

BEAUTIFUL BOY SOLDIERS: KAORU SHINTANI'S AREA 88 AND
THE NEGOTIATION OF JAPANESE POSTWAR MASCULINITY

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ABSTRACT

This paper will examine the war manga *Area 88* and its recent anime adaption. *Area 88* depicts a fictional middle-eastern civil war in which a Japanese protagonist finds himself fighting as an unwilling mercenary. *Area 88* is set in the cold war era, which, by necessity, must grapple with Japan's political reality. As history professor Hiromi Mizuno explains, "...considering the strong connection that scholars and activists have found between masculinity and war, on the one hand, and femininity and peace, on the other, how postwar Japan's masculinity has been negotiated with constitutional pacifism is an interesting and under-examined question" (105). The question arises: how can a Japanese protagonist engage in war while simultaneously advocating non-violence, or as Mizuno writes, "the dilemma of reclaiming masculinity and claiming pacifism at the same time?" (110). This negotiation of two seemingly contradictory goals both visually and textually is at the heart of *Area 88*'s narrative.

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CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Japanese war experience in the last 100 years has been uneven, catastrophic and traumatic, with the added burden of being labeled an aggressor nation by posterity. At the beginning of the 20th century, fresh from its victories over China and imperial Russia, Japan had taken its place as the dominant military power in Asia. Less than 50 years later, following its crushing defeat in World War II, Japan was stripped of its colonial possessions and would “forever renounce war as a sovereign right of the nation” as written into article 9 of its postwar constitution. Despite this history and Japan’s pacifistic government, war has always been a popular subject of postwar Japanese cinema, anime and manga that span a wide variety of genres. These genres range from political thrillers that explore contemporary or future conflicts extrapolated from current events, to science fiction space opera epics whose popularity in Japan is analogous to *Star Wars* in the United States. Others are historical in nature, setting stories within actual past events ranging from Sengoku period civil wars to the ongoing “War on Terror”. While warfare is a common subject in entertainment venues, there is an inherent historical and political tension present in Japanese material that is unique to Japan’s current circumstances. Japan (in a single generation) went from a militarized society to a pacifistic democracy. Politically, the nation surrendered international

autonomy for virtual subservience to the United States. Such a drastic change was akin to a violent national emasculation – war would no longer be an option for Japanese diplomacy and Japan would depend on others for its own security. As history professor Hiromi Mizuno explains, “...considering the strong connection that scholars and activists have found between masculinity and war, on the one hand, and femininity and peace, on the other, how postwar Japan’s masculinity has been negotiated with constitutional pacifism is an interesting and under-examined question” (105).

The Japanese struggle to answer this question has been taken up by the political right and left, with their conflicting and sometimes coinciding desires clashing and coalescing in the entertainment medium – striving to become what historian Takahashi Yoshida terms the “status of master narrative” (119). This essay will examine this struggle through what Matthew Penny calls “war as entertainment”, the interpretation of both Japan’s war history and fantasies in cinema, anime and manga. Once the competing desires of the conservative and liberal political spectrum are established, I will specifically focus on Kaoru Shintani’s war manga *Area 88* and its post-Cold War anime adaptation through the lens of Japan’s negotiated national masculinity. Both graphically and textually, *Area 88* attempts to bridge the divide between effeminate pacifism and masculine militarism, symbolized by the protagonist, the beautiful boy soldier (but ferocious warrior) Shin Kazama.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Historical Revisionism and the Desires of the Right

Historical subjects, particularly those concerning WWII, have an inherent tension within their narrative and have frequently been the target of critics. How history is presented and what is emphasized in a narrative has frequently stirred controversy. Of course, much of this emphasis is dependent on the author's personal views that span the entire political spectrum. Perhaps the most notorious (at least in Japan) is Kobayashi Yoshinori's manga creations *Sensoron* (On War), *Taiwonron* (On Taiwan) and *Okinawaron* (On Okinawa). Closely associated with members of the Liberal Democratic Party's conservative wing Nihon Kaigi (Japan Conference), Yoshinori's works echoes Nihon Kaigi's goal to "rollback what they call the dominant 'masochistic view of history' perpetrated by liberals in Japan" and substitute "a wholesome and 'patriotically correct' one" (Driscoll 291). Yoshinori's takes on the Japanese colonial occupation of Taiwan and Okinawa is therefore a story of "stunning modernizing successes achieved by valorous Japanese colonizers in Asia" a view which Mark Driscoll terms "reverse postcolonial" (294). Charles Nuckolls in his essay "The Banal Nationalism of Japanese Cinema" goes further, citing recent revisionist Japanese blockbuster movies (produced by right-wing interests) whose purpose (if successful) "will be to restore nationalism to the 'taken for granted' status it enjoyed before and during

(the Pacific) war” (817). Yoshinori has also achieved notoriety for his detailed denial of the Japanese imperial army’s practice of employing “comfort women” (forced prostitution) and refutation of Chinese massacres – particularly the so-called “Rape of Nanking”. Because such works were never localized for release outside of Japan (for obvious reasons) and the positions taken are decidedly fringe, they are of limited relevance. However, such works illustrate the desires of the Nihon Kaigi (and these desires extend beyond the fringe) to promote a Japan not subservient to international opinion, and by extension, to the United States. What has caused international controversy is the so-called “masochistic view of history” that Nihon Kaigi despises.

