationship between TS practice and storytelling in media mixes.

[101] This investigation of the contemporary manga, anime and film industries was conducted by Woojeong Joo, Rayna Denison, and Furukawa Hiroko and published in 2013. At present the official site of the project is down, but both parts can be downloaded from Rayna Denison’s personal page: https://eastanglia.academia.edu/RaynaDenison

Additionally, already existing case studies of particular media mixes from the perspective of literary studies are introduced, in order to demonstrate the remaining blank spots.

1.3.1.1. Media Mix-Related Discourse in Japan: Major Writings and Their Impact

The Japanese discourse on media mix is closely entwined with the discourse on otaku culture. While the latter has enjoyed greater prominence in scholarship, here it will be revisited from the perspective of the first. The Japanese discourse on media mix can be traced back to the works of critic Ōtsuka Eiji, particularly to his *A Theory of Narrative Consumption* (『物語消費論』 1989, 2001), a compilation of essays written in the 1980s and early 1990s. Ōtsuka offered the new model of what would later be called "character goods." As early as 1989 (『物語と趣向――物語の複製と消費』) Ōtsuka suggested that in the market for children (and, similarly, in the otaku market) the goods were not consumed as such, in other words, as material artifacts. Instead, the immaterial aspect of these products had started to play the central role. The things and smaller narratives, be it stickers, toys, or comics, opened access to the "grand narrative" (大きな物語) — as the ultimate object of consumption (Ōtsuka 1989: 10-11). Despite the term, this "narrative" is not an actual narrative text, nor is it equal to a more abstract category of a 'story' — it functions similarly to the algorithm in computer games, or the 'worldview' (世界観) in anime (1989: 11-12). The worldview is an accumulation of facts, various information on the settings, the rules of the world, its logic and aesthetics — in other words, Ōtsuka's "grand narrative" is equivalent to the imaginary world or fictional universe in Western media studies. For Ōtsuka, the growing consumer interest towards this larger universe that could only be accessed via discrete works marked the beginning of a new condition — the dominance of "narrative consumption" (with "narrative," again, meaning said worldview, and not the discrete

narrative texts, or particular stories).[102] The outlines of this process are strikingly similar to the mechanisms at work behind transmedia storytelling, and this resemblance becomes even more evident in Ōtsuka's 1991 essay 『物語消費論の基礎とその戦略（『見えない物語より』）』collected in the 2001 edition of *A Theory of Narrative Consumption*. There, Ōtsuka proclaims the importance of world-building in so-called "story marketing"[103] (「物語マーケティング」; in 1991 he already started to use "world" (世界) interchangeably with "grand narrative"). Mere segmentation and serialization of the story is not enough — but Ōtsuka is not guided by aesthetic imperatives in claiming so. As a matter of fact, in that period Ōtsuka as a producer took an apprehensive stance towards narrative consumption (despite his being actively involved in promoting it). In 1989 he assumed that once the consumers gained enough information about the grand narrative and became sufficiently acquainted with the "program," they would be able to challenge the corporate producers by creating equally valid fanworks (1989: 20). Two years later Ōtsuka added a correction that any serialized narrative could instigate world-building activities on part of the consumers, thus threatening producers' authority (1991: 35). To avoid such outcome, argues Ōtsuka, the producer must have a full mastery of the fictional world, a clear set of rules and values that guide it (1991: 34). Instrumental here is the role of the "game master," which can be assumed by the company at large or by an appointed individual (1991: 37). This position resembles to a degree the figure of "super producer" described by Dena — a person or a group of people who "exercise creative control" over the franchise, who design the whole project and then oversee its realization (Dena 2009: 125-129). Difference here lies in the ultimate goal: if for Dena the overarching management is necessary to ensure the continuity

[102] Ōtsuka 1989: 14.
[103] Ōtsuka 1991: 33-34.

of creative vision in a project, Ōtsuka's game master oversees storytelling in the franchise to control the consumers' activity and assure the prevalence of officially produced works.[104]

To summarize, some fifteen years before Henry Jenkins celebrated the emergence of new production and consumption patterns in his *Convergence Culture*, Ōtsuka Eiji described similar phenomena, including key principles and terms. Contrary to the optimistic attitude of self-proclaimed "aca-fan" Jenkins, Ōtsuka, on the producing side, seemed to be more wary against fans' creative drive. Twenty five years later it is obvious that these fears were largely moot: while fans are equally enthusiastic to apprehend, dissect, and reassemble the "grand narratives," and while they challenge the producers in ways no-one would have thought of at the time *A Theory of Narrative Consumption* was published,[105] a society of completely self-reliant "prosumers" is still a rare sight. Some of Ōtsuka's ideas, such as the prevalence of the elaborate fictional universe or the role of the single designer and overseer in "story marketing," were reflected in Euro-American theory of transmedia storytelling at the beginning of the 21st century while being obliterated in Japan by new approaches. But even if prognoses of Ōtsuka did not apply (or, unexpectedly, thrived in a completely different cultural frame), the ideas collected in the short essays fueled most of the discussions cited further. The very idea that the object consumed is not the story, but something that exists beyond any particular product has been adopted and developed equally by Azuma Hiroki, Itō Gō, and Marc Steinberg. The same applies to Ōtsuka's claim that the notion of "original" has been lost with the proliferation of fanworks (Ōtsuka 1989: 20). In other words, Ōtsuka's writing became the foundation for the majority of subsequent core writings on media mix.

The next landmark publication related to the media mix is *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals* (2001, Eng. trans. 2009) by Azuma Hiroki. Azuma invokes transformations in the

[104] The fact that Ōtsuka refers to George Lukas as an effective "game master" also suggests that his ideas, albeit differently framed, are close to those of TS theorists (*Star Wars* is considered one of the most successful fictional worlds and a predecessor of TS proper). Shifting accents are the matter of different positions respective writers assume in the franchise-fandom system.

[105] The growing number of conventions contributes to this situation to some extent, though the primary factor is obviously the Internet. Both producers and consumers rely so heavily on the Web, that increasing communication and exchange between the two become inevitable.

narrative consumption among the Japanese otaku to reflect on the changes in postmodern society (not necessarily limited to Japan[106]). He connects the evolution of otaku culture (which spans three generations) with the decline of "the grand narrative," a concept he borrows from Jean-François Lyotard[107] (that essentially harbors a completely different meaning from Ōtsuka's grand narrative, though Azuma later connects the two). Lyotard's grand narrative can be understood as a set of ultimate values, a certain ideology that consolidates society — the postmodern condition is characterized by the lack thereof. In otaku culture the transition into postmodernity manifests itself in the ways narratives are organized and consumed, and it is here that Azuma's argument becomes relevant to the discussion of the media mix. Azuma draws parallels between Ōtsuka's "grand narrative," or, simply, the fictional world, and Lyotard's "grand narrative." The first-generation otaku (born in the 1960s) sought to substitute the latter with the fictional narrative ("worlds") which functioned as a hidden layer, as some ultimate truth to be laid open (2009: 31, 34). Much like ideology or an algorithm, this hidden layer guided the users and set the rules. To paraphrase, one could discover it and operate within its confines but one could not change it.[108] From the 1980s and onward, however, even this alternative to the grand narrative was lost and replaced by the 'database model' typical of the postmodern condition (2009: 31). The database is the well of information from which the user is free to pick elements. In other words, what is "read" from the work is determined not by the deeper layer (and the original sender of the message), but by the reader. The model of database applies equally to such small units as the new characters not backed by stories, and to sprawling franchises. Azuma

[106] 2009: 10.
[107] 2009: 28.
[108] In fact, this line of thought in itself seems inspired by Ōtsuka, who in 1991 talked about the dissolution of traditional societies (such as an isolated village community) and big myths (such as special status of Japanese nation), and subsequent loss of sense of belonging. The stories — tales only shared in small communities and big myths alike — were intricately connected with specific society and structured it. Essentially, these stories expressed the worldview particular to the community and facilitated the integration of listeners into it. People shared the communities by sharing the stories. Thus the new generation of consumers, in attempts to retrieve the sense of belonging, thought the "fictional world" as a new ground to form a community through storytelling (Ōtsuka 1991: 23-27, 32).

offers the example of *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (『新世紀エヴァンゲリオン』) media mix, which he treats as a database able to spawn multiple works, while lacking a grand narrative (2009: 37-38). With the rise of the database model and the decline of the grand narrative, characters become the most important element in otaku culture, to the point when an unfolding multimedia project can be supported by characters alone (2009: 48). Ultimately this leads to the creation of the character database, with various features that can characterize or form a character (the 'moe-elements') separated and stored for future reassembling (2009: 52). To summarize, from Azuma's point of view, the proliferation of transmedia projects (franchises) and the increasingly central role of characters are the logical result of the shift in consumers' attitude, which is connected to, and reflects a larger cultural shift from modernity to postmodernity. Azuma then proceeds to problematize the effect these changes have had on the "humanness" of otaku, but these theories are of no concern here. What is relevant, however, is that Azuma's argument further downplayed the significance of the stories in favor of other elements.

The last writing that must be introduced here in order to show how Japanese discourse on character goods propagated the disregard towards stories is Itō Gō's *Tezuka is Dead* (『テヅカイズデッド』, 2005), which can be called one of the most influential texts in the otaku- and manga-related research of the 2000s. If Azuma positions characters as the focal objects of affective response in contemporary otaku culture and as the connective power between the disparate franchise parts, Itō Gō develops this theory and simultaneously pushes it in another direction, arguing that the supremacy of the character and the affective response to it have been an inherent part of otaku culture from its very start. Itō tackles with several important issues throughout his writing, including the origins of modernity and the shift to postmodernity in manga,[109] the inability of contemporary Japanese discourse to deal

[109] It is not hard to see the connection with Azuma here, though Itō limits his contemplation to manga specifically. Moreover, he tries to approach manga as a system and to take the text as his starting point, contrary to Azuma, who is first and foremost interested in the consumers' attitudes and practices.

with the changes that manga has undergone since late 1980s, and the means to achieve the "reality effect" available in the "manga system." All in all, Itō's aim is to develop a new theoretical basis for manga criticism (2005: 31, 37). His argument is founded on the specific nature of the manga character which he interprets as a dual entity. Each manga character (登場人物) posseses two sides: "the character" in the traditional sense of the word (キャラクター) — a figurant with evident interiority and personality, supported by the fictional universe expanding beyond the actual narrative, who undergoes changes along with the plot development and who is generally taken to represent some actual living being[110] (this entity is analogous to the E. M. Forster's concept of the "round character"[111]). "Kyara" (キャラ), the term coined by Itō, refers (in the manga context) to a simple drawing of a creature that infers personality, has a personal name, and appears repeatedly across the narrative text, or texts, thus creating a sense of continuity that reinforces its "actuality" (現前性).[112] The kyara forms the basis on which the "character is built," and can therefore be called a "proto-character" (2005: 94-95). Both evoke a sense of "real" in the reader, but in a different way. The "realness" of the character depends on the "plausibility" and "possibility" (もっともらしさ), in other words, on the extent to which character's reactions, development, or inner state can be applied to the reader's reality (2005: 85). The "realness" of the kyara, on the other hand, resides in the sheer sense of presence (存在感), and in its ability to evoke emotional response, "real" emotions on the part of the reader (2005: 273).

For Itō Gō these two types of "realness" and two sides of the manga character are crucial, since from his point of view they help outline the changes that occurred in Japanese comics from the 1920s to the 1990s; they can be used to explain the transition to modernity

---

practices. However, since Azuma still discusses the transformation of texts themselves under the new conditions, and Itō has to refer to consumers' reactions to the texts to support his argument, their approaches do not seem to be so far apart.

[110] Itō 2005: 109-110.

[111] http://global.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/209627/flat-and-round-characters

[112] Itō 2005: 114, 116-17.

and to postmodernity in the medium, and they make it possible to turn attention to works that have previously been excluded from manga discourse. Itō's argument is book-long, and there is no need to follow the whole extent of it here, but it boils down to engagement with the work and the "pleasure" (快楽).[113] For Itō, the pleasure of reading manga, while taking multiple forms, almost always involves the bonding with, or keen interest towards the characters. The modernity in manga corresponds to the concealment of the "kyara" aspect, and the development of the "character." Since building the latter is closely connected with the story and the way it is rendered in the narrative text (including certain technical aspects of the medium), the "modern era" was characterized by a heightened attention to narrative development (both the contents — the story — and the means of expression) on the part of creators and critics. However, since the late 1980s, the "kyara" aspect of the characters resurface, making it possible to produce popular works that do not need to rely on narrative complexity or sophisticated narration techniques to attract readers. Furthermore, the "kyara" gets separated from the "story" and becomes an isolated entity able to traverse an unlimited number of works (2005: 54). For Itō, this is the beginning of the postmodern period in manga (2005: 60). It is easy to see here the influence of Azuma's theory — in fact, Itō's argument is intended to supplement *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals* by exploring further the nature of pleasure that today's otaku experience when consuming character goods, the declining importance of the story, and the prevalence since the 1990s of direct affective response (to the "kyara") over complicated narration techniques. Itō's influence on Marc Steinberg (to be discussed later) is also obvious, as Steinberg develops the notion of the character further to something that is unbounded by medium and serves as the main attraction in countless character goods. Notably, Itō Gō also mentions the wide spread of media mixes and character goods as one of the key incentives to reconsider the approach to manga (2005: 30-31).

[113] Itō 2005: 82-83.

To summarize, there has been a shift in the last two decades in the way Japanese critics theorize otaku culture: the fictional world as a principal object of consumption has been replaced by the characters. Ōtsuka's *A Theory of Narrative Consumption* laid ground for this approach: he focused on the fictional world (the "worldview") as the unifying and promoting force behind the franchises, but notably his attention later shifted to the characters. Characters are also central to both Azuma's and Itō's argument. Thus the Japanese discourse on media mix did not so much drift away from analyses of particular narrative texts as it refused to engage with texts as texts from the very start. Instead, the writers on the corresponding topics chose to contemplate the medium itself (Itō), or the otaku products on the whole as a system (Azuma, Ōtsuka), or the specifics of consumption particular to otaku culture. However, they only touch on the media mix tangentially (though media mix projects are the direct result of the tendencies that Japanese critics identify).

1.3.1.2. Media Mix from Historical and Industrial Perspective

Marc Steinberg's work is important not only because he directly addresses the phenomenon of media mix in Japan, but also because he builds on the entirety of previous works both in Japanese and in English, including Ōtsuka, Azuma, Itō, and Jenkins (though, regrettably, Steinberg ignores all other research related to transmedia storytelling). Two of his publications, *Anime's Media Mix* (2012) and its revised Japanese translation『なぜ日本は〈メディアミックスする国くに〉なのか』(2015) focus on the specific role of anime character in the formation of media mixes and history of the practice in general. Even though Steinberg draws on the otaku-related Japanese discourse (first of all on the works of Ōtsuka, Azuma, and Itō), he gravitates towards content production or, as he puts it himself, towards "industry discourse, media studies, and popular culture," (Steinberg 2012a: vii) as opposed to the previously discussed researchers who are more interested in fan engagement. Steinberg approaches the media mix as an arrangement of specific commodities, "the media

ecology" developed "at the intersection of local innovations in culture, national media transformations, and transnational developments within late capitalist consumer culture" (2012a: x). Steinberg offers the historical account ("a critical genealogy"[114]) of this ecology, which amounts to discussion of TV anime and the related merchandise that proliferated in Japan since the launch of the *Tetsuwan Atomu* series in the 1960s (2012a: viii, xii), with a special focus on "social and economic ramifications […] of the media mix history, and the materiality on which transmedia communication relies" (2012a: ix). "Social ramifications" here do not imply fan culture, though. Just as Derek Johnson connects the emergence of media franchises with changes on economic level, in technology, and in "the social manner of media consumption"[115], and Henry Jenkins connects the changes within media industry and consumption with emerging new patterns of thought and changes in the nature of community, Steinberg employs media mix in Japan as a means to paint a larger picture. Ultimately, he connects it to "a shift from a Fordist to a post-Fordist mode of capital accumulation and media practice" which occurred in the second half of the 20th century (2012a: x, 153). This shift is marked, first, by the emergence of a new commodity type — what Steinberg, following Martyn J. Lee, calls "experiential commodities"[116]. The value of those lies in the experiences they provide[117] (practically any type of narrative as well as games, fits into this category). Closely connected to this new mode of production is a new mode of consumption as a new type of labor: within the media mix strategy, each work pushes consumers towards another one, and pursuing as well as creating connections between such works becomes an end in itself (2012a: 168, 197). Steinberg also emphasizes

[114] Steinberg 2012a: xii.
[115] Johnson explains the economic changes through increasing consolidation of companies combined with effects of post-Fordism such as diversification of markets and consumer groups. Likewise, changes of technologies mean the appearance of new distribution channels and new types of consumers. Social changes for Johnson mean segmentation of audiences and shift towards participatory activities (2013: ch. 1, section "The Context for Franchising"). In other words, the conditions Johnson lists are very close to those proposed by Jenkins and Steinberg. What it means, of course, is that (trans)media franchising, media mix development, and TS practices are very closely connected phenomena that represent evolution of content and media industries at the end of the 20th century.
[116] 2012a: 157.
[117] Ibid.

what can be called "hardware" connectivity between the constituents of the media mix. His argument is that the connections between the media are deliberately produced links, rather than the result of active "readings" by fans, to which Jenkins gives so much importance. Nor do these built-in links belong to actual narratives[118]: characters (as Steinberg understands them) exist outside of and do not even need to refer to any particular narrative.

So the character in its material (and thus available for consumption) and immaterial (and therefore transportable, medium-transcending) forms becomes the ultimate driving force of the media mix, as it shifts between media and goods, narrative and game modes, and all the while serves as a conduit between the consumer and fictional world. In his understanding of the entity of the character Steinberg is clearly influenced by Ōtsuka, Azuma,[119] and Itō, but he also condenses and develops their ideas. Indeed, when taken together these four researchers seem to provide an almost all-encompassing view on media mix. Azuma is a critic who writes about light novels and visual novels, Itō considers the medium of manga (both emphasize the specifics of reception), Steinberg discusses anime and non-narrative merchandise like stickers (with focus on the economics at large and on the overall logics of production and consumption in this new media ecology), and Ōtsuka employs his experience as an editor, series curator, light novel writer — in other words, the content producer. Taken together, their interpretations of the forces that operate within media mix and its primary media allow to explain differences found between composition of typical media mix and TS project.

Consistency of story and setting between media is not the issue, because the character itself warrants the continuity, allowing for "a world that is constantly shifting but hangs together by the thread of character" (Steinberg 2012a: 188). Likewise, any changes in

[118] The approach towards TS projects as networks with carefully built-in links between narratives and media is taken by Marc Ruppel, who explores types of links and functions of paths between 'sites' (the constituents of the TS project) in his PhD (2012).

[119] Azuma basically promotes the same view of character as an independent, non-story-bound element throughout the first half of his 『ゲーム的リアリズムの誕生――動物化するポストモダン 2』 (2007).

the mood of the world and transpositions to parallel universes should not disturb the audience because they are warranted by the nature of the character. In his 『ゲーム的リアリズムの誕生』, Azuma explains that light novels can incorporate multiple genres (mystery, detective, romance, etc.) and still remain light novels because on the deeper level they are supported by meta-genre database, and by non-narrative (脱物語的), or metanarrative (メタ物語的) characters (Azuma 2007: 47-48). In the meantime, the characters, equally supported by the database, "are imagined not as humans who live one life recounted in one story, but rather as bundles of latent behavioral patterns that can reveal themselves under varying circumstances in various stories"[120]. This approach can be easily extrapolated from light novels to the conglomeration of platforms in the media mix. The dual nature of character, as Steinberg envisions it, also precludes any adaptation from being redundant, regardless of its type. Sheer changes in materiality of characters entail new experiences, new opportunities to access the fictional world, to which any embodiment of the character is the key, and thus new pleasures.[121]

As has been said before, both Japanese media mixes and Western transmedia franchises employ very different storytelling and world-building strategies. However, on the other side of the ocean many researchers — and creators — still prefer to contemplate fictional worlds and characters in conjunction with narratives (or vice versa), and views expressed by Lisbeth Klastrup and Susana Tosca, or by Maj M. Krzysztof remain one position among many others. Japanese critical and theoretical discourse,[122] however, has been dominated by the notion of abstract intangible entities ('kyara') as main commodities. This approach proved fruitful as it made it possible for the researchers to analyze how media function in contemporary Japanese society, or, alternately, how large-scale cultural processes

[120] 『彼らは、ひとつの人生を歩み、ひとつの物語のなかで描かれる人間というよりも、さまざまな物語や状況のなかで外面化する潜在的な行動様式の束として想像される』(Azuma 2007: 46; trans. mine).
[121] On materiality of the character and its significance see Steinebrg 2012a: 84-85.
[122] Marc Steinberg's writing is considered the part of the Japanese discourse.

influence the media system. The downside was that the narrative was not just overlooked, but actively deemed insignificant, on both the theoretical and the practical plane. As a result, there are almost no extended accounts on the structure of the media mix or on the ways media mixes tell stories. It is ironical indeed, that when Steinberg set out to describe the way constituents of a typical media mix relate to each other, he illustrated his argument with the metaphor drawn from an isolated anime, instead of using actual media mix as an example.[123] As for critical engagements with concrete works (or, rather, constellations of works), the available examples stop shortly of analyzing the relationship within the media mix in detail. Most probably this is due to the lack of the appropriate theoretical framework, which results, in one case, in disregard for the specific roles each media-mix part plays in the structure, and in the other case, in the perplexing use of terms that muddle the initial idea.

1.3.2. Analyses of Media Mix as Narrative

The article by Brian Ruh, "The Comfort and Disquiet of Transmedia Horror in *Higurashi: When They Cry* (*Higurashi no Naku Koro ni*)," uses Steinberg's writing on the topic as its starting point. Ruh's goal, among others, is to demonstrate how the "horror elements are explicated across the different media." However, Ruh does not discuss these permutations at length — instead he analyzes horror elements used in the franchise in general, without paying close attention to their specific realizations in each medium. In part, this omission can be explained by the structure of the media mix in question: Ruh notes early on that there are no significant differences between different incarnations of the story, and that fans are encouraged "to experience multiple, yet similar, storylines that occur in subtly separate narrative worlds." But when one chooses to analyze the thematic elements of the franchise on the whole, without paying attention to the relationships between the constituents or specific ways these elements are realized in, or distributed across various media, it

[123] Steinberg 2012b. The anime in question is *The Tatami Galaxy*『四畳半神話大系』, directed by Yūasa Masaaki, April 2010-July 2010, 11 ep.

inevitably affects the resulting picture. Itō Gō's remark that in the analysis of "manga, anime, and game that share the same characters, worldview and story, focusing on the themes and motifs (an approach typical for literary theory) can result only in the discussion of the work in general, but not of the medium of manga"[124] seems pertinent here.[125] Ruh's article explains how the horror elements work in *Higurashi: When They Cry* as a text, but not as the media mix. On the other hand, drawing on the theories by Ōtsuka and Azuma introduced above, Ruh not only outlines the overall structure of the *Higurashi: When They Cry* media mix, but also demonstrates how the two models by these authors — the grand narrative consumption and the database consumption, respectively — work simultaneously there. This is an important point, since it is hard to imagine an extended analysis of any media mix that does not explain its organizing principle. Moreover, one cannot juxtapose these models or try to organize them into chronological succession — more often than not they work together, and it is these multiple combinations that make each media mix so unique, and open or close the storytelling possibilities.

Another article that offers a close reading of the media mix is Yokohama Yūji's analysis of *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, "The Four Narrative Structures of *Neon Genesis Evangelion*: How the Multimedia Text Can be Read"[126] (2006), which is in its intention probably the closest to this study. Yokohama's theoretical background is in Japanese literature — accordingly, he approaches Neon Genesis Evangelion media mix from the perspective of literary work studies (作品論). Similarly to Ruh, Yokohama's focus is on the contents: to be more precise, he tries to find a way to analyze a typical media mix as a conglomeration of closely interrelated but not always compatible texts, or, as is evident from

[124]「同一の登場人物、同じ世界観、似通ったストーリのマンガとアニメ、ゲームがあったとして（そうした事態は、ごく普通にある）、それを文芸的に主題を論じたところで、「作品」論となるが、「マンガ」を論じたことにはならない」(Itō 2005: 31; trans. mine). Itō, 31.

[125] Two important points should be clarified, though, with regard to Itō's statement. First, Itō talks about cases where the content is more or less identical across platforms, but transformations of story may actually call for attention. Second, themes and motifs can become a valid topic of discussion if one inquires how exactly they are realized in each medium.

[126] Trans. by Yokohama. The original title is 「『親世紀エヴァンゲリオン』における物語世界の構成―メディアミックス作品論の可能性―」

the English translation of the article title, as one text comprised of contradicting parts.[127] Theoretically he relies mainly on Ōtsuka's model of narrative consumption and Azuma's database model — both of which Yokohama finds insufficient and potentially delimiting. Basically, Yokohama arrives at the same conclusion as Steinberg in his "Condensing the Media Mix: *Tatami Galaxy*'s Multiple Possible Worlds" (2012b): that the divergence in the series can be neither dismissed nor "explained" within one unified interpretation (解釈).[128] What is needed then is exploration of the relationships between the media mix constituents, which are based both on controversies and common elements (ibid.). However, the execution of this principle in Yokohama's own article suffers from theoretical and practical inconsistencies. First of all, he seems to focus less on the relationships between various *Evangelion* incarnations than on the inner structure of the TV series.[129] Furthermore, he identifies several independent "diegetic worlds" (「物語世界」)[130]: the "war" aspect of the plot, "the conspiracy," "the "everyday life," and the "recognition between oneself and the others"[131]. Yokohama does not give clear reasons for identifying as "worlds" (moreover, as his reference to Gérard Genette implies, as "diegetic worlds") what essentially amounts to 'motifs' or 'themes' in the series,[132] that intertwine and feed into each other and ultimately

[127] Yokohama does not attempt to cover the whole franchise, though. He uses the TV series, the first two movies, *Death & Rebirth* (『新世紀エヴァンゲリオン 劇場版 DEATH & REBIRTH シト新生』) and *The End of Evangelion* (『新世紀エヴァンゲリオン劇場版 Air/まごころを、君に); and the game *Shinji Ikari Raising Project* (『新世紀エヴァンゲリオン 碇シンジ育成計画』).
[128] Yokohama 2006: 60.
[129] Since the first two movies (and especially *The End of Evangelion*) are commonly perceived as direct sequels and reveal almost no discrepancies from the TV version, they can actually be seen as one unit.
[130] Trans. mine. As Yokohama's translation of the article title indicates, 「物語世界の構成」equals "narrative structure," however both narratological tradition and the context in which Yokohama uses the term preclude the translation of 「物語世界」as "narrative."
[131] 【戦闘】, 【日常】, 【スパイ劇】, and 【自他意識】, respectively. Trans. mine.
[132] "Narrative text" is the sum of all the constituents of the work: it includes the 'story' (with all events and agents — regardless of what categories those would be separated into), the 'discourse' or the 'plot' — the way this story is restructured and related (visible or invisible narrator, sequential ordering, rhythm, etc.), and the rendering of the resulting structure in a particular medium — the 'text' (for brief explanation on terminology see Barry 2009: 215 and Bal 2009: 5-6). It is also possible to talk about "narrative" as separated from the material medium (which can come useful in case of adaptation, for instance). However, if one tries to mentally reconstruct the story of *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, that would include all events and agents (characters) regardless of their affiliation with,

shape the fictional universe, or the worldview of *Evangelion*. Furthermore, for the most part of his article Yokohama analyzes the way these "worlds" are situated and shown in the TV series, finding special significance in the fact that, for instance, one element of the narrative can be involved with different motifs (different "worlds") and gain multiple meanings accordingly (2006: 55-56). Terminological issues aside, such analysis does not exceed the close reading of one work. Admittedly, the second part of the article faces the specific media mix issue by demonstrating how the game selectively adopts and juggles the plotlines and possible scenarios. But there are no attempts to analyze how these major themes are distributed across the core works of the franchise, or how the interplay of the alternative scenarios might influence possible readings. All in all, it seems that Marc Steinberg explained the principle of divergence and parallel, yet interconnected worlds in a clearer and theoretically much more solid way in his article. Yokohama's publication is still noteworthy though. First, this is the first attempt to raise the issue of media mix as a text (or conglomeration of texts) that operates on specific principles. And, second, it draws attention to the importance of the consistent theoretical framework in the analysis of media mix texts.

Obviously, there is a lot of room left for exploration in the analysis of media mixes (or fiction-centered transmedia franchises at large) from structural as well as aesthetic point of view. This is precisely what next chapters of this study aim to accomplish. But before even attempting such analysis, one needs to prove that story within the media mix deserves attention in its own right. Besides, the theory of media mix harbors a number of contentious issues concerned with storytelling. So the rest of this chapter is devoted to discussion of these matters with attempts to clarify some of them and raise questions with regard to others.

---

say, "war or "everyday life." Furthermore, within one narrative text (like the TV series), all these events and agents are enclosed in one diegetic world. The classification suggested by Yokohama seems to be inspired by literary theory rather than by narratology. 'Theme' and 'motif' are "often used interchangeably," though it is possible to distinguish between a 'theme' as abstract and a 'motif' as concrete (Abbott 2008: 95). Another definition of a 'motif' is "the concrete realization of a fixed abstract idea" (Würzbach 2008: 322) that can include character type ('trickster') and action ('duel'), locality ('high school'), objects ('mecha'), temporal phases, and dispositions ('madness'). The motif is taken to be more specific than theme, and it probably applies better to division offered by Yokohama, since its categories are also rather specific and context-reliant.

1.3.3. Relevance of Story in the Media Mix

Evidently, one can easily explain differences between TS proper and media mix by juxtaposing the dominance of the world-building in the former and the unique status of the character in the latter. Such way of thinking, however, not only precludes textual readings of the media mix, but practically deems media mix to be a non-storytelling practice. Insofar characters can exist as independent units, the very necessity of a story (and therefore — of a narrative text) might seem questionable.[133] But is it really the case?

Besides the dominance of characters as a non-story-bound entity consecutively reaffirmed in the writings of Japanese authors, their lack of interest in the narratives can possibly be explained by the stance most vividly expressed by Azuma: the lack of deep messages ("grand narratives") in the works and the dissolution of the "original," which is lost to countless reiterations and rearrangements of the database elements. It is hard to argue that characters play a central role in contemporary otaku culture, and in popular culture on the whole. Nevertheless, one can look at the priority of characters over the story — a condition which can also be taken as compromising any serious engagement with the latter — from another angle. The very immaterial side of characters that allows them to travel between media, genres, and authors, supports and maintains their individuality. Free as they might be from particular stories, they still harbor a particular set of traits, which can include values and attitudes. When these attitudes and values are translated into actions in any particular story, the potential for additional meaning is automatically created. After all, the choices made by the actors in certain circumstances, their behavior contribute greatly both to the tone and to the moral of the story as well as its interpretation.

The next question is: how does the database correspond to different types of TS projects? As have been mentioned before, the "fictitious grand narrative" (Azuma 2009: 37) model that presumably predates database proper looks similar to *The Matrix* strategy

[133] "There used to be narrative behind a work. But as the importance of narrative has declined, the characters have become more important in otaku culture" (Azuma 2009: 47).

described by Jenkins: it also relies on complex fictional world and distinct narratives which serve as access points to the greater whole. However, the picture gets less clear if one understands Ōtsuka's grand narrative as a closed system with a fixed set of rules that also contains some kind of message. Azuma himself invites this reading when he opposes the 1980s otaku (who still relied on the "fictitious grand narrative") to those of the 1990s, who "generally adhered to data and facts of the fictional worlds and were altogether unconcerned with a meaning and a message that might have been communicated" (2009: 36). As Jenkins points out, *The Matrix* franchise, indeed, opened up to a huge, consistent universe with a particular worldview and settings. But regardless of the well-thought universe, the fans were encouraged to "read into" the multiple texts of *The Matrix* in any way they liked, from a very superficial approach to highly sophisticated interpretations. "What the Wachowski brothers did was trigger a search for meaning; they did not determine where the audience would go to find their answers" (Jenkins 2006: 122). In other words, there was no hidden message to be rediscovered in *The Matrix* — instead the fans were expected to play with bits of information and fix something for themselves — reminiscent of Azuma's database otaku of the 1990s. One might also recall that Azuma refers to the *Mobile Suit Gundam*[134] franchise as an example of the grand narrative behind the conglomeration of narratives and goods. But Ōtsuka originally used this example to describe how after learning all the necessary rules, fans can produce their own narratives within the same universe or alter some of the facts to write, for instance, male-to-male love stories about the main characters (Ōtsuka 1989: 16). In other words, even the 1980s otaku were less concerned with some inherent meaning than with exploring and playing. In this sense, the *Mobile Suit Gundam* franchise and the like can be seen not as "fictitious grand narratives," but as mini-databases, or proto-databases.

Furthermore, one might ask whether the message in work can only exist in something like Azuma's "grand narrative." Products of contemporary media mix do rely on

[134] The starting point of the franchise was the eponymous anime TV series:『機動戦士ガンダム』, Nippon Sunrise, directed by Tomino Yoshiyuki, April 1979-January 1980, 43 ep.

a database, or, to be more precise, on two databases: the general database which includes all possible tropes of the otaku culture known to the consumers, and the more limited database of the particular franchise. Officially produced works are often judged — at least among the fans — by their accurate use of, or disregard towards the existing database. Consequently, following the database or successfully adding some elements to it becomes the top priority for the franchise producers. But as long as these conditions are sustained, nothing prevents the creators from sending messages or connecting their work to the "grand narrative" of their liking. Moreover, nothing prevents the fans from doing the same. It is noteworthy that many of the anime series and their franchises (which Azuma would probably identify as typically database-centered), have been subject to deep readings by Western fans. Those fans excavated from the anime texts critical stance, ideology, and serious social questions — in other words, nothing else than "grand narratives."

It is also possible to reverse the argument and ask whether all the entertainment works before the 1980s contained a grand narrative, and, even more importantly, whether their consumers were interested in the grand narratives and hidden messages. In reference to the central case study of this thesis: when avid readers waited for the next work of Alexander Dumas' feuilleton novel *The Count of Monte Cristo* in 19th century France, most of them were probably not very interested in the heroes' political stance, or the moral of the story. Instead they were attracted by the cliff-hangers, witty dialogues, exotic decorations, and the unfolding of the revenge plot (while Maeda Mahiro questioned the ethics of revenge within a franchise created in the midst of contemporary database culture). Furthermore, even if such "grand narrative" did exist and could be deduced by the readers, it must have been limited to the ideology of that particular period and place (that is, France in the middle of the 19th century). And yet Dumas' stories have thrived for more than 150 years successfully standing the test of time, and numerous geographical and cultural transpositions. Moreover, while Dumas' characters are universally known and loved, no one would argue that the stories themselves enthrall his readers just as much.

The dissolution of the "original" is also echoed in the discussions of the media mix. When Azuma, for instance, addresses the "propagation of simulacra" in the tenets of otaku culture, where "even original works create worlds through citation and imitation of previous works," (Azuma 2009: 26) he is in essence referring to the very kind of anime media mix Steinberg favors in his writings. For Azuma, the increasingly intricate expansion of the contents into different media means that the notion of "original" is destroyed altogether: the only valid distinction remains "between the settings created anonymously (a database at a deep inner layer) and the individual works that each artist has concretized from the information" (2009: 39). Steinberg, too, suggests that the "original" ceases to exist in the media mix: when works start proliferating, "the original text is retroactively reinscribed as one element of a series, its very status as original overturned" (Steinberg 2012a: 161). It is notable, however, that for Steinberg the multiplication of diverging narratives serves as a means to protect the supremacy of the producer, to stay in control in the face of increasingly active — and productive — fans (2012a: 181). In other words, in Steinberg's logic the line is still drawn between fan-produced works (which might or might not be commercially oriented) and the works of the corporate originator.

Admittedly, one cannot deny the existence of strong counter-examples nowadays. Maejima Satoshi, for instance, describes the phenomenon of *Touhou Project* (『東方Project』, official spelling).[135] This game, developed by a single person (ZUN), set a world record in 2010 as the most prolific independently-made shooter series.[136] Touhou Project has sub-par graphics and only rudimental narrative (though it is frequently praised for the soundtrack and extremely hard gameplay), and its immense popularity must be credited to its self-promoting and self-sustaining fandom. Countless fanworks have been produced based

[135] Maejima 2010: 242-244. Maejima was writing in 2010, but the game series have continued since then with the last title released in August 2015. The game still enjoys steady following.
[136]The first installment of the game was released in 1996. The record can no longer be found on the official Guinness World Records site, but it can be accessed via the Internet Archive: https://web.archive.org/web/20130424041751/http://www.guinnessworldrecords.com/records-8000/most-prolific-fan-made-shooter-series/

on the game's characters, which include multiple remakes of various other games and game genres starring *Touhou* characters, and fan-made animated videos that boast studio-level quality. This unbound creativity aside, according to Maejima, the line between officially produced and fan-made content is extremely thin in case of Touhou. Since character designs by ZUN are so bad, and the narrative is so scarce, fans resort to other fans' designs and stories to produce their own works. Elements of Touhou games thus propagate in all directions with only superficial connection to the original games. As for the creator, ZUN, he himself apparently does not care about the consistency of the characters or narrative (Maejima 2010: 244), allowing Touhou fans to run free. This extreme case of the canon dissolution looks like a perfect illustration to the radical picture Ōtsuka painted at the end of his "Narrative Consumption" essay in 1989. Nevertheless, even in 2015, projects like Touhou are isolated phenomena rather than a majority.[137]

Judging from the stance taken by Western fandom at least,[138] Steinberg's approach is more valid than Azuma's: fanworks are enthusiastically consumed, often even supported financially (through direct payments, donations, etc.), but they are still separated from the official products. Furthermore, the whole issue of continuity in Western TS practices is based on the need to demarcate the canon from apocryphal works. The increasing pressure fans put on the producers, demanding certain developments or outcomes, can also be taken as evidence that fandom cannot be satisfied by fanworks alone. In an environment where any difference between original and copy is lost, and what is left are simulacra only, such demand certainly would not be the case (fans would not be disturbed by the contents of corporately produced narratives if they were of no specific significance — any unfavorable development would be simply ignored). Interestingly, Azuma acknowledges this state of affairs when he notes that "in postomodernity […] a copy is judged not by its distance from

[137] It also must be pointed out, that *Touhou Project* is a private project: it originates in the grassroots, which at least partially explains its specific nature.
[138] Speaking from personal experience in the fandom: fans actively communicate with the corporate creators, study the "canon," and occasionally engage into heated discussions with regards to what exactly can be considered "canon."

an original but by its distance from the database" (Azuma 2009: 61). It is, of course, possible to object that "database" here can just as well mean "fanon," the accumulation of clichés associated with the source work but not validated by official producers. However, the very distinction of "canon" and "fanon" in the fandom jargon as well as terms like "alternate universe" (one of the standard fanfiction warnings) and evaluations such as "100% canon," or "out of character" show that the official works and the fan creations are still quite clearly separated. Only the former can contribute to the canon database (though exceptions occur from time to time). Cannot this corpus of referential works then be treated as the "original"? Encyclopedic impulse that western researchers perceive in fans' activities also testifies to the urge for some concretized body of information to be explored and mastered.

It is true that the status of franchise products and the rules they have to adhere to are different from those that define isolated works — this is precisely why creating transmedia fictions and engaging with them is a distinct practice. Steinberg's remark that in contemporary media mix the work is "broken down into multiple, serialized fragments," and fans' experience is "no longer based on the appreciation of a single, unified text" accurately describes this new state (2012a: 160). However, the change in form entails the change in reading strategies. Fragmented narratives are full of gaps to be filled and clues to be deciphered. Meanings and messages have not disappeared from the franchises even now — they still can be constructed by the consumers, and the creators of particular works are mostly free to incorporate their own messages in the material produced.[139]

With this said, there still remains the necessity to establish the relationship between transmedia storytelling and media mix development. Are there irreconcilable differences between these two strategies?

[139] See Jenkins (2006: 111-112, 116-117).

1.3.4. Media Mix and Transmedia Storytelling: Variation vs. Continuity

To reinstate: most narratives cultivated within otaku culture may be built around characters, but the central role of the character does not necessarily negate telling a meaningful story. The same applies to a transmedia project. Therefore, in comparison between strategies of media mix development and transmedia storytelling more attention can be paid to the narrative parts and relationship between the components. Major differences have been repeatedly mentioned throughout the previous discussion, but they can and should be addressed in more detail. A useful template for doing so is provided by Marc Steinberg. Steinberg did not contemplate differences between the two practices in his 2012 book. But he did compare them in the article "Condensing the Media Mix: *Tatami Galaxy*'s Multiple Possible Worlds" (2012) as well as in his book 『なぜ日本は〈メディアミックスする国〉なのか』(2015, trans. by Nakagawa Yuzuru). While in the article Steinberg deliberately addresses the issue of consistency, in the 2015 book he arranges a list of crucial points where the two practices diverge.

The first point — the character-story hierarchy — has already been discussed here. Three other points refer to the specifics of production. That is, commercial TS in the U.S. is usually associated with big hits or big-scale TV serials, such as *24* (Fox, November 21-July 2014) or *The Game of Thrones* (HBO, April 2011-ongoing). In Japan, media mixes exist on all levels: for the greatest hits and for obscure titles, for the mass market and for small niche markets, etc. (Steinberg 2015, Introduction, section 「トランスメディア対メディアミックス」). They also vary in scale — while standard media mix includes anime, manga, and light novels, or novelization (with addition of non-narrative goods), other additions (e.g. in the form of audio dramas or games) are optional, as is further development of the franchise. The next point follows naturally from the previous one: media mixes are veritably ubiquitous in Japan. In the U.S., however, there is no comparable environment constructed specifically to accommodate multiple faces of media mix (ibid.). The last of the production-related points

refers to the stage at which transmedia projects are designed. That is, Steinberg sees the difference in that TS is generally constructed top-down, preplanned and strictly coordinated from the start. Contrary to that, media mixes in many cases only start after the initial success of the respective title. Therefore they are not preplanned.[140] The same applies to many TS projects though. It has been mentioned already that the common practice in the West is 'chewy' franchises based on hit works. TS projects which were entirely preplanned from the start are relatively rare — even *The Matrix* was the second-wave enterprise (Long 2007: 21). Steinberg also concedes that these days the pre-planned projects have been getting popular in Japan, and approximately half of media mixes are now developed as such from the start (Steinberg 2015, Introduction, section 「トランスメディア対メディアミックス」). Therefore, business models of fiction-based transmedia franchises and media mixes are more different in the ways production and distribution are organized (horizontally integrated corporation versus production committee), in the selection of source material and average scale of projects than in their overall logic or content development strategies.

The last two points on Steiberg's list concern the same old principles that figure in the definition of TS proper. One of them refers to the hierarchy between platforms and their narratives. As Steinberg puts it, in the center of a typical TS project there is usually a big-hit movie,[141] and the expansion of TS is part of the marketing campaign. In media mixes, there is almost no stratification between works — ideally, each work harbors the same weight as the others. "Manga, anime, a movie, and a figure are all of approximately same importance, and no one exists simply as promotion for other, more important product."[142] Steinberg uses some clever wording when he discusses this point: first, he states that transmedia storytelling

[140] Ibid. See also Joo and Denison 2013: 12.
[141] Obviously, nowadays TS projects are more and more often developed around TV series, animated TV series like *Avatar: The Last Airbender* (Nickelodeon Animation Studios, February 2005-July 2008, 61 ep.), comic books like *The Walking Dead* (October 2003-ongoing), and games like *Dragon Age* series (2009-2014, possibly ongoing).
[142]「マンガ、アニメ、映画、フィギュアなどは、どれもが他と同じくらいに重要で、この中のどれもが、より重要な製品を単なる広告にするためにあるものではない」Steinberg 2015, Introduction, section 「トランスメディア対メディアミックス」.

nowadays is somehow different from the model envisioned by Jenkins. Then he adds that "ideally" all components of the media mix are equally important (ibid.). Two arguments can be made against this statement. First of all, these components might seem equally important insofar they all provide experience with a character. Since Steinberg takes precisely this, character-centered approach to the practice, such an evaluation is valid. However, from the storytelling point of view not all of these components are equal. This is not the matter of some of them being narratives and others not. To put it very simply, their interrelationships are exactly the same as in most TS cases in the West: some works can be consumed and enjoyed separately, others have to rely on them to make sense. An audio drama or a short parody OVA based on the TV anime is not likely to draw interest as of itself. Likewise, novelization does not necessarily stand on its own as a light novel. Furthermore, regardless of narrativity, hierarchy of components in the franchise is also directly connected with the issue of tiering — and the strategies creators choose (or, rather, are allowed to choose) to address wider audiences. There is difference in the level of consumption between goods: light novel is an increasingly popular past time, nowadays replacing the magazines (Iida 2012: 290), and lots of people watch anime and read manga — probably fewer of them enjoy visual novels. And fewer yet buy figures. Manga, anime, and movie are very often hierarchically equal because they tell by and large the same story. Even though the story transforms within each medium, the diegetic time span covered does not change significantly, and the basic characteristics of the storyworld remain recognizable. On the other hand, when one medium continues the story started elsewhere, or uses the unique worldview established and explained in other works, inevitably hierarchical relationship between them changes.

Here resurfaces the last point suggested by Steinberg — the continuity principle versus the principle of variation (a key term in Steinberg's *Anime's Media Mix*[143]). This issue is the most crucial when contemplating the relationship between the two practices, because it is directly concerned with meaning-making. It leads one to a question: is it possible to create

[143] Steinberg 2012a: 180.

overarching set of meanings in a project defined by variation? Does any kind of canonicity become impossible? Does "encyclopedic impulse" of fans burn down to tinkering with the database? One quickly notices, though, that radical transformations that completely redefine the fictional world are rare in media mixes. More often variations are accompanied by pieces of information relevant for and compatible with the content of other works in the franchise. An obvious example of this is the *Evangelion* franchise. Animated film series *Rebuild of Evangelion*,[144] which started ten years after the end of anime TV series[145] and the concluding anime film,[146] does not simply rearrange and outwardly change the events and relationships, but also openly addresses mysteries and ambiguities left by the previous works. The new film series is therefore valuable for what Mittel calls "forensic fandom," because it reconfirms guesses and theories and thus officially fills the gaps. The same logic is at work in the anime film *Adolescence of Utena,*[147] which transforms almost all of the elements of the TV series,[148] up to character design. Yet, it also follows up on some clues dropped in the TV anime and offers a more definite final. Moreover, in both cases films are presented in such way that their ontological connection with the preceding series remains unclear: are they remakes or sequels?