Victim’s History and the Desires of the Left

International outrage, particularly from the Chinese that endured the brunt of Japanese atrocities during the Pacific War, decry what they see as a “victim’s history” where the suffering of the Japanese populace is stressed while their culpability in regards to war guilt is downplayed – the Japanese soldier is frequently portrayed as a victim of a corrupt and uncaring military government that betrayed them as well as the Japanese people. The 2006 film *Otoko-tachi no Yamato* (Men’s Yamato) typifies this victimization, where the narrative follows an aging sailor that reminisces about his lost comrades aboard the famous super battleship Yamato. The tale follows the crew’s final tragic days of liberty ashore before being sent on a suicide mission by reckless military

leaders. The cause that the men fight for is nebulous, the enemy is faceless, and the emphasis is entirely from a Japanese viewpoint. Professor Aaron Gerow writes “[Yamato] uses wartime suffering to forget not only Japanese war responsibility but also a postwar increasingly defined... by hypocrisy, or ahistorical idealization” (Gerow).

Gaylyn Studlar and David Desser claim in their discussion of post-war film that “The Japanese do not try to justify their actions in the war nor even deal with the fact that their policies started the war in the first place. Rather, they try to shift (displace) blame onto wartime leaders that are no longer alive”. This cultural “displacement” is not confined to the Japanese, as Studlar and Desser point out that West Germany attempted a similar strategy in negotiating its Nazi past, one seemingly endorsed by then president Ronald Reagan in his visit to Germany’s military cemetery at Bitburg. Reagan, during his speech, claimed that the German soldier was as much a victim of the Nazis “just as surely as the victims of the concentration camps” (11). However, this concept of “victimization” assumes a monolithic interpretation of war history by film, anime and manga that are not necessarily borne out after a careful examination of narratives apparently invested in the “displacement” interpretation.

Takahata Isao’s *Grave of the Fireflies* has been dismissed as a “victim’s history” by some critics due to the central narrative that focuses on the starvation and death of two young Japanese children during the Pacific War years while omitting any mention

of Japanese atrocities. However, Wendy Goldberg in her deconstruction of the anime adaptation of Isao's work notes that while the film depicts the suffering of the Japanese, it also is critical of "blind patriotism, selfish impulses... and of Japan's inability to confront this past." Even the young, doomed protagonist Seita is not immune to this criticism: his simplistic acceptance of wartime propaganda and militaristic school uniform marks him as a willing participant of the aggressive Japanese war machine. Goldberg claims that far from being a depiction of victimization, Isao's counter narrative "raises questions about how Japanese should talk about their history... How can discussions about the past both acknowledge the great suffering [of the Japanese] as well as come to terms with Japan's complicity in that suffering?" (40).

Equally well known is Narazawa Keiji's manga *Barefoot Gen* serialized from 1972 -73. Following the wartime experiences of Nakaoka Gen (who is the young son of a pacifist farmer), it chronicles the aftermath of the Hiroshima A-bomb and the suffering of the Nakaoka family. Sheng-Mei Na, in his critique of *Barefoot Gen* notes "[the Nakaokas] are, needless to say, victims of conservative, militaristic forces of the time... there is no representation at all of Japanese oppression of its colonies other than one Korean character forced into hard labor in Japan" (184). While Na is clearly of the opinion that *Barefoot Gen* is another example of "victim's history," he notes that because of the Nakaoka's pacifism they are targeted by their "indoctrinated" neighbors who

regard them as “traitors, subjecting the pariah family to oppression and violence” (186).

While minimizing the ugly overseas consequences of militarism, the Japanese people do not get a free pass – they are held culpable and not “displaced” by some vague wartime leader. Ultimately, Na concludes that the Japanese can only look at their wartime past “obliquely” – willing to accept responsibility but unwilling to face graphic depictions of their nation’s atrocities (194).

Carl Sobocinski, in his essay *Re-Staging World War II*, agrees with this assessment. Sobocinski writes, “...examining the war from children’s perspectives is an effective technique to emphasize the war’s horror and destructiveness, without directly portraying the actions of the Japanese military,” which could potentially cause audiences to avoid these films (87). The depiction of Japanese Pacific War history is a struggle of competing narratives, an uneasy negotiation of an underlying pacifistic message and an (sanitized) attempt to address the uncomfortable realities of Japanese wartime complicity. These dual desires do not end with historical subjects, but extend to the realm of war fantasy anime and manga.

Dueling Narratives in War Fantasy

Some of the most controversial of war fantasy material is the *Kaso Senki* (literally ‘Fantasy War Record’) that rewrites historical conflicts into alternate scenarios. As Matthew Penny writes, “war fantasy works market ‘what if’ historical

scenarios, science fiction reinterpretations of past battles, and technological details bordering on the fetishistic, selling ‘war as entertainment’ to members of Japan’s military fan subculture” (35). Penny states that critics have charged such manga “looks at Japan’s wartime past in an uncritical manner, glorifying parts of the past for entertainment while overlooking or downplaying its darker aspects much the same way that the (Japanese) government has frequently done” (37). Penny (while not denying that such purely nationalistic material exists) argues that much of the *Kaso Senki* genre contains powerful counter-narratives that “have subverted audience expectations of ‘war as entertainment’ and given expression to important arguments about Japan’s past conflicts and the diverse positioning of victims and victimizers in them” (37-38). Such entertainment critically examines Japan’s wartime past and in doing so promotes an anti-militarist message that counters nationalistic material. While a nod to the wisdom of national pacifism may be prudent to satisfy a predominantly center-left Japanese audience, *Kaso Senki* titles frequently express modern Japan’s repressed desires concerning wartime history and the present status quo. In Yoshio Aramaki’s *Kaso Senki* manga *Deep Blue Fleet*, Japan’s architect of the Pearl Harbor raid, Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, is time-warped from the moment of his death in 1943 to several decades before the Pacific War commences. Armed with the foreknowledge of Japan’s wartime errors, Yamamoto acts to change his nation’s fate. Morio Watanabe, in his essay *The*

Political Unconscious, notes that there is “an element of wishful thinking and repressed desire” (132) inherent in the manga, noting that Japan displaces the United States as the “good guy” of the Pacific War. Japan frees Southeast Asia from European colonialism and grants them immediate independence, makes an honorable peace with America and Britain, and most unbelievably, goes to war against Nazi Germany, saving Western Europe in the process! (132) *Deep Blue Fleet* certainly addresses the left’s anti-imperialism, but also satisfies the “repressed desire” of victory and national independence.

Kaiji Kawaguchi’s *Zipang* also attempts to negotiate the conflicting desires of modern Japan. Once again, a freak occurrence causes a modern Japanese Self Defense Force cruiser (ironically equipped with the American developed AEGIS air defense system) to be sent back to the eve of the pivotal Battle of Midway. Eventually, the Japanese crew, with no chance of returning to their original time period, decides to intervene on behalf of imperial Japan to avoid needless destruction. What the modern Japanese desire (naturally) is an honorable peace with the United States and a curbing of imperial excesses with more enlightened policies. Carl Sobocinski notes that *Zipang* does not shy away from depicting the consequences of Japanese imperialism, graphically illustrating the aftermath of the Japanese occupation of Singapore. Sobocinski writes that *Zipang* “stands in a unique position” by “[creating] many opportunities to condemn

aggressive war and brutal policies” but also “disavows” clear pacifism such as that featured in *Barefoot Gen* (90).

Penny is careful to separate *kasō senki* titles from generalized warfare-centric manga and anime, but going beyond Penny’s argument, even war fantasy that is set in completely fictional situations and not tied to any historical conflicts frequently contains pacifistic counter-narratives, using warfare as a vehicle to explore anti-war themes. War fantasy in such cases will fulfill the “military fan subculture’s” mania for action and detailed depictions of military equipment, while also disapproving of war itself. But this raises the question of why an anti-war counter-narrative is necessary in completely fictional narratives. From the wildly popular *Gundam* franchise with giant mass-produced military robots to the bizarre pop-music/space operatic smashup *Macross*, each has at its core a strong anti-militarist message. Many such series center on a Japanese protagonist, usually a hapless or unwilling participant in an impersonal conflict. The hero (or heroine) almost never fights for nationalistic causes, the typical “king and country” motivation prevalent in much American material. Historian Masaru Tamamoto argues that the great majority of post-war Japanese believe that “...there is no concept of a just war – all wars are bad. Consequently, patriotism – which is not qualitatively different from nationalism – is not an operative idea” (35). The experience of Japan’s almost complete destruction during WWII and its immediate aftermath of deprivation

and starvation even now has a powerful pacifistic influence on the post-war public according to Tamamoto: “It is the widespread loathing and fear of war that has made Japan keep its pacifist constitution – written and imposed by the American military occupiers, and which bars Japan from acquiring a military as an instrument of state policy – intact” (35).

If the Japanese harbor “loathing and fear” of war, Tamamoto’s reading of public sentiment fails to address the overwhelming popularity of war fantasy. That an anti-war counter-narrative is necessary to “sell” warfare-centric entertainment to the mainstream Japanese market is a weak explanation. This conflicted, paradoxical Japanese attitude both admires and condemns the soldier, where “...warriors are praised for their fighting spirit, yet a pacifist belief in the ultimate futility of war tempers these mixed messages” (Drazen 192). Matthew Penny writes of the “pluralistic character of Japanese war representation”, each reflecting a different perspective (35). Again, going beyond Penny’s argument, a war fantasy narrative will have to negotiate conflicting desires and perspectives unique to the Japanese war experience within its structure. As Japanese historian Takashi Yoshida states, “Japan, like other democratic countries, contains various different views within its society, and that these views vie with one another for the status of master narrative” (119). These Japanese views

revolve around Japan's relation to its closest ally (at least from a mutual defense perspective), the United States.

The Negotiation of Post-War National Masculinity

While warfare is traditionally considered to be masculine in nature, Japan in the post-WWII period found itself in a politically and militarily emasculated position.