So in media mix, rifts on the story peculiar to a single work are often combined with pieces of information relevant for the whole franchise (or its significant part). Marc Steinberg calls this strategy "addition with bifurcation," where "each new strand may add to the contours of a given world, or place us in a coexisting yet divergent one" (2012b: 87). This approach, in Steinberg's opinion, is opposite to Jenkins "additive comprehension" (Jenkins 2006: 123) associated with continuity and the "(re)constitution of the whole based

[144]『エヴァンゲリヲン新劇場版』, Studio Khara, 2007, 2009, 2012 (ongoing).
[145] *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (『新世紀エヴァンゲリオン』), Gainax, October 1995-March 1996, 26 ep.
[146] *The End of Evangelion* (『新世紀エヴァンゲリオン劇場版 Air エア/まごころを、君に』), Gainax, Production I.G, July 1997.
[147]『少女革命ウテナ アドゥレセンス黙示録』, J.C.Staff, 1999.
[148] *Revolutionary Girl Utena* 『少女革命ウテナ』, J.C.Staff, April 1997-December 1997.

on the assembly of distinct parts" (Steinberg 2012b: 74).[149] Pleasure here lies in pursuing the differences across different media incarnations of the franchise, rather than summing information up into a single universe. Naturally, Steinberg's interest in the stages of production and marketing is evident in his interpretation of this model's popularity in contemporary media mixes. Apparently, diverging media mixes do not just present a strong lure for the fans, but also help the producing side — the media corporations — to remain in control in the era of ever-present fanworks. It is worth remembering here how in early 1990s Ōtsuka insisted that it was necessary to construct detailed fictional worlds and then dexterously manage fans' access to them in order for content industry to "remain in charge." Steinberg understands constant variations of the story in the contemporary media mix as an alternative method that Ōtsuka himself adopted to retain status quo. The trick is that "each fragment warps the worldview, bringing it closer to hand and further out of reach at the same time," so that "the reader never actually grasps the totality after all" (Steinberg 2012a: 181). Each work might delve deeper into the lore or established plot and clarify a number of points, but simultaneously it adds contradictions, or new questions, or the "uncharted territory" within the fictional universe. Thereby the official producers' position of power is reestablished and reinforced (Steinberg describes the conflicting narratives of Ōtsuka Eiji's *MPD Psycho*[150] to illustrate this point). The company becomes "the guarantor" of a certain level of unity between the diverging narrative worlds, "even as it allows a proliferation of differences and the active participation of the consumer-producer in the constitution of the world in question" (2012a: 187).[151]

[149] It is worth noting, though, that Jenkins never gave a proper definition of "additive comprehension." In "Transmedia Storytelling 101" he explains that the term refers to "the ways that each new texts adds a new piece of information which forces us to revise our understanding of the fiction as a whole" (2007). But such understanding of additive comprehension does not put it at odds with Steinberg's "addition with bifurcation," since it describes the significance and relevance of an isolated piece of information instead of relations between works.

[150]『多重人格探偵サイコ』, Ōtsuka Eiji (scenario), Tajima Sho-U (illustrations), 1997-ongoing.

[151] Steinberg 2012a: 187.

This regulatory function of addition with bifurcation as well as the effect that interplay of meaningful additions and new gaps has on fans brings into mind Geoffrey Long's negative capability. Indeed, additive bifurcation can be interpreted as another way to sustain negative capability throughout the franchise. In transmedia storytelling, "a delicious sense of 'uncertainty, Mystery, or doubt' in the audience" (Long 2007: 53) stems from the gaps deliberately left in the narrative and from hermeneutic codes that set vectors for further exploration, the ground for new questions. Placing some of the answers into a distinct work creates a link between two works and propels audiences across media. But Long also cautions that some of these blank spaces should be left open — because they provide opportunity for potential further extensions and because "the very beauty of negative capability is that the number of possibilities audiences can dream up to fill in the gaps is almost infinite" (2007: 68). The same opinion is expressed by Marc Ruppel in his analysis of types of links (the 'migratory cues') between the "narrative units" in transmedia networks.[152] In his discussion of 'intersectional cues' (basically the conjunction of a certain event, or events depicted in separate works[153]), Ruppel points out that "these intersections are paradoxically both expansive and contracting" (Ruppel 2012: 97). As the reader realizes the connection, her interpretation of the event is changed forever, and added information "narrows story possibilities that might be projected into the gaps" of the narrative (ibid.).

So in the circumstances when consumers simultaneously crave for answers and for new sites of uncertainty, TS projects and media mixes have come up with two different solutions. In the first case, producers balance the expansion of the consumers' knowledge about the fictional world and the story with new questions. Information that audiences accrue

[152] Ruppel defines transmedia networks as "complex fictional systems structured by the connections between their individual components" (Ruppel 2012: 37-38). In this study, "transmedia storytelling project" is used to denote the same structures. Each individual component of the network — a 'site' — equals a narrative unit, or what in this study is called a "work" (2012: 39). Migratory cues "are prompts or signals that promote an active linking of content between multiple sites" (2012: 62). A cue functions both as a sign that establishes correspondence between sites, and a prompt for the audience to make a connection (ibid.).

[153] Ruppel 2012: 89-90.

adds up to the consistent whole, but there are always new lines of inquiry to pursue. In the second case, producers can offer multiple solutions for one enigma and multiple explanations for anything that happens within the narrative. Consumers still get the satisfaction from the answers (since their doubts are clarified to a point), but sheer multiplicity of versions makes these answers unstable and therefore prevents the gap from closing. Paradoxically, this strategy might in some terms be more liberating for the consumers, as it implicitly grants them freedom of interpretation (as well as supports a greater number of resulting theories through officially produced works). On the other hand, reservations made by Steinberg remain true, as producers destabilize reconstructable canon to maintain their authority.[154]

There is one last consideration to be added about this last distinction between principles of continuity and of variation. The two do not need to be in opposition. One of the simplest ways to employ both — and, indeed, the one workers of content industry in Japan quickly found — is to create a story where variation is a built-in, world-defining feature. Stories that involve time-loops, reincarnations, and travelling between parallel universes all answer this requirement. It is no surprise then that works exploring these themes have thrived in the otaku market since early 2000s.[155] When variation is diegetically explained, it turns from a principle under which the meaning is created to the part of meaning. Depending on how they are executed, all transformations of the events, of characters, of the storyworld can become a part of canon and contribute to the accumulation of relevant, consistent information.[156] But even in media mixes that do not pull this trick, the levels of variation,

[154] It is important to note, however, that this instability of canon varies greatly across media mixes. In some cases it is possible to cull and systematize the facts, events, and traits that are true for the whole franchise constituents, or at least for the bulk of primary works. This information could then be treated as canon. In some cases, however, true to the theories of Japanese critics and Steinberg, the only common factor is the characters and, to some extent, the worldview.

[155] This is noted by Azuma and Steinberg. Azuma actually devoted the whole second half of 『ゲーム的リアリズムの誕生』to analyses of such works.

[156] An example of such strategy is found in the oeuvre of the mangaka group Clamp (クランプ). Clamp started officially publishing their works in the early 1990s and have since then created many popular titles. Remarkably, characters and events of any given story are often mentioned in the others. This extensive net of references between the works culminated in *Tsubasa: Reservoir Chronicle* (『ツバサ-RESERVoir CHRoNiCLE』; serialized in 『週刊少年マガジン』, May 2003-October 2009,

and the sites where it happens vary greatly. It is more appropriate to talk about a scale between Dena's intracompositional transmedia fiction and a kind of media mix that involves a set of loosely defined characters that go through completely disconnected experiences in every work.

1.3.5. Media Mix as a Conglomeration of Texts: an Attempt at Analysis

On the whole, the relationship between media mix and transmedia storytelling as a strategy can be summarized as following:

1. Transmedia storytelling is characterized by push towards the unity of meaning and constant accumulation of new non-contradictory information. In practice, however, TS projects do not always follow through with this principle — especially with secondary works.

2. In the recent years there has been a tendency for the rules of transmedia storytelling to become looser. In fact, already in 2009, in his blog post "The Revenge of the Origami Unicorn: Seven Principles of Transmedia Storytelling," Henry Jenkins embraced the concept of "multiplicity." While complete removal of the guiding principles of transmedia storytelling would render the term meaningless, there are also rewards for making it more inclusive. If anything, it would allow the researchers to look closer at many different ways in which constituents of the franchise can connect to each other.

3. Media mixes generally do not employ transmedia storytelling as their central strategy. But in large media mixes, works can form constellations within which one finds increased levels of coherence.

4. In 'addition with bifurcation,' accumulation of information is not substituted by constant divergences and variations, but runs parallel to them. Consequently there remains at

---

28 vol.). The universe of *Tsubasa* consists of countless parallel worlds inhabited by the characters from all other series produced by Clamp. In many cases, the character has a different background from his or her original story or the original storyworld has been transformed. However, the original stories can just as well be incorporated into this chain of alternate realities. The fan-produced map of the works by Clamp and connections between them:
http://anidb.net/perl-bin/animedb.pl?show=rel&aid=2733

least potential for overarching meaning that would connect all or most of the works. Variations themselves could contribute to this overarching meaning.

With this clarified, it seems reasonable to explore how the media mix can function as a unit, how it can be read as a whole. The following questions arise:

1) What factors beside characters and fictional universe might unite multiple texts within a franchise? Is consistency of meaning possible across all variations?
2) How can a message stay relevant through very different reincarnations of the story?
3) How does "the abstract entity of the character" that "allows the world to hang together despite the divergences"[157] interact with other unifying factors in the franchise?
4) From what perspective can a divergent transmedia franchise be described as one extended text (or the conglomeration of texts that are meaningfully interconnected)?

With these questions as a starting point, this study looks into the *Gankutsuō* (『巌窟王』) franchise. *Gankutsuō* is a vivid example of the anime media mix that can at the same time be read as an extended adaptation of several outside sources. It follows the principles of both divergence and convergence, of addition with bifurcation and synergy on different levels. Besides that, *Gankutsuō* is characterized by multi-level intertextuality that encompasses not only the constituents of this media mix, but also the works outside it. These numerous connections point at sources of pleasure irrelevant to the entity of character or to the access to a fictional universe. Admittedly, *Gankutsuō* is not so different from *The Matrix*: it is also a limited case. After all, even though most of the anime media mixes generally employ adaptations as part of their franchise development, in most cases the work that is the starting point (that which is first adopted) is incorporated into the whole structure. The

[157] Steinberg, 2012a: 200.

source remaining outside the media mix entirely, as is the case with *Gankutsuō*, is a rare case. Nevertheless, one has to keep in mind that even a part of the franchise can maintain a different status. Despite Jenkins' claim that ideally every work should be able to serve as an entry point into the franchise, and Azuma's and Steinberg's assertions of inherent equality between all the constituents, in practice works make unequal contributions to the franchise. Each product might serve as a lure for potential fans, but usually only a few (sometimes a single work only) become the backbone of the franchise database, the touchstone for the narratives and worlds (alternate or not) further developed. In this sense *Gankutsuō* is also illuminating as it demonstrates how one work (the anime) informs all the others and serves as the core of the franchise.

CHAPTER 2. THE *GANKUTSUŌ* MEDIA MIX AS ADAPTATION

2.1. The Precursor Novels

2.1.1. Precursor Novel I: Alexander Dumas' *The Count of Monte Cristo*. An Overview

The announced source of the *Gankutsuō* media mix is *The Count of Monte Cristo* (1844-46) by Alexander Dumas, *père* (1802-1870). The novel focuses on the long, adventurous story of an ordinary sailor, Edmond Dantès, unjustly convicted to life imprisonment. Edmond is forced to spend 14 years in the prison called Château d'If, while the three villains who framed him — Fernand Mondego (Morcerf), Danglars, and Gérard de Villefort — prosper. Meanwhile, Edmond's father dies in poverty, and his fiancée Mercédès marries Fernand. After much struggle, Edmond escapes from his prison, and, having obtained an enormous treasure, assumes a new identity as the Count of Monte Cristo. He then proceeds to reward his former benefactors and inflict revenge on the three men who ruined him.

The novel ran in the *Journal des Débats* in eighteen installments (August 1844-January 1846) and was an instant success.[158] Since 1846 it has been translated into dozens of languages, and it remains popular even in the 21st century. It is no surprise then that it has been adapted time and again into various media, from movies[159] and TV series,[160] to graphic novels[161] and musicals,[162] not to mention multiple appropriations, abridged versions, and allusions. As a matter of fact, the novel first arrived in Japan as an adaptation by Kuroiwa

[158] The novel was published in the book format by Pétion (Paris, 1844-5, 18 volumes).
[159] E.g., French-Italian adaptations by Robert Vernay (1943) and Claude Autant-Lara (1961), respectively; the UK version by David Greene (1975); and the USSR adaptation by Georgi Yungvald-Khilkevich (1988).
[160] French adaptation by Josée Dayan (1998).
[161] *The Count of Monte Cristo: Campfire Classics Line* by R. Jay Nudds (2012).
[162] *Monte Cristo* by Roman Ignatiev (music) and Yuliy Kim (lyrics), which started in 2008, and 2009 adaptation by Frank Wildhorn (music) and Jack Murphy (lyrics).

Ruikō,[163] titled "Gankutsuō" (『巌窟王』). It was not until the middle of the 20th century that the book was translated by Yamanouchi Yoshio completely and published in the *Iwanami Bunko Series* (岩波文庫; 1956-57; 7 volumes in total). Despite its late arrival, *The Count of Monte Cristo*/*Gankutsuō* proved as popular in Japan as in other parts of the world. Thus, it inspired the NHK period drama *Nihon Gankutsuō* (『日本巌窟王』, January-June 1979; 23 ep.) and was adapted to several manga series, including *The Chronicle of Revenge* (『復讐記』, 1969) by Kajiwara Ikki (scenario) and Kagemaru Jōya (artwork) serialized in Shūkan Shōnen King (『週間少年キング』); *Gankutsuō* (学習研究社, 1979-1980, 6 volumes) by Tsukikage Ken (artwork) and Kubota Sentarō (scenario); *The Count of Monte Cristo* (*Young Animal Arashi* 『ヤングアニマル増刊嵐』, November 2014-October 2015) by Moriyama Ena; and *Monte Cristo* by Kumagai Kazuhiro (*Grand Jump Premium*『グランドジャンプ PREMIUM』, November 2012-September 2015, 4 volumes). The first three of these manga versions stay relatively close to Dumas' novel, while the last one appropriates the material to build its own kind of story. However, the most unique adaptation of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, which somehow manages to fit within itself most of the source material and then deliver a completely new take on the story (which is yet totally recognizable!) belongs to the domain of anime. Or, rather, it starts with an anime, namely Maeda Mahiro's[164] *Gankutsuō*[165].

Produced by studio GONZO and aired in 2004-05, *Gankutsuō* was received as a largely experimental project. Even though it did not enjoy a large fandom, the anime was

---

[163] Serialized in March 1901-June 1902 in the newspaper *Yorozuchōhō* (『萬朝報』), the novel was published in 1905 by Aokisūzandō (青木嵩山堂) .

[164] 前田真宏 (1953-) — director, animator, key animator, character designer. Directed *Blue Submarine No. 6* (『青の 6 号』, 2000) ; *Animatrix: The Second Renaissance* (Square Co., STUDIO 4°, 2003) ; *Evangelion: 3.0 You Can (Not) Redo* (『エヴァンゲリヲン新劇場版：Q』; 2012); several shots for Japan Animator Expo (『日本アニメ（ーター）見本市』, Khara, November 2014-), etc.

[165]『巌窟王』, Gonzo. First run: Terebi Asahi (テレビ朝日) , October 5, 2004-March 29, 2005). Rerun by NHK in June-December 2008. 24 episodes.

critically acclaimed. In April 2005, it became one of the three works out of 233 to win the "Notable Entry Award" for the Television Category, Tokyo Anime Award at the Tokyo International Anime Fair 2005. And in October of the same year it received the "Best Picture Award" in the TV section at the 10th Animation Kobe festival.[166] No doubt *Gankutsuō* deserved such estimation mostly for its unique and captivating visuals. These have been much discussed in interviews, reviews, anthologies (Cavallaro 2010), and even in scholarly works (Steinberg 2012c). However any viewer familiar with Dumas' novel will also notice the daring manner in which anime handles it, moving the story into a futuristic setting and introducing supernatural elements (Gankutsuō, for instance, is a demon-like creature that possesses the Count). This radical change of setting is not a simple whim of the adaptors — in fact, it can be interpreted as a trace left by another text, that is, by Alfred Bester's SF novel *Tiger! Tiger!* (1956) also known as *The Stars My Destination.* This novel not only plays an important role in the shaping of *Gankutsuō* anime as a separate work, but it is also involved in the web of references, allusions, and transpositions that distinguish the *Gankutsuō* media mix. To ignore it therefore means to overlook an important part of the *Gankutsuō* intertext.

2.1.2. Precursor Novel II. Alfred Bester's *Tiger! Tiger!* Introduction and Brief Discussion

As in *Gankutsuō*, the story told in *Tiger! Tiger!* (1956) takes place in the future. It involves space travels, super-weapons, advanced technologies, and a freak show of strange personalities and societies. It is also the story of a small man, a sailor named Gully Foyle, transformed by his desire for revenge. Bester himself defined *The Count of Monte Cristo* as his major inspiration for *Tiger! Tiger!*, since he "always preferred the anti-hero and […]

[166] http://lair.thestranglers.net/gankutsuou.html; for information in Japanese see Suzuki: 65.

always found high drama in compulsive types." [167] However, *Tiger! Tiger!* is not an adaptation in a strict sense — its relationship to *The Count of Monte Cristo* is best described as 'analogue', in Thomas Leitch's terminology (2007: 113-116), or 'radical translation', as Linda Constanzo Cahir calls it (2006, ch.1 "The Nature of Film Translation: Literal, Traditional, and Radical). In other words, there is no straightforward connection between these two works. In fact, literary scholar Patrick A. McCarthy insists that references to Dumas in *Tiger! Tiger!* simply provide a framework and wide context for the events depicted, while the meaning of the work is closely entwined with references to William Blake's poem "The Tyger" and an allusion to James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (McCarthy 1983: 59). However, as the following examples demonstrate, some of the allusions to Dumas are closely connected with key points of the *Tiger! Tiger!* narrative and suggest meaningful parallels between the (anti-)heroes.

The most evident parallel is the overarching theme of revenge as the main driving force for both the anti-hero and the plot. Likewise, in both cases revenge catalyzes the protagonist's transformation into an almost omnipotent being. Another common motif in the two novels is that in his quest the protagonist antagonizes three powers embodied by three men respectively. Similarly to Edmond Dantès, Gully Foyle is thrown into jail by his enemies, presumably, for the rest of his life, only to find a teacher there — thus his supposed demise is turned into advantage. The island of Monte Cristo, which gave name to both Dumas' protagonist and novel, finds its equivalent in Bester's Sargasso Asteroid. The asteroid echoes the island both plot-wise and symbolically. On the one hand, both locations harbor enormous treasures and later become the heroes' "special place." On the other hand, they both signify the protagonists' affinity with the divine: the symbolism of the name *Monte Cristo* (which literally means 'the mount of Christ') is paralleled by certain events in *Tiger!*

[167] Bester, "My Affair with Science Fiction" (1975). Fiona Kelleghan (1994) also points out Bester's penchant for obsessive heroes.

Tiger! (Gully Foyle is "baptized" by the asteroid's inhabitants[168]). There are minor, arguably less significant similarities as well, such as the anti-heroes' penchant for masquerading, or the transition to the active stage of the revenge plan being marked by a carnival.

For all these parallels and allusions, Bester's novel stands in a stark contrast to Dumas' story. It is true that Gully Foyle reaches something close to transcendence in the course of the novel, an evolution reminiscent of the first part of *The Count of Monte Cristo* (that is to say, at the point when retributions start, Monte Cristo has already established his unique status). However, in Foyle's case, revenge, or retribution in a broader sense is but one step to promote him further, a stage which ultimately must be passed and left behind. If Monte Cristo also "leaves his revenge behind," he only does it after it has been fulfilled. While Monte Cristo to the end acts as God's hand and the direct executor of Providence (or even celestial power itself), Foyle, on the contrary, has to realize the futility of his rage and discard it to surpass both himself and other characters and reach the status of Messiah. This difference corresponds directly to the approach taken in *Gankutsuō*. Indeed, from the ideological point of view, *Tiger! Tiger!* can be seen as a transitory stage between Duma's novel and Maeda's anime.

Returning to the novel's connection with the *Gankutsuō* media mix — since its publication in 1956, *Tiger! Tiger!* has won a solid cultural status of its own: becoming "a seamless pop artifact," as Bruce Sterling and William Gibson put it.[169] As a result, the novel is well-known among SF aficionados in Japan, and it was this text precisely that Maeda Mahiro originally intended to put on screen (*Comickers* 2005: 99; Nakamura 2006: 10; Suzuki 2006: 65). However, he was unable to obtain the rights for *Tiger! Tiger!* (ibid.) and eventually had to turn to its acclaimed precursor. Nevertheless, one can say that even having found another primary source text, Maeda's creative team never entirely gave up on Bester's

[168] There is a tendency among researchers to read Gully Foyle as a distinctly Christ figure, on the level of textual signs (McCarthy 1983: 64-66), or specific motifs (McCarthy 1983: 65; Kelleghan 1994: n.page).
[169] http://www.loa.org/sciencefiction/appreciation/gibson.jsp

work. For instance, it is most likely that Bester's novel predetermined the time setting of the series. It is certainly true that, as Maeda explained, a period setting of 19th century France would have required too much background knowledge by the audience and built-in explanation by the adaptors (*Comickers* 2005: 38; *Gankutsuō Complete* 2005: 100). But it is significant that, of all possible alternatives, the producers chose a far future, high technologies, and space travel as the anti-hero's initial occupation. Moreover, one of the distinguishing fetures of the main hero is appropriated directly from *Tiger! Tiger!*: when Monte Cristo gets overly excited, a pattern of stripes and spirals appears on his face. Bester's Gully Foyle suffers from the same affliction, though diegetic explanations for it are different in *Gankutsuō*. Minor allusions to *Tiger! Tiger!* are found in various parts of the media mix, but the most significant for Maeda's initial plans and the final product was probably the style and the overall atmosphere of the novel, which combined the spiritual overtones and intense dramatic moments with the wild and the carnavalesque.

2.2. *Gankutsuō* Anime as the New Reading of *The Count of Monte Cristo*

The Count of Monte Cristo was born when Dumas took stories of revenge and poisoning from a book by French police archivist Jacques Peuchet[170] and freely expanded them, adding such disparate elements and motifs as Romanticism and Arabian fairy tales, contemporary French politics, Parisian high society, romance, crime story, and historical figures like Abbé Faria,[171] along with personal experiences of the author,[172] as well as beliefs

[170] The book, *Memoirs Taken from the Archives of the Paris Police* (*Mémoires tirés des Archives de la Police de Paris*), was published in 1838 after the death of the author. The story in question was "The Diamond and Vengeance" (Peuchet: vol. 5; trans. by Bair 2011a: n.page). The shoemaker Pierre Picaud and his elaborate revenge became the prototypes for Edmond Dantès and his grand scheme. Other minor plotlines from this account as well as another story from the *Archives*, "A Family Crime" (Peuchet: vol. 2; trans. by Bair 2011b: n.page), were also rearranged and weaved into Dumas' novel.

[171] José Custódio de Faria (1756-1819), or Abbé Faria, was the Portuguese priest widely known for his research and practice of hypnotism. In 1797, Faria was arrested, accused of being the follower of Gracchus Babeuf and put into Château d'If, where he spent several years. Dumas changed Faria's nationality to Italian and turned him into a veritable human encyclopedia. Incidentally, Faria had his analogue in Pierre Picaud's story

[172] The name of "Monte Cristo" is a "souvenir" from the boat trip Dumas took in 1842, in Florentia, together with young prince Napoleon. For an account of *The Count of Monte Cristo* genesis and an

and values of the times.[173] *The Stars My Destination* and *Gankutsuō* were created in a similar way, reinterpreting an earlier story, or stories. It is not surprising that each author (or collective of authors) employed their own evaluative system and morale. However, in case of *Gankutsuō*, the transformation of content deserves special attention. After all, the change of protagonist and ethical stance is probably the most significant departure (apart from change in the setting) *Gankutsuō* takes from Dumas' novel and from preceding adaptations. Shedding the Count's name from the title,[174] the anime also removes him from the spotlight. Placed at the centre of the unfolding events are young Albert de Morcerf and other representatives of the younger generation such as Albert's friends: Franz d'Épinay, Eugénie Danglars, Valentine de Villefort, and Maximilien Morrel. This transformation and the subsequent changes in the story demonstrate a mutual influence of authorial intentions and metatextual conditions, such as format requirements or specifics of the target audience.

2.2.1. The Key Factors in the Transformations of Story of *The Count of Monte Cristo* in *Gankutsuō*

As is usually the case with adaptations, *Gankutsuō* as it is known now is a result of a complicated and twisted development with many converging factors. In the process, the anime turned into something quite different from what it was supposed to become at first. The primary factors in this transformation were commercial considerations closely combined with Maeda's (and then other scenarists') reading of *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Together, these two factors, or, rather groups of factors, reshaped the original concept envisioned by

---

overview of influences that shaped it, see André Maurois, *Titans: A Three-Generation Biography of the Dumas* (1957).

[173] The reign of Louis Philippe, which started in 1830, was marked by the domination of the wealthy bourgeoisie elite (bankers, financers, industrialists, and merchants). The common people's increasing dissatisfaction with Louis Philippes' policy led to his abdication in 1848. The spirit of these times is reflected vividly in the three villains of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, who are clearly the product of changing regimes: the opportunist Fernand, the banker Danglars, and the politically engaged Villefort, who was threatened by the Bourbon Restoration as much as elevated by it.

[174] Admittedly, this is not an innovation by the *Gankutsuō* production team: as has already been mentioned, *Gankutsuō* was the title of the first translation (or adapation) of the novel into Japanese by Kuroiwa Ruikō. However, it must be taken into consideration that Yamanouchi's full translation bore the traditional title, so Maeda's team had a freedom of choice.

Maeda's team (Maeda started the brainstorming stage with scenarist Yamashita Tomohiro, but Kōyama Shūichi joined the two soon after). What was that concept though? According to the interviews, the vision of *Gankutsuō* these three initially had was closer to *Tiger! Tiger!* aesthetically, and to Ōtsuka's "grand narrative" in principle. In other words, much emphasis was put on the fictional universe with its small details, laws, and inhabitants, on the one hand, and the story had to follow the Count's adventures in a manner of a "picaresque novel" on the other hand (*Comickers* 2005: 37; Maeda in Hikawa I-1). The plot thus was supposed to focus on the picaro Monte Cristo and his adventures in open space (*Comickers* 2005: 38-39; *Gankutsuō Complete* 2005: 104; Hikawa II-1, 2). It was, indeed, just the right time to pursue such project. The anime boom had almost reached its peak, with an increasing number of titles produced every year. Late night slots, one of the major factors that contributed to this rapid expansion, hosted titles that targeted adult audiences and were allowed more freedom in subject matter as well as "more liberal styles of expression" (Joo and Denison 2013b: 20). Despite these favorable conditions, Maeda and his team faced several difficulties when they tried to proceed in the initial direction. First, most of the ideas they had accumulated were too radical, that is, too closely entwined with hard science fiction, space opera and cyberpunk (*Comickers* 2005: 38; Nakamura 2006: 10; Hashimoto 2004: 23). Therefore, they were more likely to attract hardcore otaku and alienate the broader audience. Second, the content was male-oriented, which naturally would cut off half of the potential viewers (*Comickers* 2005: 38; Hikawa I-2; *Gankutsuō Complete* 2005, 101). Third, Maeda's own ethical stance came into conflict with his intended approach. The last two problems are in fact closely intertwined, and it is the way they were negotiated that eventually defined *Gankutsuō*. The first problem was solved "along the way."

To start with the last, the most subjective factor — Maeda's take on *The Count of Monte Cristo* shifted greatly when his approach to revenge at large came in conflict with the intended structure of the work. That is, Maeda wanted an "open" story (which, as he understood it, would have allowed the viewer's imagination to go beyond the closing

credits[175]) with a more or less positive ending for the protagonist. But he found it hard to reconcile the very act of revenge with the promise of bright future. That is, a person bent on revenge is tormented, maimed by definition, and therefore cannot recover easily even after the revenge is finished. If they are able to do so and continue into peaceful life without second thought, then their previous actions make no sense[176] and must have been unethical (*Gankutsuō Complete* 2005: 101; Nakamura 2006: 10). In other words, Maeda found himself in impasse: he had to either give up the whole revenge plotline, which would render adaptation meaningless, or follow through with a dark ending (something that he and Ariwara Yura would afterwards do in the manga version of *Gankutsuō*). Obviously, one cannot help but recall Alfred Bester, as he managed to savor the raw power of obsession and hatred, and yet ultimately condemn revenge and violence and push his (anti-)hero to spiritually evolve, to grow and surpass any limits. However, there was also a primary difference in the way Bester and Maeda approached their work. Bester was unrestricted. He used *The Count of Monte Cristo* as one of his inspirations, but on the whole he worked freely, taking in only the elements he saw fit. As for Maeda, he apparently did not want to stray too far from the story he intended to adapt (Hikawa II-2).

Besides, this anti-revenge pathos did not stop with the immediate effect of the events on the hero's fate. Maeda and Kōyama were also concerned with the impact that revenge had on innocent people unknowingly and involuntarily involved with it (Suzuki 2006: 66; *Gankutsuō Complete* 2005: 100, 104). Such issues as the legitimacy of revenge and the necessity of forgiveness are raised within *The Count of Monte Cristo* as well, but they never form a true dilemma. Maeda's doubts about "simply counterbalancing revenge with several charitable deeds" seem quite convincing (*Gankutsuō Complete* 2005: 100). Indeed, in Dumas' novel Monte Cristo helps Albert and Valentine, whose lives have been destroyed by his

[175] Suzuki 2006: 66; Nakamura 2006: 10.

[176] "[If you are going to end like this] why was the revenge even needed?!" (「最後はどうなるんだろうって考えてみても、「うーん、伯爵とメルセデスが渚でラブラブか？」とか考えちゃって〈略〉それだと、最初から復讐なんてするなよ、って感じですよね」(Maeda in *Gankutsuō Complete 2005 2005 2005*: 101; trans. mine).

revenge, mostly for the sake of Albert's mother, Mercédès, and Valentine's lover, Maximilien Morrel. Additionally, a skeptical reader might notice that the Count gives his pardon only to people who have never wronged him. If he shows mercy to his old enemies, than he does so only after these enemies have been destroyed (Villefort, Danglars) or face almost certain death (Caderousse). On the other hand, revenge accelerates Edmond Dantès' transformation into a transcendent being, which started in the Château d'If, as he becomes a tool, if not an embodiment of Providence.

It has been mentioned already that Bester's novel contains a shift: while the (anti-)hero, Gully Foyle, is equally driven towards glory by his vengeance, he is able to make a final step and become a superhuman being only after he realizes the futility of revenge, gives it up and seeks redemption. *Gankutsuō* occupies the middle ground: instead of forcing this complicated ethical evolution on one hero, it introduces two strong opposing themes. One is the theme of revenge, the other one that of forgiveness. They run parallel to each other throughout the anime, spawning multiple oppositions: the Count and his victims, the Count and Haydée, the Count and Fernand Mondego, Albert and Benedetto/Andrea, grown-ups and the young generation, etc. The issue of revenge itself is approached from a new angle: if in *The Count of Monte Cristo* this is an at times cruel, but overall just course of action, in *Gankutsuō* revenge is presented as something deplorable and scary (fascinating as it may be). And just as in *The Count of Monte Cristo* the eponymous character personifies the omnipotent power that rewards good and punishes evil deeds, in *Gankutsuō* the absolute power of forgiveness is associated with the figure of Albert de Morcerf. As for Monte Cristo, he embodies a destructive, irrational force that cannot find atonement on its own. It is instructive that in the anime, all the sequences where Monte Cristo helps his friends or the innocent victims of his revenge have been removed. As a result, the Count's role as benefactor was radically diminished.

The new reading of *The Count of Monte Cristo* instigates further changes on the level of emplottment. With Albert as a protagonist and emphasis put on the excessive cruelty

of the Count's revenge, the focus of the story naturally gravitates to the younger characters. In Dumas novel, the point of view shifts unrestrictedly between various characters — the major binding element being the omnipresent figure of the Count. Nevertheless, it is possible to point out the characters most prominent in particular plotlines. Thus, the affairs of the Morcerf household are mostly described in connection with Albert, Danglars' family is represented by Baron Danglars himself, and accounts of the house of Villefort focus on Villefort and his daughter Valentine. But if one keeps in mind that Valentine's main plotline covers her affair with Maximilien Morrel (the primary love story of the novel), it becomes clear that to Dumas direct targets of Monte Cristo's revenge hold greater interest than their kin (with the exception of Albert).

Gankutsuō anime, however, pays much more attention to the experiences of the younger generation,[177] especially Albert, Eugénie, and Franz. This trio, in a sense, stays in contrast with two others: "Edmond Dantès—Mercédès Herrera—Fernand Mondego" (another group of childhood friends), and "Fernand—Danglars—Villefort" (the primary objects of Count's revenge). The first opposition imbues the narrative with hope: the older trio of friends was poisoned and undone by hated, betrayal, and deceit, but the younger one even after falling apart managed to preserve emotional bonds. Thus, Edmond's long-dead dreams can yet be realized by his reflection, Albert. The second opposition brings to light the question of fair retribution, since it juxtaposes the real villains, whom Monte Cristo rightfully hates, with the "collateral damage." The theme of children as victims of grown-ups' affairs is reinforced through changes in the focus of the story and in its events. Not only do Albert and his friends fall victims to the Count's revenge schemes, they also suffer violence from the elder generation (often from their own parents). Fernand shoots Albert, Danglars locks up and threatens Eugénie in order to force her into marriage with criminal Benedetto (who nearly rapes her in the anime), and, as the most striking case, Franz is slaughtered by the Count.

[177] This also applies to the novelization.

Moreover, the anime (and, by extension, the franchise on the whole) does not limit the moral conflict to a simple opposition between two individuals — Albert and the Count — or between them and supporting characters, but it actually tries to address the way these worldviews influence the development of history. In doing so, it follows Bester rather than Dumas.

2.2.2. Ethics of *Gankutsuō* as a Double-Layered Construct: the Political Background of the Story

Admittedly, *The Count of Monte Cristo* employs historical events as background, another device that links Dumas' novel to the Romantic tradition (Terteryan 1989: n.pag,). However, even though the first part of Dumas' novel is deeply connected with events that shaped the history of France at the beginning of the 19th century, these connections lose their significance as the plot advances. The first part of the novel starts in the wake of the Hundred Days, in 1815, and the calamity that befalls Edmond Dantès is grounded in the political perturbations of the time. He gets reported and arrested as a Bonapartist conspirator involved in the efforts to reinstate exiled Napoleon. The same political circumstances then push Villefort, a staunch royalist, to "bury" Dantès in the Château d'If. And they are also partly the reason why Dantès' friends are not able to help him in the following years. For the second and third parts of the novel, however, the situation in the country, the state of the government, and the public opinion remain obscure. The only time political issues come to the fore in the third part of the novel is when they bring to an end Valentine's potential marriage to Franz D'Épinay (ch.75 "A Signed Statement"), and even then these issues are a matter of the past. If secondary characters are not visibly active on the political scene, this distance is doubled in case of Monte Cristo himself. It seems that typical characteristics of a Romantic hero —disappointment with the social order and desire for ultimate freedom (again, from the social order in the first place) — dilute the Count's national identity and obstruct his integration into any hierarchical system, or his commitment to societal issues

such as politics. Monte Cristo denies any form of legal control over himself and reaffirms time and again his position as a cosmopolitan, that is, a citizen of the world (ch.31 "Italy: Sinbad The Sailor"; ch.48 "Ideology"). Detached from society and its concerns (with exception made only for certain individuals), the hero disappears, presumably into some world of his own making, as soon as his mission is over.

When put like this, political references or even the whole premise of Dantès' arrest look more like a convenient plot device: it is easy to imagine him persecuted for a different type of crime, and Villefort's decisions could have had other reasons. The role of the historical setting is still very important though — it brought a sense of immediacy to the readers of that day and age. The novel was published in 1844-45 — Monte Cristo's revenge unfolded in 1838. For the readers, the Count and the other characters were contemporary figures, they shared the same experiences, operated within the same reference frame, were guided by or pointedly refused to follow the same social mores. And 1815 was one of the key years in French history; as such, it evoked strong emotional response in Dumas' contemporaries.[178] In other words, in a sense, the opposition between Bonapartists and royalists served to increase verisimilitude, providing the novel with particular substantiality.

Tiger! Tiger! is immediately recognizable as a novel written at the height of the Cold War. This is most evident in the opening of Chapter 8, where Bester describes the fatal stand between two political powers in his typically succinct and vivid manner:

> The old year soured as pestilence poisoned the planets. The war gained momentum and grew from a distant affair of romantic raids and skirmishes in space to a holocaust in the making. It became evident that the last of the World Wars was done and the first of the Solar Wars had begun.

[178] 1915 saw both the triumphal return of Napoleon as an Emperor of France during the Hundred Days, and his ultimate defeat, with the restoration of the Bourbon dynasty to follow. All in all, it was an epoch-turning year.

> The belligerents slowly massed men and materiel for the havoc. The Outer Satellites introduced universal conscription, and the Inner Planets perforce followed suit. Industries, trades, sciences, skills, and professions were drafted; regulations and oppressions followed. The armies and navies requisitioned and commanded.
>
> Commerce obeyed, for this war (like all wars) was the shooting phase of a commercial struggle. But populations rebelled, and draft-jaunting and labor-jaunting became critical problems. Spy scares and invasion scares spread. The hysterical became informers and lynchers. An ominous foreboding paralyzed every home from Baffin Island to the Falklands" (Bester 1957: 111).

This historical background shows also, for instance, in a change of the cast. If in Dumas' novel the protagonist opposes three men who embody the military, the finance, and the legal system, in Bester's variation the last one is replaced by science. Moreover, the scientist in question has become deadly radioactive after some accident and as such poses immediate threat to everyone around him. Bester paints the picture in bold strokes, but one thing is undeniable: *Tiger! Tiger!,* for all its outlandish spectacles, is relentlessly topical. What this means is that the hero cannot afford a convenient escape from earthly matters. *Tiger! Tiger!* is still a hymn to individuality, but it also accepts, even insists upon the indissoluble connection between the individual and society. Or, rather, it calls for a society of active individuals: the very urgency of the global conflict denies roundabout outcomes. The hero cannot get away with some successful self-reflection — he *has to* become a Messiah.

On the other hand, *Gankutsuō* is not rooted in any particular political events, nor does it have to refer to any specific background. For the audience of 2004, the events described in *The Count of Monte Cristo* had the immediacy of a history lesson. Likewise, the

opposition of two huge galactic power blocks — the "Kingdom" (of which Neo-Paris, and Earth, is presumably the center) and the "Empire," which clearly parallel Bester's Inner Planets and Outer Satellites — would probably evoke some vague space-opera associations rather than real geopolitics (the issue of terrorism had much more immediacy at the time). And yet *Gankutsuō* media mix, too, introduces a political background to the story. Moreover, the roles the characters assume in the interpersonal conflicts are closely connected to their socio-political stance, in particular, their attitude towards the war. Militarist vibe runs very strong in the evil trinity Monte Cristo aims to crush — most evidently in Fernand, who makes the war propaganda the fuel for his election run. Fernand's triumph can result only in the start of a new Galactic war — this hostility combined with ambition is also evident in Villefort. The latter is distrustful to the point of paranoia, seeing spies everywhere, and he seeks to smother liberal rights in favor of instant prosecution and execution. If this characterization seems excessive, than so is Fernand's, who ultimately organizes a coup d'état in the attempt to forcefully establish a military dictatorship. On the other hand, positively presented characters are either pacifistic by their views, or take a proactive anti-war stance. Thus, the opposition between vengefulness and forgiveness (as well as hate and love) is mirrored by open violence as opposed to self-sacrifice and negotiation, and, finally, between war and peace. *Gankutsuō* draws parallels between highly idiosyncratic values of one isolated individual and principles that play an important role in the life of society at large.

2.2.3. Catering to the Target Audience in *Gankutsuō* and Its Impact on Characters

While the new reading on *The Count of Monte Cristo* by the creative team has profoundly affected both the way the story is told and its outcome, another, and probably the most convincing reason for these transformations is to be found in the medium itself. *Gankutsuō* is first and foremost a TV anime with its specific conventions and an audience to whose demands it must cater. In other words, it needed a protagonist who would be easy to

emphasize with for the broadest audience possible. This became an even more serious issue when the target audience for *Gankutsuō* was set to so-called F1, that is, to women from 20 to 35.[179] This particular viewership is considered the hardest to reach and hold (*Comickers* 2005: 38; *Gankutsuō Complete* 2005: 102), so it probably will not be an exaggeration to say that its supposed tastes determined most of the changes in the concept of the series. The creators figured that the simplest way to appeal to the F1 audience and still reach out for the wider viewership would be to emphasize the drama or even melodrama.[180] To borrow Maeda's words: "Everything in *Gankutsuō* is balanced around human emotions. We follow not the logic of the storyworld or the story itself, but the logic of characters' feelings"[181]. Accordingly most hardcore SF or space opera elements were dropped, along with the outer space itself. The same considerations with regard to the intended viewership were employed in the choice of protagonist.

For instance, macho heroes like Bester's Gully Foyle, while not uncommon, are generally found in male-oriented works.[182] Dumas' Monte Cristo himself is a character type shaped by Romanticism. His cynical monologues and self-reflections, several strong passions that drive him, his desire for freedom from society and his battle against villains who embody bourgeois vices — all these traits are typical of the Romantic movement (Terteryan 1989: n.pag). Characters sharing some or even all of these traits are not uncommon in anime, however, they are generally ascribed the role of antagonists or villains. There is also a tendency to present them from a certain distance, with another character

[179] In his interview in *Gankutsuō Complete* (2005: 101-102), Maeda mentions that this proposition came up during his discussions with staff and producers, but he does not specify who the idea was brought up by.
[180] Maeda points out that many SF elements were dropped in favor of so-called "melodrama" (昼メロ) in his interview to Hikawa (I-2).
[181]「この『巌窟王』では全て「人の感情」が落としどころになっているんです。設定とか物語のロジックとかではなくて、キャラの気持ちのロジックで作っていく。」(*Comickers* 2005: 41; trans. mine)
[182] According to Maeda, at the point when they decided on an F1 target audience, he had already been working on the scenario for about half a year with the Count as central figure, bearing male viewers in mind (*Gankutsuō Complete 2005* 2005: 101).

functioning as a conduit for observation and interaction.[183] According to Maeda, one of the merits Albert has as a "vantage point" is that his attitude towards Monte Cristo coincides with that of the viewers: they are intrigued, entertained, and attracted to the mysterious figure (*Gankutsuō Complete* 2005: 101). At the same time, as is evident from the change in Albert's age (in *Gankutsuō* he is 15 instead of 20), the creators evidently recognized his potential to appeal to a younger audience. Kōyama, for instance, draws a curious parallel between two historical periods: the late July Monarchy in France and the early 2000s in Japan. In both cases the recent past is marked by tremendous, world-changing events, but the present seems stale and insignificant in comparison, an atmosphere that first and foremost affects the young generation.[184] Likewise, Maeda refers to the feeling of entrapment (閉鎖感), which plagues Albert, as one of the common points between him and contemporary teenagers (*Gankutsuō Complete* 2005: 101). Furthermore, just as Monte Cristo bears the typical traits of a Romantic hero, so Albert in *Gankutsuō* is a recognizable protagonist type of anime (drawn along the trends that run almost opposite to 19th century Romantic ideals[185]). As a consequence, Albert has universality that makes him accessible not only to the target audience, but to anyone familiar with traditional narrative patterns of anime.[186]

---

[183] The same attitude is expressed by Maeda in *Comickers* interview (2005: 39).

[184]「あれはルイ・フィリップの王政復古の時代が舞台なんですけど、その前にはナポレオンの偉大な時代があったんですね。でも、その後は全体的に小さくまとまっちゃってて、なんとなく閉塞しているんですよ。そういった雰囲気が、今僕らが感じている雰囲気と似ているんじゃないかなあって思えたんですよ。」(Kōyama, in *Gankutsuō Complete 2005* 2005: 104).

[185] A generic description of the type Albert belongs to would be the following:

A teenager on the road of self-exploration, weak and often lost, neither smart nor tragic. Still, this teenager possesses a certain charisma, which attracts other characters, and a pure heart. Incidentally, this heart allows him to rise above common world vices, but, unlike the Romantic hero, he is never separated from society nor wishes to. More often than not character development in anime cannot be described as coming-of-age in a strict sense, but it is still usually a journey of self-exploration and quest to determine one's place in the world. While Bildungsroman as well as initiation rites of mythology and folklore are universal, in Japanese anime the trope of the weak protagonist on the road of self-discovery received an immense boost after the impact of *Neon Genesis Evangelion* in 1995-96. Moreover, in 2004, the resulting trends were in their prime (this tendency as well as its key term — 'sekai-kei' — is discussed in more detail in the next chapter).

[186] Whether this strategy was ultimately successful or not is a matter of discussion, since many viewers in Japan and abroad have actually been irritated by Albert, contrary to the creators' expectations.

Naturally, organizing the story as Albert's Bildungsroman required rearrangements in the order of events, just as focus on drama meant rearrangements in characters' relationships. As a consequence, the whole revenge plotline had to be changed to provide new emphatic points and to leave the showdown with the Morcerfs for the last stage of the Count's plan.[187] And the young people, who are barely acquaintances in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, form a group of close friends, who are more actively involved in the unfolding events. While the last refers to the juxtaposition between generations described above, it just as much results from the simple necessity to spin a web of emotionally charged connections around the protagonist. For the same reason the family of the Morcerfs is given significant attention, with members' troubles and ambitions carefully explained and developed. That Eugénie and Albert fall in love is due to the Bildungsroman, which, as Maeda puts it, needed some "straightness" (*Comickers* 2005: 40). It is not quite clear whether this connection between coming of age and heterosexual romance should be traced back to Maeda and his team or the target audience. But the titillating ambiguity of affections between Franz and Albert and Albert and the Count (nowadays commonly known as BL "fan service") can be seen as an attempt to appeal to a female viewership.[188] The same applies to other elements and motifs in the series, such as giant robot (mecha) fights or the characters of Peppo (a cross-dresser with a mild crush on Albert) and Benedetto/Andrea (who is portrayed as an extremely beautiful but twisted young man). Those are all parts of Azuma's database and potential hooks to draw in new consumers. Like most of anime, *Gankutsuō* does not try to hide the elements defined by audience orientation — rather it pushes them to the front and integrates them into the story.[189] The mecha fight, for example, becomes a huge plot device

[187] These and other changes are discussed by Kōyama, Maeda, and Yamashita in *Comickers* 2005: 39-40.
[188] Kōyama admits as much when asked directly (*Gankutsuō Complete* 2005: 105).
[189] This foregrounding of such elements also strangely brings into light similar elements in *The Count of Monte Cristo*: the exotic girl of ambiguous status beside Monte Cristo; gratitious depictions of violence (the title of ch.45, "The Rain Of Blood," is an accurate description of its high point, and ch.33 "Roman Bandits" includes a disturbing tale of rape and murder which has no connection whatsoever to the main story); the syrupy love story of Maximilien and Valentine; Benedetto/Andrea, who is the

in episode 18. As for ambiguity in the characters' relationship, it produces new layers of meaning and thus contributes to the narrative that follows "the logic of feelings."