Operating under a pacifist constitution drafted by occupation authorities and forever renouncing war as a political option, Japan relied on American protection to guarantee its security. The "1955 system", a political arrangement put in place by the Liberal Democratic Party following post-occupation independence, essentially surrendered Japanese autonomy in foreign affairs to U.S. authority. The U.S military and its nuclear umbrella would provide deterrence from potential aggressors; Japan would adopt and politically support American foreign policy while prohibited from any military action. Japan could then, in turn, devote its energies to economic recovery and development.

Joane Nagel argues that manhood and nationhood are intimately and historically connected, that the "icons of nationalist ideology" consist of "men as (the nation's) defenders and women as the defended embodiment of home and hearth." Directly mirroring Japan's and America's relationship is Nagel's assertion that "(in nationalist ideology) men are seen as rightly concerned with such manly activities as all things military and international... women are seen as properly concerned with such womanly

things as family and domestic issues” (397). The nature of the Japanese/American alliance can thus be seen as a submissive Japan that relies on America’s protection and leadership, an obviously gendered relationship. As Japanese scholar Yoshikuni Igarahi observed: “Through the bomb, The United States, gendered as male, rescued and converted Japan (into a peaceful, democratic country), figured as a desperate woman” (20). With the U.S. having “rescued” Japan and now in charge of masculine, worldly activities, the Japanese would concern itself with an appropriately domestic sphere of responsibility of economic development. The lack of international engagement and Japan’s pacifistic constitution would seem to work against nationalistic tendencies as Tamamoto claimed earlier, but again fails to explain the enduring popularity of Japanese character-centric warfare manga.

Rhetorical Lens

Fantasy wars can range from outlandish sci-fi settings far removed from our present reality, to contemporary real world circumstances. But in any case, as Hiromi Mizuno states: “Every fantasy is based on desires [and such desires] are also historical ...every historical text speaks of not just one but multiple, sometimes conflicting, desires” (104). Considering anime to be historical texts, the “conflicting desires” Mizuno refers to are paradoxical and almost unique to Japan: the postwar desire to reassert national masculinity through the right to wage war, while reaffirming the core value of

national pacifism. To this end, Mizuno examines two popular anime using the WWII battleship Yamato as a vehicle to express Japan's cold and post-cold war national desires. While using warfare to drive the narrative, both anime also contain a counter-narrative of Japanese independence and pacifism.

Although Mizuno makes clear he does not focus on the animator's techniques when analyzing the two Yamato anime, I will argue that the artist's visual style is potentially just as important in negotiating conflicting desires and forming context within the narrative. I will examine the war manga *Area 88* and its recent anime adaption. *Area 88* depicts a fictional middle-eastern civil war in which a Japanese protagonist finds himself fighting as an unwilling mercenary. *Area 88* is set in the Cold War era, which, by necessity, must grapple with Japan's political reality of American dominance coupled with constitutional pacifism. The question arises: how can a Japanese protagonist engage in war while simultaneously advocating non-violence, or as Mizuno writes "the dilemma of reclaiming masculinity and claiming pacifism at the same time"? (110). This negotiation of two seemingly contradictory goals both visually and textually is at the heart of *Area 88*'s narrative.

CHAPTER 3: THE *AREA 88* MANGA AND JAPANESE COLD WAR

MASCULINITY

Kaoru Shintani's *Area 88* was serialized in *Shonen Jump* comics from 1979 to 1986 and is set in the Cold War time period. It chronicles a civil war in the fictional middle-eastern country of Asran that represents an amalgamation of Saudi Arabia and Iran. Needing to supplement its forces to deal with the rebel army (the rebels themselves are a mechanized force backed by the Eastern block), the government forces begins to hire mercenary pilots to undertake the most dangerous missions. While the mercenaries are considered expendable, they are allowed to fly the latest fighter aircraft available (for the 1970`s) and are compensated for aerial victories and successful attack missions with considerable monetary bonuses. Such bonuses and the opportunity to test their skills in actual combat attract the most skilled pilots to Area 88, the mercenaries` airbase and area of operations. Even though the setting and story of *Area 88* suggests a gritty realism, the manga in actuality has a strong fantastical element. Early in the series, the mercenary pilots must survive a series of encounters against hopelessly impractical enemy super weapons while flying a bewildering variety of warplanes. This showcase of exotic aerial weaponry is one of the main draws of the manga.

Shintani, in a recent interview was blunt about his motivation in writing *Area 88*, asking rhetorically “Don’t all boys like jet fighters?” citing his long interest in military aviation since childhood. However, illustrating the pacifistic counter-narrative inherent in *Area 88*, Shintani reveals that the inspiration for the manga came primarily from a coffee commercial where “a black soldier is crying while listening to an old music recording that reminds him of home” (Shintani). This theme of homesickness and the desire to escape the battlefield figures prominently in *Area 88*’s narrative. Shintani borrows liberally from a theme popularly ascribed to the French Foreign Legion, that of men joining an anonymous military organization for adventure or to escape an unsavory past. Also lifted directly from the Legion’s colorful history is the propensity for Shintani to inflict inordinately heavy casualties on the mercenary fliers. Entire flights are regularly annihilated and the mercenaries fight to the last man with nary a protest – or to put it in Legion terms “faire Camerone” – with depressing regularity. This high casualty rate emphasizes the cheapness of life on the frontline as well as the ferocity of the conflict. The mercenaries respond with grim, fatalistic humor – they fight not for country or ideology but money and the thrill of combat. By setting the conflict in a fictional country with an international cast of characters, the inherent nationalism of warfare is minimized. The anti-government forces for the first several volumes are faceless cannon fodder as their motivations are only gradually revealed. Ideology is also

irrelevant to most of the characters involved; they have no stake in the conflict save monetary gain and survival.

The Japanese protagonist, Shin Kazama, does not fit this image of a hardened mercenary or an impulsively adventurous youth. He is a talented pilot fresh from civilian flight school with a career at a prestigious Japanese airline reserved for him. After a night of post-graduation revelry, his scheming “friend” Kanzaki tricks a drunken Shin into signing on to Area 88. Shintani immediately sidesteps the thorny issue of Japanese pacifism, as Shin becomes a hapless and unwilling participant in war. The terms of enlistment are restrictive – three years’ service that can only be waived if a \$2 million dollar penalty is paid. Desertion is – naturally – punishable by death. These terms of service trap Shin in a situation where he must violate his own pacifism (and by extension his country’s) in order to survive, as he must become an efficient killer in order to earn his \$2 million.

Area 88s Shojō Aesthetic

Kaoru Shintani at first glance seems an unlikely author of a war manga targeting a primarily male audience. Shintani began his career with a nomination in 1972 for the Ribon Comics Award, presented each year by the industry to the most promising new girls’ manga artist. Shintani’s art style is reminiscent of popular shojō titles such as Chiho Saito’s *Utena*, and notably lacks the realistic and often times

grotesque character depictions of more traditional shonen (boy) or seinen (adult) manga. The protagonist, Shin, is strikingly feminine in appearance with a lithe, graceful body and stylistic facial features usually reserved for female characters exemplified by his large, expressive eyes. His improbably blond hair, fashionably parted into a wave, completes his feminization. Interestingly, Shin's hair color never elicits any comments by his fellow pilots (despite the obvious incongruity), suggesting that other characters do not "see" him as blond at all, but acts as a visual signifier. Along with Shin's motivations and beliefs, his physical appearance marks him as an outsider. The androgynous appearance of Shin (accentuated by his blonde locks) contrasts with his fellow mercenary pilots and their supporting arms dealers, some of who are depicted as particularly odious looking individuals. Shin is Japan in microcosm – feminized because of his pacifist beliefs and submissive in the sense that he is forced to fight by others, a mere tool in a war that does not concern him. As James Welker writes in his essay "Beautiful, Borrowed and Bent": "Shojo manga's lithe beautiful boy characters with their large twinkling eyes evolved out of a tradition of cross-dressing and trans-gender performance" – these performances that Welker refers to is the "Takarazuka Revue" where an all-female cast played male roles on stage. These "trouser roles," as Welker terms them, directly influenced early shojo manga – most notably Tezuka Osamu's "Ribbon Knight" which started serialization in 1953 (p. 846 – 848). The story may seem

cliché by contemporary standards but was groundbreaking for its time as *Ribbon Knight* portrayed a girl “with a boy’s heart” raised as a prince to ascend to the throne of her kingdom. The titular character, “Princess Sapphire,” donned male clothing as she embarked on adventures in a Disney-like setting, battling witches, dragons and the other usual suspects of a typical fantasy manga. Eventually she would have to make a choice – to either continue her life as an adventurer or marry the prince of a neighboring kingdom. Reflecting the reality of female life in Japan at the time (and to a degree still true today), *Ribbon Knight* depicted the limited choices that women had in the business world or traditional marriage (Toku 22). However, Princess Sapphire was the forerunner of characters that “represent... an exemplary female who can negotiate successfully both genders and their attendant roles and domains without – at least theoretically – being constrained by either” (Robinson 145). She represents “...the inner conflict that derives from the clashing coexistence of two poles”, a dramatic friction by rubbing two gender poles together (Drazen 87). Sapphire does chose to marry the prince at the end of her story, but not before fulfilling her desires as an adventurer. Shin, the “lithe beautiful boy” is also able to successfully negotiate both genders and their attendant roles – his feminine appearance is symbolic of his pacifism and emotional sensitivity, balanced by his innate skill as a warrior in aerial combat. While Shin fights ferociously, he is able in the end to lay aside the gun and embrace a pacifistic existence in Japan.

This physical difference is not racial in depiction. Contrasting Shin with the only other Asian mercenary pilot, a former South Vietnamese air force officer named Nguyen, reveals marked differences in their features. Nguyen's square jaw and mustache, black hair and facial scarring presents an almost comical depiction of "tough guy" masculinity, an image reinforced by his habit of strafing helpless pilots out of their parachutes. Nguyen can be seen as a personification of his country – an entity forged in conflict, scarred by warfare, and eventually destroyed when no peaceful resolution is possible. Nguyen's birth was a violent caesarian section (his mother's abdomen was torn open in an explosion), just as South Vietnam was created in the forced partition following the first Indochina war. After enduring decades of war, Nguyen, like South Vietnam, falls in battle but not before expressing envy and regret to Shin – at least with Japan, Shin has a country to return to. While South Vietnam no longer exists, Japan has managed to survive defeat albeit in an emasculated form.