To summarize, as an adaptation, *Gankutsuō* anime is shaped by a number of factors, which involve both deliberate reevaluation of the contents and characters' positions, and such factors as the target audience and format specifics. Equally important is the fact that *Gankutsuō* is not a straightforward adaptation of a single work. It is built on two novels, which, in turn, have intertextual relations of their own. Needless to say, this complicated interaction between precursor works, adaptors' values, and pragmatic reasons defines not only the anime, but all other media mix constituents. In the following part these works and their relationship to each other as well as to the adapted novels will be discussed in greater detail. First, however, an outline of the whole *Gankutsuō* media mix is required.

---

very definition of picaro and thus provides entertainment in the form of adventures of a rogue, amoral hero, etc. It is, indeed, amazing how many elements of *Gankutsuō* seem directly transposed from the novel, while in fact they stem from the different set of conventions. Thus Peppo and Benedetto/Cavalcanti, both recognizable anime types, have been developed and given more personality in the media mix, but those factors which make them parts of database have been laid out by Dumas.

2.3. The *Gankutsuō* Media Mix as a Network

In a manner that in 2004-05 had already become an established practice the anime *Gankutsuō* was followed by a number of other texts, which in one way or the other shared its content: a novelization with a sequel, a three-volume manga, a separate novel which offers a side story, and an audio drama.[190] In the case of *Gankutsuō*, all of these works were created by the members of the anime production team — an occasion rare enough to be worth mentioning here. The comprehensive list of participants and their roles is included in Appendix 1. This section focuses mostly on the contents of these texts and the links that integrate them into a network. Their material aspects are analyzed in greater detail in Chapter Three.

2.3.1. An Overview of the *Gankutsuō* Texts

Figure 3 visualizes the relationship between *Gankutsuō* works in terms of diegetic chronology.

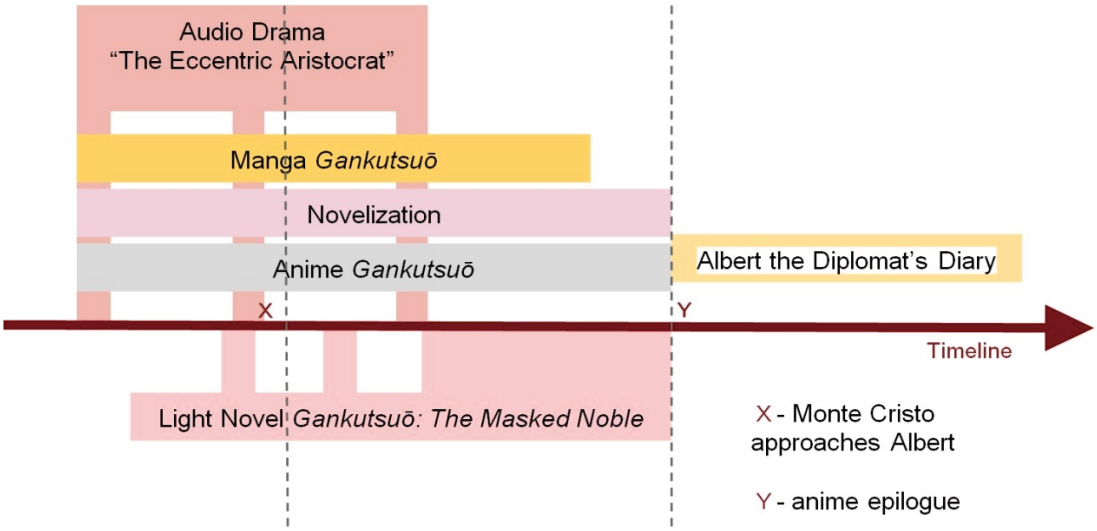


Figure 3. The timeline of the *Gankutsuō* media mix (relationships between the constituents).

[190] *Gankutsuō* media mix includes several novels, which offer alternative versions of the story and are penned by different authors. In order to distinguish between them when the need arises, the three-volume text by Kōyama Shūichi is called "novelization" (this is an accurate term, because this work immediately follows the anime and remains close to it plot-wise), and Ariwara Yura's *The Masked Noble* is referred to simply as a "novel" or as a "side story." Additionally, Kōyama authored the third separate text, Albert's diary, which is called as such.

The time period covered by the anime and by Kōyama's novelization corresponds to that of Dumas' novel. Albert's diary can be considered a printed sequel to both of them. The audio drama, *The Eccentric Aristocrat,* serves as a prequel, providing some glimpses at Monte Cristo's past. The manga, starting at the same point as the anime, then takes a turn to focus entirely on the Count and his inner demon Gankutsuō, and pursues only one revenge plotline — the one which involves the Villefort family. The one-volume side story, *Gankutsuō: The Masked Nobleman*, shifts the focus to Benedetto/Andrea, the illegitimate son of Villefort, who assists the Count in his revenge. When put like this, the relationship between these works seems pretty simple. However, changes in the development of events and perspective in each one are radical enough to leave only several scenes and plotlines that can be compared across the texts. For instance, major plotlines across works which cover the same period diegetically (that is, the anime, the manga, the novelization, and the side-story novel) can be sorted like this:

Table 2. Major plotlines in the media mix constituents.

anime	manga	novelization	side-story novel
The Morcerf family			
Albert's "bildungsroman"			
Covered		Detailed	
Revenge against Fernand			
Covered		Covered	Covered (alternate version)
The Villefort family			
Poisoning in Villeforte's house and the fate of Villeforte's family			
Covered	Detailed (alternate version)	Detailed (alternate version)	Summary
Villeforte's illegitimate child			
Covered		Summary	Detailed
The Danglars family			
Albert and Eugénie's betrothal, love triangle with Benedetto/Cavalcanti			
Covered		Detailed	Detailed (alternate version)
Danglars' bancrupcy and final fate			
Covered		Summary, no culmination	Detailed, no culmination

The "alternate version" in Table 2 refers to cases of a completely transformed plotline — but even when the unfolding of events coincides in general, there are usually minor differences and discrepancies. Very few scenes and sequences travel across the media mix unchanged. As for the "detailed" storylines, they involve not so much the addition of new information on the fictional world as deeper engagement with certain characters. The degree to which the story is altered varies with each work.

Thus Kōyama's novelization (Media Factory; December 2004, February 2005, May 2005) serves as a double of the anime series, with the reservation that it is narrated strictly from Albert's point of view (though short passages that offer insights into other characters' psyche and circumstances are inserted at the beginning of each chapter). Novelization elaborates on the Bildungsroman and mystery aspects of the anime narrative, trying to offer a minute account of Albert's evolution throughout the series and a sufficient build-up with regards to the Count's true plans. It still covers all of the plotlines to some extent, and as such, it is the only work apart from the anime that offers the complete version of the *Gankutsuō* story and is therefore a veritable point of entry into the media mix. It is not, however, a substitution. As demonstrated in Table 3, the first two volumes were released while the anime was still running. For this reason, Kōyama forestalled the development of events in the printed version: essentially, two first volumes cover the content of the first eleven episodes. It did not make much sense to simply repeat the contents of the anime in a printed form; after all, the audiences' memories were still fresh. Therefore, the novelization includes additional scenes and alterations that cover a range from minor details to the whole plotlines while following the same route overall.[191] In other words, here the industry-specific

[191] Kōyama, who is the scenarist and the head writer of the anime series, explains these transformations as his own reading of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, running parallel to the anime series (Kōyama 2005b: 315). This claim, however, is not at odds with both pragmatic reasons and general storytelling principles of the media mix. In fact, one might say that this is a perfect illustration of the supremacy of the character in the contents industry paradigm. The very idea of the *Gankutsuō* novelization seems rather pointless at first sight. After all, there is already a book, which contains

reasoning behind the principles of variation evident in the typical media mix development comes into light: another major work in the media mix has to be different enough to preclude redundancy and, which is no less important, prevent spoilers.

Table 3. Overlap between the coverage of events in the anime and the novelization.

Episode number	01	02	03	04	05	06	07	08	09	10	11
Release date	05.10. 2004	12.10. 2004	19.10. 2004	24.10. 2004	02.11. 2004	09.11. 2004	16.11. 2004	23.11. 2004	30.11. 2004	07.12. 2004	14.12. 2004
Events in the anime	The meeting on Luna — Albert and Eugénie's engagement cancelled (includes first moves by Heloise as well)										
Events in the novelization	Albert meets the Count in Neo-Rome, Luna; Albert's friends introduced; Monte Cristo visits the Morcerfs; Albert has a duel with Maximilien										31.12.2004 **Vol.1**
Episode number	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19			
Release date	04.01. 2005	11.01. 2005	18.01. 2005	25.01. 2005	01.02. 2005	08.02. 2005	15.02. 2005	22.02. 2005			
Events in the anime	Events in the anime: **Eugénie's Concert** — Franz's letter (aftermath of his death)										
Events in the novelization	Monte Cristo meets Danglars; Haydée sees Fernand de Morcerf (incident at the opera); serial poisoning in Villefort's house starts; the dinner at Auteil; Benedetto/Andrea is introduced; Franz starts his investigation; Maximilien gets poisoned; Albert and Eugénie's engagement cancelled										28.02.2005 **Vol.2**
Episode number	20	21	22	23	24						
Release date	01.03.2005	08.03.2005	15.03.2005	22.03.2005	29.03.2005						
Events in the anime	Eugénie saved from Cavalcanti — The Finale										
Events in the novelization	Serial poisoning case is solved; **Eugénie's concert**; Villefort is arrested; Benedetto/Andrea gets engaged to Eugénie; Haydée reveals Fernand's crimes; Albert chlallenges Monte Cristo to a duel; Franz uncovers the Count's past and the meaning of "Gankutsuō"; Monte Cristo kills Franz; Albert saves Eugénie; Fernand tries to accomplish coup d'état —— Culmination of the story and the epilogue										31.05.2005 **Vol.3**

much more material than the anime and is sufficiently different to prove a very entertaining reading even for the audiences (and maybe especially those) already acquainted with the anime. This, combined with the fact that novelizations are not considered a very profitable enterprise per se (Iida 2012: 303-304), should have discouraged Kōyama from the start. Despite all reservations, there was a favorable factor for the novelization in this particular case: *The Count of Monte Cristo* did not belong to "otaku products," and chances were that at least part of the audience would be more interested in a more familiar format than in a 19th century novel. However, it also meant that Kōyama would have to follow the "traditional" narrative patterns and focus on the protagonist's experiences. Incidentally, that was the most obvious way to produce a work very different from that of Dumas.

Despite its semi-independent status, the novelization is still bound to the anime. This connection is secured in two very different ways. First, with accordance to defining trends of otaku culture (and, consequently of the otaku-oriented content industry), two works are united by characters or, to be more precise, by kyara. In other words, as a light novel the novelization relies on the visual designs established in the anime. This is evident from the covers of the three volumes, the frontispieces and the character portrait gallery set at the beginning of each volume. This is also where connection by omission comes into play. As well known, illustrations are an essential part of the light novel. The bond between illustrations and the written text is so strong, that the relationship between them is generally called synergetic (Satō 2013: 155; Maynard 2012: 263). It has even been pointed out that light novels are the product of "collective authorship," where the role of the illustrator is not inferior to the role of the writer[192] (Ichiyanagi 2013: 15; Satō 2013: 142; Maynard 2012: 264). But the *Gankutsuō* novelization is surprisingly lacking in terms of illustrations: they are scarce, grayish and on the whole very moderate-looking. In truth, they could be hardly more at odds with the lush visuals one comes to expect from *Gankutsuō* works. Of course, production costs and time concerns play an important role: sometimes quality printing cannot be afforded; or it might be that the principal illustrator Matsubara Hidenori had only time to draw the covers; etc. Important here is that the novelization does not have to include high-quality illustrations when it can rely on the anime to provide the visuals. A reader hooked by the story in the written form thus has even more incentive to move to another medium. If Geoffey Long describes 'negative capability' as a lack of answers, as mysteries awaiting to be solved and secrets to be revealed, than here one may find another kind of negative incapability on the level of visual expression.

[192] In his 『キャラクター小説の作り方』(2013), aimed at aspiring light novel writers, Ōtsuka Eiji recommends to create character sheets with manga-like illustrations before one even starts to write (Ōtsuka 2013: 20-21). In other words, manga- and anime-like visuals play important role not only in the final product and in the process of reading, but at the early stages of creation.

Long's negative capability in a more classic sense exists on the level of content as well. The novelization manages to tie the loose ends together more or less and bring the story to the epilogue, but it does so in a rather perfunctory manner. As a matter of fact, only about 25 pages of the printed text (out of about 800 in total) correspond to the contents of the last four episodes of the anime. Culminations and denouements of all three revenge plotlines are practically synopsized,[193] and the accompanying spectacle is omitted. In part, the composition chosen by Kōyama seems to be at fault. As has been mentioned already, the two strongest points in the novelization are the development of Albert (as the text incessantly discloses his interiority) and the mystery that surrounds Monte Cristo, his true identity and intentions.[194] However, both of these culminate in episodes 19-20 of the anime. Kōyama even exacerbates the situation by choosing Franz to deliver all the answers with regards to Gankutsuō and Edmond Dantès. Consequently, after Franz is killed (ch.17 "Tragedy" in the novelization, which corresponds to ep.18 in the anime), and Albert recovers from his grief, the story loses momentum, and the remaining revenge plotlines become irrelevant, resulting in a sketchy final. But Monte Cristo's plans regarding his enemies still remain an important part of the story as does his opposition with Albert. Nor should one forget the considerable emotional impact these interactions yield — an impact totally missing in the novelization's finale. In the end, the reader, who wants more than pure information, has to turn to the anime.[195]

---

[193] This tendency to summarize the outcome for each of the three villains produces some ridiculous results with regard to Danglars: both Kōyama and Ariwara faithfully introduce Chekhov's gun directly relevant to Danglars' undoing, and then forget about it. The anime is the only work in the media mix to properly finish this plotline.

[194] This composition actually reflects Kōyama's own tastes, as he reportedly loves to write mystery and plant clues around the text (*Gankutsuō Complete 2005 2005*: 107).

[195] A counterargument is possible of course, that this "lacking" finale is a consequence of medium specificity — that is, that a written text, and particularly the typical light novel style does not allow for the same impact in certain parts of the story. Up to a point this is convincing: for instance, the final episodes depict the bombing of Neo-Paris, races in aircraft vessels and a mecha fight in surreal decorations. It would be hard to reproduce the effect of these verbally, especially since the novelization follows the light novel trend of avoiding lengthy descriptions. Kōyama himself seems to have had the same notion, as all relevant moments are skimmed over. Monte Cristo's final stand-offs with the three villains and Albert, however, have potential for the human drama not limited to a visual medium — the dialogue can serve as a sufficient and an effective tool in such scenes. It is impossible

In addition to the novelization, Kōyama Shūichi authored *Albert the Diplomat's Diary* (online serialization: July 2005-July 2006; printed version: August 2006), which can be read as a sequel to the novelization, and, to some extent, the anime. At the same time, insofar as it follows the development of events peculiar for these two *Gankutsuō* versions, it cuts itself off from the manga and Ariwara Yura's light novel. There is not much new information, besides some rather placid explanation of "how everyone lived afterwards" (though, as fans' responses indicate, this is what was expected from the sequel). The diary, however, contributed to the media mix, because it provided a new experience to the fans and helped sustain their interest. How exactly this was accomplished is discussed in Chapter Three.

The three-volume manga *Gankutsuō* by Maeda Mahiro and Ariwara Yura (serialized in *Monthly Afternoon*, May 2005-May 2008), stands out not only because of its stunning visuals and radical reinterpretation of the Villefort plotline, but also because of its deliberate incompleteness. Potentially there could have been a way for Maeda and Ariwara to create a relatively self-sufficient story — especially since they move away so much from other media mix constituents. After all, the Villefort plotline has a clearly carved beginning and end, particularly in the manga, which does away with two closely related plotlines.[196] But the manga does not try to realize this potential — in fact, it is organized in a way that draws attention to the loose ends instead. It starts with reintroducing the protagonist of the anime, Albert, and goes on to lay the ground for most of the plotlines of the story and bring into play all the characters, including the minor ones. And yet, all this material is completely discarded after the end of volume one. Most space in the next two volumes is devoted to a rather grotesque rendering of Villefort and his family's ill fate, interwoven with Monte Cristo's flashbacks. These flashbacks are quite extensive and convincingly connect the

---

to judge now whether the lack of emotionally charged moments in the novelization's finale was the unfortunate result of some blunders in production, or whether it was a conscious decision of the author (Kōyama stresses in the afterword for the third volume that these three volumes are his own project, as opposed to the collectively produced anime).

[196] Closely connected to the fall of the Villefort house are Maximilien and Valentine's love story and the story of Villefort's illegitimate son Benedetto. In the manga, neither Maximilien nor Benedetto are even mentioned.

Count's past as Edmond Dantès to his present. Moreover, they raise stakes with regard to the Count's inner conflict and allow readers a first close look at the entity of Gankutsuō. But this plotline also remains unfinished: the third volume ends with Monte Cristo moving on to his next target. Thus, instead of building another self-sufficient reading of the story, however partial, the manga points explicitly at the anime — the only work in the media mix that is able to finish all the lines and cover all the gaps.

Another printed constituent of Gankutsuō media mix is Ariwara Yura's *The Masked Aristocrat* (Kodansha, August 2008). This short novel occupies the middle ground between Kōyama's novelization and the manga. On the one hand, it covers most of the plotlines recounted in its more extended counterparts. Moreover, unlike its predecessors, it is not limited to one character's point of view.[197] Nevertheless, most of the events are abridged or summarized, so Ariwaras's novel looks more like a sketch of the larger Monte Cristo's story than an independent new rendering. On the other hand, the novel follows the pattern set by the manga: it picks one plotline and elaborates on it. In this case, the chosen central character does not belong to the anime's primary cast. It is Benedetto, also known as Andrea Cavalcanti, who plays a decidedly secondary role in the other works.[198] One could argue though, that Ariwara's novel changes the character too much, so that instead of an extended or an alternative story of Andrea, it tells the story of an alternative Andrea.[199] Incidentally,

[197] To specify, there are passages that give access to the interiority of Benedetto/Andrea, Eugénie, Monte Cristo, Beruccio, and Baptistin. However, in most cases the perception of a character does not coincide completely with that of the narrating entity, so it would be more correct to speak of the narrator's introspection into characters' minds.

[198] This shift, the centripetal movement of the character, in fact, continues the vector traced by *The Count of Monte Cristo* and the anime *Gankutsuō*. In Dumas' novel, Andrea is one of the key figures in the Count's revenge (a sort of trump card against Villefort), but he spends most of the book unaware either of his position or of his true identity. Not so in *Gankutsuō*: Andrea is fully aware of his place in Monte Cristo's scheme; moreover, he pursues his own side project within the Count's plans and acts with double maliciousness against Albert and Eugénie. *The Masked Aristocrat* retains this new positioning, but also, similar to manga, alters the events, and Andrea is presented as a much more sympathetic figure than in the anime.

[199] Benedetto/Andrea in the anime is depicted as a totally corrupted criminal and a sex predator. He seduces his own mother, Victoria de Danglars, and has the same plans for her daughter and his half-sister Eugénie. While in Dumas' novel Andrea also intends to marry Eugénie, he is not interested in her, but in her father's money. Moreover, he does not know that they are blood relatives. In the anime and novelization, however, Eugénie is Andrea's primary goal — to the extent that he attempts to

the relationship between the anime and the novelization is mirrored by the connection between *The Masked Aristocrat* and the manga *Gankutsuō*. Ariwara's side story, released after the manga's end, also addresses it on the visual and on the narrative level. The character introduction incorporates images from the manga, and all illustrations have been drawn by Maeda Mahiro, in the same style as in his manga. Content-wise the novel adopts the facts particular to the manga version (Beruccio's past as an Italian godfather, specific details of Dantès' imprisonment in Château d'If, the asteroid Monte Cristo), though the two storyworlds still diverge at many points. A number of factors might have affected this proximity between the two works, including the time of release (*The Masked Aristocrat* was published a month after the last manga volume), or the creator (Ariwara was the scenarist for the manga).

The last media mix constituent to be mentioned here is the audio drama "The Eccentric Aristocrat" (November 2005), which consists of four parts and lasts about 50 minutes in total. Content-wise it is clearly a supplementary work: a series of recollections by the Count who talks to Haydée about his past and his feelings (most central characters appear briefly in these short episodes). The small amount of new information to be found in the drama stands in stark contrast to the other media mix constituents. However, it must be noted that adding to the story is not, strictly speaking, the primary function of this work. It is true that audio dramas can function as spin-offs or even closely adapt other works. For example, the manga *Saiyūki* and its sequels (『最遊記シリーズ』) by Minekura Kazuya that has been running since 1997 now boasts more than forty CD dramas. One can listen to the whole *Saiyūki* series instead of reading it. But in the case of *Gankutsuō*, as in many others, the main purpose is to give the anime fans another opportunity to enjoy their favourite voices.[200]

---

assault her even before the wedding. Ariwara's version of Andrea is far more benevolent: he gets to sincerely care about his sister and even helps her escape from her oppressive father.

[200] It is well-known that voice actors, seiyū (声優), enjoy particular popularity in Japan. Their activities are not limited to acting: seiyū also work in the dubbing industry, act as voice-overs in television programs, release singles and song collections, participate in radio shows, etc. Popular seiyū

Because dramas are often voiced by different actors than the anime series, fans tend to look down on this type of work. *Gankutsuō* is an exception since the audio drama was produced after the anime and with the same actors.[201] Indeed, it is hard to imagine the Count voiced by anyone other than Nakata Jōji.[202] In this sense, the audio drama is integrated more solidly into the media mix than is often the case. Additionally, even though it does not contribute to the development of the story, it is still linked to other works on different levels.

2.3.2. Intertextual References in the *Gankutsuō* Media Mix

As can be seen from this overview, each *Gankutsuō*-related work transforms parts of the story: from elements of the setting to plotlines to character behavior. As such, *Gankutsuō* conforms to the principles of media mix development. On the other hand, it does not answer the requirement that each media mix element should stand on its own: most constituents offer only glimpses of the bigger story or abridge it. There is another significant difference: these works do not change and rearrange the anime only, they repeatedly address Dumas' version of the story or borrow from Bester's *Tiger! Tiger!* In other words, they bypass the mediation of the anime to appropriate parts of these two novels directly. In many cases, references are made on a small scale: in the form of names and toponyms or minor details. For instance, Dumas devotes a significant amount of space to the description of Albert's dwellings, with meticulous attention given to his collection of expensive, unnecessary, and

---

have their own fanclubs, and it is not an uncommon practice to follow a favourite seiyū across different series.

[201] I would like to thank Kobayashi Shō for pointing this out (in the mail exchange).

[202] Even though the position of the protagonist is taken by Albert, Nakata was the central figure in the voice cast. For instance, *Comickers* (『Comickers コミカーズ』, 2005) conducted a special interview with Nakata for their eight-page feature on *Gankutsuō*, and Maeda repeatedly touches on the quality of Nakata's performance in his own interviews. The structure of the audio drama also shows how central this performance is for *Gankutsuō*. Likewise, almost every review about the anime on the Japanese Amazon mentions Nakata's acting as one of the high merits of the series. Incidentally, Nakata has a highly recognizable voice, and his most well-known roles include Corporal Giroro in *Sgt. Frog* (Sunrise, April 2004-April 2011), Hijikata Toshizō in *Peacemaker Kurogane* (Gonzo, October 2003-March 2004), and Alucard in *Hellsing* (Gonzo, October 2001-January 2002) and *Hellsing Ultimate* OVA (Satelight, Madhouse, and Graphinica & Kelmadick; February 2006-December 2012). The last role is significant in the context of *Gankutsuō*, as there are obvious parallels between omnipotent eccentric vampire Alucard and eccentric vampire-like Monte Cristo. Here one finds another form of intertextuality realized through the performer.

unused paraphernalia (ch.39 "The Guests"). A similar passage, albeit subdued in tone and shortened, appears in Kōyama's novelization (Kōyama 2004: 49-50). Many of the references address the first two parts of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, which deal with the fate of Edmond Dantès and the Counts' preparatory activities before coming to Paris. Abbé Faria reappears in the novelization and is discussed in great detail as a former vessel for Gankutsuō (Kōyama 2005b: 177-179).[203] Though the figure and the backstory of the Abbé are completely changed, he serves the same function in Dantès' development as the Abbé facilitates his transfiguration, provides him with the means to escape from Château d'If, and gives him unsurpassed power. The manga does not include Faria, vessel or not, but it does something arguably more significant — it introduces the Monte Cristo asteroid. Indeed, it is the first work in the media mix that explains where Dantès got his famous alias and his enormous treasure. At the same time, the golden asteroid of Monte Cristo evokes Bester's Sargasso Asteroid, which itself is an equivalent of Dumas' island.

Examples of intertextual references are found even in the minor constituents of the media mix, such as *Albert the Diplomat's Diary* and the audio drama *The Strange Aristocrat*, though both can afford only passing references to other works. The audio drama addresses the Count's propensity for disguise (in particular, his posing as a cleric). This is a plot device extensively used in *The Count of Monte Cristo* and ignored in the anime in favor of complete physical transformation (interestingly, in *Tiger! Tiger!* both are combined and become an important theme). As for Albert's diary, it is probably the least intertextually involved work, but it still offers an allusion to Bester's *Tiger! Tiger!* When Albert moves to planet Janina as a diplomat's apprentice, he meets there a thinly disguised Monte Cristo, who has apparently survived the finale of the previous work.[204] Monte Cristo, hiding his former identity, poses as a galactic circus owner and an eccentric master of entertainment. This is precisely the mask

[203] The same is insinuated very obscurely in the anime by means of a single shot.
[204] This is also the reason why Albert's diary is the sequel only to the novelization: in other works, the outcomes for the main heroes are too different (Monte Cristo dies, and Albert joins the space armed forces) to warrant such sequel.

that Gully Foyle assumed in Bester's novel at one stage of his revenge. The identity of the mysterious circus owner, while fairly transparent, is never openly revealed in the text. This allusion to Monte Cristo's prototype, Foyle, can therefore be read as a tongue-in-cheek disclosure for the knowing audience.[205]

But the number of extensive borrowings (that go beyond parts and elements of *The Count of Monte Cristo* adapted in the anime) is limited. One such appropriation appears in *The Masked* Aristocrat, where it alters the outcome of Morcerf's plotline so that it approaches Dumas' novel. To be more specific, events develop differently after Fernand de Morcerf/Mondego is revealed to be a war criminal and a fraud, and Albert challenges Monte Cristo for a duel. The differences between the three works (the novelization variant is almost identical to that of the anime, minus some minor details) are summarized in the Table 4.

Table 4. Morcerf's plotline denouement.

	The Count of Monte Cristo	Anime *Gankutsuō*	*Gankutsuō: The Masked Aristocrat*
Reason for a duel	Albert wants to avenge the dishonor his family suffered	Albert wants to avenge his betrayed trust and trampled feelings	unclear
Format of the duel	With pistols, in Bois de Vincennes	With giant robots and swords, in Bois de Boulogne	With pistols, in Bois de Vincennes
Before the duel	Mercédès visits Monte Cristo and persuades him to spare Albert, then tells Albert Edmond Dantès' story	Mercédès visits Monte Cristo and tries to persuade him to spare Albert Franz tells Albert Edmond Dantès' story	Mercédès and Fernand tell Albert Edmond Dantès' story
Outcome of the duel	Albert apologizes and cancels the duel	Franz fights instead of Albert and is killed	Albert apologizes and cancels the duel
Fernand's demise	Fernand commits suicide after his family leaves him (after the duel)	Fernand tries to kill his family and himself, than repeatedly tries to fight Monte Cristo, and commits suicide when Monte Cristo is dead	Fernand commits suicide after explaining his past to Albert (before the duel)

[205] In fact, no one of the fans who posted their impressions online seemed to have caught this allusion.

Albert's future	Albert gets enrolled in the French cavalry reserved for service in Africa	Albert becomes a diplomat and is sent to work in the Earth (Kingdom's) embassy on Janina	Albert gets enrolled in the space army

There is no evident reason for changing the development of events in Ariwara's novel. Actually, it is even somewhat detrimental to the new reading of *The Count of Monte Cristo* that pervades the *Gankutsuō* media mix. As have been said before, in *Gankutsuō*, the characters' personal conflicts are paralleled and mirrored by their political situation. A significant point in the *Gankutsuō* epilogue is that the Kingdom and the Empire finally seal a peace agreement after decades of war. But Albert getting enlisted in the military forces does not tie up well with that idea. Apparently, in Ariwara's novel, the priority was put on intertextual play instead of unified meaning-making.

Two other isolated episodes found in the media mix combine substantial references to *The Count of Monte Cristo* with minor alterations and significant transformations of contents across platforms. The public execution on Luna is the climax of the first episode of the anime, and arguably one of the most memorable sequences in the whole series. The execution is also remarkable because it is the only occasion of appropriating extended quotes and paraphrases from Dumas. The dinner at Auteil, iconic as it is, is employed in three of the *Gankutsuō* works (see Table 5), but for different purposes. The structure of the episode as well as the intertextual connections it harbors changes accordingly. Besides, there is a whole plotline, devoted to the Count's revenge against Gerard de Villefort, which differs greatly in each work, except *The Masked Aristocrtat*, which simply synopsizes the anime version (though even in this case there are minor alterations). Quite different sensibilities can be discerned behind these changes in the novelization and the manga, but they are particularly significant in the context of the ethical stance *Gankutsuō* takes in relation to *The Count of Monte Cristo*. In the following section, the aforementioned two episodes and the plotline are considered in more detail. The discussion of each work will not be limited to these events —

rather, the aim is to use the comparison of content as a base to which other considerations about the structure of *Gankutsuō* media mix and its status of adaptation will be added.

Table 5. Major episodes and plotlines that change significantly across the *Gankutsuō* works.

Anime *Gankutsuō*	Manga *Gankutsuō*	Novelization	*Gankutsuō: The Masked Noble*
Public execution in Neo-Rome (Luna)			
Villeforte's plotline			
Poisoning in Villeforte's house and the fate of Villeforte's family			
Villeforte's illegitimate child (the dinner at Auteil)			

2.3.3. Variations of the Story and Intertextual Connections: Extended Examples

2.3.3.1. Example I. The Public Execution in Neo-Rome

Albert and Monte Cristo's first encounter during the Carnival in Luna is highlighted by the traditional public execution they witness together with Albert's best friend Franz. As is evident from Table 4, the scene is recreated in three *Gankutsuō* works. In each one, however, this episode is treated differently, even if the basis remains unchanged. First of all, in two of the *Gankutsuō* variants (the anime and the novelization) Monte Cristo does not simply save one of the convicts, but offers Albert to draw lots to decide which of the criminals will be pardoned. The multiplication of meanings starts here: in the novel this episode is placed between Monte Cristo's charitable actions towards the Morrel family and his impending revenge in Paris. Far from being just another demonstration of Monte Cristo's deity-like powers, this episode illustrates the progression of the Count from a benevolent force towards a malevolent one, as he uses his influence to save one person, but condemns (in both actions and words) the other. Without reference to Dantès' preceding actions and with the game added, this episode obviously has another connotation in the anime *Gankutsuō* and the novelization — it is now directly connected with Albert and his role in the Count's

plans. However, it undergoes slight modifications, bringing into light different participants and distributing accents.

In the anime, the game leads to a tug-of-war between Franz and the Count for influence on Albert. The struggle, in which Monte Cristo poses as a Mephistophelean figure, is expressed via dialogue as well as mise-en-scène. Additionally, the sequence includes both reminiscences of the past and anticipations of the future. As for the former, one of the criminals claims to be unjustly framed by his rival in love — the connection with Monte Cristo is evident from the Count's reaction, even to the viewers unfamiliar with the story. And Monte Cristo hints at the upcoming events, when he suggests that every person is a pawn in some game commanded by forces unknown. These forces are, of course, embodied by Monte Cristo himself, and Albert and France are the chess figures. That there are three convicts in the anime instead of two in Dumas' novel is also an anticipation. This number parallels the targets of Monte Cristo's revenge: Morcerf, Villefort, and Danglars.[206] Obviously, for any viewer without prior knowledge of Monte Cristo these hints are not immediately recognizable — they can only be understood retrospectively.

In the novelization, written from Albert's point of view, the emphasis naturally falls onto him and his reflections. The game of drawing lots also becomes more of a stimulus towards self-exploration, and the Count's instigation is somewhat underplayed. On the other hand, a considerably prolonged dialogue includes points which connect the novelization to other *Gankutsuō* works. First of all, the comparison of man's life to a game reappears, bridging the novel's and the anime's versions. Second, there is a part in the novelization where Monte Cristo asserts that simple death is not a sufficient punishment for his enemies. This statement can be traced back to Dumas' novel, but it reappears with certain variations in all media mix constituents. Since it describes the Count's motivation, and idea expressed in it is central to the Count's philosophy in both Dumas' novel and the *Gankutsuō* media mix, it

[206] Incidentally, three symbolic cards used in the anime reappear in the manga, though in a completely different episode — Monte Cristo gives three playing cards to his enemies personally, during their first meeting.

does not come as a surprise that similar words are found in the anime as well, voiced by Gankutsuō in the prologue to episode 22. Another persistent allusion to Dumas is the Count's fascination with the phenomenon of death, restated also in the manga, but not in the anime. Thus, in the novelization, the execution episode is not so much an introduction as the background to develop Albert (through reflections and self-exploration) and insert extended references to Dumas (which also help to elaborate the Count's personal views).

As for the manga version of the episode, it shows much more proximity to Dumas than to the anime. There are again only two convicts, and no games take place. After one of the convicts is pardoned, the other one wreaks havoc, followed by Monte Cristo berating human baseness. Such development is practically identical to that in Dumas' novel, though its connotations change: as in the anime, it provides a first insight into the Count's dark personality. More importantly, in the manga too, the Count insists that simple death does not amount to fair punishment, but this time he addresses neither France nor Albert, but Gankutsuō. This diversion signals the whole change of approach in the manga, which tends to ignore Albert and his friends in favor of the Count's inner struggle and his relationship with Gankutsuō.

2.3.3.2. Example II. The Dinner at Auteil

Closely connected to the Villefort and Danglars plotlines, the dinner at Auteil is adopted in the anime, the novelization, and the light novel *Gankutsuō: The Masked Noble*. This episode takes place soon after Monte Cristo arrives in Paris to execute his revenge. As a gesture of good will, he invites all of his new acquaintances to the country residence he has just bought. Unsurprisingly, the Count's real motivations have nothing to do with self-promotion. He uses the dinner — and the place — to put pressure on Villefort and to introduce to the high society another tool of his revenge — Andrea Cavalcanti. Danglar's wife (Hermine in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, Victoria in *Gankutsuō*) and Villefort had an affair about 20 years before the novels' "present" (the dates change throughout the novel and

in the media mix); Madame Danglars got pregnant and gave birth to a child in the residence at Auteil. Villefort then put his illegitimate son into a wooden box and buried him in the garden (whether he considered the child stillborn or not is a matter of interpretation). The child was saved, received the name Benedetto and grew up to become a criminal. This Benedetto is no one else than Andrea Cavalcanti, whom Monte Cristo orders to pose as a rich Italian marquise. Andrea then approaches Danglars' family, almost succeeds in marrying Danglars' daughter Eugénie, but is revealed as an impostor, arrested, and brought to court. It is there that he reveals his lineage and the story of birth, ruining Villefort and causing Madame Danglars to have a breakdown.

But returning to the dinner at Auteil: upon introducing Andrea (in whom greedy Danglars immediately takes interest), Monte Cristo brings his guests first into the room where the illegitimate child was born, and then into the garden, where he supposedly has found the box with a child skeleton in it. This upsets Villeforte and Madame Danglars and leads to some minor plot developments which are of no importance here, as the primary objective of the episode is to set a starting point for an Andrea-centered plotline or rather two interconnected plotlines. Additionally, the sequence foreshadows the chain of deaths soon to break out in Villefort's house, when it is made clear that Madame de Villefort succeeded in making poison based on Monte Cristo's recipe (this revelation is not crucial for the Villefort plotline and is treated simply as anticipation).

The most important difference between this sequence in Dumas' novel and in the *Gankutsuō* works is the abscence of the Morcerf family in the former. Indeed, since the third part of *The Count of Monte Cristo* does not privilege any plotline, and the narrator constantly shifts between them, there is no need to include all the key players into one episode. Therefore the unrelated family of Morcerf is excluded, as distinct from the *Gankutsuō* works. There are, however, more changes in the contents of this episode, changes that distinguish these works both from each other and from Dumas' novel.

In the anime, for instance, the visit to the Auteil residence is a densely packed chapter (episodes 8 and 9) that lays ground for almost all of the plotlines that unfold from that point on. The Morcerfs, the Danglars, and the Villeforts — three targets of Monte Cristo's revenge — are gathered in one place for the first time. The sequence drops hints at the connection between Monte Cristo and Mercédès, introduces several new characters, develops romantic relationships central to the show (between Albert and Eugénie, and Valentine and Maximilian, respectively), openly mentions the Gankutsuō entity for the first time and provides the basis for Franz' increasing suspicions (which will ultimately lead him to investigate the matter). Finally, it serves as an important stage in the plotline concerned with the poisoning in Villefort's house — in addition to introducing Andrea, provoking Villefort and Victoria, and, of course, adding to the Albert-Monte Cristo dynamics. The episode is thus much more extended and complicated; in fact, it discards completely the flow of the sequence as it was in Dumas' novel: a dinner and an organized walk. At one point, Monte Cristo suggests a game of treasure hunt in the giant redecorated house, which naturally results in characters getting separated. The game culminates with Victoria Danglars and Villefort — and Albert — entering the cursed room. But the episode sees a second culmination, when Albert drinks the poison meant for Valentine. Apart from reinforcing Albert's central role in the story, this incident connects the Auteil arc seamlessly to the next, the Villefort plotline.

Kōyama's novelization largely follows the anime version of events, though in a more centralized way, since the point of view is limited strictly to Albert. It also elaborates on the material, providing a more complicated version of the game, a somehow different development of Maximilian and Valentine's situation (but with the same result of the two becoming a pair), and an extended introduction of Andrea. What it omits though is Albert's poisoning — since Kōyama chooses to stay closer to the novel at the initial stages of the Villefort plotline. The episode itself, however, does not reveal any connection with *The*

Count of Monte Cristo, except of one small speech that the Count makes during the dinner.[207]

Not so in Ariwara's side story, which follows Dumas' novel much more closely. Here, too, all three families are present, but there are no labyrinths. The events proceed very much like in the novel: the guests admire various curios in Monte Cristo's house, sit down for a gorgeous dinner, and are then led by the host to the cursed room (the description of which is also close to that in Dumas' work). As in Dumas' novel, Monte Cristo specifically addresses Villefort as a servant of Law to witness the crime that supposedly happened in the mansion. Likewise, these two texts share the final blow to Villefort, when at the end of the garden scene he is asked about the legal punishment for infanticides (Ariwara 2008: 92). The punishment is, of course, death. Ariwara, however, does not follow Dumas blindly — since the central character of the side story is Andrea, some additional scenes with him have been added. There are also elements that connect this version to the novelization. For instance, Monte Cristo mentions the crying baby, which is supposedly heard in the cursed room — a feature introduced by Kōyama. In fact, the Count offers his guests to take any curio they like from his collection if they do not hear the baby's voice — a diluted version of the games played in the anime and the novelization. The most obvious connection is, however, the figure of Andrea, whose introduction includes the same inflections. That is, if in Dumas' novel the focus was on Andrea's fortune and Danglars' greed, the *Gankutsuō* works stress the love triangle almost immediately formed between him, Eugénie, and Albert.

---

[207] As usual, Kōyama does not exactly cite Dumas, but paraphrases him: 「みんなさんならお分かりでしょうが、財産がある段階に達しますと、ムダなものにしか欲望を感じなくなってしまいます。美食についても然り。ただ美味しいというだけなら、そこそこの金で十分にまかなえます。美味である上に、さらに大きな価値、大きな驚きが付加されて始めて、美食は私たちの魂に満足を与えてくれるのです……」(Kōyama 2005a: 155). Compare with: "Gentlemen," he said, "you will admit that, when arrived at a certain degree of fortune, the superfluities of life are all that can be desired; and the ladies will allow that, after having risen to a certain eminence of position, the ideal alone can be more exalted. Now, to follow out this reasoning, what is the marvellous? — that which we do not understand. What is it that we really desire? — that which we cannot obtain." (Ch. 63 "The Dinner").

The Auteil episode, therefore, provides another example of transformations and intertextual relations between the texts. The anime version introduces very radical changes into the episode and even shifts its significance in relation to the whole structure of the story: the dinner becomes a nexus where multiple plotlines start, develop, and get entwined. The novelization retains this principle as well as the general outline, but, as usual, limits the perspective to Albert and explores his reactions to different events. It also provides a more subtle passage towards another plotline — the poisoning in Villefort's house (to be discussed next). Ariwara's light novel, on the other hand, brings the story back to Dumas' version, but supplements it with Andrea-centered scenes and references to other media mix constituents.[208]

2.3.3.3. Example III. Villefort Plotline: the Poisoning Case

The next plotline — the poisoning at Villefort's household — deserves attention if only because it constitutes one-third of Monte Cristo's revenge project and is therefore a major part of the story. It is also a plotline that undergoes the most significant changes in the media mix event-wise: both Maeda's manga and Kōyama's novelization offer a unique development of events, simultaneously addressing *The Count of Monte Cristo*.

The premise is common to all texts under discussion: Héloïse, Villefort's second wife, is determined to murder her step-daughter, Valentine, in order to secure the inheritance for her own son, Edouard. In Dumas' novel, Monte Cristo instigates Héloïse to go on a killing spree and even provides her with a poison recipe. Valentine survives all attempts at taking her life, but several other people, including Valentine's grandparents (the Marquis and Marquise de Saint-Méran) get murdered. Monte Cristo, initially content with the role of an observer, has to acknowledge, when pressed by Maximilien, that Valentine does not deserve

[208] It must be noted here that while there is no corresponding episode in the manga (which drops the character of Benedetto and the relevant storyline altogether), the residence at Auteil is repurposed in a way that thematically parallels sequences described here. That is, Villefort is invited to a party at the Count's mansion at Auteil only to meet a person he killed with his own hands.

such a cruel fate. He helps Valentine escape Villefort's house and takes care of her until his revenge is finished. The rest of Villefort's family is ruined: Héloïse, driven to the corner, kills her son and herself, and Villefort, unable to cope with all the tragedies, loses his mind. This is arguably the most somber part of Dumas' novel — and the only one where the legitimacy of revenge is questioned. At the same time, this part is also the most optimistic in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, because it involves the central romantic line of the story — the relationship between Valentine and captain Maximilien Morrel — which ends happily.

Each text in the media mix, starting with the anime, treats this outline in its own way. Transformations start with the figure of Villefort, who is arguably the most contradictory and the most likeable of the three villains in *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Villefort is a slave of his ambitions and of public opinion. Obsessed with his reputation, he buries anything and anyone who threatens to ruin it: figuratively (as he condemns Edmond Dantès to the life imprisonment in Château d'If) or literally (as when he buries his new-born son[209]). Likewise, Villefort tries to bury the chain of murders within his own family. At the same time, Villefort has his share of positive characteristics; he repents in the end, and he goes mad from genuine grief.

The opposition in *Gankutsuō* between "evil, violent grow-ups" and "sinless, vulnerable children" inevitably reshapes the figurants — thus Villefort becomes possibly the least pleasant character in the media mix. At the same time, the centrality of the younger generation changes the structure of the whole plotline. In the novel, the poisoning is isolated from other events on both diegetic (Villefort's house is closed to the outside world) and non-diegetic (the plotline is developed in its own string of chapters) levels. In fact, the only outsiders to get involved are Monte Cristo, Maximilien, and, to a very small extent, Franz. The anime paints a very different picture of collective efforts undertaken by the young people to save Valentine. The Count, on the other hand, is himself a destructive grown-up and therefore

[209] The parallel between Dantès' fate and Benedetto's is addressed directly in *The Masked Noble* (Ariwara 2008: 57)

cannot play the role of Valentine's or Maximilien's benefactor — what is left are hostilities between him and Villefort. Thus, the list of key events in the anime looks as following:

Table 6. Villefort's household plotline in the anime (on the level of fabula).		
1.	Monte Cristo provides Héloïse with the poison and the means to distribute it (Borgia's ring)	
2.	The ring slowly contaminates Héloïse's own body with poison (revealed only later)	
3.	Valentine and Maximilien form a bond	
4.	Albert nearly dies (in Auteuil)	both drink the poison meant for Valentine
5.	Butler Barrois dies	
6.	Valentine falls into coma	
7.	Valentine is saved by the young generation, lead by Maximilien	
8.	Valentine stays in Maximilien's house	
9.	Héloïse collapses from poison	
10.	Villefort confronts Héloïse and tries to push her to suicide	
11.	Héloïse loses her mind under the influence of the toxin	
12.	Insane Héloïse and Edouard are kidnapped by the Count as hostages to use against Villefort (revealed only later)	
13.	Villefort tries to arrest Monte Cristo but is refuted	
14.	Villefort is arrested after an unsuccessful attempt to kill Monte Cristo	
15.	During Villefort's trial, his illegitimate son Andrea/Benedetto reveals his true identity	
16.	Villefort is poisoned by Benedetto and goes insane much like his former wife	
17.	Héloïse and Edouard survive thanks to the efforts of Monte Cristo's servants[210]	
18.	Valentine marries Maximilien	

In the novelization, however, the events listed under 4 to 11 in Table 6 have been altered completely. Albert is much more intricately involved with the rescue of Valentine and the mystery of the poisonings at large. Ultimately, alterations like this are necessary because of Kōyama's decision to adopt one point of view only. The events must be either reported by Albert as they unfold around him, be presented as a summary, or as another character's tale (the first option is obviously preferable). Moreover, since the novelization is largely driven by Albert's reflections on his experiences and on things he witnesses, Albert has to be put in the center of action. More interesting, though, is how the novelization

[210] The two appear in *Albert the Diplomat's Diary*, which serves as a sequel to the anime and Kōyama's novelization.

appropriates parts of *The Count of Monte Cristo* that are missing in the anime. Such is the background of Maximilien Morrel and, to some extent, the actions Monte Cristo takes for his sake. As has been indicated earlier, in Dumas' novel, Monte Cristo helps Valentine largely because she is the object of Morrel's adoration. Indeed, the Morrels in the novel are the primary subjects of the Count's goodwill. This relationship is established in the second part of Dumas' novel (chapters "The House of Morrel&Son" and "The Fifth of September"): Monte Cristo saves Morrel's family business in Marseilles from bankruptcy and his father from suicide. Maximilien, deeply influenced by this incident, cultivates the resolve to help those in need, which ultimately brings him to the circle of Albert's friends and to the new encounter with Monte Cristo. Both this story and the resulting friendship between Maximilien and the Count have been omitted in the anime. Kōyama's novelization, however, appropriates some parts of it: thus Maximilien recounts the miraculous salvation of his father by some anonymous Englishman (an identity also used by Dumas' Monte Cristo), and the Count gets involved in Albert and Maximilen's efforts to save Valentine. This change, however, is not similar to the changes of Albert's own role — that is, it is not conditioned by the structure of the work. One could say that this is clearly the site where the principle of variation, typical for media mix, is manifested. But instead of going into a completely new direction, Kōyama chooses to adopt the part of Dumas. This deliberate alteration of the anime plotlines, combined with homage to *The Count of Monte Cristo*, is found in other *Gankutsuō* works as well, including the manga.