Along with Shin's womanly features, he exhibits emotional sensitivity and is quite capable of shedding tears when the stress of combat becomes too much for him to bear. Shin also engages in internal monologues, where he questions the morality of earning blood money to buy his own release. This culminates in an apology to his supposed final victim where he will have amassed enough victories to pay the \$2 million penalty. But, predictably, this is not to be. Forced to purchase a new plane after a crash

landing, he must now continue to kill in order to pay off his penalty. Angered at his turn of bad luck, Shin declares, “How many more people would I have to kill before I made back my money?! ...I’d rather die first!” (18) This choice of emphasis is telling, as he apparently values the lives of others more than his own, but here lies the hypocrisy. Shin could choose not to kill and face execution for cowardice or he could take his chances and attempt to desert. In the end he does neither, he puts aside his pacifism due to the natural desire of self-preservation. Area 88 is continually filled with flashbacks of Shin’s peaceful life back in Japan. In order to regain his life of peace he returns to battle, but not only does he continue to kill; he is easily the most talented at it – the so-called “top ace” of Area 88.

This schizoid break between Shin’s sentiments and his actions encapsulate Japan’s conflicting desires in the cold war world. Area 88 may involve a fantasy conflict set in a fictional country, but the historical background in which the narrative is embedded makes it impossible to avoid the issue of Japanese pacifism. This desire to “reclaim masculinity while reaffirming pacifism” results in a feminized hero, a beautiful reluctant warrior who dreams of peace while outdoing his more outwardly manly fellow mercenaries in martial prowess. This is emphasized early in the manga, with Shin constantly referred to as “number one of Area 88” by his fellow mercenaries. However, later episodes in the manga question this negotiation of pacifism and masculinity.

Some time after his crash landing, Shin is asked to hear the last words of a condemned Japanese mercenary. The anonymous Japanese soldier joined the Asran foreign legion because he wanted (in his words) “to impress my buddies.” However, once on the battlefield he could not bring himself to kill another human being and attempted to desert. Interestingly, the Japanese mercenary is not drawn in the same stylistic manner as Shin, but is unambiguously male. Shin may be playing the role of the reluctant warrior, demonstrating masculinity through martial prowess but balancing it with abhorrence to violence; however, the Japanese mercenary refuses to compromise his ideals and dies for them. Throughout the encounter, the unnamed Japanese mercenary is clearly in charge of the situation, at one point mocking Shin with the question “How many more men will you kill in 3 years?” (121). Despite facing death he is confident and assured, by contrast Shin is shaken by his probing questions. By stoically refusing to discard pacifism he shows a superior moral courage to Shin as well as a superior masculinity. Shin, even after declaring he would rather die than take another life, (admittedly made in the heat of the moment) never follows through. While Shin represents conflicting desires, the mercenary represents a Japanese man where this conflict is absent.

In an earlier episode in the series, another encounter with a Japanese character further reinforces this comparison. As word spreads of a Japanese mercenary in the

Asran air force, a Japanese photojournalist travels to Area 88 to investigate. Goh Mutsuki, known as Rocky, immediately establishes a rapport with Shin because of their shared nationality. Rocky is presented as experienced and brave, having covered many conflicts as a war correspondent coupled with a somewhat reckless reputation. Stylistically he is quite different than Shin, with mature, masculine features. During the interview he arranges with Shin the differences become more pronounced. Rocky begins the interview with small talk to put his subject at ease, but as the questions become more pointed Shin begins to lose his composure. Rocky, as a pacifist Japanese, is puzzled as to why Shin would volunteer his services as a mercenary. When Rocky asks him bluntly, "Do you enjoy killing people?" Shin can only stammer a denial, his face a mixture of indignation and shame (215). Rocky is an observer to war, not a participant. Despite this he exhibits more manly qualities than Shin both physically and emotionally – during the interview he is a consummate professional, emotionally detached and firm. Shin, in contrast, accents his already feminine features with a display of emotional vulnerability. In a later episode, Rocky exhibits more evidence of his manly pacifism. Shot down behind enemy lines accompanying a mercenary airborne division, he evades his pursuers and seeks assistance from a nomadic tribe in the middle of the Asran desert. The head of tribe will not render aid to a stranger, nor will he allow Rocky to leave and possibly compromise their location. He therefore attempts to kill Rocky in an

honorable duel. In a spectacular (and cocky) display of swordsmanship, Rocky defeats the headman. However he refuses to finish off his foe, proclaiming “Human life is too precious to waste!” (269). Not only does he earn the respect of the tribe, but wins the hand of the headman’s daughter, Sara – all in less than five pages! But Rocky’s heroics are not finished – anti-government forces attack the camp and begin slaughtering all its inhabitants. Sara is gunned down and in a rage, Rocky rams a tank with his vehicle kamikaze-style, sacrificing his life to protect and avenge the tribe who were just moments ago his enemies. Fighting in self-defense, fighting to protect others, fighting for love, Rocky represents the idealized Japanese man, a perfect negotiation of manliness and pacifism. He also represents a tie to the martial glory of Japan’s past, his skill with a katana marks him as a modern samurai, his death as a noble and courageous kamikaze.

The American Representation

On the opposite end of the spectrum is Shin’s American friend Mickey Simon. Notable is the stylistic contrasts between the two men. Mickey is depicted as unequivocally male and (early in the series) as a Caucasian caricature with a grotesquely exaggerated long nose. Simon is initially portrayed as a stereotype of the American man: brash, confident, and irreverent. In his first meeting with Shin, Mickey does little to dissuade this image first mocking Shin’s Japanese ancestry and then

moving on to tired clichés: “KA-ZA-MA huh? What a goofy name... you Japanese are a bunch of economic animals!” (20). Mickey is also the polar opposite of Shin in attitude and demeanor regarding war and conflict. While Shin is an unwilling participant and is emotionally haunted by his actions, Mickey, a former Vietnam War navy pilot, is a volunteer to the carnage. In the beginning of the series Mickey is not portrayed in a particularly sympathetic light, a boorish contrast to Shin’s tortured existence. As Shin is a personification of Japan’s Cold War desires, so too is Mickey a personification of America. While Japan was emasculated by defeat, in contrast America has had an entirely different experience toward war and state. The only period that the U.S. has experienced something similar to Japan’s WWII ordeal was the aftermath of the Vietnam War, as this long and controversial conflict eventually ended in America’s first clear cut loss. Much like post-WWII Japan there was a struggle to define what all the lives sacrificed, both American and Vietnamese, meant in defeat and the question whether the U.S. should have become involved in the first place. Most debilitating was “...America’s devastating loss of confidence in its status as the world’s most powerful, most respected, most moral nation” (Studlar and Desser 15). That the war was meaningless waste was a sentiment that reverberated with the American public. America generally had done very well in its wars, but defeat combined with the Watergate crisis severely undermined the public’s feelings of inherent righteousness and

national machismo. With the election of Ronald Reagan, a primary objective was to restore the confidence of the citizenry and reassert America globally – and by extension national masculinity. The simple answer to this conundrum was to rehabilitate the image of the military. The Cold War was currently at its height so the maintenance of armed forces was still a high priority, but by confronting the Soviet Union with blunt, antagonistic language and – on the surface at least – aggressive military posturing Reagan restored a sense of national righteousness. After the invasion of Grenada, an operation that was viewed as a comedy of errors by those involved, former Special Forces soldier Eric Haney sarcastically wrote, “America declared a great victory and felt good about herself again” (305). The Grenadian operation combined with one-sided military clashes against Libya and Iran throughout the 80’s resulted in a revival of jingoistic pride. What Reagan foreign policy accomplished during the 80’s (policies which would have bitter consequences over the next few decades) was to restore by successful military action feelings of nationalism and national masculinity – something modern Japan has never experienced.

As noted earlier, Mickey is not portrayed favorably in the first few episodes of the manga. However, as the series progresses, Mickey is not presented as evil or a warmonger. Rather he is portrayed as a victim of war. In a poignant scene, Mickey returns home following his Vietnam tour and is greeted by his relieved and emotional

father who is anxious for him to take over running the family business. With caring parents, a beautiful fiancé and a prestigious position within his father's company arranged for him, Mickey seems to have the perfect future. However, he finds that war has fundamentally altered him. Having lived on the edge for so long, he cannot adjust to the tedium of civilian life. As a distracted Mickey reminisces in his downtown office: "The sunset in Vietnam was the color of blood... but it was beautiful. The sunset in New York is the color of peace... but it looks dull" (26). Unable to cope, he alienates his family and fiancé while constantly reliving his recently completed tour of duty. As his disturbed fiancé Tracy observes: "You think of peace when you're fighting, you think of war when you're at peace. You live your life looking at the other side... you can't live any other way. You're always looking at a mirage... a blue mirage far away in the sky..." (30).

An obvious physical transformation accompanies Mickey's development from an American caricature to a three dimensional character. His grotesquely elongated nose is refined to a realistic (but still stylized) representation that accompanies the revelation of his past, the first of many such changes. As Shin represents the conflicted desires of cold war Japan, Mickey is the personification of national masculinity unchecked, resulting in self-destructive behavior. America, in its role as keeper of western hegemony, finds itself moving from conflict to conflict to defend its national interests and assert itself globally.

America, like Mickey, is in a constant state of war – a course that the manga suggests is unsustainable.