In the manga, one finds the darkest version of the plotline in question. It retains the isolated nature it has in Dumas' novel: there are no young friends to help Valentine, Albert is not involved, and Maximilien is absent completely. Partially their function as outside observers (in Dumas' novel, half of the events in the Villefort household are shown through Maximillien's eyes; in Kōyama's novelization Albert plays the same role) is assumed by Franz, but unlike his counterparts, Franz is unable to partake in the action — and is completely excluded from the pivotal segment of the story. The story itself also changes drastically, in

part, probably, because all other plotlines have been discarded, and there is neither need nor the room to dwell on transitional stages between the key events. Thus, Héloïse starts her murdering spree even before the Count arrives in Paris, but her body count remains surprisingly low, as Villefort catches her after the second murder. In an attempt to save his own good name, he murders Héloïse. Afterwards Villefort, driven half out of his mind by the stress and yearning for his late first wife, proceeds to sexually abuse Valentine (who apparently reminds him of her mother). In the meantime, Héloïse is revived by the Count. In an unexpected twist, she enchants and consoles Valentine, and Villefort is forced to confront his aggrieved family and, ultimately, Monte Cristo. His former victims show little compassion. Villefort is tortured, and in the culmination of this storyline Monte Cristo dissects him with the aim to "search for the virtuous heart" within his body (ch.15 "Paradise"). The nightmare ends in a sort of "family reunion": the Villeforts live "happily" in some enclosed environment. Villefort himself is plainly insane, but it is safe to say that no one in the family is in touch with reality anymore, including little Edouard, who has spent several months grieving his late mother.

The manga thus paints a story radically different from the other *Gankutsuō* works[211] and even more so from *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Still, it retains intertextual connections with the latter. For instance, the only work to suggest that Monte Cristo and Héloïse got acquainted before Paris, the manga adapts the circumstances of this meeting from Dumas. The manga is also the only text that introduces a miraculous concoction used as both powerful medicine and horrible poison. If in Dumas' novel this mixture alludes to the elixir of life and, by association, to the Count's superhuman nature, in the manga it can literally revive the dead, and it is used to bring Héloïse back to life. The political background that determined Villefort's decision to "bury" Dantès in prison is transposed from Dumas' novel, including the conflict between the royalists and the Bonapartists. Moreover, there is also an

[211] The poisoning-centered plotline in the Ariwara's novel is not discussed here in detail, because it is reduced to a brief summary and largely follows the anime version.

evident reference to Bester's *Tiger! Tiger!* in the dissection of Villefort: Bester's protagonist Gully Foyle, equally bent on revenge, commits the same horrendous act against one of the minor characters.

As is evident from the summary, the development of events in the manga is distinguished by a dramatic increase in violence (poisoning, murder, rape, torture). The question remains, why this change happened. Certainly, this unexpected accumulation of violent events can be attributed to the authors' fancy. However, besides being simplistic, this explanation does not account for one simple fact: even if the creator chooses to tell a dark story simply because of love for dark stories, he or she has more than one option for framing it. Moreover, in this case, this framing is multiple-layered, because the work was not conceived as a completely self-contained one, but as a part of a media mix based on adaptation. So another possible interpretation of this dark turn of events is that the manga provides the backdrop for the narrative development found in other works, particularly in the anime. As a matter of fact, it is necessary to explore more closely this last issue — the way different works support or undermine the interpretative stance evident in the central work of the media mix.

2.3.4. Ethics of *Gankutsuō* on the Level of the Media Mix

There is no other constituent in the *Gankutsuō* media mix that strays away from the anime story-wise as much as manga does. Yet, the potential it has to support — or turn around — the ethics of the anime exceeds that of all other *Gankutsuō* works. The anime's focus on the younger generation led by the principle of forgiveness sets the tone for the whole constellation of narratives that is *Gankutsuō* media mix. So, despite the relocated violence and the increased attention to the darker side of the revenge plot, *Gankutsuō* anime turns out to be an optimistic piece that puts its stakes on the protagonists' determination to leave the grudges behind and move on. Most of the other texts follow in tow, except the manga, which provides a counter-case, or a negative, by drawing out a reality in which

forgiveness is absent and the opposition removed. If the anime paints Villefort as a decidedly unpleasant person who never cares about any of his family members, in the manga this tendency is exacerbated. Likewise, Héloïse is portrayed as a much more cunning and aggressive individual. Even Valentine, from the younger generation, is dragged into the cycle of abuse and retribution. At the same time, the insights into the motives of all the participants abound: while there is no innocent soul left among the Villforts, all of them resort to crime in attempts to end their misery. The tormentors are also the tormented.

This reading is supported by the characterization of Monte Cristo in the manga version of *Gankutsuō*. As has been said already, in Dumas' novel the presentation of revenge in a positive light and as an entertainment feature is largely facilitated by the character of the Count, who is constructed to be admired and respected. Monte Cristo's negative emotions and grievances are caused by his disagreement with the world, not with himself, and he is able to solve this conflict at the end of the novel. Not so with Monte Cristo in the anime (and other media mix constituents): unable to let go of his past, the Count is bound to endlessly relive his imprisonment. At the same time, he is no longer able to act as a savior — quite on the contrary, Monte Cristo becomes the leading figure among the aggressive grown-ups in the media mix, ending unexpectedly in one camp with his villainous targets. The manga brings this condition to the fore: by the end of the volume three, it is obvious that no amount of violence can satisfy Monte Cristo, nor can he stop his quest. The only force that can put an end to this struggle comes from the outside, in the form of the younger generation, in particular the protagonist Albert. However, to remove this force from the play, as the manga does, means shutting the Count forever in the cycle of violence. Therefore, the reworking of story and plot in the manga goes beyond adapting the story to a certain manner of narration or foregrounding a character. Rather, it contributes directly to the ethical stance expressed first in the anime and then reaffirmed throughout the media mix. The anime and the manga work as the two sides of the same coin: the manga, which on its own seems an incomplete

and unreasonably dark story, is completed and counterbalanced by the anime, while it adds to the central argument of the latter.

This strategy is not without its weak points, though. The anime presents the conflict of two sets of values in a largely abstract manner. The unreal setting and conventionalized elements of *Gankutsuō* are superimposed on what comes close to theatrical performance, with clear-cut roles and unbounded pathos. Such environment, on the one hand, allows for metaphoric exaggeration in line with anime storytelling traditions. On the other hand, the inherent unreality makes it possible to offer easy solutions, or, if one prefers, to solve the conflict on a symbolical level, so that good intentions and self-sacrificial gestures are enough to stop violence which has seemingly got out of hand. However, as the manga delves deeper into the Count's troubled mind, one begins to have doubts as to whether anything could heal this tormented individual. To paraphrase, when the Count stops being a personification and gains personality, his salvation becomes much more problematic. This ambiguity may actually be the key to the manga's overall structure, which at times betrays the reality of the events accounted. Not only is the narration fragmented, shifting the focus between different figurants, and interspersed with flashbacks. The plot also gets sketchy at times: certain pieces are left unexplained, and Villefort plotline, isolated as it is, evokes an almost claustrophobic feeling. A considerable number of pages is allotted to shōjo-esque amalgamations of memories or metaphors that break the narrative flow; so the manga gains a dream-like quality. The macabre characterization, the insight into the antagonist's interiority is thus both supported and neutralized by disjointed narration.

Needless to say, this is only one possible reading, but it makes the manga the most interesting of the *Gankutsuō* texts: it allows freedom of interpretation to a much greater extent than the other media mix constituents, but it also manages to remain consistent within itself. Other works tend to balance on the verge of self-contradiction. The two imperatives in the anime, the two states the protagonists strive to achieve, are forgiveness and peace. Another central idea is that vengefulness and happiness are incompatible. Yet, in *The*

Masked Aristocrat Benedetto/Andrea successfully takes his revenge on Villefort and does not suffer any consequences. And Albert, as has already been mentioned, ends up joining the military. At the same time, Ariwara's novel reinstates the futility of revenge to some extent, as it describes the Count's breakdown after Fernand's suicide. It is made very clear that Monte Cristo cannot enjoy his success and is even haunted by it. As for Kōyama's novels, they underscore Albert's determination to reject revenge and follow a different path in life,[212] but do not dwell on the notion of forgiveness. Furthermore, they largely downplay Monte Cristo's destructive side: there are no scenes where he delivers the final blow to Danglars and Villefort; his duel with Franz (the most violent scene in the anime) is practically absent, and he does not commit any direct violence against Albert. On the other hand, Monte Cristo poses as a benefactor towards Maximilien. In both the novelization and the side story, these combinations result in something closer to a mixed message than deliberate ambiguity. The remaining media mix constituent — the audio drama — offers a sort of a rift on the subject as it declares Albert the main cause and target of the Count's vengefulness. In other words, the inability to forgive transgressions against oneself is substituted with the inability to accept the other's happiness. But this motivation is clearly present in the anime, so the audio drama simply brings it to the foreground.

To summarize, only the anime and the manga *Gankutsuō* problematize revenge in a productive way and produce a new interpretative dimension when read together. Other media mix constituents are more reserved in their handling of the topic and, in fact, tend to downplay it. The development of Albert or Benedetto/Andrea and their personal lives seem to bear much more weight than the legitimacy of Monte Cristo's revenge.

[212] Kōyama's interpretation seems problematic in itself, as he does not exactly promote foregiveness as much as the "positive outlook," where the offended party refuses to admit the very fact of offence (which renders forgiveness impossible). Moreover, he weaves into Albert's motivations the urge for expiation, as Albert is very much burdened by the death of Franz and by his father's crimes. The evaluation of Kōyama's stance is, however, the matter of personal interpretation and is beyond the scope of this study.

2.4. The *Gankutsuō* Media Mix as a Multilayered Structure

An overview of *Gankutsuō* works reveals that relationships between them can be considered on several levels:

1. The world-setting. The term is used here specifically to distinguish the concept from Ryan's 'storyworld,' and from the 'worldview' used in the Japanese discourse. Ryan's 'storyworld' is reconstructed from a particular narrative and includes events (Ryan 2013; 2014: 36), which in this discussion are considered on a separate level. Worldview, according to Ōtsuka's explanation, includes all possible information, down to the minute details, about a given fictional world and can probably be used synonymously with the latter (Ōtsuka 1989: 12). As for the 'world-setting' (the word itself is borrowed from Stevie Suan 2013: 29), it includes only the most basic premises which can serve as a common denominator for a constellation of works that transform not only events, but various minor details of the story. One could say that this is the first key factor that distinguishes *Gankutsuō* from the other *The Count of Monte Cristo* adaptations. For instance, the namesake of the project and its defining feature — the demon of Gankutsuō — is part of the world-setting, together with the key provisions of its mythology. Likewise, the world-setting determines the temporal shift of the story into the 5th millennium and the inclusion of SF and space opera elements, such as interstellar travel and intelligent non-humans (e.g. Haydée and Monte Cristo's servant Ali are both aliens). It also defines the broad interpretation of characters: their personalities, their inclinations and their positions in relation to each other (the romance between Albert and Eugénie falls into this category as well as the characterization of secondary characters such as Bertuccio and Baptistin, or Beppo). Finally, the visual design, so important for the media mix, also belongs to this level.

As is evident from this description, the world-setting coincides with the basis of the media mix, with the concept of the whole project, and is thus the most stable and unified set of parameters found in *Gankutsuō*. The relationship between media mix constituents on this level is primary that of sharing. Nevertheless, even here discrepancies can be found. Details

of the setting do not always coincide from work to work (and thus the year 5053 in the anime is changed to 5829 in Kōyama's novelization; the automated space fortress of Château d'If becomes a standard prison in the same work; and the Count's scars change in shape and quantity in the manga and Ariwara's novel). Nor are the characters (and their positions) always consistent (so Andrea becomes kinder in *The Masked Aristocrat*, and Valentine more vicious in the manga). This is exactly where the difference lies between the world-setting and the fictional world (as it is understood by most of the theorists referred to in Chapter One): both unite the franchise, but the latter demands consistency.

2. The ethics of the story. This is probably the weakest link from a theoretical point of view, since it deals with the meaning of the work, and the meaning is known to be contingent. Three points can be made to defend the validity of retaining this parameter. First of all, in the infinity of possible readings (though this "infinity" itself is quite questionable, unless one takes a radically poststructuralist approach) some meanings are more probable than others (see Kranz 2008: 89). That is to say, one can usually deduce which clues have been selected and arranged with intention to be noticed and in which direction one is expected to follow. Second, paratextual sources can be used to clarify the intentions of the creators. Consulting interviews, prefaces, and afterwords does not necessarily mean subjugating oneself to the supremacy of the author, nor does it preclude interpretation. On the contrary, knowing what the creator intended to say may throw light on the controversies inherent in the work, or give one the better understanding of the devices and techniques involved in the meaning-making. And this is the third point to be made here, especially relevant in the study of adaptation: the issue of reinterpretation, of the dialogue between works inevitably arises, and with it the issue of meaning.

For instance, in case of *Gankutsuō*, the alternative take on revenge and the change of perspective from the avenger to the innocent unknowing victims produce very tangible results. That is, these two factors, together with commercial ones, reshape the structure of the

story (the point of view, the order of events and the order in which these events are narrated, causal relationships, etc.); introduce new themes and motifs (such as coming of age or self-sacrifice); and ultimately become another key point that distinguishes this adaptation from many others. Seeing how crucial this new ethical stance has been for the anime, it is no wonder that it is more or less sustained, or even underscored across the media mix. But here also remains room for ambiguity: while each media mix constituent takes its moment to support the new reading (which can be summarized as "Vengefulness corrupts one's soul, and revenge is the road to misery"), several works simultaneously introduce plotlines or details that undermine it. Such are the outcomes of Benedetto's and Albert's respective plotlines in *The Masked Aristocrat*, or the Count's behavior towards Maximilien and Valentine in Kōyama's novelization. The manga is in fact the perfect illustration of the ambiguity that remains even if, or maybe especially if, one knows about the authors' attitude to the subject. Overwhelmingly cruel and hopeless, it can be read either as a blatant breach of the anime's ethical code or as the opposition (the "negative") specifically designed to produce a synergistic reading. In other words, the ethical reevaluation of *The Count of Monte Cristo* unites the *Gankutsuō* works, but it also tends to fluctuate at times, to become vague.

3. The third level is that of the story as it is defined in Bal's terminology (the fabula and its specific rendering). As is obvious from numerous examples that have been given so far, the story transforms in every installment with regard to key events, characters' agency, point of view, and relationships. In other words, the *Gankutsuō* media mix realizes Steinberg's principle of "addition with bifurcation," when each work alters isolated plotlines or even the whole story, but at the same time supplies new information or experiences. The works here are connected insofar story elements coincide. At the same time, elements that alter form paradigmatic chains: besides new transmedia threads to follow, these paradigms provide the reader with the opportunity to choose between variants. This, in turn, is related to canon formation. Is it possible to identify which events and settings are canonical in a

conglomeration of works like this? It would, of course, be very easy to suggest that in cases like *Gankutsuō*, when there is an identifiable 'hub,' the status of canon can be attributed only to this central work. All other *Gankutsuō* texts then gain a provisional status of non-canonical variations. Such reading would be in harmony with approaches taken by Ōtsuka Eiji or Azuma Hiroki. If the new content is not relevant for the core story, than its status is not different from that of fanworks and vice versa. These new works do not add up to the fictional universe either — all they can offer are rifts on the initial story and characters (or, in Azuma's terms, the recombinations of the database). But, as was explained earlier, most media mixes maintain canonicity in more complicated ways: even if bifurcation is severe, it is often possible to emphasize addition. It is also worth recalling here, that the existence of canon is one of the few motivations remaining for consumers to crave officially produced fiction. So another approach can be taken towards these diverging works to reevaluate their contributions to the canon.

Even a quick look at the *Gankutsuō* media mix constituents reveals that while all of them introduce more or less radical changes to the anime narrative, there is not a single work that would change everything (that is, everything besides kyara, because the continuity of kyara is the minimal condition for the work to belong to the media mix). In most cases, radical changes are limited to a handful of settings, to a couple of storylines, a number of scenes. Moreover, in most cases the alteration is limited to one work only. On the other hand, certain additions are, on the contrary, sustained in several works. These repetitions and exclusions can enable the reader to create a hierarchy of story elements with regard to canonicity. For example, the political background behind Dantès' arrest is changed to the Bonapartist-royalist opposition only in the manga, while the rest of the works reconfirm the Kingdom-Empire setting. Likewise, only in the novelization is the Château d'If changed into a more or less regular prison (where Dantès apparently worked as a librarian) — other works describe it as an automated space fortress, and the manga and Ariwara's novel even elaborate on the topic. Or, considering plotline transformations, despite differences in the development

of events, all variations of Villefort's plotline end with Héloïse and Edouard safe and separated from him, and Benedetto disclosing his old crime in the courtroom. The only exception is the manga. Therefore what the reader finds in manga is a pure deviation, a "parallel world," while other variants could be considered interchangeable.

The resulting set of relationships is similar to the overlapping storyworlds as imagined by Marie-Laure Ryan. As has been mentioned already, Ryan binds the storyworld to the narrative text, which is delimiting and contradicts one of the main points of transmedia storytelling — that fictional world can exist beyond specific narratives. However, if one takes Ryan's storyworlds as the versions of the story, and fictional world as the whole they add up to, her model of transfictionality seems applicable to cases like the *Gankutsuō* media mix. At the very least, it could be used to describe the relationship between works that share certain fictional entities. Following Lubomír Doležel, Ryan classifies the relations of transfictionality between the storyworlds into 'expansion,' 'modification,' and 'transposition' (Ryan 2013: n.pag.). Expansion (Figure 4.1) adds up to the original storyworld (as it happens in transmedia storytelling proper); modification (Figure 4.2) reinvents the story and creates a distinct version of the original storyworld (this is what happens in many of *Gankutsuō* constituents); and transposition "preserves the design and the main story of the protoworld but locates it in a different temporal or spatial setting" (this last category is redundant as it coincides with adaptation and can be better described as such).

Figure 4. The relations of transfictionality between the storyworlds (based on Ryan's classification)

4.1. Relation of expansion

4.2. Relation of modification

Unfortunately, Ryan's model is exacerbated by her employing criteria other than consistency — such as medium and authorship — to determine whether the storyworlds are distinct from each other. This is why her model actually involves three-steps: first, it is necessary to decide what kind of relationship exists between two works content-wise, then to determine whether the storyworlds are distinct (regardless of the contents), and finally combine these two factors to determine the relationship between two works. The problem is evident as soon as one looks at the figures Ryan uses to illustrate her point (Figures 5.1-2).

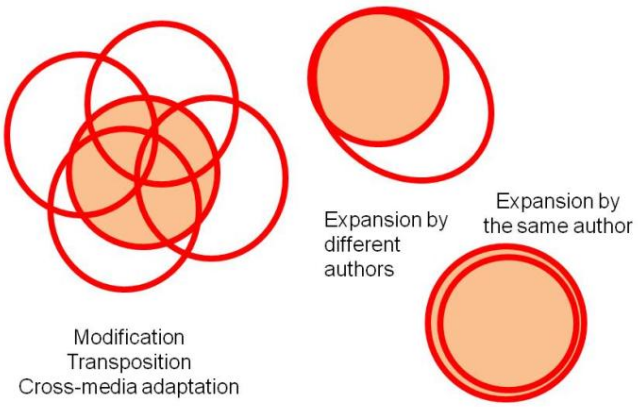


Figure 5.1. Relations between storyworlds in transfictional and transmedial systems (qtd. from Ryan 2013).

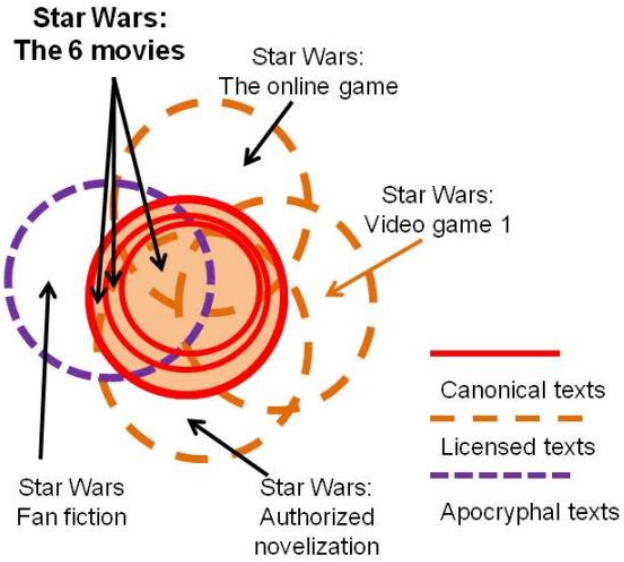


Figure 5.2. Relations between storyworlds in the *Star Wars* system (qtd. from Ryan 2013).

The two models of expansion from Figure 5.1. clearly do not hold up if one imagines one author (or a creative unit) producing works that contradict each other. Similarly, the difference in medium should not preclude the significant (or even full) overlap of narrative content. Ryan's distinction between the two variants of expansion given is therefore moot. Moreover, her model fails to describe the subtle variations of canonicity that emerge when works simultaneously expand and modify the initially given storyworld.

On the other hand, this reciprocity of the story elements (which either reinforce or deny each other) brings to mind the distinction Marc Ruppel makes between 'storyworld elements' and 'universe elements' in the transmedia networks. Storyworld elements are significant and particular and "have noted traits in their own right." Universe elements are mentioned but undefined, they lack substantiality. They can, however, enter the first category through the process of 'definitization' (Ruppel 2012: 262), which often happens across distinct components of the transmedia network. That is to say, when the reader encounters a "random," seemingly meaningless object or detail for the second time, she or he integrates it into the storyworld[213] (ibid.: 263-264). Hence "a compounding of meaning that rewards the movement from site-to-site" (ibid.: 266), and, as a consequence, the potential of the storyworld to grow. As this study argues, canon formation works in a similar way, with any given fact gaining canonicity with every repetition.[214] Figures 6.1 and 6.2 illustrate the process: figure 6.1 represents a conglomeration of works clustered around the "mothership" of the anime (violet circle). In each case the work at least partially overlaps with the anime, but also adds some new information. As can be seen in Figure 6.1, not every media mix

[213] Ruppel does not specify the difference between the 'storyworld' and the 'fictional universe' (though he notes that the very distinction is problematic, as the terms are usually used interchangeably), but his writing implies that the former is comprised of detailed and specified elements that are immediately relevant to the narrative, while the latter is more abstract and harbors the potential to be further defined and disclosed. Ruppel's storyworld should not, however, be mixed with storyworld as understood by narratologists, because for all its immediacy, it is still the abstract construct shared by *multiple* works.

[214] This process is not limited to canon, though: fanons are formed in the same way. First, someone comes up with a certain idea, or fans latch onto a hint from official producers. If the element then starts to be reiterated in the fan works, its influence grows accordingly. Potentially it can even be included into the canon or remain fundamental fanon truth.

constituent includes one hundred percent of the information given in the anime — but all of them contain discrepancies (which belong to the sticking part). At the same time, certain works overlap not only with the core work, but with each other. These overlaps are the sites where certain facts are reiterated and become increasingly stable. The process is shown in Figure 6.2 where gradations of violet represent changes in canonicity.

Figure 6. Canon formation in the *Gankutsuō* Media Mix.

Figure 6.1. Overlapping works.

Figure 6.2. The levels of canonicity.

This canonicity, however, is always threatened, as any controversial fact has the potential to be repeated for the second or third time and thus form a new cluster. One could, in fact, imagine the work to be completely detached from the circle of the anime but overlap with several others. Moreover, an extended old franchise might include several such formations. An obvious example is the relatively young Marvel Cinematic Universe, which is constructed on the basis of comics, but separated from them.

Returning to *Gankutsuō*, it is possible to conclude that despite conspicuous discrepancies between its works (and their storyworlds, if one borrows Ryan's term), they still contribute to the formation of a fictional world which, in its turn, unites them. These links are, of course, much weaker, and the world — more unstable and open to manipulation than in the transmedia franchises based on meticulously developed fictional universes, where the majority of works are created under the principle of continuity. Such instability of canon is to be expected from a franchise where "human drama" takes priority over the world-

building. But the weaker connections on the level of the story and the world-building are reinforced by connections on other levels of the *Gankutsuō* network.

4. The last one is the level of intertextual connections. This network is different from the others because it involves not only other constituents, but texts from without the media mix, that is, *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *Tiger! Tiger!*. All *Gankutsuō* works are bound to each other insofar as they all refer to the anime, sharing the world-setting, selectively transposing its story, and propagating its ethics. But it is possible to argue that yet another, stronger level of unity is created because the same works simultaneously refer to Dumas' and Bester's novels.

These intertextual connections as such are not crucial to the narrative, in other words, not necessary. To give an example: variations in the number of executed criminals do not affect the overall development of the scene (unlike the presence or absence of the card game — but then, again, removing it in the manga did not influence the overall development of events or even the outcome of the scene). Likewise, it is hard to discern any immediate necessity in changing the composition and contents of the dinner at Auteil in *The Masked Aristocrat* to bring it closer to that in *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Sometimes, minor allusions and transpositions scattered across the media mix can introduce additional sequences or explanations, as it happens when Dantès poses as a priest to approach Mercédès in the audio drama, or when he communicates with Gankutsuō at the Monte Cristo asteroid in the manga. Ultimately, though, more often than not these new details increase the discrepancies between the storyworlds. Depending on the perspective, one might even say that it is intertextual references that distort the episodes to the point of becoming unrecognizable and mess with the ethical stance underlying the media mix. Some kind of constant tension is created: the more works borrow from *The Count of Monte Cristo*, the further they stray from the anime. At the same time, their status as adaptations is reinforced. Indeed, it is possible to ask: if

several works that tell similar stories in the similar setting all refer to a common hypotext[215] (or hypotexts), then cannnot they all be called parallel independent adaptations of this work? The answer to the question is modulated by the fact that all *Gankutsuō* works constantly fall back to the anime. It happens on the material level, the level of the expressive means available for the particular medium: the voices and the visuals. It also happens on the level of storytelling, as only the anime develops and finishes all the plotlines in their entirety. Therefore, every new borrowing from or allusion to *The Count of Monte Cristo*, or *Tiger! Tiger!* is based on and becomes meaningful against the material already adapted in the anime.[216] Any relationship the *Gankutsuō* texts have with other works thus becomes secondary to their status as parts of the media mix. But this common base also reinforces the connection between the references themselves. Importantly, each work borrows a different part from Dumas, so that combined they form a string of changes that strangely push the media mix backwards, against the transforming adaptation drive. Changes necessitated by the change of protagonist, by the ethical reinterpretation of the source work, and by the constraints of the format are annulled, so that ultimately another sort of negative image is formed: the adaptation of *The Count of Monte Cristo* that *Gankutsuō* never was and never could be.

---

[215] Hypotext and hypertext are terms introduced by Genette in his discussion of intertextuality (Genette 1982, Eng.trans. 1997; qtd. in Allen 2000: 107-108). The latter builds on or refers to the former, so hypotext is a synonym of the "source work."

[216] As a mental experiment, one can imagine reading *The Masked Aristocrat* before watching the anime. This particular novel is the most appropriate subject, since it does not serve as a sequel or prequel and covers the same time span as the anime. Suppose, the reader has read *The Count of Monte Cristo* and notices the note on the cover of Ariwara's novel that identifies it as a source work. But how would *The Masked Aristocrat* read as an independent adaptation? Many things would not make sense. The setting is changed, but the new fictional world is not fleshed out and exists only as thinly painted backdrop. The story of Monte Cristo's revenge is pushed to the fringe, and those parts of it which are told at all are mostly summarized. Many characters are only mentioned in passing. On the other hand, Bendetto/Andrea is moved to the front for some obscure reason, but there is no evident explanation as to why there was need to focus on the point of view of this particular character. At the same time, even Benedetto's storyline is laid too thin to serve as a character study in its own right. All of these questions would, of course, be answered, if the reader then watched the anime. However, one would quickly come to understand that it is not the anime that expands on *The Masked Aristocrat*, filling the gaps, but on the opposite, the novel picks up the secondary character of Benedetto and rewrites his story.

To summarize, the *Gankutsuō* media mix can be imagined as a multilayered structure where complicated dynamics exist between works on different levels, but also between these levels. The works are bound by common aesthetic and ethical principles as well as by the basic settings. These parameters secure the unity of the project, though even they are not absolutely impervious to change. Another link between all the *Gankutsuō* texts is the strong connection they hold with the two novels outside of the media mix. Each text adopts different elements from these two, but, paradoxically, the novelty of each element can be noticed only in comparison with its rendering in other works, starting with the anime. That is, not any interpretation of *The Count of Monte Cristo* found in any given *Gankutsuō* work is completely its own. It is also important that articulations of the ethical stance, variations in the story, and intertextual references occur, so to say, concurrently and not in some hierarchical order. As a result, at times the rifts on the anime narrative and the intertextual play threaten to trample the position the *Gankutsuō* media mix takes as the new reading of Dumas' novel. Finally, as the binding factor, the story itself seems to work in two opposite directions. On the one hand, its volatile changes undermine the unity of this conglomeration of works. On the other hand, the story binds all texts to each other and first of all to the "hub"[217] of the media mix, the anime, through a series of gaps and additions. Furthermore, overlaps between story content (Ryan's storyworlds), combined with the information provided by the core work, form what should be called the canon of this franchise.

For all their complexity, the relations between the *Gankutsuō* works and their function as media mix constituents have so far been considered with regard to only one

[217] 'Hub' is the term Marc Ruppel uses when he discusses transmedia projects as networks. The hub (or, to use less specific term, the 'core text') "acts as a binder, a spine through which network continuity and coherence is maintained" and ensures "global connectivity, and, with it, network and narrative coherence" (Ruppel: 256-57). It must be noted that Ruppel studies much more complicated and extensive transmedia compositions than *Gankutsuō*. Moreover, he focuses on the projects that involve transmedia storytelling proper and thus facilitate other kinds of connections than those that function on *Gankutsuō*. However, the network hub is an element that applies to many, if not all, types of transmedia projects, including the media mix.

dimension — the dimension of meaning. That is, the discussion has not yet touched upon either the materiality of the media employed in the media mix or the conventions that pertain to each of these media (the only exception has been made for the anime as the starting point of the media mix, but even its material aspects have so far been ignored). However, without doubt these issues have to be addressed in a close analysis of the transmedia project, which by definition relies on differences in experience provided by the constituents. Besides, as has been already demonstrated with regard to the visuals in the novelization, the expressive means of the medium can be facilitated — or subdued — to create an additional connectivity between works. Finally, in *Gankutsuō*, works that can be considered highly unconventional go side by side with works that, on the contrary, seem to follow the conventions associated with the respective medium almost to the letter. It goes without saying that not only the shape of the story, but also its meaning as well as the audience's response is affected in both cases. Therefore, the next chapter is dedicated to a detailed discussion of these matters.

CHAPTER 3. THE *GANKUTSUŌ* WORKS AND THEIR MEDIALITY

There is no particular order to follow in discussing *Gankutsuō* media, since each of them is worthy of analysis in its own right. The order chosen for this chapter (from the *Gankutsuō* novels, to the manga, to the anime[218]) reflects the shift from a very conservative treatment of the respective medium and its conventions to conscious play with form and, finally, to an innovative and experimental approach. Besides, the anime is assigned to the end of the list because its plurimediality allows for additional intertextual references, which enrich the narrative, but cannot be directly reproduced in most of the other works. This additional layer of intertextuality as well as its treatment in the other works is discussed after the issues more directly related to medium specificity.[219]

3.1. The *Gankutsuō* Novels and their "Light-Novelness"

Three major staples of the media mix, three media that usually form its core are manga, anime, and light novels (the fourth major medium, not employed in the *Gankutsuō* media mix, is, of course, video game). It therefore seems logical to identify the written texts that belong to the *Gankutsuō* media mix and stem from the anime as light novels. But it might as well be better to confirm whether these texts fit necessary parameters. Admittedly, these parameters may vary depending on the researcher, since the term itself has proved rather hard to define. The common consensus these days is to assume the "levels of light-novel-ness" (Maynard 2012: 3). Senko K.Maynard gives the following list of defining features culled from (a less systematic) table provided by Ōmori Nozomi and Mimura Mii in 『ライトノベル☆めった斬り!』(2004)[220]:

---

[218] Since the role of the *Gankutsuō* audio drama in the media mix structure has already been discussed in section 2.3.1. ("An Overview of the *Gankutsuō* texts"), it is not treated separately in this chapter.
[219] 'Medium specificity' here is used in a broad sense, that is, it implies not only technical means available for each platform, but conventions and traditional practices associated with it.
[220] Manyard 2012: 3; trans. mine.

1. Format:
    a. The “bunkobon” format[221]
    b. Illustration on the cover in manga/anime style
    c. Multiple illustrations inside
    d. A length of max 300 pages[222]
2. Narrative structure:
    a. Without a definitive conclusion
    b. Serialized (more than 5 volumes)
3. Setting:
    a. Non-realistic world-setting (fantasy, SF, etc.)
4. Characters:
    a. Built through dialogues
    b. Codified and non-realistic
5. Cross-media promotion
6. Style:
    a. High density of new paragraphs
    b. High density of onomatopoeia
    c. Non-realistic
7. Themes:
    a. No reference to social issues, no message

While this list provides a useful template for defining a light novel, its source has not gone unquestioned. In 2013, Ōmori’s list of criteria was investigated by Ōta Mutsumi. Ōta’s research group sorted the list to cull objective evaluation parameters. In the course of selection they conducted a series of interviews, and as a result they gave up on criteria that proved to be too subjective (most of those referred to characters and their qualities. See Ōta 2013: 279, 282). Ōta’s group then proceeded to conduct the quantitative analysis of the corpus of twenty light novels and ten novels for general public (一般文芸作品).[223]

[221] Bunkobon (文庫本) is a small paperback book, usually A6 (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bunkobon).
[222] According to Iida Ichishi, the average light novel is 256-288 pages long (Iida 2012: 283).
[223] A detailed account of the research methodology and results can be found in the aforementioned article or online:
https://societyforlightnovel.wordpress.com/資料集/

According to the results, it is impossible to tell a light novel from a novel for general public using criteria that refer to writing style.[224] On the other hand, the clearest difference between the two types of novels was found in the publishing format The final list includes such criteria as "the first edition is published as a bunkobon (文庫本)," "the character's portrait is on the cover," "coloured illustrations are included," "the work is serialized," "an afterword is included in the first edition," "the author addresses the readers in the afterword," "there is an anime adaptation," and "special reading is provided for certain words and phrases"[225] (Ōta 2013: 286).[226]

Iida Ichishi, whose focus is on the light novel-related industry (their production, distribution, and promotion), seems to concur with this assessment by including the names of actual publishers into his definition:

> Light novels discussed in this book are novels that have illustrations on the cover, frontispiece and within the text, are aimed at younger audience, and are published by imprints such as Dengeki Bunko (電撃文庫) of ASCII Media Works, MF Bunko (MF 文庫) of Media Factory, Famitsu Bunko (ファミ通文庫) of Enterbrain, and others (Iida 2012: 16-17; trans. mine).

The *Gankutsuō* novelization conforms to most of Ōta's criteria, apart from a specific treatment of the illustrations, and it was indeed published by MF Bunko (MF 文庫 J). *The Masked Aristocrat*, however, deviates from most of them. First, it is not A6, but Japanese B6 (12.8 × 18.2 cm). Second, it was published by Kodansha in the so-called KC Noberusu (KC ノベルス) series. Furthermore, it has no afterword or preface, and it is not serialized.

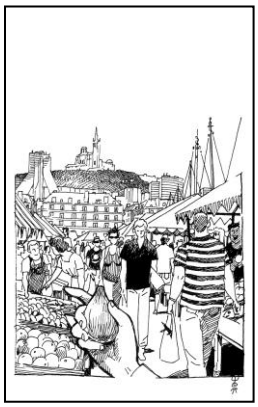
[224] The following parameters are given as an example: "many dialogues, but few scene descriptions," and "writing which is easy to read and to understand" (determined by such factors as kanji density, average length of sentences, and length of passages between punctuation marks)" (Ōta 2013: 283).
[225]「ルビで特殊な読み仮名が指定されている」, Ōta 2013: 281.
[226] There are also several criteria not relevant to the publishing strategy, but still effective, such as "the work incorporates several genres," or "the protagonist possesses special powers" (Ōta 2013: 286-287).

Although the novel adopts certain toponyms and personal names from *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and scatters several SF terms across the text, no noticeable amount of "special readings" (that is, new terms coined by the author) is found in the text. And while its cover depicts Andrea Cavalcanti — the central character — the novel has no colour illustrations. On the other hand, at the beginning of the book one finds a character portrait gallery typical for light novels and long manga series. Maeda's drawings also fulfil some of the functions Satō Chihiro associates with light novel illustrations: they introduce characters[227] (or, in the light of its connection to other works, reintroduce them) and provide information not included in the written text (Satō 2009: 60). One cannot help noticing though, that both these functions apply to illustrated fiction in general. The drawings here do not contain episodes completely absent in the text (ibid.) or contradicting it (Satō 2013: 145). The same applies to their form: there are no typical manga techniques or elements involved, such as pictograms, [228] speech/thought balloons, screentones, or paneling (Satō 2009: 57-58). Additionally, as demonstrated in Figure 7, not all of the drawings include characters.[229]

Figure 7. Some of the illustrations in *The Masked Aristocrat* are highly decorative and do not include portraits of characters (note. however, that the characters are still present within the frame)/

7.1. p.070

7.2. p.161



7.3. p.191

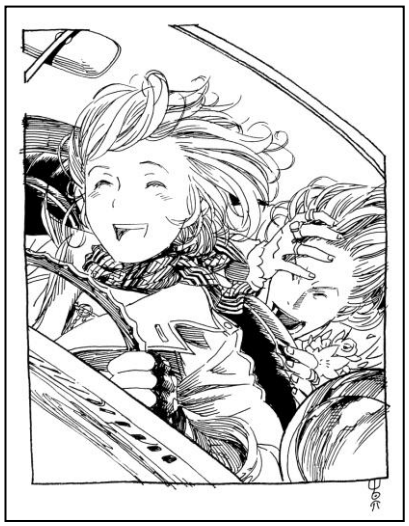
[227] Satō 2013:143.

[228] What Takekuma Kentaro calls 'keiyu' (形喩) — the collection of simple drawings and backgrounds with fixed meaning. Those are further divided into 'manpu' (漫符) and 'kōka' (効果) Contrary to the latter, which gain meaning only in the context, the former can be interpreted even when separated from a panel (Takekuma 1995: 80-82).

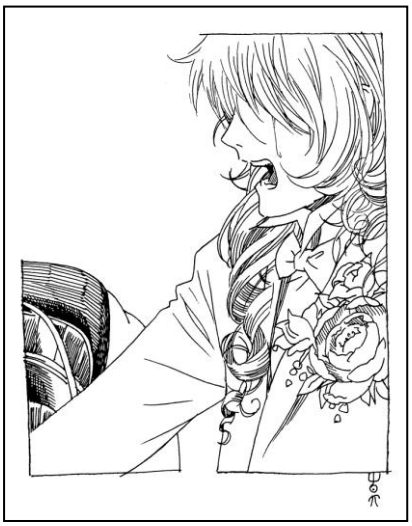
[229] This tendency will continues in *Albert the Diplomat's Diary*, where character portraits are interspersed with sketches of diegetic objects and environments.

However, on the whole the lack of the aforementioned qualities does not warrant the exclusion of the illustrated text from light novels: in fact, a quick perusal of light novels that belong to other series reveals similar patterns.[230] Besides, the "manga-like" nature of Maeda's illustrations can be recognized immediately: first, by the way he draws faces and conveys emotions (Figure 8); and second, by the style that coincides perfectly with the one Maeda adopts in the manga. When one takes into account this last point, combined with format specifics indicated above, it seems feasible to suggest that *The Masked Nobleman* downplays its light novel nature to some point, but does not suppress it completely.

Figure 8. Characters' expressions in Maeda's illustrations for *The Masked Aristocrat*.



8.1. p.169



8.2. p.173

On the level of written style and contents, however, both Kōyama's novelization and Ariwara's novel seem to conform to the characteristics stereotypically associated with light novels: there are multiple dialogues; specific typographic characters and symbols are inserted into the text; the narrative is character-centered (which means that introspections and character interactions have priority over description and exposition); and the amount of pages is within the norm (three volumes of the novelization are 250-300 pages long each,

[230] Apparently, the inclusion of multiple character-centred illustrations that can *somehow* be identified as manga-like is far more important than any additional features these illustrations might posses.

and *The Masked Nobleman* is 200 pages long). Allusions to Dumas and Bester, in other words, intertextual references also conform to the "multiple, varying quotes" that, according to Hiwatashi Takahiro, distinguish light novels (Hiwatashi 2013: 254). Hiwatashi discusses the wordplay and the proliferation of specific terms, or, to the opposite, popular colloquial expressions in such texts. He is thus interested in a particular type of borrowings and appropriations as distinct from the broader range of relations discussed in this study. However, the novels by Kōyama and Ariwara incorporate their share of attention-catching words, including product names (*Bugatti Type 35, Voisin, Corse Figari Wine, Citroën SM, Pomme Prisonnière*), toponyms (*Luna, Neo-Rome, stellar area Saxony, Rogliano*), locations (*the Theatre of Tycho Brahe*[231] and *the Teatro Argentino* on Luna*; Bois de Boulogne, Bois de Vincennes*), special terms (*Ancien Régime, Chaski System, jaunt, asymmetric material, ultra-high density matter, énarque*), and personalities (*Marcus Licinius Crassus, Pompey the Great, Faust, Salome, Carmen*). Hiwatashi notes that such words are usually not essential for meaning-making and are not necessitated by the story per se (2013: 254-255). The same applies to most of the words listed above. There is no technical need for the readers to know what type of car each character drives. Some the locations are in fact used interchangeably: Theatre of Tycho Brahe and Bois de Boulogne in the novelization are replaced by Teatro Argentino and Bois de Vincennes in *The Masked Aristocrat*. For a more extended example one could turn to the public execution episode, when, in the novelization, the account is given about each convict's crimes. The first two names, Andrea Rondola and Peppino, go back straight to Dumas' novel (albeit the personalities of both convicts have been changed). The last, added, convict is a priest called Guibourg, who apparently conducted black messes and sacrificed a child in a ritual requested by some noble woman.[232] The reader willing to search for the name will find that the Abbé Étienne Guibourg (1610-1686) was a real

[231] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tycho_Brahe

[232]「アンドレア・ロンドロ、ペピーノことロッカ・ブリオリ、司祭ギブール……」；「＜…＞ギブールってのは町はずれの貧乏寺の司祭で＜…＞生活に困って黒魔術に手を出したってちんけな野郎でさ ＜…＞ギブールの依頼人の貴婦人は、さらってきた子供を生け贄にして何やら不思議な能力を手に入れようとしたってことですよ。」(Kōyama 2004: 120-121).

person,[233] who indeed committed that very crime multiple times for Madame de Montespan, was ultimately caught and convicted, and died in prison. While an interesting detour, this information is not relevant whatsoever to the scene or to the *Gankutsuō* plot in general. In other words, its presence in the text, like that of many other similar details, is completely provisional.

One last remark to add about the novelization's affiliation with light novel traditions is that it bears traces of what is known as 'sekai-kei' (セカイ系) in otaku culture and the related critical discourse. Nowadays this similarity is not so evident, as sekai-kei is known to denote works where "problems related to a small-scale relationship between "you" (heroine) and "me" (protagonist) are directly connected to large-scale abstract problems, such as the "world crisis" or "the end of the world," without any intermediary layer"[234], where the intermediary layer refers to society. However, critic Maejima Satoshi (who, much like Azuma, focuses on otaku culture and its products) denounces such plain understanding of the term (2010). According to Maejima, 'sekai-kei' was first used in 2002 by a certain website master to designate works that borrowed from the second part of *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. Maejima defines such works as follows:

> Works created in the late 1990s-early 2000s under the influence of *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, that focused on the (usually male) protagonist's self-consciousness, while incorporating typical elements of otaku culture such as

[233] http://www5e.biglobe.ne.jp/~occultyo/akuma/montesupan.htm
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/%C3%89tienne_Guibourg

[234]「主人公（ぼく）とヒロイン（きみ）を中心とした小さな関係性（「きみとぼく」）の問題が、具体的な中間項を挟むことなく、「世界の危機」「この世の終わり」などといった抽象的な大問題に直結する作品群のこと」（『波状言論 美少女ゲームの臨界点』, 2004）
Quoted in Maejima 2010: 136. Trans. mine.

giant robots, beautiful fighting girls, or detectives[235] (Maejima 2010: 129-130; trans. mine).

The definition of sekai-kei started to change after 2003 and transited into its later state (involving the relationship with the heroine and the end of the world) in 2004. At first, few works conformed to the new version, including those that are usually given as typical examples, but then, paradoxically, a new wave of works appeared that followed the new definition as a set of guidelines (Maejima 2010: 7-8, 157-158). *Gankutsuō* novels were written during the watershed period, but they stay clearly influenced by the earlier tradition. As follows from Maejima's definition, this older understanding of sekai-kei implied a weak, uncertain and extremely self-reflexive protagonist, with excessive attention paid to his interiority (2010: 54, 64, 199-200). At the same time, sekai-kei downplayed the world-setting or the exploration of the fictional universe, since the aim of the story was not to provide an access to the fictional world, but to facilitate the identification of the reader with the hero (2010: 101-102). This last aspect — the absence of a large background setting — is also identified by Ōhashi Takayuki as one of the defining features of the light novel in general. Takahashi explains this as a strategy aiming to maximize the identification between teenage reader and teenage protagonist. The world of a teenager is usually limited to the narrow circle of his personal relationships (a girlfriend, close friends, family) and to a limited number of spaces (school, home, favourite places). The connection to the outer social world is weak. These circumstances are mirrored and intensified in the characterization of the light novel protagonist (Takahashi 2013: 26-27). Maejima resorts to a similar logic when he discusses the non-realistic depiction of war, which sekai-kei works have often been criticized for. Intense and believable personal drama stands in stark contrast with

[235]「『新世紀エヴァンゲリオン』の影響を受け、90 年代後半からゼロ年代に作られた、巨大ロボットや戦闘美少女、探偵など、オタク文化と親和性の高い要素やジャンルコードを作中に導入したうえで、若者（特に男性）の自意識を描写する作品群」.

catastrophes and battles that are practically insubstantial. They may influence the plot somehow, but they happen "somewhere else" and remain vague, abstract. As Maejima points out, this, is in fact a very realistic depiction of the way teenagers experience real life — hence sekai-kei's appeal for its readership (Maejima 2010: 79-80).

Returning to the main topic, the *Gankutsuō* novelization possesses all characteristics mentioned above. Albert is depicted as an insecure, self-reflexive (or rather self-criticising), and even brooding teenager (in contrast to his brighter personality in the anime). His worries and troubles are limited to the circle of people close to him. Any kind of political or social trouble is pushed to the background — it is precisely the scenes of political unrest and of military uprising that are skimmed over in the third volume. Indeed, it is telling how "Shinji-kun is me!" (chosen by Maejima to illustrate the sensibilities of the *Evangelion* and sekai-kei target readership) rhymes with the words of one of *Gankutsuō* fan-reviewers: "The reader is Albert-kun!"[236]. It must be noted, however, that this affinity to sekai-kei is found only in the novelization and, to a lesser extent, in *Albert the Diplomat's Diary*. *The Masked Aristocrat* does not limit the point of view to one character[237] and thus breaches the fundamental rule of sekai-kei, that is, the intense focus on one person's interiority (it must be noted, however, that the narrative with multiple points of view still remains one of the options for light novels — not all of them focus on a single protagonist).

Albert the Diplomat's Diary stands apart from the other texts for two reasons. The first is its format, which strays even further from the typical light novel. The diary is printed in B5 size and in horizontal lines. All illustrations except the cover are in black and white, and are closer to sketches than to finished drawings. The diary was also a limited printing, not meant for mass distribution, with the price changing accordingly.[238] These differences

[236]「読者はアルベールそのもの!」http://www.amazon.co.jp/review/R2K5SB4E9PRGNB

[237] If anything, the point of view in this novel is narratorial, with introspections into different characters' thoughts and feeling. In Genette's terms, Ariwara employs zero focalization.

[238] The price in official GONZO shop for this item was 2,700 yen as of December 2015 (http://gonzo-style.ecq.sc/gankutuou/gnz-gds-go01.html). The average light novel price is 500-600 yen per volume (Iida 2012: 15).

between Albert's diary and the other written texts are the consequence of its specific origins. Initially it was published online in a form of a typical blog,[239] which lasted for a year. The readers had the opportunity to write to the blogger (Kōyama), who sometimes answered them as Albert. What effect does a text like this have on the consumers? Obviously, Albert's diary was also read as a serialized sequel, with people waiting for new entries in hopes of getting some new information. But it was also an attempt at metalepsis. Metalepsis is "the contamination of levels in a hierarchical structure as it occurs in narrative," an "intrusion into the storyworld by the extradiegetic narrator or by the narratee […] or the reverse" (Pier 2008: 303). While metaleptic affects threaten to alienate the reader, they can also heighten the immersion, "draw the extradiegetic narratee (reader) into the picture" (Pier 2008: 304). Christy Dena argues that in transmedia projects, cases like this constitute a 'deictic shift.' She borrows this concept from cognitive narratology: a deictic shift occurs when the recipient of the story cognitively relocates to the time and space of the fictional world (Dena 2009: 275-76). In transmedia fiction, argues Dena, the opposite effect is also possible — when the deictic center of the storyworld is aligned with that of the actual world (ibid.). Among the factors that Dena considers functional in this recentering are "diegetic artifacts," which include websites, blogs, newspaper issues, etc. These artifacts supposedly belong to the diegetic reality, but at the same time exist and function in the readers' actual space. Ideally, these artifacts "not only provide a diegetic link between an imagined and actual world, but they also enable interaction to take place" (Dena 2009: 286).[240] In other words, this is a way to enhance the audience's experience with the transmedia project.

The extention of this logic might be found behind four pages of the *Impartial* "newspaper" (the tabloid where Albert's friend Beauchamp supposedly works) posted on the

[239] http://arbert0829.blogzine.jp/ - unfortunately, the page has been down since November, 2014.
[240] Evidently, there was no pronounced interaction in Albert's online blog, but the possibility was suggested, and the blog was alive for a year.

official *Gankutsuō* site.[241] These four artifacts are designed as screenshots of the *Impartial* news site with articles written by Beauchamp and related to episodes which must have been covered by press during the events of the anime. However, this work does not serve any specific function: it does not disclose any valuable information, and, if anything, it does not facilitate the empirical re-alignment of the actual and the fictional worlds. The reason for this is that the *Impartial* screenshots are only designed to look like web pages, but are in fact images that appear on the official *Gankutsuō* site. There is no effort here to reproduce the fictional object as part of the actual world. What is the function then of these seemingly inconsequential pieces? Dena, when introducing diegetic artifacts, refers to Barthes' "reality effect," to suggest that such artifacts "do not necessarily need to have any role other than verisimilitude" (Dena 2009: 290). These images can therefore be understood as the "concrete detail," where a referent and a signifier collide (Barthes 1968, trans. into Eng. 1986: 147): the *Impartial* screenshot refers to nothing but itself, it does not participate in the construction of the story, it simply represents a single element of fictional world. And precisely because of this, it has the potential to make the fictional world more tangible (though not by shifting its deictic center). Whether said potential has been realized in this particular case is a question though. These four images are hidden in an obscure section of the official site, which renders them practically non-existent for the larger part of the audience. Even when found, these four elements stay isolated and out of context. One needs to make an effort just to reconnect them with the diegetic world of *Gankutsuō*. With these considerations in mind, one can perceive them as a truncated project — an idea that was never fully realized.

Similarly, Albert's blog did not realize its full potential as a diegetic artifact. It did not allow the readers much interactivity, to start with. Artifacts discussed by Dena generally offer interactive experiences[242] — here, however, the options for users were very limited, and communication with Kōyama-"Albert" occurred in a sporadic manner. When the collected posts were published on paper, soon after the blog finished its one-year run, their

[241] Unfortunately, the official *Gankutsuō* site went down in November 2015. While the page can still be accessed through the Internet Archive, the images are no longer available. However, they are included in Appendix 2.
http://web.archive.org/web/20150511084611/http://www.gankutsuou.com/special/index.html
[242] Dena 2009: 286. For an extended example see pp. 281-283.

function inevitably changed. As a printed book, this diary does not qualify as a diegetic artifact. There are no attempts to imitate the authentic written diary on the level of design, and the only thing in common with the blog is horizontal script. As for the contents, the relative closeness in style (its immediacy, disorganized manner, colloquial expressions) to Kōyama's own novelization further obscures the special status of a diary. If anything, the book reads not so much as a diary but as another light novel with Albert as the explicit diegetic narrator. Therefore, in the printed version, the diary functions only as a narrative expansion, a sequel.

3.2. The Manga *Gankutsuō*: Playing with Conventions, Juxtaposing Techniques

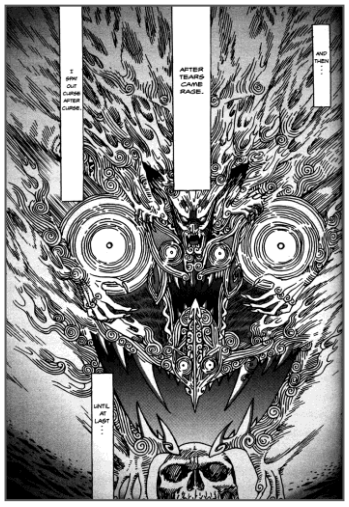
The manga *Gankutsuō*, serialized in the seinen manga magazine *Monthly Afternoon* (『月刊アフタヌーン』), reveals several interesting traits on the level of composition and techniques. First of all, one cannot help but notice the shifts in the page layout. 'Page layout' denotes everything that relates to "proportional and positional relationships between the panels" (Groensteen 2007: 91) as well as certain other elements such as balloons (吹き出し). According to Thierry Groensteen, it can be a) regular or irregular, and b) discrete and ostentatious (2007: 97). Regular layout is understood as the one that maintains an unchangeable homogenous structure, such as the grid. Irregular layout, on the contrary, relates to changes in size and shape of panels. Discrete layout tends to be "transparent" and dominated by the story, while the ostentatious one draws attention to the physical parameters of the page and is thus dominated by "picture" (2007: 99). It must be mentioned here that Groensteen develops this classification in response to another one by Benoît Peeters (1998), which is based on the relationship between the layout itself (in terms of a spatial composition of the page) and the narrative. The layout, according to Peeters, can be utilized as: conventional, rhetorical, decorative, and productive. The first two modes correspond to Groensteen's 'regular' and 'irregular,' respectively. 'Decorative' signifies the dominance of the image and of the decorative function over the narrative, while the "productive utilization of page" means that the story is subjugated to a specific layout (in other words, the very division of a page into units precedes and becomes the basis for the narrative). Peeters thus conflates the form of the page layout and its function — it is obvious, for instance, that the line between the last two modes is very thin. Likewise, conventional layout should be considered productive if it shapes the narrative (e.g., in yonkoma) and rhetorical if it directly contributes to the narrative on the level of expression (for instance, setting up rhythm). Indeed, Groensteen makes a convincing argument that in many cases a page responds to several of Peeters' categories at once (Groensteen 2007: 93). He also points out that often these definitions apply only "to one unit or a subgroup of the page" (2007: 101). Therefore it seems reasonable to retain Peeters' terms as functions that can be executed by both regular and irregular layout, which gets either ostentatious or discrete.

In the case of *Gankutsuō*, the layout is irregular, with a predominantly rhetorical function. This combination tends to lead to the least visibility, and therefore should not have been of much interest. There are, however, multiple places throughout the three volumes, when visuals strike the reader before the narrative content. This is because the layout often serves decorative function (Figure 9), and in a number of limited cases, it seems to undertake the productional function as well.

Figure 9. Certain pages in the manga *Gankutsuō* are covered by the full-page-sized illustrations, where the decorative function is combined with the rhetorical or dominates over it.

9.1. vol.1, p.97

9.2. vol.1, p.156



9.3. vol.1, p.157

9.4. vo2, p.26

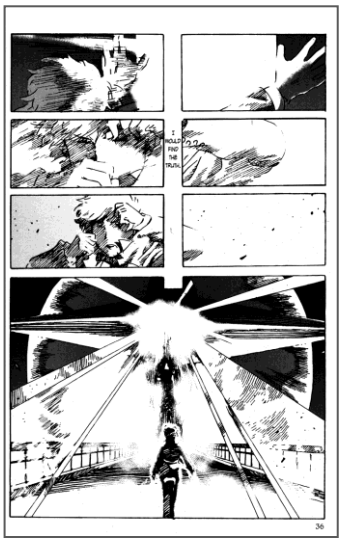
9.5. vol.3, p.134

9.6. vol.3, p.193

The images in the Figure 9 are parts of the narrative thread in the manga — their function is therefore not limited to the decorative. Some of them serve as descriptions

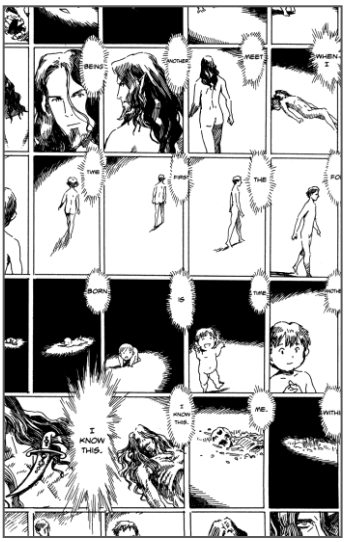
(Images 9.2, 9.3), while others relate some kind of event (Images 9.5, 9.6), or add symbolism and extrapolate on the verbal track. For instance, Image 9.1 illustrates and reinforces the verbal text, where Franz expresses suspicions against Monte Cristo. But it also translates the Count's Orientalist vibes, which are profound in Dumas' novel (the Arabian motifs here are replaced by the motifs that remind of the Far East: lotuses and dragons). Image 9.4 is the final, page-sized frame of the sequence, where Monte Cristo encourages Villefort's wife Héloïse to continue her poisoning. At the same time it visualizes the "grip" he has on her and hints at the Count's true nature (as possessed by Gankutsuō). Nevertheless, it should be pretty obvious that in all these pages the narratively significant information is subordinate to the visual spectacle. The reader finds herself lost in the lines and patterns, discovering new details and motifs. In other words, the decorative function prevails over rhetorical, and the image — over the narrative. In fact, these pages, wholly covered by semi-abstract drawings, come close to illustrations. In the pages included in Figure 10, a similar effect — the stumbling of the narration — results from the panel layout.

Figure 10. Layout with productional function can take the shape of a deliberately symmetrical division of panels.



10.1. vol.1, p.36

10.2. vol.2, p.92



10.3. vol.3, p.195

10.4. vol.1, p.194

10.5. vol.1, p.153

Pages like these are very rare in the *Gankutsuō* manga, but this makes them all the more noticeable. The obvious effect they produce is the break in sequential reading. In Image 10.1, six panels are actually three panels that should be read from top to bottom. However, the wider vertical gap forces the reader to follow each of the two columns separately. The gap itself draws the eye directly to the vertical formed by Albert's figure and the rocket. The four upper panels in Image 10.2 reveal a typical aspect-to-aspect transition (McCloud 1993: 72). One might argue, that in this case, the time is not stopped for the convenience of "a wondering eye," but compressed in a charged moment before the violent release in the fifth panel. In any case, the order, again, loses its relevance here. The same applies to Image 10.3, which is deliberately constructed so as to evoke a non-linear flow of time.

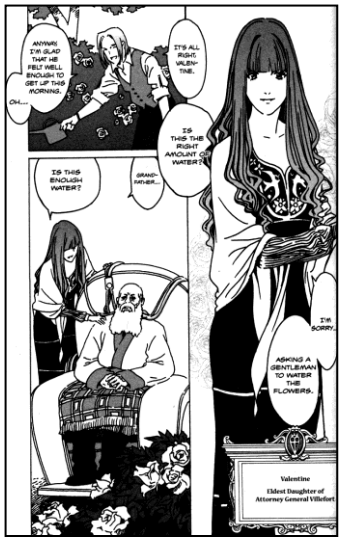
As for Image 10.4, admittedly, it is possible to argue that the division of the page does not have the priority. One might notice, however, that the panels are again arranged in a specific manner that breaks the sequence, or, rather, randomizes it. In this case, several routes are reinforced simultaneously by the shape of the panels (horizontal and vertical ones form two different paths) and their size (one is compelled to go from the largest panel to the smallest — which disrupts the natural reading order of Japanese manga) as well as by visual "rhymes" between the contents of the panels: Héloïse's and Monte Cristo's lips, Monte Cristo's tresses, the glove. All possible paths, however, end in the left lower corner, with Monte Cristo's extended hand.

Likewise, in Image 10.5 the composition is dominated by the portrait (literal) of the despairing prisoner, with images of death and betrayal forming a second frame around him. These images are pushed simultaneously to the background and against the borders of the page. Again, they deny any determined sequence, suggesting multiple paths: there are several diagonals (Dantès's arm—Fernand's hand—Dantès screaming face; two silhouettes—Mercédès' back; squirming Dantès—kneeling Dantès—Dantès' face), but these diagonals also run parallel to each other, thus creating a new possible direction, and besides there are rhymes, again, between two images of Dantès in the top right corner, between the two renderings of the same couple, and between Dantès with a headless skeleton and a skull in the bottom. Incidentally, the images of Fernand and Mercédès refer to a moment when despairing Dantès could not have known about the two. As such, their depictions here can be interpreted as anticipations, what Genette calls 'prolepsis' (1972: 75). But as this prolepsis remains unsignified, it does not contribute anything to the story at this particular moment — it can only be recognized retrospectively (needless to say, this applies only to the unknowing audience, but the knowing readers, too, must find this impossible recollection jarring).

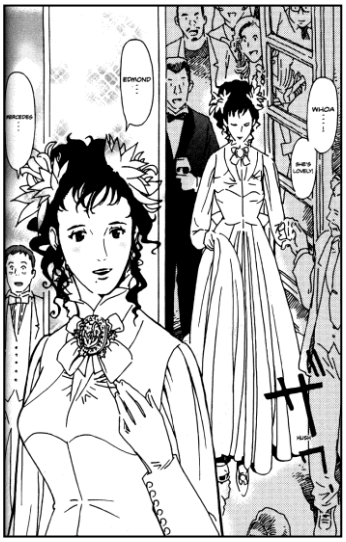
While the level of details and of abstraction in the pages quoted above distinguish *Gankutsuō* from many other titles, such combination of layouts should not be surprising: after all, it is typical for manga to devote a whole page or spread to the "show-stopper." However,

the manga also includes the type of decorative elements and compositions one does not expect to find in a seinen. Image 9.1 already provides a clue: there is a half-body portrait of the Count surrounded by flowers, with words scattered all over the page, and no panels. Figure 11 includes similar examples found in the first two volumes:

Figure 11. Shōjo-like "style images" in the manga *Gankutsuō*.



11.1. vol.1, p.105



11.2. vol.1, p.132

11.3. vol.1, p.175

11.4. vol.1, p.188

11.5. vol.1, p.207

11.6. vol.2, p.112

11.7. vol.2, p.161

11.8. vol.3, p.150

11.9. vol.3, p.35

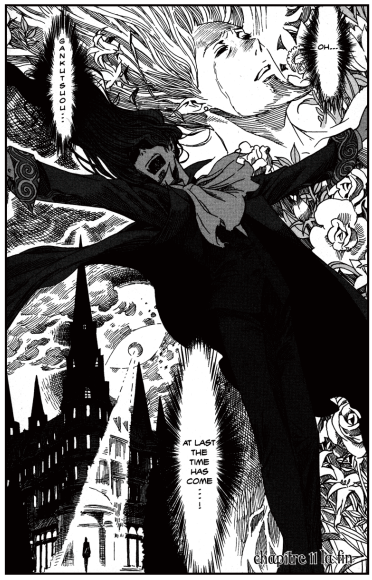
In the Images 11.1 to 11.7, the viewer finds examples of the "style image" (スタイル画), also known as "three-row overlaid style image" (三段ぶち抜きスタイル画[243]), which has been regarded as one of the distinguishing elements of shōjo manga. Images 11.3 and 11.5-7 provide the model of this device, with beautiful female figures overlapping other panels. Introduced and popularized by Takahashi Macoto, the style image is believed to have broken the rule of paneling and instigated the development of specific shōjo storytelling techniques (Fujimoto 2012: 47). One example of such layout is found in Image 11.8, which combines three separate layers through both overlapping and embedding. Image 11.9 includes the typical shōjo technique of surrounding a character by flowers for decorative effect (that the flowers do not belong to the story becomes evident as soon as the reader turns the page).[244] Additionally, there are pages that conflate multiple scenes and characters, as is demonstrated in Figure 12.

[243] Trans. by Fujimoto (2012: 25).

[244] The technique of drawing decorative flowers was first cultivated in jojō-ga (叙情画), the illustrations for shōjo magazines, in the post-war period by Nakahara Jun'ichi (1913-1983). Again, it supposedly was Takahashi who adopted it into shōjo manga (Takahashi 2008: 119-120, 122).

Figure 12.Some page-sized panels are created through the technique of collage or by blending together discrete scenes and figures. This multilayering is also typical of shōjo manga.

12.1. vol.1, p.213



12.2. vol.2, p.176

12.3. vol.2, p.155

12.4. vol.3, p.181

12.5. vol.2, p.174-175

12.6. vol.2, p.174-175

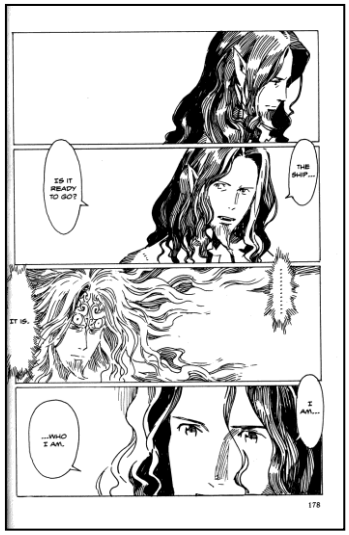
Now, one may notice that Images 12.1, 12.2, and 12.6 are different from Images 12.3, 12.4, and 12.5. The former combine distinct elements by layering, while the latter blend elements into each other. The effect, however, is similar: there is a break of narrative flow as the reader wanders around the page, traversing it in different directions. Instead of moving the story forward, these pages picture the characters' emotions employing the classic shōjo composition (or, as with Images 12.3-5, its analogue). They stand in stark contrast with other

sequences where the layouts become decidedly cinematic. Maeda, who has worked both as key animator and as director on multiple projects, has ample experience in creating storyboards, and some of his panel sequences look remarkably like key frames for animation (Figure 13).

Figure 13. "Cinematic" transitions between panels in the manga *Gankutsuō*. Examples of shot-reverse shot were not included because this technique is too obviously "cinematic" and does not convey the specificity of Maeda's style.

13.1. vol.3, p.154-155

13.2. vol.3, p.154-155



13.3. vol.3, p.154-155

13.4. vol.3, p.154-155

13.5. vol.3, p.154-155

13.6. vol.3, p.154-155

The examples above include zoom-in (13.1, 13.5-6), camera tilt (13. 4), and paneling that resembles key frames (13.2-3, also in the first two panels of page 13.1). It goes without saying that these sequences are linear and action-oriented: they vividly evoke movement and change (sometimes fast, as in examples 13.1 and 13.5, sometimes slow, as in examples 13.2-4).

This contrast between two types of composition inevitably brings to mind Itō Gō's argument about the historical development of manga in post-war Japan. As has been said before (Chapter One, section 1.3.1.1), Itō is largely concerned with the "realness," or "reality" of character and kyara. Therefore his account of manga history revolves around the ways the creators compensated for suppressed kyara reality. For Itō, these efforts determined the distinction between shōnen (as well as seinen and gekiga) and shōjo manga: the former tried to achieve "reality" by becoming increasingly "cinematic," the latter by becoming more and more "literary" (Itō 2005: 235). For Itō, both strategies are closely connected with what he calls the 'indeterminacy of frame' (フレームの不確定性). Frame as a cinematic term is defined as "a single image, the smallest compositional unit of a film's structure, captured by the camera on a strip of motion picture film — similar to an individual slide in still photography," [245] but Itō is more concerned with the borders of the image and the "camerawork," so for him the frame has a double meaning: either that of a site of access, a window into the fictional world, or that of the image snatched by the camera (2005: 200). As the latter, the frame can only be bound to a panel, but as a "window" it can correspond either to the panel or the whole page — thus the indeterminacy of the frame. Itō's argument is that shōnen and shōjo manga have dealt differently with this indeterminacy. Shōnen manga artists equated frame with panel (thus binding it to the "camera"), adopted cinematic techniques, such as montage, emphasized the temporal progression between panels, and therefore created the illusion of a seamless world existing behind discrete frames and inhabited by realistic characters, the world that can be "filmed" (2005: 205-206, 213, 216). Shōjo manga artists, by contrast, embraced the indeterminacy of frame and worked with the page as a unit. They did not struggle to recreate cinematic illusion, convey the passage of time, or physical movements; instead they created multilayered spaces filled with images and words that combined to build up atmosphere and relate the characters' interiority (Fujimoto

[245] http://www.filmsite.org/filmterms10.html

2012: 47-48; Itō 2005: 225, 228, 233).[246] Incidentally, techniques like the "style image" are considered fundamental for shōjo manga precisely because they break clear-cut frames, create "two levels of time and […] two dimensions of space on the page" (Fujimoto 2012: 47), and, by placing the character outside the panel grid or on top of it, increase the indeterminacy of the frame (Itō 2005: 204-205).

So there is a conceptual and practical gap between two manga traditions. Maeda, however, combines them in his work, switching between page and panel with ease. Notably, many shōjo titles do employ cinematic techniques when the need arises, regulate the order of panels and show the development of events, which leads Itō to conclude that shōjo manga enjoys more expressive freedom than is allowed in the "male" genres (Ito 2005: 232). One could therefore conclude the Maeda's style is closer to shōjo, but three points testify against that. First, as evident from the examples above, Maeda actively borrows from shōjo on visual and compositional levels, but he does not employ the verbal track in the same way. In fact, the verbal track in the manga is used rather sparingly. Lengthy, poetic passages as one of the core elements of shōjo do not surface in Maeda and Ariwara's work. Second, even though "style images" and multilayered pages are used regularly, shōnen/seinen-like page layouts still prevail. Most of the decorative page-sized drawings introduced in Table 9 are also hard to identify with a shōjo manga. Finally, even though storyboard-like sequences are not that frequent, they leave a strong impression by directly evoking camera movement. In other words, the manga *Gankutsuō* simultaneously combines and juxtaposes the two sets of techniques.

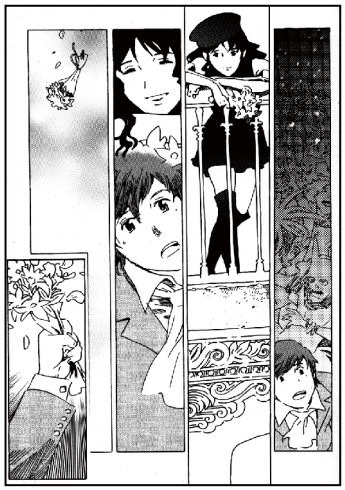
[246] As matter of fact, this effect can be achieved even with single-layered layout by scattering the verbal text across the page in a seemingly haphazard manner. This technique is also employed in *Gankutsuō*, albeit to a lesser extent. See, for instance, the interpolation of Gankutsuō's inner monologue with other characters' lines during the execution sequence in ch.1 "The Public Execution" (pp.79-89); and Edmond Dantès's ravings during the imprisonment in Château d'If in ch.4 "Château d'If" (pp. 143-151, 155-158). As Jaqueline Berndt points out, lexias spread over the page in such way encourage the reader "to stitch the parts of the page together in a more ambiguous, imaginative way less predetermined" by the logic of the implied camera (2013: 337).

Similar contrast can also be found in the application of screentones and hatching. By and large, there are three patterns:

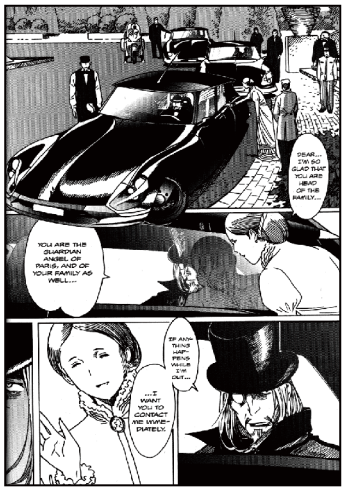
- the dominance of screentone, with little or no hatching (see Figure 14.1-6);
- screentone combined with hatching (with the latter applied in increased proportion);
- hatching and cross-hatching heavily applied, with very little or no screen-tone.

Maeda is certainly not the first mangaka to combine screentones and extensive hatching, but generally it is done in an even manner, when hatching simply used as an amplifier at certain points.[247] In Gankutsuō, however, the fluctuation is remarkable. Moreover, there is a correlation between the amount of hatching and the emotional weight and tone of panel content (one exception is ch.2 "The Public Execution," which relies more on uneven, inaccurate lines, ink blots and black space; and the last two chapters, which shed screentones almost completely). The darker the situation, the more hatching appears on the page, and the more lines in general (for instance, the characters' hair is drawn in multiple strands instead of a more or less solid mass). In fact, many examples of hatching or proliferating lines appear in the images given above, but some additional examples are provided in Figure 14.

Figure 14. Scenes in the manga *Gankutsuō* with light or neutral atmosphere (screentones used heavily) vs. scenes with dark, menacing atmosphere (with increased amounts of hatching).



14.1. vol.1, p.11



14.2. vol.2, p.40

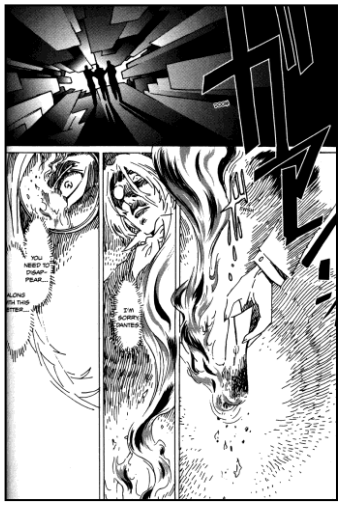
14.3. vol.2, p.62

[247] Nogizaka Tarō, Yukimura Makoto, and Miura Kentarō's works serve as good examples.

14.4. vol.2, p.107

14.5. vol.2, p.119

14.6. vol.2, p.141

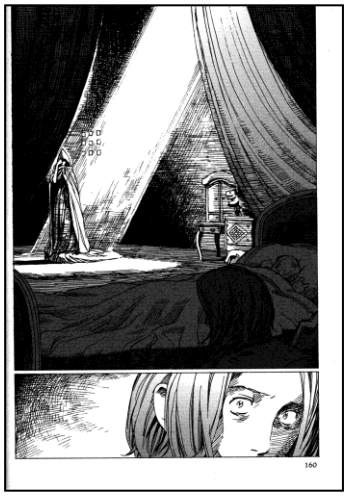


14.7. vol.1, p.142

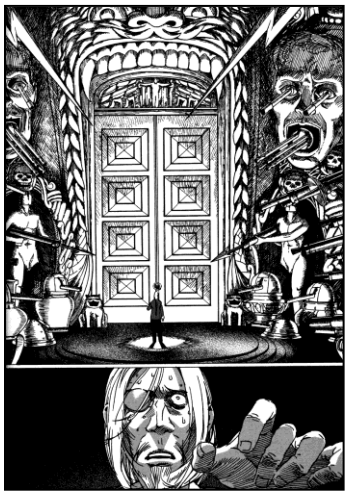
14.8. vol.1, p.148

14.9. vol.2, p.101

14.10. vol.2, p.156



14.11. vol.2, p.160



14.12. vol.3, p.4

Images 14.7-8 show conventional examples (to draw a character in distress with hatching, especially across the face, is a common technique). In image 14.9, the sense of violent motion is created via multiplying contour lines. Page 14.10 implies Villefort's sexual assault on Valentine. On page 14.11, the dead mother has just come to take her son; the scene is full of foreboding. The same applies to page 14.12, where Villefort prepares to enter the enemy's territory. In other words, there are all kinds of negative connotations: scenes vary from slightly ominous to openly violent. It is hard not to recall here the distinction between 'plastic' and 'structural lines' by Thomas Lamarre (2010). What Lamarre describes is not an opposition between two types, but a continuum between two poles. On the one end of the spectrum is the structural line, which is subordinated to the form, which is in turn subordinated to the structure. As an obvious example of this process Lamarre describes lines combining into a grid of rectangular panels that conform to the shape of the page (Lamarre 2010: 277). Lamarre defines such lines as ruled, connected with angles and angular compositions, but the structural line does not need to be a straight one or meet others at the right angle if the structure is created by systematic repetition: theoretically, a line that forms a circle is also structural at least to some extent, insofar as the circle is a part of a formal system. Indeed, this conforms to Lamarre's own juxtaposition (2010: 290) between the stalk of wheat (which is definitely plastic) and the sun (which Lamarre characterizes as "geometric") in Nakazawa Keiji's *Barefoot Gen* (『はだしのげん』, 1973-1987). The plastic line "creates the sense of a centre of motion within it" (2010: 282). If structural lines are brittle and fragile, plastic lines are dynamic, elastic and flexible and inherently resilient to damage (2010: 282). But, more importantly, plastic lines can convey violence. Thus the opposition between screentones and hatching becomes clearer.

Natsume Fusanosuke describes screentones as light, neutral, and inorganic (Fusanosuke 1995: 71-73). Inorganic does not exactly equal "without life," but could still imply that screentones are rather passive in their function. They fill the gaps, create surfaces,

and provide a basis for optical effects (1995: 72-74), but they have to be combined with other techniques, such as hatching, whitening (ペンホワイト), or scratching to become expressive. Conversely, this also means that screentones can only function as such when they are isolated, because when combined with hatching, they tend to get subjugated to the other technique. In *Gankutsuō*, however, pure screentones are imbued with meaning simply as a result of their opposition with multiplying lines. That is, they convey calmness, equilibrium, or neutrality. The hand-drawn lines, on the other hand, harbor energy and action, but this energy is uncontrolled and the actions are potentially harmful or destructive.[248] Immediately a question arises: to what extent is hatching plastic? This is not as evident as with character lines (which gravitate to plasticity), motion lines (defined as a border case of structural lines that has at least the potential to be revitalized and freed from the form[249]), or cross-hatching (which most likely shifts along the scope depending on its alignment with panel borders, page edges, etc.). Indeed, it is hard to define the primary tendency of hatching.

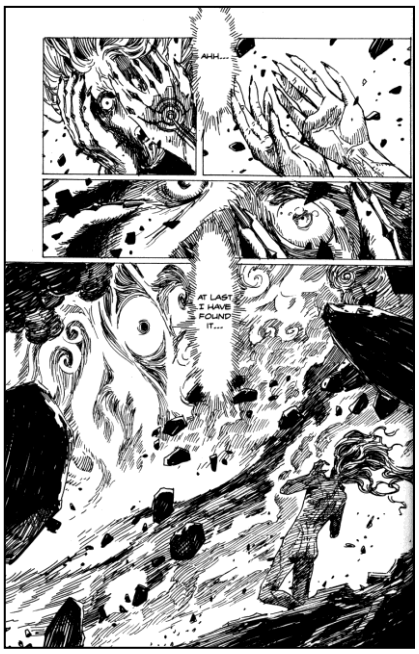


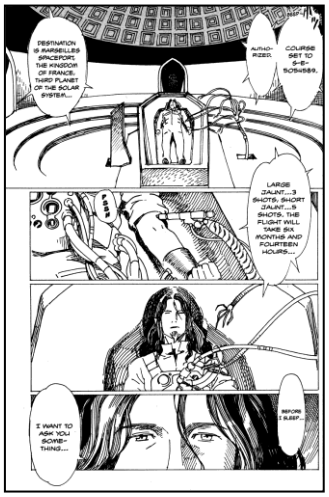
Figure 15. The ambiguous plasticity of hatching (vol.3, p.131).

[248] It must be noted that Monte Cristo is the most often hatched character in the manga. Moreover, multiple uneven lines are integrated into the design of the Count in the form of his wavy tresses and a net of scars.
[249] Lamarre 2010: 283.

For instance, most lines in Figure 15, apart from Dantès' hair, are very short strokes, sometimes sloppily attached to each other to form a longer line (which is therefire supposed to become brittle). Yet there is definitely a feeling of impact and power, and at least partially it is evoked by the strokes. On the following page, again, most lines that form the Gankutsuō mask are either very short or oddly flattened against each other, or they actually comprise several lines — but the effect remains. So either the length of the line does not matter, and the only factor that counts is whether it belongs to some structure, or the potential of the lines is dominated by the shape which they form. But it is also possible to suggest that in cases like this a raw energy is radiated by the sheer proliferation of lines. Precisely because the strokes are crowded, because they push against each other, get partially entangled and are followed by even smaller lines, they harbor the potential to explode, to proliferate further and cover the whole page.[250] It has been mentioned before, that the last two chapters of the manga (ch.16 "The Escape" and ch.17 "Gankutsuō") relies almost solely on hatching. But this does not mean that every page is covered equally. The more slow-paced parts of the narrative coincide with whiter pages, where hatching is limited to isolated places and is in general looser. Here another type of opposition exists (Figure 16): opposition between "intense and extensive" (16.1), and "selective and moderate" (16.2).

Figure 16. Contrast between intense scenes with prolific hatching and pacified scenes with greater amounts of empty spaces.

16.1. vol.3, p.166



16.2. vol.3, p.183

[250] In fact, Fusanosuke draws a comparison between the fully hatched panels and the ones using screentone and concludes that the former tend to feel dark and heavy (Fusanosuke 1995: 70). In other words, excessive hatching in manga can produce a suffocating effect.

Thus there are two kinds of tension at work in *Gankutsuō*: between types of layout (and appropriated manga traditions) and between the rendering of the image. This does not make the manga unique or innovative. More significant is that such fluctuations tend to draw the attention from the story to the medium. But there is another force in the manga *Gankutsuō* that operates on a level beyond the story. This force is what Thierry Groensteen calls 'braiding.'

Braiding is a relation between discreet panels that traverses the whole work and encourages plurivectoral reading. "Discreet" here means that those panels are not a part of the narrative sequence and they do not necessarily follow each other directly. Since braiding is separated from the temporal-causal relationships of the narrative, it remains in a supplementary position and thus does not influence "the conduct and intelligibility of the story" (Groensteen 2007: 147). This dialogue between panels is usually facilitated by the "remarkable resurgence of an iconic motif (or of a plastic quality)" (Groensteen 2007: 151). Non-linear connections between the panels based on common elements (which can include both the parameters of the panel itself and any part of its contents) result in series of images that ultimately form a network. In the *Gankutsuō* manga, these types of connections are evident on several levels. On a smaller scale, they are found in the rhymes between panels or the reappearance of certain details, as exemplified by Figures 17.1-3.

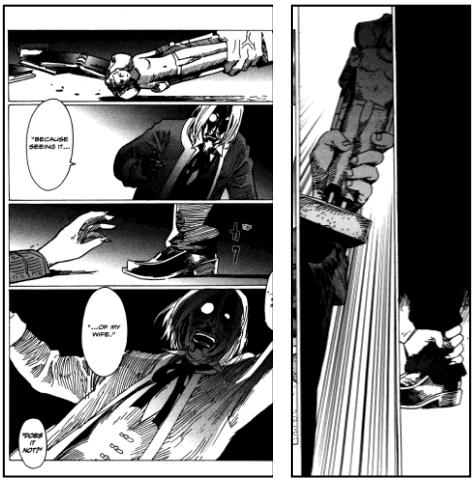


Figure17.1. vol.2, pp. 93-94 (left to right).
Parallel gestures.

Figure 17.2. vol.2, p.99; vol.2, p.176; and vol.3, p.150
Two images of Monte Cristo on the second page echo dead Héloïse in the coffin (the first page) and the figure of unconscious Dantès on the last page, respectively.

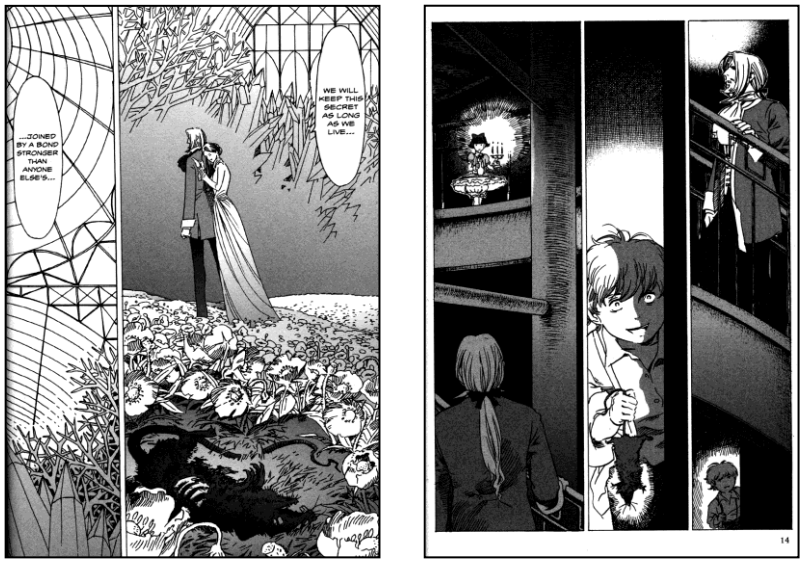


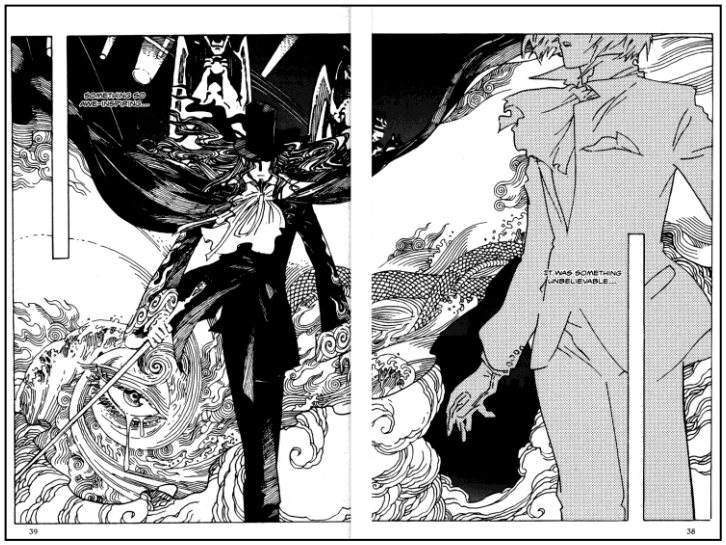
Figure 17.3. vol.2, p.52 and vol.3, p.14. Dead rats (the first one poisoned by Héloïse, the second presumably killed by Edouard).

But there is another, much more ubiquitous motif in *Gankutsuō*, that recurs incessantly throughout the three volumes. This is the motif of Gankutsuō's eye. In his interview to *Comickers* (2005), Maeda describes Gankutsuō as an impartial, but attentive observer.[251] In the anime, this position is reinforced by the role of the storyteller, as

[251]「巌窟王はきっかけであり、傍観者にすぎない。だから目のモチーフを多用してるんです。宇宙の目というか、自然法則とか運命とか、我々をじっと見ている目というのをイメージし

Gankutsuō is a voice-over (speaking in French) in the recap sequences at the beginning episodes 2 to 23.[252] The eye motif is another means that works towards the same end. In the anime, it is expressed primarily through the artificial sun in the Count's underground dimension. Its reappearance in the anime series is mostly plot-motivated: the sun is shown every time someone visits Monte Cristo's place. In the manga, the eye is much more abstract and often depicted metaphorically, transforming into the moon or a planet, or overlapping with other characters' eyes. The range of its transformation is reflected in Figure 18.

Figure 18. The eye motif and its variations in the manga *Gankutsuō*.



18.1.vol.1, pp.38-39

18.2. vol.3, p.181

ています。目というのは善でもない悪でもない、何もしなくて、ただじーっと見ている。我々の中にある、我々自身を客観する理性の目、と言っていいかもしれません。〈略〉冒頭の語りにあるように、巌窟王は孤独なエドモンの友であり、傍観者であるんです。彼はただ人間に対する興味があるだけというか、人間の心のどろどろした浅ましさや愚かしさなど全部ひっくるめて、ただ単に面白いと思っているだけなんです。」(Maeda, in *Comickers*: 40).

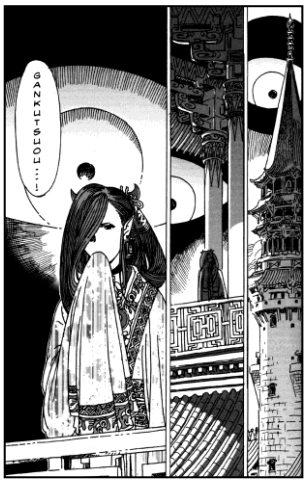
[252] There is, of course, the blurring of the boundary between the storyworld and the real world, since summary is essentially a paratext, in Genette's terminology (though, supposedly, it could become closer to a metatext if it offers some sort of critical commentary on the events summarized). However, this practice is so common in anime and in TV series in general that it has become transparent and does not carry special meaning on its own (for example, the previews for the next episodes are narrated by Albert). The only thing more or less novel about the *Gankutsuō* previews is that they give the viewer access to the character of Gankutsuō, whose personality otherwise remains hidden till episode 23.

18.3. vol.1, p.169

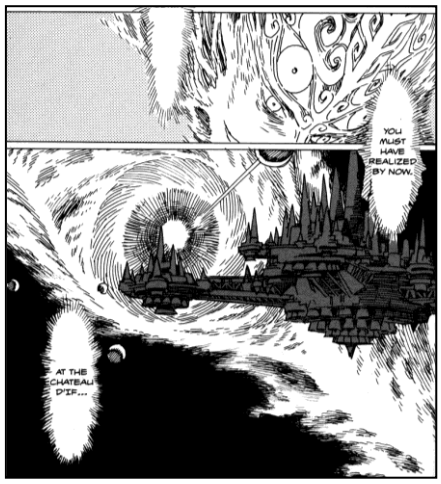
18.4. vol.1, p. 41

18.5. vol.3, p. 98

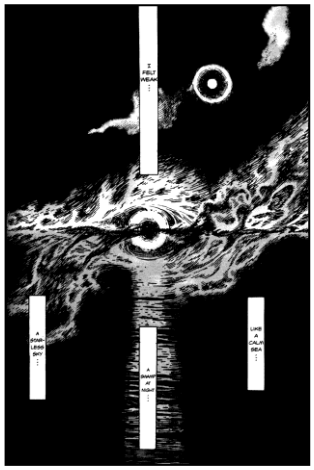
18.6. vol.2, p.17



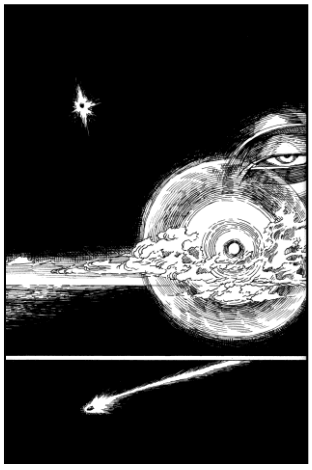
18.7. vol.2, p.27



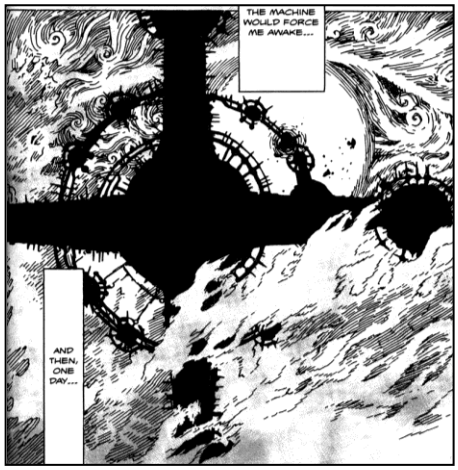
18.8. vol.3, p.191



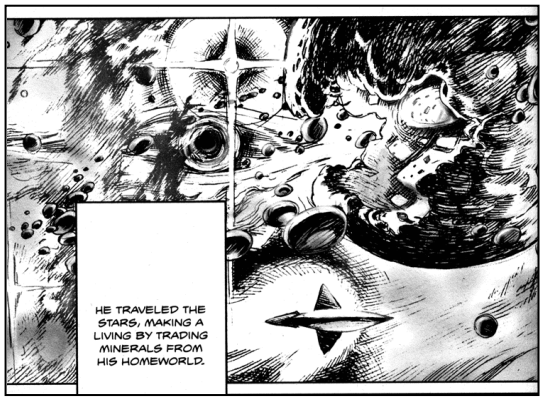
18.9. vol.1, p.158



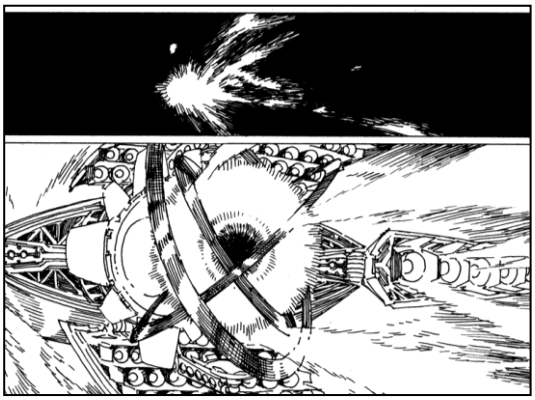
18.10. vol.3, p.147



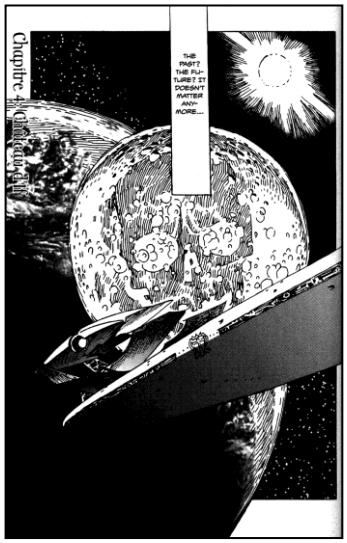
18.11. vol., p.162



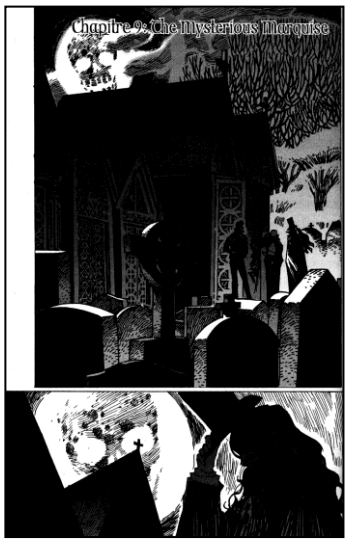
18.12. vol.1, p.51



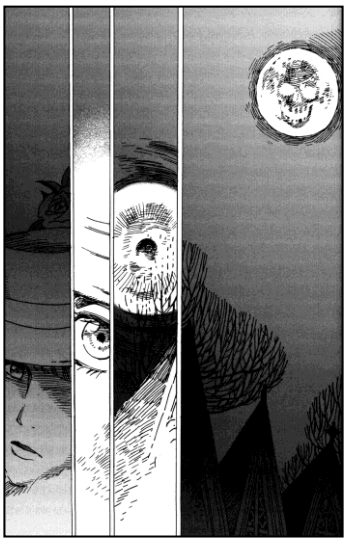
18.13. vol., p.187



18.14. vol.1, p.125

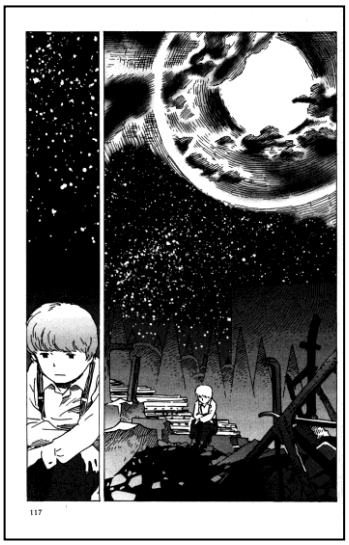


18.15. vol.2, p.97



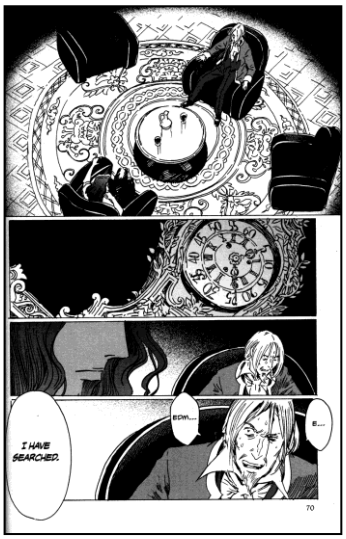
18.16. vol.2, p.103

18.17. vol.2, p.116

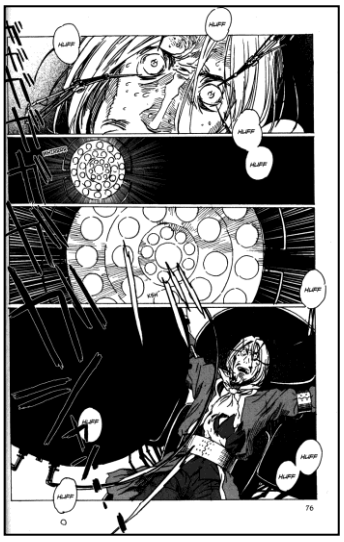


18.18. vol.2, p.117

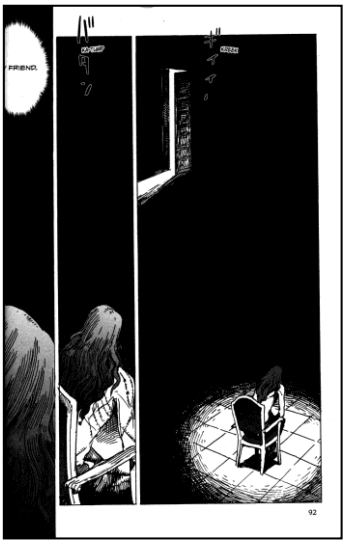
18.19. vol.3, p.114



18.20. vol.3, p.70



18.21. vol.3, p.76



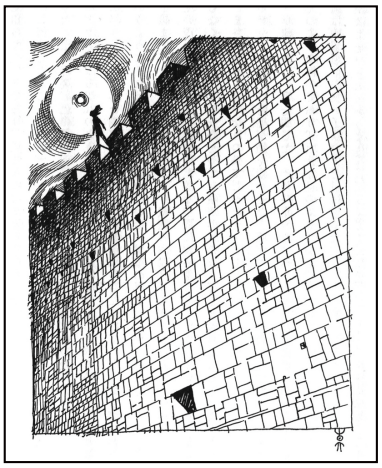
18.22. vol.3, p.92

As the eye motif runs through the series, sometimes resurfacing simply as a white round shape in the darkness (as, for example, in Images 18.20.-22), it creates multiple effects. On the level of meaning, obviously, it underscores the notion of the mystic presence that witnesses the characters' sins and punishments, trials and choices. Notably, close-ups of Monte Cristo's eyes also proliferate, so there is a certain overlap between him and Gankutsuō. At times it is impossible to tell who watches: the impassive witness or the burning avenger. If the balance shifts toward the latter, then the eye signals the absolute control Monte Cristo has assumed over the life of his future victims. On the other hand, the proliferating eyes (which include multiple cases of other characters' eyes filling the panel or beung superimposed on the page) are naturally connected with the notion of "truth": every central character, apart from Monte Cristo, is wrapped in lies and obscure presentiments.

At the same time, ties and threads created via this motif permeate the work and complicate its structure. Even from the overview above it is evident how several sub-motifs derive from the central motif: Gankutsuō's eye is one of them, but a chain of characters' eyes runs in connection and parallel to it. The image of Château d'If gives rise to two shapes: the cross (18.11) and the monolith building with spires (18.8), reflected in the towers around the Apollo square on the execution day, in the Héloïse's new mansion, and in the Count's own

underground palace (18.6). The moon forms its own thread (18.14-19), as does the specific version of the eye-projector (18.3-5). As the linear reading is replaced by an unknown number of routes to follow, the work gets simultaneously invigorated and more solid, with discrete panels bound together.[253] And this multiplication of sub-motifs leads to another effect — it changes the experience of the of the person who reads, especially when re-reading the manga. Once the reader has noticed the recurrent motif, she cannot help but look for new instances, for new variations. Likewise, when the same motif appears for the second time, it signals the appearance of another potential chain. Again, the attention of the reader starts to oscillate between the narrative thread and the visual elements (consequently, this effect is more pronounced during the re-reading, when the reader is not anymore bound by the appeal of the unknown story).

Figure 19. Illustrations from *The Masked Aristocrat* with a familiar eye motif.



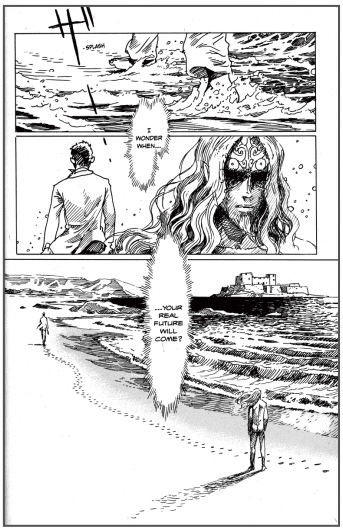
19.1. *The Masked Aristocrat*, p.28

19.2. *The Masked Aristocrat*, p.188

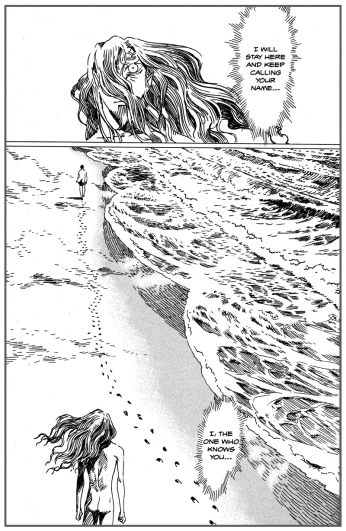
[253] Incidentally, Groensteen was criticized by Japanese critics for his concept of braiding, because braiding, in their opinion, did not apply to long-running series typical for Japanese mainstream manga. For series that last 15-20 years and more, it is hard to speak of a premeditated and meticulously realized design project (which is the braiding proper, so to say). The drawing style can undergo significant changes over the years, and the same applies to mangaka's preferred techniques, page layouts, and even to the specifics of the content (there are, for instance, changes in tone). However, braiding still seems to be achievable in shorter series. Ideally, mangaka and scenarist start with the complete story in their minds, but in practice, a clear understanding of what motif one wants to weave into the narrative is enough. *Gankutsuō*, for instance, ran intermittently for three years. Besides, there was a huge pause (about a year and a half) before the last two chapters. But once Maeda decided on the eye motif, it must have been rather easy to reproduce it in the new instalments, regardless of the time gap.

Meanwhile, the rhymes between images run beyond the limits of the medium and the isolated work: as evident from Figure 19, certain illustrations in *The Masked Aristocrat* incorporate motifs from the manga. Certainly, this semblance might just as well be explained away as the unity of style: after all, both *The Masked Aristocrat* and the manga *Gankutsuō* are Ariwara and Maeda's conjoint projects. So it makes sense that Maeda resorted to the well-tried patterns when he needed to illustrate Andrea's meeting with Gankutsuō, or Monte Cristo's breakdown. In other words, this might be an example of visual consistency and overlap of motifs between the two works. Otherwise, it is possible to think of self-citation. If *Gankutsuō* media mix is taken as one composite unit, however, it is possible to think of these parallels as another instance of braiding, which expands beyond a single isolated text and reveals itself in the visual tracks of discrete texts involved in the project. The following parallel (Figure 20) is illustrative in this regard.

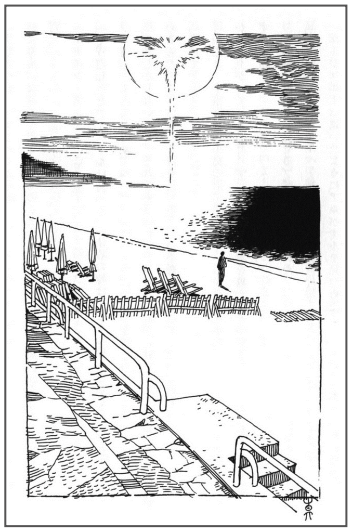
Figure 20. Visual parallels between the *Gankutsuō* manga and *The Masked Aristocrat.* Self-citation or braiding?



20.1. *Gankutsuō*, vol.3, p.212



20.2. *Gankutsuō*, vol.3, p.219



20.3. *The Masked Aristocrat*, p.212

Images 20.1 and 20.2 are the pages from the last chapter of the manga: separated by a short interlude, they serve as an epilogue. Image 20.3 is a page-sized illustration to

Ariwara's novel, also found in the epilogue. In other words, there is symmetry not only between the visuals in these pages, but also between their placement within the overall composition of the work. But what about the content? The manga shows Gankutsuō in some imaginary place, seeing off Edmond Dantès. The scene takes place in the middle of the main story, when Monte Cristo is busy executing his enemies. Dantès here stands for the heart Monte Cristo cannot yet lose (he needs it for his revenge), his walking away is the refusal to merge with Gankutsuō, and the direction in which he proceeds is towards his past (Maeda and Ariwara 2008: 93-105; 204-210). The illustration from the novel (20.3), on the other hand, depicts Albert. This scene is not abstract, because, as is explained in the text, Albert walks along the beach whenever he tries to sort out his complicated feelings about the tragedy that befell him. So here one finds another rift on the central theme of the anime series: the parallels between young Dantès and Albert, and the opposition between Albert's and the Count's approaches to revenge and forgiveness. As *The Masked Aristocrat* is the last *Gankutsuō*-related work, one can say that the media mix has thus come full circle.

3.3. The Anime *Gankutsuō*: the Visuals and the Music

3.3.1. The Visuals in the Anime *Gankutsuō*

It has been mentioned already that Maeda's creativity revealed itself first and foremost on the level of style — that is, in the physical rendering of *Gankutsuō*. The anime series became widely known because of its unique and striking visuals, combining 3D computer graphics (CG), textures, and traditional two-dimensional digital animation.[254] The incorporation of 3D CG is in itself not surprising, but *Gankutsuō* is exceptional because here those elements are not limited to vehicles and weapons: the whole architectural environment is modeled in 3D. Moreover, computer graphics is used to create complicated backgrounds comprised of 2D and 3D mixed together. Above everything else, the anime is distinguished by its use of textures. Textures cover most surfaces within the frame as well as characters' clothes and hair, at times they overlay the image, and, what is important, they move. It might not be an exaggeration to say that the visuals were the primary factor of this anime's success.

Two points need to be clarified about the use of textures. First of all, they were Maeda's project. This much is evident from all available interviews, especially those where other members of the production team share their experiences. Apparently, at an early stage of project development Maeda proposed three key points, two of which were related to the visuals: to apply textures, and to create a collage from various materials for the background, even to the point that it becomes a painting without a vanishing point. He also wanted "to mix materials on screen" (Hashimoto 2004: 22). Maeda's proposition was in harmony with aspirations of Studio Gonzo, which has always been known (or, some would say, notorious) for its experiments with 3D. As Gonzo chief executive officer Ishikawa Shin explained in his interview with Ian Condry in 2006, the company had chosen digital animation and digital technology as its trump cards in an increasingly severe competition (Condry 2006: 146). Thus Maeda's suggestion, reckless as it seemed at the beginning, had an appeal for the

[254] Mononoke (『モノノ怪』, Tōei Animation, July 2007-September 2007, 12 ep.) would appear two years later.

parties involved. Certainly, it was other people that brought the idea to life. Soejima Yasufumi, as digital director, was responsible for the actual application of the textures. He was also in charge of textile design and choice of patterns, in other words, it is largely the result of his vision that viewers ultimately see on screen.[255] And Matsubara Hidenori, who was entrusted with character design, had to create figures that would be compatible with the layers of texture. This is not an easy task: textures do not allow for small details; they hide wrinkles, folds, and seams on the clothes. Apart from the characters' faces, Matsubara was basically left with the silhouettes, and these had to express individuality.[256] In other words, the anime's impressive visuals were the result of a collective work, but instigated and overseen by Maeda. In fact, the same applies to the overall design of the anime *Gankutsuō*: Maeda allowed some of the creators to run free (Soejima and Sasaki Hiroshi, the art director, both comment on it[257]), but closely supervised others.[258] His collaboration with Matsubara is particularly interesting in this regard: Matsubara himself had not read Dumas, so he designed characters based on Maeda's drafts and explanations (in the interview, Matsubara complains

[255] It must be noted though that Soejima's textures were still checked and confirmed by Maeda during the production process (Nakamura 2006: 17).

[256] http://web.archive.org/web/20150801170646/http://www.gankutsuou.com/staff/index.html
As a matter of fact, Matsubara contradicts himself within one and the same interview: first he explains that he tried not to elaborate on the silhouettes, but later he states that he tried to utilize the expressive potential of the silhouettes ("I deliberately tried not to start with the silhouettes. Since in this series characters are distinguished by textures, getting fixed on some detail at an early stage is more often than not counterproductive"; "I made a habit of asking what kind of person the character in question was; for overall image I consulted fashion magazines, but my priority was the silhouette" ;「僕は逆にシルエットを先に考えないようにしましたね。今回、テクスチャーがキャラの区別になる部分があるので、なにか決め込んだディテールをつけてしまうと、かえってそれが余計になることがあるんです」 ;「「どんな人なの？」という話はよく聞くようにして、イメージはファッション誌などを参考にしましたが、シルエットだけ活かすようにしています」 (Matsubara, in the interview on official Gankutusoō site; trans. mine). It might be possible though, that in the first case he means precisely the simplification, the refusal to include complicated details or outlines in the silhouette.

[257] Suzuki 2006: 96, 99.

[258] Nanami Kōta, who was charged with location design and modeling, recollects the development of Neo-Paris. He received broad explanation along with some sketches. However, the results of his two-week work did not satisfy Maeda. Apparently the problem was the atmosphere: Nanami went for SF imagery, while Maeda wanted something closer to the "Paris of the past." Nanami had to redesign the location (Suzuki: 115-16). What this episode demonstrates is that while production stuff were free, and even encouraged to interpret and invent, they had to do it within a frame set by Maeda.

that he kept mixing "good" characters with "bad" ones because of Maeda's style[259]). Again, Matsubara had creative and interpretative freedom, but with Maeda's interpretation as a starting point and with certain principles to observe. Said principles can be summarized as "decorative" (「デコラティブ」; Maeda, in Nakamura 2006: 19), "impossible" (「あり得ない」; Soejima, in Suzuki 2006: 97), "excessive" (「過剰」) and "collage" (「コラージュ」; art director Sasaki Hiroshi, in Suzuki 2006*:* 99).

The second point to emphasize is the function of the textures and the effect they provide. Maeda explains in one of the interviews that the decision to employ textures was at least partially informed by practical concerns: in this story about aristocrats and nouveau riches clothes had to convey the social status of the characters. Costumes of complicated design (with laces, multiple layers, etc.) would be hard to animate, so the textures provided a relatively simple solution (*Gankutsuō Complete* 2005: 102-103; Nakamura 2006: 17). It is not clear whether this was really an easier strategy: the production team had to order special software to apply textures effectively and then rely on an outside specialist to operate it (Suzuki 2006: 110; *Gankutsuō Complete* 2005: 103). More importantly, the textures are applied in a specific way — that is, in most cases, they are not fixed. Or, rather, the textures remain static at the lower layer, as character contours move over them. Such effect can only be achieved deliberately.[260] One could suggest that the impression of richly detailed garments Maeda was talking about in relation to character designs could have been approximated by simply filling each designated area with a pattern. But the technique employed in *Gankutsuō* produces a much more dynamic effect. It also brings forth the multilayered nature of the image.

[259] http://web.archive.org/web/20150801170646/http://www.gankutsuou.com/staff/index.html

[260] It is possible to recreate this effect in a graphics editor such as Adobe Photoshop. Without going into too many details, in case of Photoshop, one can attach the texture to the image by selecting the necessary area and than using the "paste into" command. If one wants to recreate the *Gankutsuō* effect (with several frames), one has to paste the texture into another layer and then apply a layer mask to it.

As Marc Steinberg rightfully points out, this operation draws attention the "planarity of the screen as surface," and ultimately constitutes a move "toward a greater *irrealism* of the image" (Steinberg 2012c: 18; original emphasis). Steinberg, however, interprets the potential effect of texturing in a rather radical way. In his opinion, the opposition between moving character outline and static texture breaks down the unity of character and, consequently, its identity, as it draws the viewers' attention from the "macrolevel" of narrative to the "microlevel" of autonomous patterns (2012c: 15-16). At the same time, unchanging textures flatten the image and disrupt linear perspective, rendering "illegible the dimensions and movements of the rest of the image" (2012c: 16, 18). This, too, allegedly obstructs the viewers' immersion in the story and negates the centrality of the character (ibid.).

With regard to the first statement, two observations can be made. For a start, Steinberg's "macrolevel" and "microlevel" seem to correspond to the plane of meaning (that is, the storyworld and events mentally reconstructed on the basis of clues the text provides) and the expressive means of the medium, respectively. While it is true that the prevalence of one can weaken the other, in principle the visibility of medium need not challenge the story content (though it may overturn storytelling conventions, e.g., by destroying the "transparency" of the medium). At any rate, the notion that the character can be so easily challenged by layering needs to be re-examined. Steinberg himself argues that the character's identity "depends among other things on its self-resemblance and its visual containment within delineated boundaries" (Steinberg 2012c: 15). But are the boundaries really challenged in *Gankutsuō*? Steinberg gives as example sequences in which characters move but the pattern remains static. Movements in such cases are presumably rendered indistinct. However, the very example he gives (the extended version of which is demonstrated with Figure 21) to illustrate the point betrays his argument.

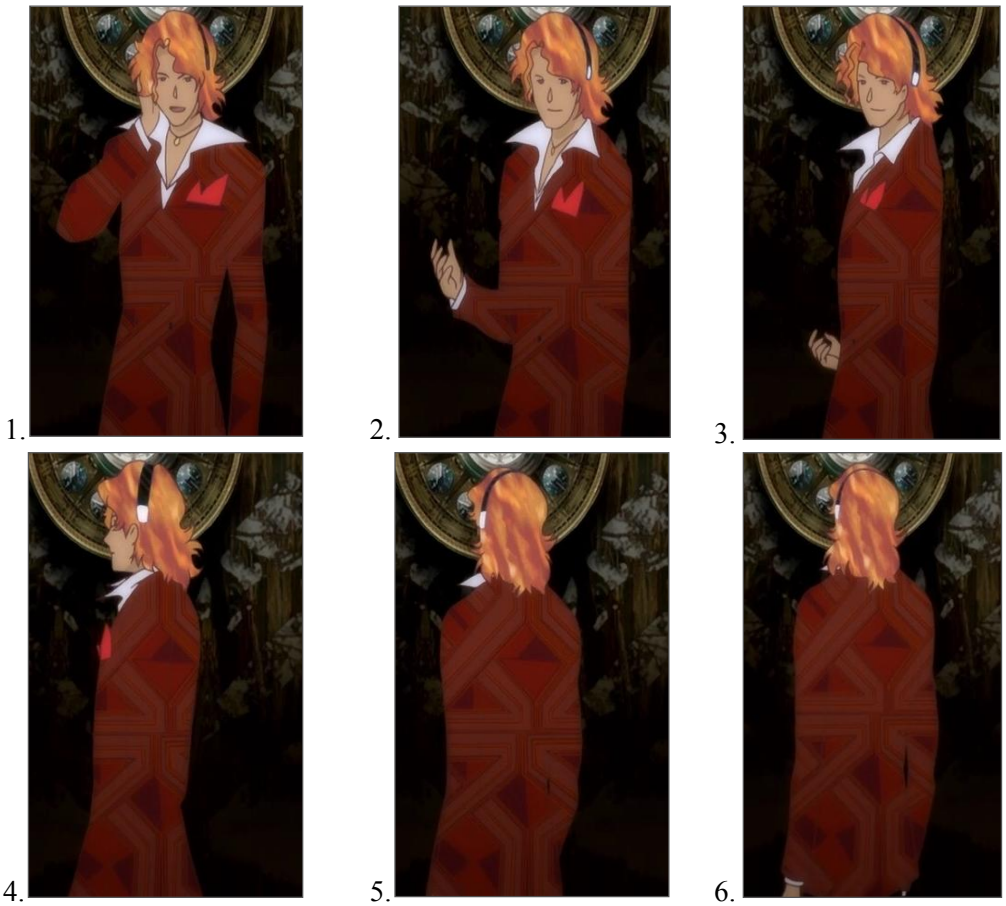


Figure 21. *Gankutsuō*, ep.13. Lucien Debray turns around.

Steinberg provides only images 21.1 and 21.5 when he talks about the texture that "masks" the movement. In doing so he omits a number of visual clues that clearly signal the opposite: the collar, the handkerchief, the hands — not to mention the head of the character. What is ultimately achieved via the use of these clues is not a simple (and, as Steinberg suggests, not easily recognizable) switch between two states, but a *visibly* continuous, gradual change of position. To assert that the texture deprives Debray's torso of motion is to ascribe to the texture the absolute dominance over all other elements of the image — in other words, to view the sequence in a very selective manner.

Steinberg also mentions the frequent absence of outlines that separate parts of the body: for instance, in the example above Debray's left hand remains merged to his body (visually only) in frames 2 to 6. This is indeed a frequent occurrence in *Gankutsuō*, but arguably it does not disturb the boundaries of character any more than textures do. For one

thing, the outer contour of the character is never broken: there always remains a solid form distinguished from the background and the form of other characters. In fact, what distinguishes it is precisely the specific pattern and quality of the texture.[261] There is also the matter of visual closure,[262] which "manifests itself in an ability to complete objects whose detail is only partly drawn" (Medley 2010: 63). In other words, even when a character's limb is not separated by a clear line from his torso, the viewer still knows that it is there and that it will reappear should the position of the character change. Stuart Medley, who explores connections between the specifics of the human visual system and the perception of non-realistic images in comics, provides the following illustration of how the brain fills in the gaps in the purely visual signal (Figure 22):

Figure 22. (qtd. in Medley, 2010: 60). The viewer can identify the chair in the last panel, despite the absence of details and reduction of colours to "black-yellow" opposition.

[261] The earlier quote from Matsubara (see footnote 233) indicates as much. Most characters are assigned one or two dominant textures for clothes, so that they quickly become recognizable. The texture for the hair does not change at all and thus becomes an inherent quality of the character.

[262] Not to be confused with the Scott MacCloud's term. Stuart Medley, following art theorist and practitioner György Kepels, defines visual closure as "[c]ertain latent interconnections of points, lines, shapes, colours and values [which are] closed psychologically into bi-dimensional or tri-dimensional wholes" (Kepes 1944, qtd. in Medley 2010: 61).

The transformation of the chair in Figure 22 is not dissimilar from the visual transformations found in *Gankutsuō*, yet it remains recognizable — even more so because the viewer is provided with the opportunity to check the last (bottom right) panel against the first. In the anime, two versions of the same character are not visible simultaneously, but each new manifestation is discerned in conjunction with information already stored in the viewer's brain. Moreover, Steinberg chooses to ignore one fundamental element of the character (as kyara) that does not change: the face. Characters' faces are not textured and can thus both provide a sense of movement (as it happens with Debray in the example above) and unite all the disparate manifestations of the character. That the creators also recognized the significance of the face in this regard is evident from their treatment of Haydée in episode 6. The production team aimed for a special effect at the end of the episode and decided to construct the whole character model in 3D. Maeda insisted, however, that the face — "the soul of the character" — should be left two-dimensional (*Gankutsuō Complete* 2005: 103; Nakamura 2006: 21). This allowed the creators to achieve the desired effect without alienating the character from its surroundings.

Steinberg is, however, not entirely off the mark: the experimental graphics of *Gankutsuō* could not win over all the viewers, and there are indeed people who find the anime visually challenging or outright incomprehensible. But this is the case with every innovative work that aims to break the convention of "transparency" and foreground the materiality of the medium. This is definitely also a matter of getting accustomed to a new form: many viewers outside and even within Japan were troubled by the first episodes of *Gankutsuō*, but then got used to 3D and textures and were able to enjoy — or dislike — the anime on the level of narrative. This fully applies to the second point in Steinberg's argument that should be considered in detail: the disruption of linear perspective.

Truly, the textures do have a flattening effect, and thus perspective is sometimes (but not always) smothered by the clattering of multiple patterns and 3D objects (also textured) within the frame. It is one thing, however, to say that certain conventions of spatial

representation cease to function, and another to assert that this renders "illegible the dimensions and movements" altogether. For one thing, not all of these conventions are discarded: they still determine the relative size of characters' figures and various objects, or the overlapping that conveys the foreground-background relationships. Characters also often move from one side of the screen to the other, making perspectival relations irrelevant. The multiplanarity of the image revealed as a result creates a specific aesthetic. As Soejima puts it, perspective was discarded in favour of subjective space entirely focused on and drawing attention to the human drama:

> […] we thought: why not make the amount of information within the frame subjective, so that it would change drastically depending on the emotional states of the characters, as it does in shōjo manga? Then, if the character becomes mentally unstable, perspective should warp accordingly[263] (Soejima, in Suzuki 2006: 97; trans. mine).

In other words, far from putting distance between the audience and the characters, the creators aimed to increase the medium's capacity to convey emotions and elicit empathy from the viewers. It is telling that Soejima explicitly refers to shōjo manga, which is well-known for its emphasis on characters' interiority and relationships in addition to its highly complicated multi-layered page layouts. Notably, people from outside shōjo culture have often found this kind of manga hard to decipher, particularly in its earlier years.[264] For those

[263] 「背景に関しても、そうなのですが、実際のパースペクティブの空間ではなくて、人間ドラマが凄く主体になっていて、目線もそこに集約するわけだから、人間の心象風景に応じて、情報量が減ったりもの凄く増えたりするぐらいの、少女漫画的な展開ぐらい舞台の情報量の差が、主観的にあってもいいじゃないかと思っていました。パースペクティブも、その人の意識が狂ったら、同じように狂ってもいいんじゃないか。」

[264] Takahashi Mizuki points out that shōjo manga was often criticized for its visuals, including complicated panel designs, and that its visual aesthetic often remained illegible to the unfamiliar reader (Takahashi: 122, 130). Fusanosuke also suggests that hard to decipher page layouts were one of the factors that drove male readership away from shōjo manga (1995: 181).

who mastered necessary skills, however, these narratives became the source of rich emotional experiences.

But shōjo manga conventions were not the only thing Maeda and his team had in mind. The flattened, collaged images, along with the textures, can be considered constituent parts of an intermedial reference. Irina O. Rajewsky, a German scholar who specializes in comparative literature and intermedia studies, defines this type of intermediality as follows:

> Intermedial references are thus to be understood as meaning-constitutional strategies that contribute to the media product's overall signification: the media product uses its own media-specific means, either to refer to a specific, individual work produced in another medium (i.e., what in the German tradition is called *Einzelreferenz*, "individual reference"), or to refer to a specific medial subsystem (such as a certain film genre) or to another medium qua system (*Systemreferenz*, "system reference") (Rajewsky 2005: 52-53).

Indeed, at times *Gankutsuō* also aims to reproduce, with its own unique means, the devices and tropes of another medium. For instance, in his interview to *Digital Anime Artwork 2* (2006), Maeda refers to kamishibai[265] as he reveals that at initial stages of development he conceived of the space "behind the camera" as a box layered with textures and cut-outs (Suzuki 2006: 66). But he also perceived this box as a theatrical stage: *The Count of Monte Cristo*, with its dialogues full of wit and pathos, and action unfolding mostly in enclosed spaces — salons, work studies, pavilions — reminded Maeda of a chamber play (Nakamura 2006: 19;

[265] "Kamishibai or storyboard theater — a popular cultural theater for children especially prevalent in the late 1940s and 1950s, in which a storyteller would narrate a story accompanied by a series of still images or storyboards" (Steinberg 2012a: 14). The storyboards were slid horizontally into a special wooden box with a "screen" on one side. Sometimes the storyteller would move them at an alternating speed, to create an effect of movement or to build up suspense (Steinberg 2012a: 14, 20-21, 24-25). This analogy describes pretty clearly what Maeda had in mind.

Suzuki 2006: 66). Thus the stage play became another aesthetic model for the series.[266] It is worth discussing how this model was implemented, as certain affinity between the media of anime and theatre has been found, for instance, by Stevie Suan.[267]

Among the common points raised by Suan are highly codified props, characters, and acting techniques; emphasis on human emotion; and an intricate interplay of the realistic and the unreal. With regard to props, Suan explains that world-settings in anime often constitute fantastic places (and utilize unreal circumstances),[268] but these locations are executed with extremely high levels of detail associated with realistic representation.[269] Characters, on the other hand, constitute recurring types, easily identifiable due to their design that also utilizes multiple standartized elements and more often than not serves as a "summary" of a character (2013: 44-45, 125-129, 131, 202-203). Large part of characters' "performance" consists of conventionalized gestures, movements, and expressions (2013: 129, 192, 249). As Suan points out, quite frequently one finds a number of possible plotlines and situations associated with a particular character type (2013: 209).[270] At the same time, these predictable personalities, limited, memorizable expressions, and imaginary setting exist side by side with character interiority that is based on and brings forth "true-to-life" feelings (2013: 125, 226-227).[271]

---

[266] Soejima explains that Maeda told him to aim for the aesthetics of the theatrical or opera stage (Suzuki 2006: 97; see also Maeda's interview to Nakamura 2006: p.19). According to Kōyama, the leading writer of the series, the character lines were influenced by the same logic. Maeda apparently suggested poems by William Blake and George Gordon Byron to set the mood. Consequently, Kōyama aimed for the dramatic with Monte Cristo's lines, while he tried to make the dialogues for Albert and friends as unaffected as possible (*Gankutsuō Complete* 2005: 106).

[267] Even though Suan focuses on Japanese traditional theatre (Noh, Kabuki, and Bunraku), he leaves some room for more inclusive comparisons.

[268] See Suan 2013: 33, 194). As Jaqueline Berndt puts it, "[t]ypically anime […] is less the Science-Fiction story in particular, but the otherworld setting in general" (2011: 87).

[269] "While the unreality is absolute, it is made relatable by the finer details of its make-up" (Suan 2013: 194). In Kabuki, Noh, and Bunraku, entirely different methods and techniques are used to construct a set (see 2013: 164-167), but Suan contends that the paradoxical nature of elaborate, yet unreal environments explored in the course of play remains the same (2013: 193-194).

[270] All these elements (function in the narrative, appearances, personality quirks, etc.) derive from and contribute to what Azuma Hiroki calls the database. The term 'stock characters,' while rarely found in anime and manga discourse, seems quite adequate to describe many of the results of this reassembling.

[271] At one point Suan calls this "a balancing realism achieved through the utilization of a "human," emotional element" (2013: 196), and finds analogous principle at work in "Asian and World Theatre

The anime *Gankutsuō* relies on all of the aforementioned conventions. As discussed in Chapter Two, the story unfolds within a space-opera setting, and both Albert and Monte Cristo are recognizable character types, with predefined set of behaviors and reactions, relationships, and trajectories. So are Peppo, Benedetto/Andrea, Valentine, Haydée, and others. This applies both to their roles in the narrative and their appearances, which often do "express the internal externally" (Suan 2013: 125).[272] Conventionalized gestures and expressions also abound (some of examples are given in Figure 23), though *Gankutsuō* does not employ radically exaggerated forms such as one finds, for instance, in *Fullmetal Alchemist: Brotherhood*.

Figure 23. Conventionalized expressions of emotion in the anime *Gankutsuō*.

Ep.2

Ep.2

as a whole" as well as ballet (2013: 227). While Suan considers traditional art forms, the ability of seemingly implausible and/or generic characters and narratives to call forth emotional response in the audience repeatedly comes up in discussions of mass culture and media fandom. For instance, a lot of what Suan says about the tangibility of emotions evoked by anime characters applies to Itō Gō's discussion of kyara. Kyara might lack the real body and deep personality, but they still elicit affective response from the readers and are thus perceived as "real" (Itō 2005: 272-273). Henry Jenkins discusses "emotional realism," that is, a narrative being "emotionally" true to the viewers' personal lives" rather than the real life, as one of the key factors in the fans' engagement with works of fiction (Jenkins 1992: 109-110). And Thomas Leitch discerns a similar tendency in the reception of Baz Luhrmann's *Romeo + Juliet* (1996): "many viewers report a paradoxical effect associated with the grand opera that provides Luhrman's truest generic model: the very artifice of the conventions recognized and discounted as conventions deepens these viewers' emotional response" (Leitch 2007: 125). Apparently, this principle is not limited to a number of art forms or to specific media, however, trying to lay bare its mechanics is beyond the scope of this study.

[272] Thus it is obvious at first glance that Maximilien is an awkward big fellow with a heart of gold; Benedetto/Andrea's beautiful, almost feminine features are belied by his narrow evil eyes; Valentine's huge fringe not so much hides her expression as reflects her excessive introvertion; and so on.

Ep.3

Ep.6

Ep.8

Ep.17

So how does an already highly conventionalized medium reproduce another one on the level of form? What happens when the anime series does not simply stage a theatrical play diegetically but attempts to *become* a staged play? In case of *Gankutsuō* the answer apparently was to push already abstract characters, set, and props into yet another level of abstraction. It has been described earlier how fantastic storyworld of *Gankutsuō* is visually revealed as a mash-up of 2D, 3D, and textures. It is thus comprised of multilayered spaces more sophisticated than those found in most regular anime and yet more abstract. As a result, they look less like glimpses a self-sufficient living fictional universe, and more like instances of stage set and props (frequently replete with symbolism). Textures on the characters' clothes have similar function: as Soejima explains, the characters had to be sufficiently abstract to become "actors."[273]

[273] 「しかし、それくらい彼ら（劇中のキャラクタ）は舞台役者なわけで、舞台役者として歩いていても、アクターであり、アクトレスでしかないわけですから。視聴者からみた想像の世界の範疇で記号化した彼らを楽しむという意味合いでいうと、彼らは確実に記号化して

> All characters are therefore nothing else but actors and actresses. In order to be enjoyed as parts of the imaginary world viewed by the spectators, characters have to be thoroughly codified. They have to be symbolic. Therefore, the texture applied [to the characters' clothing] has to be symbolic; if the characters are dressed into plain, simple clothes, they cease to be actors, they stop being symbols. This is the logic I followed (Soejima in Suzuki 2006: 97; trans. mine).

Finally, the same overcodification happens on the level of "performance." To borrow terms of theatre criticism, one could speak of shifts between representational and presentational acting (in a sense of relationship between the actor and the audience). Representational acting is associated with a more realistic style, where actors on stage ignore the audience completely and immerse themselves into the diegetic world for the length of the play. Presentational acting, on the contrary, is directed towards the audience and is more formal, stylized and dramatic.[274] In the context of this discussion, however, speaking of presentational style does not mean that *Gankutsuō* characters address the viewers in any way. The difference between the presentational and the representational can be called relative insofar as it concerns the audience's being aware of its position: it depends on the medium as well as on the viewer. For instance, if 'aside' (when a character briefly speaks to the audience, but other present characters remain "oblivious" to it) is classified as a typical dramatic device of presentational acting in theatre, in anime it is likely to be interpreted as character's direct thought (addressed to nobody in particular or to the other character).

なければいけない。シンボリックでないといけない。それでいうと、貼られるテクスチャというのは、記号的でないと成り立たないわけですが、それが地味な服装に落ち着いた時点で、彼ら舞台役者でない、記号でもなくなってしまう。論理的には、そこに気づいたわけです」.

[274] Cash 2013: n.pag. (http://www.thedramateacher.com/elizabethan.theatre-conventions/)

Physical "acting" is no less ambiguous: Suan draws parallels between the conventionalized gestures and movements in anime, and in Noh and Kabuki (2013: 184-185, 189-190, 244, 249) — and acting in Kabuki is defined as presentational.[275] At the same time, Suan acknowledges that the "Anime system […] is not nearly as developed as that of the theatres," and contains only a handful of "non-mimetic gestures" (2013: 250). Besides, there is a difference in the way these media are "read." Experienced anime audience becomes so naturalized towards certain expressions that they are perceived as transparent. The viewer learns to decipher the intended emotion or expression instantly and unconsciously. Consequently, most viewers would not pause to appreciate the image itself, unless it is specifically designed to draw attention. In fact, it is possible to play against this "transparency" to increase the immersion for viewers — a common practice noted by Suan, who mentions that "it is often in the smaller, more human movements like twitching and faint smiles that we see the minute details of human (and animal) movement so faithfully reproduced on screen" (2013: 203). Indeed, when animators insert in an animated sequence a realistic, non-codified gesture, they achieve a sort of harmony: conventionalized expressions allow viewers direct access to characters' interiority, while such little, fleeting motions grant characters physical presence and individuality.

Gankutsuō offers many fine examples of this device, but, more importantly, it adds yet another, third type of movement — exaggerated gestures associated with presentational stage acting of Western tradition. These gestures neither belong to the anime lexicon, nor can be interpreted as natural — as a result, they immediately catch the viewer's eye. Moreover, they are over-the-top and generic enough to stir up associations even if the viewer is not interested in Western theatre per se. Notably, such sequences are not a constant feature: they appear at irregular intervals, either when Monte Cristo is involved, or during intense

[275] http://www.kabuki-bito.jp/eng/contents/eye/vol2_presentation_not_representation.html

dramatic moments[276] (see Figure 24 for an example of a particularly long sequence that leads to the culmination of episode 23 — the highest point of the series).

Figure 24. *Gankutsuō*, episode 23: Albert repeatedly splays his hands as he shouts at the possessed Monte Cristo: "Count! Is this the "destiny" you spoke of?! Were not you the one who told me that destiny was the path you carved on your own?!" The delivery of this speech approaches declamation,[277] and its unbound pathos is self-evident. Interestingly, Monte Cristo cannot see Albert at the moment, as he is walking away; and Albert starts chasing him as soon as (but not before) he finishes his lines. Note also the stage-like background. Incidentally, the soundtrack for this scene is the final part of movement IV of the *Manfred Symphony* (Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, 1885), which also inflates the pathos.

[276] This infrequency might itself be significant. As it is, the originality of the anime *Gankutsuō* is ascribed to its visuals rather than its treatment of characters. And these visuals never change, which on the one hand allows the viewers to get used to them and enjoy the work, and on the other hand makes each shift between acting styles all the more noticeable. Anime-like behaviour and gestures are perceived as neutral, while each piece of presentational acting is a deviation from the norm. Had the characters "performed" like this for the whole 24 episodes, the atmosphere of the series would have changed completely. Lightness and clarity would have been lost with the "transparency" of expression. The series would have strayed too much from the mainstream anime, alienating part of the audience (in fact, even the use of textures had this effect on certain viewers). Instead, *Gankutsuō* allows the narration to flow smoothly even as it expands the boundaries of the form and borrows from other media.

[277] 'Declamation' is defined as "the art of diction of a text spoken by an actor," which in the 18th century "was contrasted with a simple recitation and song, as a recitation "accompanied by movements of the body" […] and approached the recitative" (Pavis 1998: 88).

To return to the initial subject — textures used in the anime *Gankutsuō* are a part of a larger project. On the one hand, they are instrumental in creating a fluid, sophisticated, and emotionally charged space within a frame. On the other hand, they help bring forth the constructed, artificial nature of this space, so that flattened backgrounds become a literal backdrop for the characters' performance. With characters, the effect is arguably diluted by the repeated use of the same textures, which become an inherent part of a character. But textures add an extra layer of symbolism to already conventionalized character appearances. When specific mode of performance is added to the mixture, the "box" beyond the screen briefly transforms into a stage and characters into actors.

Figure 25. Theatre-like mise-en-scène in the anime.

Ep.4

Ep.4

Ep.5

Ep.9

Ep.12

Ep.13

Ep.20

Ep.21

Ep.23

Ep.24.

This effect is akin to Viktor Shklovskii's 'defamiliarisation.' According to Shklovskii, defamiliarisation is found in "1) deviation from conventionalized forms of representation; 2) disruption of automated patterns of representation; 3) alienation of familiar objects, concepts, and forms" (Schmid 2008: 98). In regard to *Gankutsuō*, the first two would mean foregrounding the artistic device and, ultimately, the medium itself, whereas the last one would imply making "strange" and less accessible the characters and events of the narrative (this is precisely what happens from Marc Steinberg's point of view). This study, however, argues that while deviation from and disruption of conventions on the level of form indeed takes place in *Gankutsuō*, it does not necessarily lead to the unbinding of character. The key point here is the "emotional realism." Bertolt Brecht described presentational acting as externalizing all emotions and insisted that "emotion in question must be brought out, must lose all its restrictions so that it can be treated on a big scale."[278] As has been

[278] from Brecht, 'Bertolt on Theatre: The Development of an Aesthetic,' ed. and trans. by John Willet: Hill and Wang, 1992, p.139. Qtd. in "Eye of the Beholder: Presentation, not Representation" (http://www.kabuki-bito.jp/eng/contents/eye/vol2_presentation_not_representation.html)

demonstrated in this section, not only the actual "acting" of the characters, but the overall design of *Gankutsuō* is tuned to achieve this very goal. And what results from it is more than just a unique tone or aesthetics born from the interaction of several media. Instead, one finds in *Gankutsuō* specific narrative logic, which is probably best described by Stevie Suan: "when the circumstances are unreal, all that is left recognizably real is the emotion" (Suan 2013: 213).

Incidentally, there is another dramatic art form (and medium) that embodies this very logic — Western opera. Linda Hutcheon describes how in "operas and musicals, the unrealistic conventions of singing act to distance [the audience] but the music counters that by provoking identification and a strong affective response" (2006: 134).[279] It should not come as a surprise then, that the anime *Gankutsuō* refers to opera as well, though the connection is not as strong as with staged play (after all, the characters do not break into singing, and the plot, however secondary it may be to the pure emotional drama, gets fairly complicated at times). Still, operas are performed diegetically in the series, and two arias are included in the soundtrack — the aesthetics they signal can therefore be said to be conducive to the ultimate effect described above. This is, however, not the only way the *Gankutsuō* soundtrack contributes to the storytelling: besides providing ambience and atmosphere, certain tracks are involved in the play of meanings, which is the subject of the next section.

[279] Similarities between opera and previously discussed media are also found in the characterization. Hutcheon cites Ulrich Weisstein in her discussion of adaptations of literary texts into opera, to explain that "drastic reduction in the quantity of text, in conjunction with the highly sensual nature of music, necessitates a simplification of both action and characters, the emotions expressed in the closed musical numbers occupying a large segment of the time normally reserved for the dramatic events" (2006: 45), and "[c]haracters are defined "succinctly and forthrightly" as a result (Weisstein 1961: 19), but may seem poorly motivated for that reason" (ibid.). Once again, generic and "flattened" characters acquire life and reality when emotions overwhelm the narrative.

3.3.2. Intertextual References in the Anime Soundtrack

The soundtrack in *Gankutsuō* is not experimental, though it involves more classical[280] compositions than an average anime series does. But it is special in its own right, because it adds a lot to the subtext of the story via intertextual references. These references are different from the ones discussed earlier (Chapter Two, sections 2.3.2, 2.3.3) because they do not address Dumas' novel, at least not directly. Truly, half of the classical pieces found in *Gankutsuō* soundtrack are mentioned in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and thus appropriating them in the anime (as diegetically performed) has the same effect as using the verbal track to refer to certain places or personalities mentioned in the novel. But of particular interest here are those compositions that interact with the meaning of *Gankutsuō* directly, offering hints at or a new perspective on the events of the story. The following part addresses three compositions that are particularly intriguing with regard to intertextual reading. These are the aria "Il Dolce Suono" from Gaetano Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor* (Naples, 1835), movements I and IV of the *Manfred Symphony in B minor, Op. 58* by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (Moscow, 1886), and the aria "Nonnes Qui Reposez" from Giacomo Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable* (Paris, 1831). These compositions draw attention first of all because they are also connected with *The Count of Monte Cristo*. For instance, perfomances of operas by Donizetti and Meyerbeer become a background for characters' interactions. As for the *Manfred Symphony*, it is based on the dramatic poem *Manfred* (1816-17) by Lord Byron, whose other works are also mentioned in the novel. For Dumas, such references undoubtfully served as means to bind the story tighter with the readers' reality. He used points of reference shared by the characters and his contemporaries[281] to heighten the readers' sense of involvement (in a sense, these were the artifacts used to achive the reality effect discussed earlier). In anime, however, these particular compositions gain a new

[280] "Classical" here means "of, relating to, or being music in the educated European tradition that includes such forms as art song, chamber music, opera, and symphony as distinguished from folk or popular music or jazz" (online Merriam-Webster dictionary: http://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/classical). It thus should not be confused with "classic" as "conventional."
[281] The novel was written in 1844-45, and the story of revenge unfolds in 1838.

meaning, as they reveal close connections with the *Gankutsuō* story. To be more precise, *Lucia di Lammermoor* evokes Edmond Dantès' distant past, while the *Manfred Symphony* and *Robert le Diable* are significant in the light of the series' finale. Accordingly, the following discussion starts with Donizetti's work.

Lucia di Lammermoor is not simply a part of a soundtrack, but one of the pieces performed diegetically. Leading characters attend this opera during the first part of the first episode, but the events it implicitly alludes to are not revealed until much later. Based on Walter Scott's novel *The Bride of Lammermoor*, this opera covers such tropes as forbidden love, the feud between two families, and the protagonists' demise. As such, it certainly adds up to the atmosphere of the high drama, but its range of implications is wider. In Dumas' novel, *Lucia di Lammermoor* was only mentioned, but another opera by the same composer, *Parisina* (1833), served as a set for a scene. That its replacement in *Gankutsuō* was a deliberate one is proved by the choice of the composition, which gains profound significance in the context of the series. The aria "Il dolce suono" is sung by the heroine of the opera (Lucia) gone insane as her wedding turns into chaos. Wedding festivities cut short by a tragedy; the bereft bride; love and hope destroyed — though the details and circumstances are radically different, this setting vividly evokes the moment when Edmond Dantès', or Monte Cristo's story began.[282] Indeed, in the anime the performance of "Il dolce suono" marks the moment when Monte Cristo first appears on screen. It is possible to make yet another inference from the choice of the opera in *Ganutsuō*. *Lucia di Lammermoor* is the tragedy of a girl deceived by her hateful brother (Fernand is Mercédès' cousin in the novel and is treated as a brother in the anime) and destroyed by the separation from her beloved. In contrast, *Parisina* is a story of infidelity and jealousy. If this refers to the Edmond-Mercédès situation, then the anime takes a decidedly more sympathetic angle on Mercédès. Therefore,

[282] In the light novels, which do away with references to existing works, a "new" opera explicitly mirrors the details of Dantès' wedding catastrophe.

"Il dolce suono" can be interpreted as both a reflection of the characters' circumstances and a commentary on their position. The same applies to the following two compositions.

The *Manfred Symphony* was composed by Tchaikovsky in 1885. Byron's poem, on which the symphony is based, recounts the last days of the eponymous character. Manfred is a magnificent but tormented figure. His knowledge and skills allow him to command supernatural powers and walk otherworldly realms on par with their denizens. At the same time, he grieves some events in the past, which are never explained. Manfred's despair forces him to seek first oblivion in magic, then peace in suicide, and, finally, reconciliation with his long-lost love. It goes without saying that Manfred, being a typical Romantic hero, shares certain traits with Monte Cristo (e.g. unparalleled talents and knowledge, love tragically lost, and detachment from the rest of the humanity). In Dumas' novel, Byron's poem is explicitly referred to by several characters, including Monte Cristo himself. However, *Gankutsuō* opens new parallels to explore. Of particular interest here is the figure of Arimanes in his underground kingdom of malevolent spirits that Manfred visits in search of his dead beloved. Arimanes, or Ahriman, or Angra Mainyu, is the epitome and source of darkness and misfortune in Zoroastrianism.[283] This image of the god-like underground ruler of all things strange and evil is echoed in *Gankutsuō* in the shape of the eponymous entity.[284] Moreover, on the brink of death Manfred faces demons who try to lay claim to his soul. Not intimidated, Manfred defies the demons and sends them away just before he expires. A distorted reflection of this scene is found in the circumstances of Monte Cristo's death in the anime: the Count suffers a mortal wound only *after* Gankutsuō creature is exorcised from his body, and thus gains a chance to retain his true heart, that of Edmond Dantès. This

[283] http://www.pantheon.org/articles/a/angra_mainyu.html

[284] The Arimanes-Gankutsuō-Monte Cristo parallel is underscored in the description of the Count's underground domain in *The Masked Aristocrat*. Apparently, the only two humans who serve there are Bertuccio and Baptistin. All other inhabitants are either robots or aliens. Therefore, Monte Cristo is quite literally the ruler of the cavern inhabited by non-humans and strange creatures (Ariwara 2008: 47).

development brings to mind yet another piece from the *Gankutsuō* soundtrack — *Robert le Diable*.

This opera by Giacomo Meyerbeer is based on the medieval legend of Robert the Devil. In the centre of both the legend and its adaptation stands the rampant young man Robert who, at one point of his unlawful life, learns that his father is Satan himself. In the opera, Satan approaches Robert and urges him to embrace his demonic nature. However, in the end Robert denies his father and chooses virtuous life. This development of events (the demon who poses as a hero's friend and benefactor and the hero who refuses to give up his immortal soul) again brings to mind the relationship between Gankutsuō creature and Monte Cristo in the anime. Thus a chain of associations connects respective outcomes of *Manfred* (especially the poem rendition), *Robert le Diable*, and *Gankutsuō*.[285] Additionally, the deceitful friendship and false protectiveness that Satan offers Robert can be paralleled with Monte Cristo's behavior towards Albert throughout the first two thirds of the series.

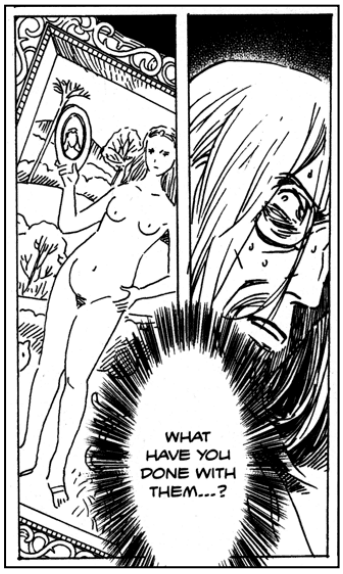
It is worth mentioning that the anime is not the only work in the *Gankutsuō* media mix that refers to works other than *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *Tiger! Tiger!* For instance, Kōyama's novelization mentions Albert's favourite novels, which include *The Three Musketeers* (1844), *The Man in the Iron Mask*,[286] and *The Great Bodhisattva Pass* (『大菩薩峠』[287]). The first two titles are hardly more than a playful reference to Dumas. As for Nakazato's novel, it could have been selected for its leading character, Ryūnosuke. Geoffrey O'Brien, American film critic and cultural historian, introduces the hero in the following way:

[285] It is possible to describe these three stories as variations of the Faustian plot, however it must be noted that the legend about Robert preceded Goethe's *Faust* (1832). On the other hand, the profound impact that Goethe's tragedy made on his contemporaries can account for Meyerbeer's choice of the source material.
[286] This title is sometimes given to one of the volumes of *The Vicomte of Bragelonne: Ten Years Later*, the third Dumas' novel about d'Artagnan and his friends (serialized in 1847-1850).
[287] This immense novel, set in the Bakumatsu era, was written by Nakazato Kaizan and ran in a serial form for three decades (1913-1941). It consists of 41 volumes.

> he is an icon of popular culture as an embodiment (in the words of the scholar C´cile Sakai) of "the fascination of evil . . . which gives him his seemingly paradoxical charisma." Ryunosuke is the archetypal fallen angel of early modern Japan, a figure who elicits sympathetic identification by the uncompromising intensity with which he follows his path, even if that path seems to lead into darkness ("The Sword of Doom: Calligraphy in Blood," 2015, Web[288]).

From the description at least, this character is reminiscent of Maeda's Monte Cristo. It is hard to assess the level of similarity though, and at any rate, this reference is only made once in an offhand manner, so it is more likely that it introduces an amusing parallel at most. The same applies to visual references and citations found in the third volume of the manga. Maeda rapidly introduces several paintings (which belong to the diegetic world) and one page-sized panel that strongly evoke either particular works or recurrent motifs of European art tradition (Figure 24).

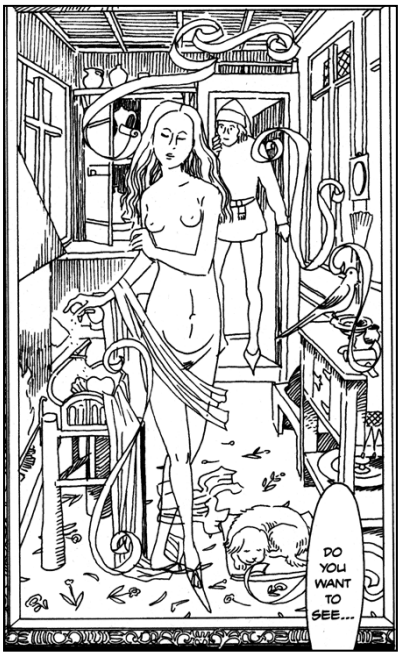
Figure 26. Visual intertextual references in the manga *Gankutsuō*.



26.1a. vol.3, p.10

26.1b. The middle part of the front of *Triptych of Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* by Hans Memling (1485).

[288] https://www.criterion.com/current/posts/358-the-sword-of-doom-calligraphy-in-blood



26.2a. vol.3, p.12

26.2b. An illustration for *The Golden Ass* (the *Metamorphoses* by Apuleius) by Jean de Bosschère. The protagonist (Lucius) spies on the witch transforming into a bird.

26.3a. vol.3, p.185
A painting on the ceiling of the cryostasis chamber on the spaceship Spada.

26.3b. *Saint Francis Receiving the Stigmata* by Giotto di Bondone (tempera, 1295-1300).

26.4. vol.3, p.209

Again, these citations and allusions are not random, though they are connected to the manga more on the level of broad themes than concrete situations. For instance, examples 26.1a and 26.2a introduce pictures that decorate the house of resurrected Héloïse. They are shown while Villeforte wanders around looking for his family. The Vanitas[289] panel from the *Triptych of Earthly Vanity and Divine Salvation* represents Vanity and Lust,[290] two sins that ruin Villefort in Dumas' novel and even more so in the manga. Incidentally, in the triptych this panel is flanked by images of Devil and Death, which is a rather accurate description of Villefort's circumstances. The second image, though it may be a direct reference to *The Golden Ass*, evokes a broader tradition of spying as a narrative device in the picaresque novel. At the same time it anticipates the scene that happens only a couple of pages later, where Villefort spies on Héloïse and Valentine having sex. The next painting (26.3a) that is the part of the diegetic world is clearly a variation on Saint Francis of Assisi receiving the

[289] 'Vanitas' is a type of painting that originated in the Middle Ages. The name derives from the book of Ecclesiastes 1:2, 'Vanity of vanities; all is vanity' (with vanity meaning "futility"). These paintings expressed the transience of life, the insignificance of earthly matters, and the inevitability of death. At first, vanitas images more frequently involved people (and humanoid figures like Death), but after the 16th century vanitas came to be associated with symbolic still lifes.
http://findingshakespeare.co.uk/shakespeares-world-in-100-objects-number-26-a-vanitas
[290] http://www.wga.hu/html_m/m/memling/3mature4/26vani1.html

stigmata, particularly close to the retable by Giotto di Bondone (26.3b).[291] Within the narrative, it appears in the aftermath of Dantès' escape from Château d'If, following his first conversation with Gankutsuō. It can thus allude either to Dantès' transformation (he has been chosen and marked by an omnipotent supernatural being) or to the nature of Gankutsuō. In his interview to *Comickers*, Maeda denies the straightforward interpretation of the creature as a Mephistopheles-like figure and its relationship with Monte Cristo as a contract with the Devil (*Comickers* 2005: 40). In the manga, Gankutsuō is presented as sincerely benevolent towards Dantès, so the allusion to the Christian saint might imply that its help is closer to real blessing than to a demonic scheme. Finally, the image of a skeleton dressed up as a beautiful lady (26.4) evokes a visual tradition closely related to vanitas symbolism, the motif of Death and the Maiden. Here, both entities are conflated into one, and the futility of earthly pursuits applies not to the beautiful woman (who obviously stands for Merecedes), but to the misguided man in front of her.

To summarize, explicit intertextual references that directly address the contents of the narrative are not particular to the anime soundtrack. However, references in other *Gankutsuō* works are short and isolated, and they are not introduced in a systematic manner. One might easily bypass any of the clues given above (no doubt, this study has overlooked numerous others) as one pursues the plot development. The soundtrack, however, is an integral part of the anime narrative, and as such it facilitates a more sustained engagement with intertextually meaningful pieces. They are not only repeated within the anime, but can be heard again in the audio drama, and are included into *Gankutsuō Classic Compilation* CD (「巌窟王 クラシックコンピレーション」, 2005). The chances that the viewer will recognize them and make a meaningful connection are therefore much higher. These pieces therefore perform a triple function. First, *Lucia di Lammermoor* and *Robert le Diable* are adapted into the *Gankutsuō* storyworld along with other elements that belong to the

[291] http://www.louvre.fr/en/oeuvre-notices/st-francis-assisi-receiving-stigmata

storyworld of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, such as the house No. 30 in the Avenue des Champs-Elysees or the city of Marseilles. Second, *Gankutsuō* forms an intertextual relationship with the three musical pieces as independent works of fiction. Finally, they contribute to a specific atmosphere created by intermedial references to the theatre and the opera on the visual and narrative levels of the anime. Additionally, the arias "Il Dolce Suono" and "Nonnes Qui Reposez" connect the anime with the audio drama via the shared soundtrack.

3.4. The *Gankutsuō* Media and Their Specificity

A close inspection of each of the *Gankutsuō* works reveals different degrees of innovation and transparency brought about by the media involved. Incidentally, the "medium" is in itself a very ambiguous term. Marie-Laure Ryan makes a list (and not an exhaustive one) of possible meanings the word "medium/media" can take that stretches over half a page (Ryan 2014: 26). This is because in general, definitions of the concept conform to research needs and theoretical stance taken by a particular scholar or beneficial for a given field of study. Thus Werner Wolf points out that to be useable in literary theory and intermediality studies, the definition of the medium should combine "technical aspects of the channels used with semiotic aspects of public communication as well as with the aspect of cultural conventions that regulate what is perceived as a (new) medium" (Wolf 2011: 2). Ryan, whose interests include literary, game, and media studies, apparently shares these considerations. In order to facilitate a more productive use of the concept, Ryan enlists three dimensions that determine the categories of media:

- semiotic substance (such as image, voice, or movement as well as their characteristics[292]);
- technical dimension, which includes not only technology associated with the media (photography, film, comics, etc.), but also modes of production (e.g., animation, computer programming, or printing) and material support (book, DVD, software, etc.).
- and cultural dimension, which "addresses the public recognition of media as forms of communication and the institutions, behaviors, and practices that support them"[293] (Ryan 2014: 30).

[292] To be more precise, Ryan distinguishes the following characteristics of signs under consideration: signifying dimensions (such as line, color, shape, or pitch and loudness); sensorial impact (e.g. auditive, or visual); and mode of signification (iconic, indexial, or symbolic) (Ryan 2014: 29).

[293] Conventions associated with the particular medium (including conventionalized means of expression, typical content, the proportion of non-realistic devices and non-transparent elements, and so on) also belong to the cultural dimension.

As has been demonstrated, with most *Gankutsuō* works, their specificity does not reveal itself in the semiotic dimension per se. That is, they are obviously shaped by materiality of the semiotic codes and material supports used, and in case of the audio drama it is the semiotic substance of the voice that is central to the consumer's experience. But with other constituents, two different dimensions become more prominent. The technical dimension gets especially conspicuous in the anime, which literally utilizes new technology to create a new stunning visual style. At the same time, the anime brings forth the cultural dimension of the medium. On the one hand, it relies on recognizable tropes and narrative techniques (including the specifics of world-setting and characterization, plot development, and expressive means) and therefore answers expectations of a regular anime viewer. On the other hand, *Gankutsuō* utilizes conventions of acting and mise-en-scène associated with stage performance (in Western theatre), and alludes to the aesthetics of shōjo manga and opera. Notably, all intermedial references in *Gankutsuō* seem to reinforce the same principle: the "realistic" approach to the storytelling is discarded in favour of the emotional realism, which draws the audience into the story and evokes strong empathy towards the characters. The effect is further reinforced by the overcodification of characters through the use of textures. Here the key can be found to the jarring difference between the beginning and the end of the anime.

For the first two thirds of the series the plot develops steadily albeit relentlessly (mostly introducing variations on the material from *The Count of Monte Cristo*), until the main mystery is disclosed and explained in episodes 17 ("The Confession") and 18 ("The Duel"). Starting with episode 21 ("The True Identity of the Nobleman"), however, the series rushes forward (at it parts ways with Dumas' novel completely), and the story of a private revenge, and people's secrets and relationships rapidly expands to include a coup d'état, destruction of Neo-Paris by spaceship missiles, and a last-second escape from an underground lava pit.

Such rapid change in pace and tone can, of course, be explained as a particular case of what Suan calls "the basic formal structure of Anime" and compares to the governing compositional principle of Japanese traditional theatre: *jo-ha-kyū* (序破急; 2013: 56-57). The *jo* part of the narrative serves as an introduction, the *ha* part adds new information and disrupts the development of events in some way, rekindling the viewers' interest. The third part, *kyū*, "quickly ends in a burst of energy to leave a lasting impression" (2013: 58, 61, 70). This description, indeed, fits the narrative structure of the anime *Gankutsuō* perfectly. Nevertheless, an alternative (or complimentary) explanation would be that the narrative is altogether designed so as to urge the viewers to enjoy it first and foremost as a spectacle of emotion not bound by conventional logic. The explosion of action and visual extravaganza at the end thus echoes the boiling feelings of the characters. The creators themselves appear to be of the same opinion — hence Maeda's remark in one of interviews:

> Everything in this series is bound together by "human passions." We follow not the logic of the setting or the story while we proceed, but the logic of characters' feelings. Even things that seem confusing at first sight should make sense when seen through the lens of characters' feelings. Take episode 22. Albert and the Count continue talking in the midst of aerial bombing. It is not that they do not notice — they are desperate! They could not care less about the bombs![294] (*Comickers* 2005: 41; trans. mine).

[294] 「この『巌窟王』では全て「人の感情」が落としどころになっているんです。設定とか物語のロジックとかではなくて、キャラの気持ちのロジックで作っていく。一見不可解に見える物事も、キャラの気持ちという観点で見れば納得するはずなんです。例えば 22 幕でアルベールと伯爵が話してる後ろで、街が爆撃されてますけど、二人は気がつかないんじゃなくて、必死なんだよこいつらはよ！爆弾なんてどうでもいいんだよ！って(笑)。今この瞬間の方が大切なんだよ、って。」This statement does not necessarily mean, however, that the anime *Gankutsuō* does away with the story as the Japanese theorists are wont to say with regard to otaku-oriented media. The most obvious proof is that until episode 18 ("The Duel") *Gankutsuō* runs a complicated multithreaded plot replete with flashbacks and foreshadowing, and involving a huge cast

Thus the anime *Gankutsuō* utilizes the technical and the cultural media dimensions to achieve specific narrative logic and unique aesthetics. The manga *Gankutsuō* also pushes against conventions, as it combines within itself a range of techniques usually associated with separate industrial genres. As noted in section 2.3.4 of Chapter Two, this approach might also be determined by storytelling needs: fluctuations between "shot-by-shot" montage of panels, shōjo-esque multilayered page layouts, and intricate page-sized illustrations disrupt the flow of the narrative and draw the readers' attention to what Mieke Bal identifies as the level of 'text.' The technological dimension works to the same end, as the constant tension between screentones and hatching as well as the extensive use of braiding bring forth the material aspects of the medium. The dark content of the manga is therefore more or less pacified (and made more tolerable), as the story loses tangibility, on the one hand, and is counterbalanced by the intricacies of the narration, on the other hand.

The remaining *Gankutsuō* works do not push their mediality to such extent, though they still harbor certain aspects worthy of notice. The specificity of *Albert the Diplomat's Diary* is determined by the material support that does not fit the conventions associated with the medium of the light novel (the size of the book, paper quality, the style of illustrations, etc.). Additionally, it is a work that was delivered successively via two platforms (which can be considered separate media utilizing the same verbal text) — Web blog and book — and thus allowed for two kinds of experience. It must be noted, however, that this applies only to those readers who discovered the blog while it was still running. Little effort was made to bring out the diary- or blog-specific features in the text itself, apart from those provided by the platform (namely, the successive, fragmented publication). Moreover, as of December 2015, the blog has been removed, leaving only the printed artifact, which is narrative-wise very close to a regular light novel.

---

of characters; and even after the story gets wild, all plotlines are followed through till the last episode ("At the Shore"), which finishes and puts in order the remaining threads.

Two other novels, *Gankutsuō: The Masked Noble* and Kōyama Shūichi's novelization, largely follow conventions of their medium, that is, the light novel. The novelization in particular conforms to almost all typical characteristics. It is possible to suggest that, since the novelization follows these conventions so closely, they might have influenced its narrative. Thus the focus on Albert's interiority, the vagueness of the "outside world," and even numerous minor intertextual references derive as much from the typical light novel narrative pattern (especially, one of its sub-types, sekai-kei) as from Kōyama's personal approach to storytelling. *Gankutsuō: The Masked Noble*, on the other hand, is a more specific case, even if it does not exactly stray from light novel conventions. Still, the change in format, though not as radical as with the Albert's diary, and illustrations that seem to gravitate towards the decorative aspect rather than kyara portraits signal a certain unconventionality. Furthermore, distinguishing features of the three novels come to the fore precisely because variations exist between them, that is, within the media mix.

At the same time, the material aspects of these works allow to create new connections. Therefore, as a plurimedial form, the anime can include intertextual references in the soundtrack, binding together the classical pieces it appropriates, *The Count of Monte Cristo*, and the key elements of the *Gankutsuō* story. The overall soundtrack of the anime, as well as actors' voices, provides a natural link to the audio drama. The same applies to the visual track: Kōyama's novelization downplays its own visual elements to lean directly on those of the anime. Likewise, *The Masked Aristocrat* and the manga are connected not only through the narrative elements they share specifically with each other, but also through the images that are an inherent part of each medium. Therefore, the material aspects of the media serve not only narrative, or expressive purposes, but contribute to the media mix formation. Additionally, by drawing the audiences' attention to the respective medium, the anime and the manga imply the possibility of a more multifaceted engagement with the texts that is not limited to deciphering the story.

CONCLUSION

As the previous two chapters demonstrate, several features of *Gankutsuō* distinguish it from a typical media mix. Its most obvious novelty resides in the medium-specific choices evident in the anime and, to a lesser extent, in the manga. The anime employed a new technology to create the visuals that mark it among other titles even a decade later. Furthermore, the anime is characterized by a sort of hybridity, as it acquires certain attributes of other media (such as stage play, opera, and shōjo manga). The manga freely swaps together traditional shōnen and shōjo expressive means, utilizes the indeterminacy of frame and variations of page layout, and punctuates the narrative with images that are closer to abstract illustrations than to mainstream manga style. Despite its apparent propensity to collage of techniques and materials, *Gankutsuō* media mix is marked by a high level of visual and aural unity: all principal illustrations across the franchise belong either to Maeda Mahiro or to Matsubara Hidenori, and the audio drama shares voice actors and the soundtrack with the anime. The soundtrack deserves to be mentioned separately: not only are parts of it diegetically integrated in the anime, but they also provide intertextual references that echo and anticipate the unfolding events and characters' decisions, forming an additional layer of subtle meaning.

Structurally, *Gankutsuō* media mix was unusual for its time, as it started with the anime. In the early 2000s, a common strategy was still to adopt popular manga and light novel titles. Media mixes originating from anime started to appear in numbers only around 2010 (Joo and Denison 2013a: 26) — so in this regard *Gankutsuō* is a forerunner. At the same time, this structural peculiarity connects directly to a less prominent but important feature of this media mix: each of its constituents was created by members of the initial production team. This also distinguishes *Gankutsuō* from the majority of media mixes, where creators that operate in different media are not so closely connected to each other. On the one hand, flexible system of the production committees allows new participants to join at

later stages of media mix development. On the other hand, most media mixes are still based on adaptations of manga and light novels — in this case, at least one or two creators work isolated by definition (nowadays, most otaku products are made with potential media mix development in mind, but the creator still cannot predict what kind of collaborators he or she will have to work with in the future). And even when several media mix constituents are developed simultaneously, the creators do not necessarily come in touch directly. In this sense, despite all the alternative routes they chose in their respective works, Maeda Mahiro, Kōyama Shūichi, Ariwara Yura and Takahashi Natsuko[295] can be called a creative unit — a notion more often associated with transmedia practices (as understood by Dena or Jenkins).

At the same time, in many respects *Gankutsuō* is decidedly "traditional." Thus it involves only the media most readily associated with otaku products. As a media mix proper, it also renounces consistency between its various constituents, so that each of them offers some rifts on — and at times radical transformations of — the story told in the core work (the anime). Every work within the franchise is built around a shared group of characters put into the world-setting that is specific to this media mix and easily recognizable, despite minor changes. Even though circumstances and personalities of the secondary cast may vary, the central figures of Albert and the Count remain relatively consistent. Consequently, fans can simply enjoy *Gankutsuō* as a conventional media mix — a combination of characters and general 'worldview' expressed in a chain of parallel, fancifully connected refractions of the narrative (though it must be noted, that here the 'worldview' is closer to a specific aesthetic than to a fictional universe).

The key to the true novelty of *Gankutsuō* lies in the levels of unity found in this franchise. The unifying factor is no longer reduced to the characters — instead, the works are connected on four levels:

1) The first, and the most basic is the level of world-setting, with its collection of the most solid constantas that define the specifics of the fictional world, personality of the

[295] A scenarist for the anime who also wrote the scenario for the audio drama.

central characters, and overall predilections of the included narratives.

2) The second level is the level of story, or, one should say, the core of the narrative. Despite all — sometimes radical — changes, all *Gankutsuō* texts come back to the two main heroes. All related events unfold in highly similar, though not identical places and involve more or less constant set of props and figurants (those are too fluid to be included into the world-setting, but still they are very likely to reappear in most texts).

3) Yet on another level the *Gankutsuō* texts are bound by specific re-reading of *The Count of Monte Cristo*, which is supported in one way or other by every constituent of the media mix. At times, though, tensions surface between this re-reading, as well as the ethical stance that underlies it, and the narrative elements that gain their primary meaning on the next level.

4) On the fourth and final level exists an intertextual network, which stretches across all the texts and reaches outside the franchise to bind them to *The Count of Monte Cristo* and *Tiger! Tiger!* novels. Intertextual references *beyond* the material adopted in the anime constitute meaningful parts of the narrative, but their presence leads to discrepancies and potentially can even change the interpretation of a given work. At the same time, when taken together, they form a "ghost" of one another, a much more literal (to use Linda Cahir's terminology) adaptation of *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Therefore, intertextuality of the *Gankutsuō* works, when directed at Dumas' novel, foregrounds the status of *Gankutsuō* as adaptation and at the same time underscores its difference from the source work. *Gankutsuō* here, however, does not mean the anime only, but the whole conglomeration of works that form one large adaptation project. With *Gankutsuō*, another level of engagement is possible beyond ordinary consumer-to-media-mix interaction — the engagement that involves switching between the media mix per se and the novels that inform it. It cannot be a coincidence that, though the works comprising the *Gankutsuō* franchise stem from the anime, all of them overtly point at Dumas' novel as their "source" (原作), and that Bester's novel is

referred to in the interviews. Thereby *Gankutsuō* encourages the fans to take a step forward and find yet another way to enjoy the individual works and the whole network.

But such assumption raises at least two questions:

1) How many fans are really willing to engage in intertextual play, search for traces, establish connections, and ultimately incorporate their knowledge of *The Count of Monte Cristo* in the reading of the *Gankutsuō* media mix as a whole?

and 2) is *Gankutsuō* one of a kind or are there other similar examples out there?

It is hard to accurately answer the first question without conducting a survey among Japanese fans. However, judging from available reviews at least, viewers and readers seem to ignore most of the intertextual connections. Many reviewers touch upon the anime's status as adaptation and compare it to Dumas' novel, but they rarely go into the details of the story. Even when points of departure from *The Count of Monte Cristo* are noted and described, the aim is usually to indicate gaps between the two narratives in terms of either fidelity or anime conventions (not all viewers appreciate the giant robots added to the revenge plot). Absent are attempts to interprete *Gankutsuō* as a specific rereading of the hypotext. Furthermore, reviews on the manga and the novels rarely remark on connections between *Gankutsuō* and other works. It is also indicative that in the *Gankutsuō Comic Anthology*[296] (a 230-page collection of fan comics on the series) only one out of forty participants, Tsubaki Momo (椿桃), refers to *The Count of Monte Cristo* in her gag manga. Besides, Tsubaki cites parts of the novel that have not been adopted or alluded to by any of the media mix constituents, which means that her interest could be limited to relations between the anime and the book. As for the connection between *Gankutsuō* and *Tiger! Tiger!*, it is hardly mentioned at all. At the same time, it is quite possible that more specific discussions of the media mix took place on specialized boards or online blogs that are simply not available at present. It is also hard to estimate the relevance of the intertextual network for western audiences for a very simple

[296] 『巌窟王コミックアンソロジー』, BIBLOS (ビブロス) , 12.2005.

reason: half of the media mix is not available to them. But the *Gankutsuō* page on the popular publicly maintained site TV Tropes[297] contains a fairly comprehensive list of intertextual minutiae found in the anime, so at least some fans seem to be hunting for those. Overall, however, intertextual play on top of the adaptation seems to have been of more interest to the creators themselves, which could explain the answer to the second question: as of now, no other examples of such an approach to adaptation and media mix development can be given.

It must be emphasized here that many anime series contain explicit, deliberate and multiple intertextual links to specific works. One of the popular contemporary examples is *Psycho-Pass*,[298] which is full of citations from and references to such diverse authors as Terayama Shūji, René Descartes, George Orwell, Søren Kierkegaard, Philip K. Dick, Jonathan Swift, Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Iwakami Yasumi and many others. Some of the books were introduced not in the anime, but in the additional materials including the *Psycho-Pass Official Profiling* book[299] and interviews with the creators. So strong is the "literary" side of the series, that in 2013 the largest bookstore chain in Japan, Kinokuniya (紀伊國屋書店)[300], ran for three months a special "Read the real book!" fair (「紙の本を読みなよ」フェア), introduced by one of the main characters (Table 26). Even without going that far, anime, as Stevie Suan rightfully notes, "is filled with intertextual pieces from every source of media" (Suan 2013: 28). The same applies to manga and light novels. However, an anime, let alone a media mix, that cultivates such an extensive and meticulous intertextual network around some distinct text is definitely a rare occasion.

[297] http://tvtropes.org/pmwiki/pmwiki.php/Anime/Gankutsuou
[298]『PSYCHO-PASS サイコパス』, Production I.G., directed by Shiotani Naoyoshi and Motohiro Katsuyuki, written by Urobuchi Gen, October 2012-March 2013 (1st season), 24 ep.
[299]『PSYCHO-PASS サイコパス OFFICIAL PROFILING』, Kadokawa, 2013.
[300] Full list of the books included into the "Read the real book!" fair: https://www.kinokuniya.co.jp/c/store/Shinjuku-Main-Store/20130313115532.html

Figure 27. A shelf in one of Kinokuniya stores. The sign near the bookshelf starts with the title of the fair and the name of the character. The photograph taken from official Books Kinokuniya site.[301]

The same can be said about the status of *Gankutsuō* as adaptation. As explained in section 1.2.4. of Chapter One, close relationships between adaptation and transmedia fictions have already been noted in academia and identified as an area for further exploration. However, at present researchers' interest is directed mostly at the ontology of adaptation within such projects, at its specific functions, and the requirements it must conform to. Studies that analyze more unique ways in which the two phenomena come together are still rare, though it is possible to name a couple. Marc Ruppel introduces under the name of 'transremediation' (Ruppel 2012: 333) a project that consists entirely of transpositions of (almost) identical content between media. Neil Young's *Greendale* started as a series of live performances (combining songs and short talks in between) the singer did during his tour in

[301] https://www.kinokuniya.co.jp/c/store/Shinjuku-Main-Store/20130313115532.html

Europe in spring 2003, and then was transcripted into print story notes, made into a film, printed as an artbook and a graphic novel, etc. In each case, the tale was adapted as closely as possible not only with regard to the content but also to the form — to paraphrase, each consequent adaptation included some kind of intermedial reference to its predecessors (2012: 355-56, 359). Moreover, following the model of storyworld versus universe elements described in section 2.4 of Chapter Two, seemingly insignificant, random tidbits of information were given meaning with every shift to the new medium (2012: 407, 416). In a project like this, argues Ruppel, the redundancy of content is actually the key to enjoying the whole series of transpositions, since it allows the reader to concentrate on mediality of the platforms involved (2012: 334). To borrow Ruppel's own words, "rather than focusing on the continuity of the *story* elements carried across platforms, we instead must focus first on the essential *form* that such elements are supported by" (2012: 358; original emphasis), with "the inevitable trade-offs between media [utilized] as an expressive aesthetic in its own right" (2012: 350; see also 359-360). Young's *Greendale* is definitely different from typical commercially oriented transmedia franchises of today. If anything, it is closer to an art project (that is not to say that entertainment and art are mutually exclusive — it is rather a matter of the dominating principle). But throwing light onto such projects is important because it reveals the potential of the adaptation-transmedia fiction amalgam.[302]

Another example of this potential comes from Johannes Fehrle, who demonstrates how Edgar Wright's movie *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World* (2010) not only adapts the comic book by Bryan Lee O'Malley (*Scott Pilgrim*, 2004-2010), but also incorporates multiple intermedial references that include the source work and its medium as well as the game *Scott Pilgrim vs. the World. The Game* (Ubisoft, 2010). In this case, too, "citations" of the medium within another medium form a network of links between the works that functions parallel to the intermedial transposition of the story elements, which is the primary connective factor in

[302] For instance, Ruppel perceives *Greendale* as a particularly valuable case study that reveals "a new sense of transmedia […] which positions meaning in transmedia practices as potentially more reliant on platforms themselves" (Ruppel: 332).

more traditional adaptations. The consumers are driven to the other constituents of the franchise as they are left "longing for both the greater immediacy of the first instantiation of mediation" (which is the comic book that the film adapts, but also imitates) and "for the more immediate […] ludic experience of the game" (Fehrle 2015: 57). Ruppel and Fehrle's accounts are highly informative, as they reevaluate the role of adaptation practice within transmedia fiction and bring into light new aesthetic and commercial opportunities it provides. However, both of them focus on the materiality of the medium. The analysis of the *Gankutsuō* media mix in this study brings the focus back to the level of story and fictional world — which are at the core of many transmedia practices that involve storytelling. At the same time it also foregrounds the fact that *Gankutsuō* is first and foremost a product of the entertainment industry, an anime-based media mix. As such it serves as evidence that the story in the products aimed at otaku market has not yet been entirely divested of meaning, that it still can take a central role in the media mix development, and harbours vast potential that is yet to be explored. Ultimately, the analysis of the *Gankutsuō* media mix allows some insights with regard to the questions first posited in section 1.3.5 of Chapter One:

1) What factors beside characters and fictional universe might unite multiple texts within a franchise? Is consistency of meaning possible across all variations?
2) How can a message stay relevant through very different reincarnations of the story?
3) How does the entity of the character that binds together the diverging plot developments interact with other unifying factors in the franchise?
4) From what perspective can a divergent transmedia franchise be described as one extended text (or the conglomeration of texts that are meaningfully interconnected)?

It is true that *Gankutsuō* offers very specific answers to this list. But certain tendencies can be extrapolated as descriptive of media mixes in general. So, with regard to the first question the most obvious answer seems to be the "story," but even in case of *Gankutsuō*, which is relatively story-oriented, there is no consistency on this level. Not only the fabula, but also behaviour and interiority of certain characters (except the main heroes) are prone to change. The connections remain, though, on the level of the world-setting — the minimum of parameters that characterize the fictional universe of *Gankutsuō*, its overall aesthetics, character outlines, and the basic premises of the story. This level of unity is to be expected in any franchise that is not strictly character-based. If a fictional universe serves as a basis for transmedia franchise development, then facts regarding characters and their story might become less relevant, substituted with information about the world itself.

Concerning the second question, as the relationship between the manga and the anime demonstrates, the diverging versions of a story can still complement each other meaning-wise. Obviously, this is very much the matter of interpretation — but at the very least, it is possible to incorporate in each work a sufficient basis for consistent reading. The notion of a certain central idea resisting the outward changes of the narrative is not in itself new, especially in the otaku culture. In fact, it is solidly incorporated into the concepts of time loop, parallel universes, and reincarnation, so anime, manga, and light novels, which often rely on these plot devices, address this issue regularly. The anime *Noein: To Your Other Self*[303] can serve as a an illustration of this logic: across countless universes and timelines a person named Noein tries to save his beloved Haruka, yet in every universe she dies — and each failure reinforces Noein's despair (much like each new text brought into picture may reconfirm the initial reading). The anime does not stop there, however. First the viewers learn that Noein has been unconsciously looking only for those worlds where

[303] 『ノエイン もうひとりの君へ』, Satelight, directed by Akane Kazuki, October 2005-March 2006. 24 ep.

Haruka died — within the current metaphor it would mean sticking to one interpretation only. Then the protagonist Haruka breaks the cycle — in the context of media mix this act might signify retconning[304] (that is, an alteration) of the previously canonical material in a new work. The implication is, then, that the meaning that persists across diverging, or even opposite developments of story may still be revoked by a particular franchise constituent. Or yet another piece of canonical material might call for a complete re-evaluation of the previously accepted material. Nevertheless, an established reading is likely to survive even radical permutations of the story unless producers set out to unequivocally change it.

The answer to the third question has proved to be tricky. As noted in Chapter One, fictional universe can play a central role in the development of a franchise, to the point that remaining fixed characters are pushed to the background. One would expect to find in the character-centered media mix an inverse correlation between the stability of a character and that of story content: so that diverging works are held together by much more constant figurants. However, as seen in *Gankutsuō*, stability of a character largely depends on his o her position: entities central to the franchise are less likely to change, though they can still be removed (as happens with Albert in the manga) to make place for other, temporary, leads. At the same time, secondary roles can change significantly (two most obvious examples are the Villefort family members in the manga and Benedetto/Andrea in *The Masked Aristocrat*). Visual appearances remain, though — one might suggest then, that the kyara aspect of a character (that is, the drawing that evokes personality and transmits individuality) is the decisive factor. Fandom practices, however, do not always support this notion. A very vivid counterexample can be drawn from the practices of Euro-American fandom of Disney

[304] To 'retcon' something means to erase a part of the officially established canon and replace it with some new material (the word "retcon" is itself a portmanteau of "retroactive continuity" —— http://fanlore.org/wiki/Retcon). Retcon can be seen as another evidence of the complicated power relationships between creators and producers, and fans: only the former can retcon the officially accepted material, but fans can lash out against the retcon if they feel that the changes are too radical and/or restricting.

animated TV series *Gravity Falls*.[305] One of the most popular characters is the series' main antagonist Bill Cipher, a triangle-shaped one-eyed demon (see Figure 28), who has been celebrated in fan videos, songs, fan-made merchandise, shimeji, fanfiction, and, of course, fanarts.

Figure 28. A character from *Gravity Falls*, Bill Cipher.

There is nothing new about the outburst of fan creativity around a character – interesting here is the tendency to draw said character as a humanoid. As is evident from Figure 28, Cipher in his original form looks like an archetypical kyara. And indeed, it is in this form that he has won fans' attention and affection. Fans, however, would not stay content engaging with the kyara and started to produce multiple versions of what they imagined to be his human-like avatar. Sometimes this is obviously done with the purpose of drawing erotic content, but many fans seem to simply like the idea and continue to come up with possible redesigns for the character. If this example seems exceptional, one might remember that Japanese fanartists also quite often change the appearance of characters to the point that those are barely recognizable.[306] And there are cases like the movie *Adolescence of Utena* that redesigned the main heroines and the villain even as it kept all other characters

[305] Disney Television Animation, created by Alex Hirsch, directed by John Aoshima and others, June 2012-February 2016, 40 ep.
[306] It is true that fanartists usually keep all essential identifiers, such as a haircut or a costume —— much like Bill Cipher fans make sure that in each incarnation he keeps his cravat and top hat —— but changes in style itself can push a character very far from its initial image.

almost intact.[307] However, admittedly, in both of the aforementioned examples, changes in the characters' appearances are more or less diegetically grounded, and there are cases like *Fullmetal Alchemist* or *Hunter × Hunter*,[308] where consistent character design has persisted across distinct media mixes. Apparently, additional research is required in order to confirm how often characters are visually redesigned by the producing side and how these changes correlate with the transformations of story content. Regardless, the personality of characters seems to be less stable than is generally assumed, and it does not necessarily counterbalance the bifurcation of storylines in the media mix.

Finally, there are many factors that influence the level of unity in media mix, but mostly it depends on the type and number of links between its constituents. As should be clear from the previous discussion, a central idea or a set of suggested readings can be a strong unifying factor — so does the world-setting. Besides, the *Gankutsuō* works are very consistent visually, and it is quite possible to imagine a media mix that would push the stylistic unity even further, subjugating all the constituents to a certain artistic vision. However, it would probably stray away from a standard, market-oriented franchise and towards an art project (similar to Young's *Greendale*, in principle, if not in execution). Additionally, the *Gankutsuō* works are intertextually linked to the two novels outside the media mix. However, even if these connections were removed from *Gankutsuō*,[309] its texts would still be bound together by their common reliance on the anime (as the core of the media mix and the only work that provides the whole story). This is the last unifying factor to be discussed here: whenever a core work or works appear in a transmedia franchise, it lays

[307] It is very likely, though, that this was done specifically to imply the direct connection between the movie and the preceding TV series, and to signal the permanent change that has occurred in the three main figurants (since *Revolutionary Girl Utena* plays with conventions of magical girl anime, regular transformations of those characters have been its recurrent theme from the start).

[308] 『HUNTER×HUNTER』, Togashi Yoshihiro, March 1998-ongoing, 32 vol. 1st anime TV series: Fuji TV, directed by Furuhashi Kazuhiro, October 1999-March 2001, 62 ep. 2nd anime TV series: Madhouse, directed by Kōjina Hiroshi, October 2011-September 2014, 148 ep.

[309] Keeping in mind that at least part of the story transformations in the *Gankutsuō* novels and the manga had to do with re-adapting *The Count of Monte Cristo*, a degree of uncertainty remains as to how these works would have changed in such case.

the foundation for canon formation, which is possible even in divergent media mixes, as has been demonstrated in section 2.4 of Chapter Two. In fact, the network of intertextual references and that of canonical facts are constructed and transformed under the same principle. In both cases, there is a text that becomes a basis of sorts and a touchstone for all following materials — other works (whether in distinct media or not) operate with its content to introduce changes or additions. In the first case, this central position is occupied by the adapted text (that is, *The Count of Monte Cristo*), and all others turn from simple constituents of the franchise into parts of an unusual adaptation project. In the second case, this interaction between texts results in the canon formation, where canon includes the fundamental work or works (such as the anime *Gankutsuō*) and a more or less condensed field of overlapping information that grows around it. Additions to and extensions of the canonical material can thus become another net of links between the works and an attraction factor for exploration-oriented fans.

It should be emphasised that while many of the questions discussed above are theoretically interesting and worthy of further inquiry on their own, they can also be used as an outline when defining narrative aspects of a given transmedia project. Obviously, the analysis that focuses only on conditions of production or commercial strategies of the media mix development, or the one that privileges general characteristics of media mix constituents as commodities offer only a partial picture of the phenomenon and its particular realisation. What is needed, therefore, is close readings and narrative-oriented analyses of media mixes and of transmedia franchises in general — a critical tradition that has not been developed so far. Indeed, there is currently no set of tools to apply and guidelines to follow in the analysis of a fiction-based transmedia project, and available tools often proof insufficient. For instance, narratology excels in the analysis of a single isolated narrative. It can also be effectively employed in the comparative analysis when a story shifts between media with little change in content. But it can hardly be used to create an exhaustive account of a typical media mix, where transformations of content are often arbitrary, and connectivity of the

constituents (not all of which are narratives per se) determines strategies of meaning-making, distribution of information, relative canonicity of the works and products, and, ultimately, the shape of the whole project. On the other hand, it is obvious that, when interpreting a transmedia franchise as a fiction-based network, one has to take into account metatextual factors such as the creators and producers' approach and chosen strategy, production process, market conditions, and the target audience.

In this sense, adaptation studies might provide a viable model of analysis. As explained in the introduction, there is no widely accepted theoretical framework or toolset in the field. However, since publication of Bluestone's groundbreaking *Novels into Film* a case study has remained the main strategy of the field. And while there is no established model for it, a proper case study is expected to be as inclusive as possible, so that an analysis of story transformations is supplemented by considerations of historical and cultural backgrounds of the works in question, specificity of media involved, and permutations of the adaptation process itself. In other words, it is not rare (and certainly is desirable) in adaptation studies to undertake a comprehensive analysis. The same approach is necessary in a critical analysis of media mix (and a broader category of transmedia franchises) as a fiction-based project. This study is an attempt to create a model, albeit not perfect, of such analysis. As such, it covers four major aspects of the *Gankutsuō* media mix: 1) the specifics of its production and its overall structure; 2) its target audience and its presumable influence on the shape and content of the franchise; 3) connectivity between media mix constituents, and types of links that bind them (in this particular case the aim was to demonstrate how a group of works functions as a unit and how this process is enhanced by their relationship with other specific works); and 4) specifics of the media involved. With regard to adaptation itself, this study distances itself from poststructuralist or cultural-studies readings more typical in the analyses of fiction nowadays. Necessarily, it focuses on the contents of the texts in question as well as concrete readings. Indeed, this study has moved in the opposite

direction from those associated with poststructuralism: instead of trying to subvert meaning, it has attempted to establish a system of meanings as links.

From the point of view of cultural studies, no doubt a lot is left to be discovered in *Gankutsuō*. Postcolonialism might provide one vantage point to how *Gankutsuō*, for all its alterations to plot and characterization, faithfully reproduces Orientalist motifs so conspicuous in *The Count of Monte Cristo*, with Ali and especially Haydée being the very embodiment of "exotic Other." Such inquiry, however, would be far from straightforward — suffice to recollect the details of Dumas' own biography (after all, he himself was a person of color, thus pushed to the fringes of the dominant culture, and he had his share of prejudice and personal attacks[310]) and Maeda's filmography (two OVAs that he directed in previous years — *Blue Submarine No. 6* and *Animatrix: The Second Renaissance* — raise the problem of prejudice, discrimination, and interracial conflict in fantastic settings). The issue would be further complicated by the ambiguity of the very concept of race in anime and the database principle that provides many avenues to fetishize characters apart from race.[311]

Equally engaging could be an inquiry made in the context of gender studies. One surprising thing about the anime *Gankutsuō* is how it treats its female characters. In *The Count of Monte Cristo*, women are limited to secondary roles: even when they actively influence the plot development (Héloïse, Mercédès) or become one of the romantic leads (Valentine, Haydée), their input remains decidedly inferior to that of their male counterparts. Despite their circumscribed position in the text, however, the majority of the female characters in the novel still have agency. Eugénie argues with her father as an equal and then

[310] Apparently, some research has already been conducted about the ways Dumas' identity influenced his writing. For instance, the anthology *The Black Musketeer: Reevaluating Alexandre Dumas within the Francophone World* (2011, ed. by Eric Martone) was assembled with the purpose of reevaluating Dumas' identity as "francophone" (that is, representing the colonial periphery rather than the "truly French" metropole). The question remains though whether Dumas' personal experiences as a person of color should be connected with his Orientalism (which at least in part comes from Romantic tradition).

[311] Thus Haydée may be perceived as exotic and titillating not because she is connected to the specific representation of race and culture, but because she combines particular database elements, such as pointed ears and unusual hair color, or the melancholic subdued disposition. In fact, the cute alien girl herself is a database element. In other words, there may as well be different mechanisms at work behind similar characterization and effect of Dumas' Haydée and Maeda's Haydée.

runs away with her companion (and presumably lover) to pursue the career of an independent artist; Mercédès manages to persuade first the Count and then her son, Albert, to give up the duel; Haydée successfully heals Monte Cristo's heart; and even Héloïse and Madame Danglars, who are both destroyed as a result of the grand revenge schemes, do not go down without struggle (Madame Danglars preserves her fortune from speculating in the bond market, and Héloïse at least gets to die on her own terms). The anime, however, removes most of this agency and the ability of female characters to affect the development of events. Mercédès tries but cannot prevent the duel; Haydée's feelings cannot reach Monte Cristo; Eugénie is terrorized by her father; and Héloïse cannot even kill herself, loses her mind and is incarcerated by Villefort. Additionally, Eugénie, Haydée and Madame Danglars are all assaulted by Benedetto/Andrea, which arguably emphasizes their disempowered position. One can suggest that these changes are counterbalanced by some positive development in the epilogue: Eugénie becomes a renowned pianist, Héloïse and her son stay alive and slowly heal, and Haydée is crowned as the ruler of her native planet. However, all of them can reach this brighter future only with the help of the male characters (Monte Cristo saves Héloïse, Albert rescues Eugénie and Haydée). This imbalance is reverted to a point in the manga and *The Masked Aristocrat* (which allows to suggest Ariwara's defining influence), where some of the women (Eugénie, Héloïse and Valentine, to be specific) regain their agency. This compensation itself, however, can be interpreted in different ways: after all, Héloïse and Valentine can win against the male oppression only by reverting to extreme violence, and then they get to dominate but one enclosed, isolated household. The above crude overview nevertheless shows a prominent line of inquiry that could be further supplemented by references to the creators' remarks about the necessity of a female romantic interest for the protagonist, and the treatment of fanservice elements in the show (the most "kinky" sequences in the anime and the manga involve evil and wanton Héloïse and Victoria Danglars — homoerotic motifs, on the contrary, are ubiquitous but "prudent," and are presented in an unequivocally positive light).

The next possible (but definitely not the last) line of inquiry concerns politics in *Gankutsuō* and would probably involve contemplating the historical and cultural context of this adaptation more closely. The anime was made after the shocks of the 1990s (which reportedly influenced *Neon Genesis Evangelion*[312]) and 9/11, which in itself is enough to explain its pacifist pathos. But one could look closer at the echoes of these events traceable in the media mix. One might also ask whether *Gankutsuō* is not another case of typical mass culture hypocrisy. Even though the protagonist and his friends are not isolated from military destruction, and the political struggle is weaved into the plot on the literal and symbolical levels, it is all too easy to perceive the finale as a cheap solution: the militaristic "bad" guys die, while the well-meaning young generation rises to power, and the war stops. It is possible to consider then why the creators felt the need to insert this theme in the work and give it such a denouement, and to what extent their decision matches the conventions of commercial anime that actually require such kind of development: friendship and peace should be celebrated at the end as the highest values. One could then draw parallels between these tendencies and storytelling in Hollywood movies, which have been criticized for similar strategies.[313]

Finally, one could forego a cultural studies approach to look at the text itself and trace multiple links that connect *Gankutsuō* to works other than Dumas and Bester's novels (starting, presumably, with Maeda's own earlier projects). In other words, intertextuality of the media mix could be more comprehensively examined. When undertaking this task, however, one should be aware that the media mix is a conglomeration of products of the otaku culture and thus refers to a multifaceted database. Therefore any kind of link with other such product should be re-checked, because there is always the probability that instead of one concrete reference the researcher has stumbled upon a more or less common pattern.

---

[312] Maejima 2010: 31-32.

[313] In 1957, George Bluestone wrote that one of the dime novel clichés — that "the remedy for social evils" was found not "in social attack on the problem but rather in single-handed effort" — merely anticipated "the film's finding personal solutions to universal problems" (1957: 40-41).

At the same time, depending on the researcher's position, the very proliferation of such patterns or codes, which oversatiate the narrative, on the one hand, and do not have traceable origins, on the other, might be the most welcome aspect of this work and of anime in general. From this point of view, *Gankutsuō* is one of those texts so welcomed by Barthes, that invite the reader to "write" the meaning and to indulge into following multiple, constantly branching threads of meaning.

As for the questions relevant for this study, one of them is to what extent the net of intertextual relations with some outside work can hold the media mix together as opposed to other, more traditional links (the visuality of kyara in particular). The case in question is *Samurai 7*,[314] an adaptation of Kurosawa Akira's *Seven Samurai* (1954), which ran almost parallel to *Gankutsuō*. There are conceptual and structural similarities between the two. *Samurai 7* also demonstrates the increased attention to the younger cast (in this case, village priestess Kirara, her sister Komachi, and the youngest samurai Katsushirō) and the radical change in settings (in *Samurai 7* steampunk elements and 3D mecha are superimposed upon the traditional images of Edo Japan[315]). Its media mix was developed in a similar shape, with seven volumes of novelization (written by the head writer of the anime**)** and two different manga following the core work of the anime series. As in *Gankutsuō*, the manga at least refer to Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* extensively, even as they borrow the settings and (in one case) the plot development from the anime. So from a certain angle this project seems to be very close to *Gankutsuō.* For all these common points, there are differences between the two media mixes that outweigh the similarities.

Some of them stem from the production process. For one, the anime series was constructed in a different way. It is obvious that the scenarists of *Samurai 7* faced the opposite challenge from those of *Gankutsuō*: if the latter had to cut the sprawling feuilleton novel to fit the plot into 24 twenty-minute episodes, the former had to extend the material of

[314] 『SAMURAI 7』, Gonzo, directed by Takigiwa Toshifumi; June-December 2004, 26 ep.
[315] For a detailed comparison between the anime *Samurai 7* and Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai* in regard to the narrative content, aesthetics, and ideology, see Berndt 2011: 90-94.

the three-hour-long source work. The chronology of the media mix was also different. In *Gankutsuō*, the works closely followed one another (for instance, novelization ran parallel to the second part of the anime, and all other works, except *The Masked Aristocrat*, were released or started running within a year after the anime ended). With *Samurai 7*, to the opposite, there was almost a year-long gap between the anime and other media mix constituents (e.g. the manga was released only in September 2005, and the novelization did not start until November of the same year[316]). Besides, the sets of constituents in the two media mixes were dissimilar: if *Gankutsuō* moved into the "literary" direction, *Samurai 7* opted for a more heterogeneous set of works, including a game and a musical. At the same time, there are no sequels or side-stories presented as independent works (though flashbacks and additional information are included in the novelization) or radical transformations of the basic story structure — each work retells the battle between the seven samurai and the villagers, on the one side, and the evil bandits on the other, invariably with the focus on the samurai and with an almost identical outcome.[317] The consumption process is therefore different from that in *Gankutsuō*: there are no gaps to cover and no puzzle to fit together — instead the recepient faces a chain of variations of (by and large) the same story. But what really stands out when one compares these two media mixes is how the visuals of *Samurai 7* change across the works. Obviously little more than a semblance to the anime characters can be maintained in the live performance of the musical. But both manga versions also departed from the initial design: if Asano Maiko delivered *Samurai 7* in what some reviewers disapprovingly called "old shōjo style,"[318] Suhō Mizutaka radically changed the characters' appearance and, in some cases, their personality (see Appendix 3). The last fact did not go

316 What it means, among other things, is that Kōyama Shūichi and Tomioka Atsuhiro were writing in quite different conditions: the latter did not have to worry about spoilers (and, arguably, redundancy). The content the writers had to work with also must have influenced the resulting novels: Kōyama and Ariwara had to somehow handle the complicated multithread narrative — even if they chose to focus only on one aspect of the story; Tomioka had fairly simple basic story and at least nine characters (including the villain) to develop.

317 One exception is the game where certain characters can apparently survive depending on the player's choices.

318 Amazon users describe it as「一昔前の少女漫画」and 「二世代前の少女漫画みたい」.

unnoticed by the readers, bringing out mixed reactions.[319] It might not be an exaggeration to say that Suhō's work signaled its affinity to the media mix only by the world-setting (loosely so) and by paratextual clues.[320]

To summarize, constituents of the *Samurai 7* media mix have little visual or aural unity (voices and music in the musical are different from the anime — see Appendix 4), they are chronologically disconnected, and do not overlap or depend on each other in the same way as the *Gankutsuō* works do. Together these factors deny the media mix the unity that distinguishes *Gankutsuō*: *Samurai 7* looks closer to a chain of discrete adaptations than to an adaptation project of a higher level. However, there is the need yet to verify this last suggestion: it could be possible to prove that intertextuality directed at the outer work (Kurosawa's *Seven Samurai*) functions as the major unifying factor in *Samurai 7* similarly to *Gankutsuō*. To determine whether or not this can outweigh the discrepancies found on other levels, a detailed analysis of such links is needed. This remains a promising line of inquiry for the future.

Finally, one matter of interest that emerged as this study was conducted is the typical media mix structure. Even the few examples given in this thesis demonstrate that media mixes can follow any number of strategies and assume any number of compositions. It seems interesting, however, to try and look for patterns, for some kind of preferred strategy that is more particular than general claims about the principle of variation, and that distinguishes at least an isolated group of such projects. One could take a synchronic

---

[319] As one upset reader puts it, "I am shocked that it even bears the name of *Samurai 7*" (「もう、別の世界を描いているとしか、思えません。これで SAMURAI 7 を名乗られるのは、私としても結構ショックです」). Others accepted the work but still commented on its visuals.

[320] As a matter of fact, the only clear indication of its genealogy in Suhō's manga is the title and its design. In Asano's version, it is supplemented by the references to the anime on its obi (帯, the strip of paper bound around the dust jacket of the book, which is usually used for advertisements). As obi are often thrown away, there is not much difference between the two works. More importantly, other paratextual clues are not employed at all. On the contrary, all *Gankutsuō* works indicate both Alexander Dumas and Maeda Mahiro as originators of the source material (usually in the form of the copyright note on the cover and in the colophon). Both *Samurai 7* manga, however, refer only to Kurosawa Akira and the scenarists of *Seven Samurai*, Hashimoto Shinobu and Oguni Hideo.

approach and analyze media mixes developed by one principal producer[321] over the course of several years. Alternately, one could instead look into media mixes that involve anime series by different studios developed within a given period. It is also possible to focus on one anime studio instead and trace the media mixes developed around its anime for an extended period of time. An alternative approach would involve grouping the media mixes according to their originating work (for instance, the light novel or the visual novel). Even more interesting results might be gained by doing so with regards to questions such as "How does the order of the platforms employed change depending on the originating platform?" or "Is there a correlation between the originating platform and the platform that later becomes central to the media mix (if such hierarchy is distinguishable)?." Additionally, such inquiry could help outline the hierarchies of the constituents typical for media mixes and therefore reaffirm or invalidate the notion that each constituent can serve as an equally valid entry point into the franchise.

The last two decades have seen the growth in number and size of transmedia franchises within and outside Japan. Producers' desire to off-set risks, increase the number of distribution channels, and accomplish synergy on the level of production and promotion combined with consumers' desire for vast and comprehensive fictional universes and recurrent characters to give birth to increasingly complex franchising strategies. At this point, the fiction-based transmedia franchise might as well be in its peak, with titles, worlds and characters spreading across media in ways that no one could imagine even at the beginning of 1990s. Yet, even this hype will sooner or later come to its end. Already Joo and Denyson note that even though media mixes continue to proliferate in Japan, consumers have come satiated, with "hints appearing that the impact of synergy and cross-media promotion is

[321] An anime studio is the obvious choice, since anime has always been one of the main media mix constituents, and in many cases media mix per se is developed on the basis of the anime adaptation. Moreover, since many media mixes span two years and more, there is the need to anchor each subject to a certain point of time. While it is possible to simply group media mixes by the date their first constituent was released, this seems counterintuitive, given the aforementioned tendency to use the anime to jump-start the whole project.

diminishing" (2013: 27-28). Meanwhile, journalist Mark Harris bemoans the impact that omnipresent franchising has on Hollywood.[322] Harris has many qualms, for instance with the "TV-fication" of feature films and the deliberate blandness (that is, disconnectedness from "here" and "now") he perceives in the new franchise movie type, but above all he is troubled by the way new original projects are smothered in the new climate where "a studio's lineup is brands and franchises, and that's it." For all his pessimism, Harris finds one small hope — that audiences do change with time. This remark is meaningful in many ways. Not only generations change — tastes do, too, and fashions come to pass. Even the older audiences cannot be expected to support ever-expanding franchises forever: there are, after all, only so many universes a person can explore at a time and only so much time a fan can spend with one universe without getting tired. Sooner or later (and, given the pace of changes these days, probably sooner) transmedia franchising will be replaced by some other marketing strategy, and transmedia fiction will increasingly become the property of grassroot creators rather than corporate producers (a process that has started already and is not likely to stop). However, in retrospect this epoch of franchising will without doubt be marked — and not only for its business models, but also for its particular aesthetics. Documenting the most interesting cases to emerge in this environment and illuminating standard practices as their background seems a worthy task, a challenge this study of *Gankutsuō* as adaptation has taken.

[322] "The Birdcage," 2014. http://grantland.com/features/2014-hollywood-blockbusters-franchises-box-office/

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Allen, Graham. *Intertextuality*. 2000. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.

Azuma, Hiroki (浩紀東). *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals*. 2001. Trans. Jonathan E. Abel and Shion Kono. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2009. Print.

———『ゲーム的リアリズムの誕生。動物化するポストモダン2』講談社, 2007. Print.

Bal, Mieke. *Narratology: Introduction to the Theory of Narrative. Third Edition*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2009. Print.

Barry, Peter. *Beginning Theory. An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory. Third Edition*. Manchester: Manchester University press, 2009. Print.

Barthes, Roland. "An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative." In Russian. Trans. Grigoryi Kosikov. *Foreign Aesthetics and Theory of Literary Fiction in XIX-XX: Treatises, Articles, Essays.* Ed. Grigoryi Kosikov. Moscow: Moscow State University Press, 1987. 387-422. (//Барт Р. "Введение в структурный анализ повествовательных текстов." *Зарубежная эстетика и теория литературы XIX—XX вв.: трактаты, статьи, эссе*. Пер. Г. К. Косикова. М.:МГУ, 1987. 387-422). Web.

——— "An Introduction to the Structural Analysis of Narrative." Trans. Lionel Duisit. *New Literary History.* 6.2. On Narrative and Narratives (1975): 237-272. Web.

——— "The Reality Effect." 1986 [1968]. *The Rustle of Language.* Trans. Richard Howard. Berkely: Univesity of California Press. 141-148. Web.

——— "Effekt real'nosti [L'Effet de réel]." Izbrannye raboty: Semiotika. Poetika [Selected Works: Semiotics. Poetics]. In Russian. Moscow: Progress Publishing, 1994. (//Барт Р. "Эффект реальности." *Барт Р. Избранные работы: Семиотика. Поэтика*. М.: Прогресс; Универс, 1994. 392-400). Web.

Berndt, Jaqueline. "Ghostly: 'Asian Graphic Narratives,' Nonnonba, and Manga." *From Comic Strips to Graphic Novels: Contributions to the Theory and History of*

Graphic Narrative (Narratologia series). Ed. Daniel Stein and Jan-Noël Thon. Berlin: deGruyter, 2013. 321-337. Print.

——— "Postcritical Anime: Observations on its 'Identities' within Contemporary Japan." *Arts, Culture and Identity: Compilation of Papers and Seminar Proceedings*. Ed. & publ. by The International School Office, Graduate School of Literature and Human Sciences, Osaka City University, 2011. 85-94. Web.

Bester, Alfred. "My Affair with Science Fiction." *Hell's Cartographers*. London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1975. 46-75. Web. March 2014.

——— *The Stars My Destination*. 1956. London: Orion Publishing, 2010. Print.

Bluestone, George. *Novels into Film*. Baltimore and London: the Johns Hopkins University Press, 1957. Print.

Bruhn, Jørgen, Anne Gjelsvik and Eirik Hanssen, eds. *Adaptation Studies: New challenges, New Directions*. London: Bloomsbury, 2013. Print.

Cash, Justin. "Elizabethan Theatre Conventions." *The Drama Teacher*. 3 Jul. 2013. Web.

Condry, Ian. *The Soul of Anime: Collaborative Creativity and Japan's Media Success Story*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2013. Print.

Connor, J.D. "The Persistence of Fidelity. Adaptation Theory Today." *M/C Journal* 10.2 (2007). Web.

Dena, Christy. *Transmedia Practice: Theorising the Practice of Expressing a Fictional World across Distinct Media and Environments*. Diss. University of Sydney, 2009. Web.

Dumas, Alexander, *père*. *The Count of Monte Cristo*. Eng. Trans. London: George Routledge and Sons, 1988. *Project Gutenberg*. Michael S. Hart. 8 Nov. 2008. Web.

Eder, Jens. "Transmediality and the Politics of Adaptation: Concepts, Forms, and Strategies." *The Politics of Adaptation*. Ed. Dan Hassler-Forest and Pascal Nicklas. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014. Web.

Fehrle, Johannes. “Leading into the Franchise. Remediation as (Simulated) Transmedia World. The Case of *Scott Pilgrim*.” *IMAGE* 21 (2015): 4-16. *IMAGE. Journal of Interdisciplinary Image Science*. Web.

Fleming, Mike .P. “The Literary Canon: Implications for the Teaching of Language as Subject.” Booklet. Strasbourg: Council of Europe, 2007. Web.

Fujimoto, Yukari (藤本由香里). “Takahashi Macoto: The Origin of Shōjo Manga Style.” Trans. Matt Thorn. *Mechademia* 7 (2012): 24-55. Print.

Genette, Gerard. *Figures. Vol. 2*. Trans. N. Pertsov. Moscow: Sabashnikov’s Publishing House, 1998. Print.

Gibson, Wiliam. “William Gibson on *The Stars My Destination*.” *The Library of America*. 23 February 2012. Web. September 2013.

Groensteen, Thierry. *The System of Comics.* 1999. Trans. Bart Beaty and Nick Nguyen. Mississippi: Mississippi University Press, 2007. Print.

Harris, Marc. “The Birdcage: How Hollywood’s Toxic (and Worsening) Addiction to Franchises Changed Movies Forever in 2014.” *Grantland*. Bill Simmons.16 December 2014. Web.

Harvey, Colin B. “A Taxonomy of Transmedia Storytelling.” *Storyworlds Across Media: Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology*. Ed. Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014. 278-294. Print.

Hashimoto, Taichi (橋本太知).『Gankutsuou Production Book』. December 2004. Print.

Hennig, Martin. “Why Some Worlds Fail. Observations on the Relationship Between Intertextuality, Intermediality, and Transmediality in the *Resident Evil* and *Silent Hill* Universes.” *IMAGE* 21 (2015): 17-33. *Journal of Interdisciplinary Image Science*. Web.

Hikawa, Ryūsuke (氷川竜介), interviewer.「前田真宏と松原秀典とのスペシャル対談」. Official『巌窟王』Site (currently down). Web. May 2015.

———「前田真宏と山下友弘、神山修一、高橋ナツコとのスペシャル対談」. Official『巌窟王』Site (currently down). Web. May 2015.

Hiwatashi, Takahiro (樋渡隆浩) 「テクストの歴史性ー『涼宮ハルヒ』を視座に」『ライトノベル・スタディーズ』一柳廣孝, 久米依子 (編著). 青弓社, 2013. 248-264. Print.

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Theory of Adaptation*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.

Ichiyanagi, Hirotaka (一柳寛孝) 「はじめに」『ライトノベル・スタディーズ』一柳廣孝, 久米依子 (編著). 青弓社, 2013. 13-16. Print.

Iida, Ichishi (飯田一史) 『ベストセラー・ライトノベルのしくみ――キャラクター小説の競争戦略』, 青土社, 2012. Print.

Itō, Gō (伊藤剛) 『テヅカ・イズ・デッド―ひらかれたマンガ表現論へ』2005. NTT出版, 2009. Print.

Jenkins, Henry. *Textual Poachers: Television Fans And Participatory Culture*. London: Routledge, 1992. Print.

――― *Convergence Culture: When Old and New Media Collide*. New York: New York University Press, 2006. Print.

――― "Transmedia Storytelling 101." *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*: *the Official Weblog of Henry Jenkins*. 22 Mar. 2007. Web.

――― "The Revenge of the Origami Unicorn: Seven Principles of Transmedia Storytelling." *Confessions of an Aca-Fan: the Official Weblog of Henry Jenkins*. 12 Dec.2009. Web.

――― "Revenge of the Origami Unicorn: The Remaining Four Principles of Transmedia Storytelling." *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*: *the Official Weblog of Henry Jenkins*. 12 Dec. 2009. Web.

――― "The Aesthetics of Transmedia: In Response to David Bordwell (Part One)." *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*: *the Official Weblog of Henry Jenkins.* 10 Sept. 2009. Web.

——— "The Aesthetics of Transmedia: In Response to David Bordwell (Part Two)." *Confessions of an Aca-Fan: the Official Weblog of Henry Jenkins*. 13 Sept. 13 2009. Web.

——— "The Aesthetics of Transmedia: In Response to David Bordwell (Part Three)." *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*: *the Official Weblog of Henry Jenkins*. 16 Sept. 2009. Web.

——— "Transmedia 202: Further Reflections." *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*: *the Official Weblog of Henry Jenkins*. 1 Aug. 2011. Web.

——— "Media Mix is Anime's Life Support System": A Conversation with Ian Condry and Marc Steinberg (Part One)." *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*: the Official Weblog of Henry Jenkins. 8 Nov. 2013. Web.

——— "Media Mix is Anime's Life Support System": A Conversation with Ian Condry and Marc Steinberg (Part Two)." *Confessions of an Aca-Fan*: *the Official Weblog of Henry Jenkins*. 11 Nov. 2013. Web.

Johnson, Derek. *Media Franchising: Creative License and Collaboration in the Culture Industries*. New York: New York University Press, 2013. Kindle.

Joo, Woojeong, Rayna Denison, and Furukawa Hiroko. "Manga Movies Project Report 1: Transmedia Japanese Franchising." Report for UK Arts and Humanities Research Council research project "Manga Movies: Contemporary Japanese Cinema, Media Franchising and Adaptation." 2013. *Manga to Movies Project Website*. Web.

——— "Manga Movies Project 2: Japan's Contemporary Manga, Anime and Film Industries." Report for UK Arts and Humanities Research Council research project "Manga Movies: Contemporary Japanese Cinema, Media Franchising and Adaptation." 2013. *Manga to Movies Project Website*. Web.

Kawasaki, Takuto, and Iikura Yoshiyuki (川崎拓人・飯倉義之) 「飯倉義之文化 メディアミックス ラノベキャラは多重作品世界の夢を見るか?」『ライトノベル研究序説』一柳廣孝, 久米依子 (編著). 青弓社, 2009. 18-32. Print.

Kelleghan, Fiona. ”Hell’s My Destination: Imprisonment in the Works of Alfred Bester.” *Science Fiction Studies* 64, Vol. 21, Part 3 (1994). *Science Fiction Studies Website*. Web.

Klastrup, Lisbeth, and Susana Tosca. “Transmedial Worlds — Rethinking Cyberworld Design” In *Proceedings of the 2004 International Conference on Cyberworlds,* 409-16. Los Alamitos, CA: IEEE Computer Society, 2004. *Lisbeth Klastrup’s personal site: publications*. Web.

Kopylova, Olga. *Graphic Novel Adaptations of Literary Works (with Natsuhiko Kyōgoku’s ‘Hundred Stories’ as an example).* MA Thesis. Utsunomiya University, 2012. Print.

Kranz, David L. "Trying Harder: Probability, Objectivity, and Rationality in Adaptation Studies." *The Literature/Film Reader: Issues of Adaptation*. Ed. James M. Welsh and Peter Lev. Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press, 2007. Web.

Krzysztof, Maj M. “Transmedial World-Building in Fictional Narratives.” *IMAGE* 22 (2015): 83-96. *IMAGE. Journal of Interdisciplinary Image Science*. Web.

LaMarre, Thomas. “Manga Bomb: Between the Lines of Barefoot Gen.” *Comics Worlds And The World Of Comics: Towards Scholarship On A Global Scale*. Ed. Jaqueline Berndt. Kyoto: International Manga Research Center, Kyoto Seika University, 2010. 262-307. Web.

Landow, George P. “The Literary Canon.” *The Victorian Web: Literature, History, & Culture in the Age of Victoria*. Web.

Leitch, Thomas M. “Twelve Fallacies in Contemporary Adaptation Theory,” *Criticism* 45.2 (2003). 149-171. Web.

——— *Film Adaptation and its Discontents: From Gone with the Wind* to *The Passion of the Christ*. Baltimore: The John Hopkins University Press, 2007. Print.

——— “Adaptation Studies at a Crossroads,” *Adaptation* 1.2 (2008): 63-77. Web.

Liebler, Raizel and Keidra Chaney. "Canon vs. Fanon: Folksonomies of Fan Culture." *MIT Media in Transition 5* (2007). *Selected Works of Raizel Liebler*. Web.

Long, Geoffrey A. *Transmedia Storytelling: Business, Aesthetics and Production at the Jim Henson Company*. MS Thesis. Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2007. Web.

Maeda, Mahiro, and Ariwara Yura. *Gankutsuou: The Count of Monte Cristo*. *Vol. 1*. Trans. by Collinge, Gemma. New York: Ballantine Books, 2008.

——— *Gankutsuou: The Count of Monte Cristo*. *Vol. 2*. Trans. by Collinge, Gemma. New York: Ballantine Books, 2009.

——— *Gankutsuou: The Count of Monte Cristo*. *Vol. 3*. Trans. by Collinge, Gemma. New York: Ballantine Books, 2009.

Martone, Eric. "Introduction: Alexandre Dumas as a Francophone Writer." *The Black Musketeer: Reevaluating Alexandre Dumas within the Francophone World*. Ed. Eric Martone. Newcastle upon Tyne, U.K.: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2011. 1-32. Web.

Matsutani, Sōichirō (松谷創一郎) 「マンガはどこへ行く 実写映画、アニメ、ドラマとメディアミックスの活況 」『創』6 月号 (2006). 創出版. 68-75. Print.

Maynard, Senko K. (泉子・K・メイナード)『ライトノベル表現論: 会話・創造・遊びのディスコースの考察』 明治書院, 2012. Print.

McCarthy, Patrick A. "Science Fiction as Creative Revisionism: The Example of Alfred Bester's The Stars My Destination." *Science Fiction Studies* 29, Vol. 10, Part 1 (1983). *Science Fiction Studies Website*. Web.

McFarlane, Brian. *Novel to Film: Introduction to the Theory of Adaptation*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2004. Print.

McCloud, Scott. *Understanding Comics: the Invisible Art.* New York: Harper Perennial Publishers, 1994. Print.

Medley, Stuart. "Discerning Pictures: How We Look at and Understand Images in Comics." *Studies in Comics* 1.1 (2010): 53-70. Web.

Mittell, Jason. "Transmedia Storytelling and Transmedial Worlds. Strategies of Storytelling on Transmedia Television." *Storyworlds Across Media: Toward a Media-*

Conscious Narratology. Ed. Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014. 253-277. Print.

Moraru, Christian. "Intertextuality." *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. Ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan. 2005. London and New York: Routledge, 2008. 256-261. Print.

Murray, Janet. *Hamlet on the Holodeck*. 1997. Cambridge, MA: The MIT Press, 1998. Print.

Nakamura, Megumi (中村恵美) 「エンターテインメントへの意識革命 前田真宏」『アニメーションノート No.2』誠文堂新光社, 2006. Print.

Natsume, Fusanosuke (夏目房之介) 「スクリーントンがマンガにもたらした「革命」」『マンガの読み方』井上学 (編). 宝島社, 1995 年. 68-74. Print.

———「コマの基本原理を読み解く―読者の心理を誘導するコマ割りというマジック　第９節　コマの鑑賞３―アニメのセルのように重なるコマ」,『マンガの読み方』 井上学 (編). 宝島社, 1995 年. 180-181. Print.

Ōhashi, Takayuki (大橋崇行) 「キャラクターの神話――ゼロ年代ライトノベルの可能性」『ライトノベル・スタディーズ』一柳廣孝, 久米依子 (編著). 青弓社, 2013. 18-33. Print.

Ōta, Mutsumi, and Yamaguchi Naohiko (太田睦／山口直彦／山川知玄) 「ライトノベル作品群の統計解析」『ライトノベル・スタディーズ』一柳廣孝, 久米依子 (編著). 青弓社, 2013. 18-33. Print.

Ōtsuka, Eiji (大塚英志) 『キャラクター小説の作り方』星海社, 2013. Print.

———「物語消費論のノート：1.　世界と趣向――物語の複製と消費」(1989).『定本　物語消費論』1989. 角川書店, 2001. 7-20. Print. (=Marc Steinberg. "World and Variation: The Reproduction and Consumption of Narrative." *Mechademia* 5 (2010): 99-116. Web).

———「物語消費論のノート：2. 物語消費論の基礎とその戦略」(1991)『定本　物語消費論』1989. 角川書店, 2001. 2-54. Print.

Parody, Clare. “Adaptation Essay Prize Winner: Franchising/Adaptation.” *Adaptation* 4 (2) (2011): 210-218. *Adaptation*. Web.

Pavis, Patrice. *Dictionary of the Theatre: Terms, Concepts, and Analysis*. Trans. Christine Shantz. University of Toronto Press, 1998. Web.

Peeters, Benoît. "'Four Conceptions of the Page' From Case, planche, recit: lire la bande dessinee." Trans. Jesse Cohn. *ImageTexT: Interdisciplinary Comics Studies*. 3.3 (2007). 41-60. Web.

Peuchet, Jacques. “The Diamond and the Vengeance: a Modern-Day Anecdote.” *Mémoires Tirés des Archives de la Police de Paris*. [Memoirs Taken from the Archives of the Paris Police]. *Vol. 5*. 1838. Trans. James Bair. 2013. Kindle.

——— “A Family Crime.” *Mémoires Tirés des Archives de la Police de Paris*. [Memoirs Taken from the Archives of the Paris Police]. *Vol. 2*. 1838. Trans. James Bair. 2013. Kindle.

Pier, John. “Metalepsis.” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. Ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan. 2005. London and New York: Routledge, 2008. 303-304. Print.

Piegay-Gros, Nathalie. *Introduction A L'intertextualite*. Paris: Dunod 1996. *In Russian*. Georgyi Kosikov trans., Moscow: LKI 2008 (//Пьеге-Гро, Натали. *Введение в теорию интертекстуальности*. Пер. с фр. Общ. ред. и вступ. ст. Г. К. Косикова. М.: Издательство ЛКИ, 2008). Web.

Rajewsky, Irina O. "Intermediality, Intertextuality, and Remediation: a Literary Perspective on Intermediality." *Intermédialités : histoire et théorie des arts, des lettres et des techniques / Intermediality: History and Theory of the Arts, Literature and Technologies* 6 (2005): 43-64. *Érudit*. Web.

Ryan, Marie-Laure. “Narrative.” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. Ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan. 2005. London and New York: Routledge, 2008. 344-348. Print.

——— “Transmedial Storytelling and Transfictionality.” *Poetics Today* 34.3 (2013), 362-88. *Marie-Laure Ryan’s personal site*. Web.

——— “Mediality And Transmediality. Story/Worlds/Media: Tuning The Instruments Of A Media-Conscious Narratology.” *Storyworlds Across Media: Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology*. Ed. Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014. 25-49. Web.

Ruh, Brian, “The Comfort and Disquiet of Transmedia Horror in *Higurashi: When They Cry* (*Higurashi no naku koro ni*),” *Refractory: a Journal of Entertainment Media* 23 (2014). Web.

Ruppel, Marc Nathaniel. *Visualizing Transmedia Networks: Links, Paths And Peripheries*. Diss. University of Maryland, 2012. Web.

Saint-Gelais, Richard. “Transfictionality.” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. Ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan. 2005. London and New York: Routledge, 2008. 612-613. Print.

Sanders, Julie. *Adaptation and Appropriation*. New York: Routledge, 2006. Print.

Satō, Chihiro (佐藤ちひろ) 「表現のパイオニア――ライトノベルから切り開く地平」『ライトノベル研究序説』一柳廣孝, 久米依子 (編著). 青弓社, 2009. 51-72. Print.

———「ライトノベルの錬金術――テクストとイラストが織り成すモザイク」『ライトノベル・スタディーズ』一柳廣孝, 久米依子 (編著). 青弓社, 2013. 141-156. Print.

Schmid, Wolf. *Narratologija.* Moscow: Yazyki Slavyanskoj Kultury, 2003. Print.

——— *Narratology: an Introduction*. Trans. Alexander Starritt. Berlin; New York: De Gruyter, 2010. Print.

——— “Defamiliarisation.” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. Ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan. 2005. London and New York: Routledge, 2008. 98. Print.

Scolari, Carlos Alberto. “Transmedia Storytelling: Implicit Consumers, Narrative Worlds, and Branding in Contemporary Media Production.” *International Journal of Communication* 3 (2009): 586-606. Web.

Snyder, Mary H. *Analyzing Literature-to-Film Adaptations: a Novelist's Exploration and Guide*. New York: Continuum, 2011. Web.

Stam, Robert. "Introduction: The Theory and Practice of Adaptation." Ed. Robert Stam and Alessandra Raengo. *Literature and Film: a Guide to the Theory and Practice of Film Adaptation.* Oxford UK: Blackwell Publishing, 2005. 1-52. Print.

Steinberg, Marc, *Anime's Media Mix. Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan*. Minneapolis: Minnesota University Press, 2012a. Print.

——— "Condensing the Media Mix: *Tatami Galaxy*'s Multiple Possible Worlds," *Canadian Journal of Film Studies*, 21.2 (2012b). 71-92. Web.

——— "Inventing Intervals: The Digital Image in *Metropolis* and *Gankutsuō*," *Mechademia* 7 (2012c). 3-22. Web.

———『なぜ日本は〈メディアミックスする国〉なのか』大塚英志 (監修), 中川 譲 (訳. 角川). EPUB 選書, 2015. Kindle.

Suan, Stevie. *The Anime Paradox: Patterns and Practices through the Lens of Traditional Japanese Theater*. Leiden, the Netherlands: Global Oriental, 2013. Print.

Suzuki, Akira (鈴木朗), ed., interviewer. 「Chapter 2. [巌窟王]」『DIGITAL ANIME ARTWORK 2』ビー・エヌ・エヌ新社 (BugNewsNetwork), 2006. 64-123. Print.

Takahashi, Mizuki. "Opening the Closed World of Shōjo Manga." *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime*. Ed. Mark Wheeler Macwilliams. New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2008. 114-136. Print.

Takekuma, Kentarō (竹熊健太郎) 「一目でわかる「形喩」図鑑！—漫付と効果の具体的な使用例検証 120」『マンガの読み方』井上学編. 宝島社, 1995 年. 78-105. Print.

Tanaka, Ema (田中絵麻) 「クールジャパンの産業構造—製作委員会方式によるメディアミックスと多様性の並存—」『*Social and economic systems studies*』30 (2009). 45-53. Print.

Terteryan, Inna A. “Romanticism.” *History of World Literature,* Moscow: Nauka, Vol. 6: 16-27 (1989). Digital version: *Fundamental Electronic Library “Russian Literature and Folklore*.” Web.

Thoss, Jeff. “Tell It Like a Game: Scott Pilgrim and Performative Media Rivalry.” *Storyworlds Across Media: Toward a Media-Conscious Narratology*. Ed. Marie-Laure Ryan and Jan-Noël Thon. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014. 211-229. Print.

Van Parys, Thomas, review on *In/Fidelity. Essays on Film Adaptation* (Ed. David L. Kranz and Nancy C. Mellerski). *Image [&] Narrative*, vol. 14, No 1 Beyond all Bearing. (Con)Figurations of the Intolerable, part 1 (2013). Ed. Arne De Winde, Sientje Maes, and Bart Philipsen. Web.

Van Gool, Daniël. “Jeff Gomez Reveals Secrets to Transmedia Franchise Development at CineKid.” *Alternate Reality Gaming Network (ARGNet)*. Michael Andersen. 1 Nov. 2010. Web.

Wolf, Mark J. P. *Building Imaginary Worlds: The Theory and History of Subcreation*. New York: Routledge, 2012. Kindle.

Wolf, Werner. "Intermediality Revisited: Reflections on Word and Music Relations in the Context of a General Typology of Intermediality.” Ed. Suzanne M. Lodato, Suzanne Aspden, and Walter Bernhart. *Word and Music Studies: Essays in Honor of Steven Paul Scher and on Cultural Identity and the Musical Stage. Word and Music Studies* 4 (2002). 13-34. Web.

——— "(Inter)mediality and the Study of Literature.” *CLCWeb: Comparative Literature and Culture* 13.3 (2011). Web.

Würzbach, Natascha. “Motif.” *Routledge Encyclopedia of Narrative Theory*. Ed. David Herman, Manfred Jahn, and Marie-Laure Ryan. 2005. London and New York: Routledge, 2008. 322-323. Print.

Yokohama,Yūji (横濱雄二) 「『新世紀エヴァンゲリオン』における物語世界の構成―メディアミックス作品論の可能性」『日本文学』1 月号（2006） 御茶の水書房. 51-61. Print.

「『巌窟王』のストーリー構成」『Comickers コミカーズ』春 44 号 (2005) 美術出版社. 36-43. Print.

「前田真宏, 神山修一とのインタビュー」『巌窟王コンプリート』.メディアファクトリー, 2005. 100-107. Print.

APPENDIX 1

Table A. Anime production team members v.s. media mix constituents			
	The role in the anime production	Title of the work	Input in the work
Maeda Mahiro (前田真宏)	• Original project • Original character design • Director	• Manga *Gankutsuō* (3 vol.) • *Gankutsuō: The Masked Noble* 『巌窟王　仮面の貴公子』 • *Albert the Diplomat's Diary* 『アルベール外交官日記』	manga illustrations, cover illustrations,
Matsubara Hidenori (松原秀典)	Character design	• *Gankutsuō Complete*『巌窟王　コンプリート』 • *Albert the Diplomat's Diary* 『アルベール外交官日記』 • Novelization (3 vol.)	cover cover cover
Kōyama Shūichi (神山修一)	• Head writer • Scenario	• Novelization (3 vol.) • *Albert the Diplomat's Diary* 『アルベール外交官日記』	author author
Ariwara Yura (有原由良)	Scenario	• Manga *Gankutsuō* (3 vol.) • *Gankutsuō: The Masked Noble* 『巌窟王　仮面の貴公子』	scenario author
Takahashi Natsuko (高橋ナツコ)	Scenario	• Audio Drama "The Eccentric Aristocrat" 『巌窟王 audio drama 異形の貴公子』	scenario

Table B. Chronology of *Gankutsuō* media mix (release dates)		
Title	Publisher/Studio	Date
Anime *Gankutsuō*	Gonzo	October 2004-March 2005
Gankutsuō novelization	MF Bunko, Media Factory (MF 文庫 J, メディアファクトリー)	• vol.1 — December 2004 • vol.2 — February 2005 • vol.3 — May 2005
Albert the Diplomat's Diary 『アルベール外交官日記』	http://blog.ocn.ne.jp/ (platform) Print: G クリエイターズ	July 2005-July 2006. August 2006.
Audio Drama "The Eccentric Aristocrat" 『巌窟王 audio drama 異形の貴公子』	Victor Entertainment (ビクターエンタテインメント)	November 2005
Manga *Gankutsuō*	*Monthly Afternoon* (『月刊アフタヌーン』), Kodansha Print: <アフタヌーン KC> , Kodansha	May 2005-May 2008 • vol.1 — December 2005 • vol.2 — July 2006 • vol.3 — July 2008
Gankutsuō: The Masked Noble 『巌窟王　仮面の貴公子』	<KC ノベルス>, Kodansha	August 2008

APPENDIX 2

Appendix 2. Impartial “newspaper” from official site.

1.

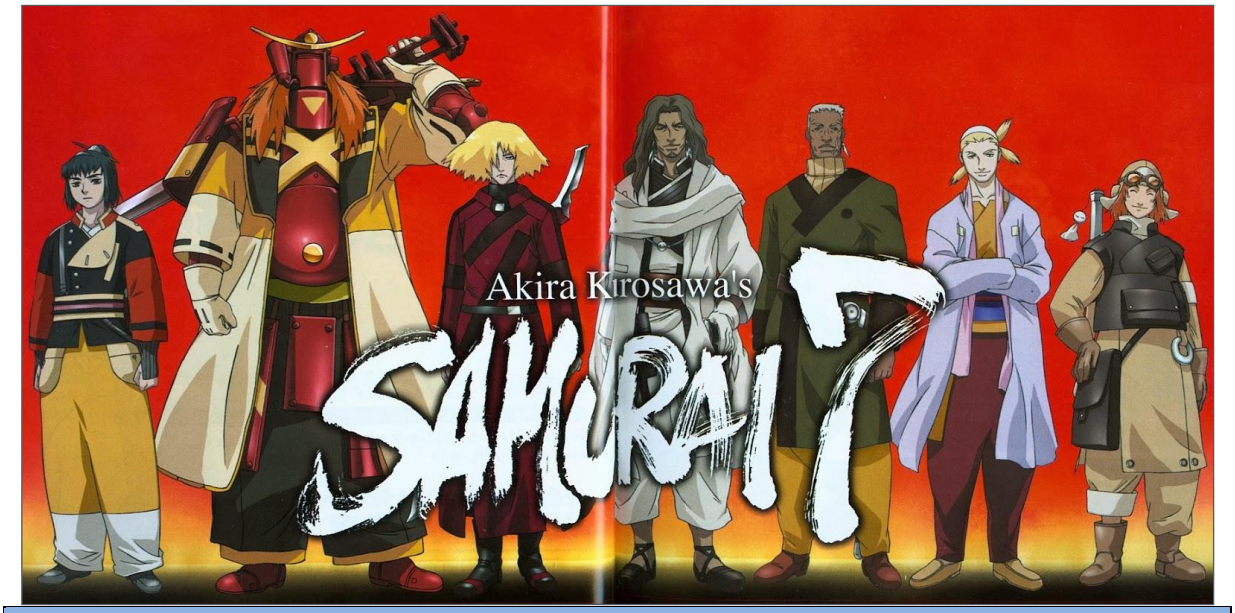
2.

3.

4.

APPENDIX 3

Samurai 7 media mix: design transformations



Kusanagi Takuhito's design (anime, game, musical)

Asano Maiko's design (2005)

Suhō Mizutaka's design (2005-2007)

APPENDIX 4

1. Voice Actors in the *Samurai 7* Anime

(source: https://ja.wikipedia.org/wiki/SAMURAI_7)

Character	Voice Actor
カンベエ	寺杣昌紀
カツシロウ	朴璐美
キクチヨ	コング桑田
ゴロベエ	稲田徹
シチロージ	草野徹
ヘイハチ	犬飼淳治
キュウゾウ	三木眞一郎
キララ	折笠富美子
コマチ	斎藤千和
リキチ	西前忠久
ウキョウ	子安武人

2. Actors in the *Samurai 7* Musical (Ibid.)

	2008 production	2010 production	2012 production	2015 production
カンベエ	加藤雅也	加藤雅也		別所哲也
カツシロウ	篠谷聖	三浦翔平	馬場徹	矢崎広
シチロージ	載寧龍二	相葉弘樹	磯貝龍虎	野島直人
キュウゾウ	中河内雅貴	西島隆弘（AAA）	中河内雅貴	古川雄大
ヘイハチ	きだつよし	橘大五郎	市瀬秀和	永山たかし
ゴロベエ	高橋広樹			黒須洋壬
キクチヨ	住谷正樹（レイザーラモン）			大澄賢也
キララ	水野絵梨奈		疋田英美	入来茉里
コマチ	宮武美桜・宮武祭	能政瞳・能政愛		-
ヒョーゴ	森山栄治	丸山敦史		市瀬秀和
ウキョウ	山崎銀之丞	中川晃教		根本正勝