Shin and Mickey represent their respective countries' attitude toward war, but these attitudes are not fixed and evolve through the series. Mickey is not a reluctant warrior – he was called on to fight by his country and did so with no regrets. After an intense aerial battle a conflicted Shin asks Mickey “We`re nothing but a pack of killers, aren't we?” Mickey, already concerned that the distracted Shin was almost killed during the preceding fight, answers bluntly: “We either kill them or they kill us. Don't question what you do” (52). Mickey in the beginning of the series does not moralize about his actions, nor question the righteousness of the cause he is fighting for. Initially Mickey befriended Shin simply because he was a superior pilot – he simply recognized that his odds for survival would increase if he flew with Shin as his partner (25). Their relationship, in the first few chapters at least, is based on exploitation much like America and Japan in the immediate post-WWII period. Japan was rebuilt under U.S. auspices to be used as a barrier against the spread of communism and as a forward operating base in the Far East; the investment in Japan was in America`s national self-interest and survival.

As the series progresses and Shin and Mickey strike up a friendship, Mickey's gaijin features become less pronounced and his demeanor becomes more introspective as

Shin's moralistic struggles and sensitivity to violence begins to shape and change his outlook. As their partnership for mutual survival develops into mutual respect, Mickey evolves from a stereotypical caricature to a conflicted individual who realizes the futility of his way of life. This is illustrated by his repeated warnings to Shin to not "make the same mistake I did" in returning to a war zone and to "forget about this place" once he does leave (205). The Shin/Mickey interaction (initially) mirrors the cold war reality between Japan and America, but as the friendship develops it reflects the Japanese desire to move on to a more equal and respectful partnership.

Mickey meets a predictably tragic fate. During the final battles he realizes that he has found something worth fighting for beyond simply the thrill of combat – he falls in love with a fellow female mercenary pilot. In the end, Mickey adopts Shin's views on warfare – he wishes to bring to an end the Asran civil war and sees the attraction of settling in a peaceful country. Unfortunately in the final scenes he is killed along with the woman he had hoped to live with in peace, fittingly in the cockpit where he was most comfortable. The self-destructive trajectory of Mickey is fulfilled and foreshadows the possible consequences of America's hyper masculinity if the nation does not change course while tacitly approving of Japan's state pacifism.

The great irony of the series is that the sensitive Shin eventually becomes another Mickey despite the latter's warnings. Once released from Area 88, Shin finds he

cannot adjust to civilian life in a similar manner to his American friend. While still retaining his effeminate features, several frames of the manga depict Shin's momentary transformation to a menacing, beast-like character in times of conflict or high stress. Notable is Shin's hardened demeanor which deters a group of would be muggers where he simply intimidates them into flight with a menacing aura (28). After living a squalid existence in a Paris apartment, he willingly volunteers to return for another three-year contract with the Asran mercenary force. Like Mickey he finds himself craving the fear, intensity, and exhilaration of combat that eventually leads to his near destruction. Only a fortunate "deus ex machina" moment keeps Shin from meeting the same fate as Mickey – his fighter plane crashes and he suffers from selective amnesia of his experiences at Area 88. Because of this amnesia, Shin is able to successfully adjust back to Japanese society. Like Japan, Shin is left near death by war but is reborn into a peaceful new existence.

CHAPTER 4: THE *AREA 88* ANIME AND POST-COLD WAR MASCULINITY

The *Area 88* manga series ended in the mid-eighties when the Cold War was still at its height. Illustrating Japan's conflicting desires of the period, it allowed a Japanese protagonist to display unsurpassed martial ability while still containing a central counter-narrative confirming the wisdom of national pacifism. While warning against hyper-national masculinity as represented by the character Mickey, *Area 88* suggested a new, equal partnership between Japan and America for each nation's mutual benefit. Though *Area 88* is a Cold War text, its popularity did not end with the fall of the Berlin wall. In 2005, a twelve-episode anime series was produced which loosely followed the plot of the first few volumes of the manga series. As the anime series was produced post-Cold War with a strictly limited episode count, it differs in several striking ways from the original source material.

Dani Cavallaro argues that anime adaptations should be considered independent texts, in that "...no text can be transposed to a different form without altering substantially, acquiring fresh meanings and inaugurating novel perspectives." By using a different vehicle of expression, inevitably there will be some difference in "content and mood" (6). Simply by adapting a work from the primarily visual medium of manga to the visual/audio medium of anime will entail substantial changes to perceptions of the work

– by giving a character a voice it immediately challenges the reader’s perception of the original source material. Cavallaro states “by encoding its source in a different form, the adaption comes to constitute not merely an alternative way of saying the same thing, but a *different text* – a radically separate way of conveying messages ... by virtue of its own formal distinctiveness” (6). This is particularly apt concerning the *Area 88* anime adaption. Several stylistic changes were made to render Kaoru Shintani’s *shojo* aesthetics more conducive to animated action sequences both in character designs and mechanical representations. Also the need to condense a workable narrative into twelve episodes from a source material of literally thousands of pages required a drastic rewrite of major plot points. But most importantly was the passage of time – 20 years of political and societal changes separate the end of the *Area 88* manga series and the airing of the anime.

Examining the stylistic changes first, as they are the most apparent in a superficial viewing, one is struck by the clean simplicity of the character designs in the anime adaption. While Shin still sports his rather androgynous hair-style and retains his blond locks (a character trademark), his facial features are now unambiguously male, with hardly a trace of his original shojo ancestry apparent – gone are the large, expressive eyes so distinctive in the manga. Mickey and the other supporting characters

are similarly simplified, losing much of Kaoru Shintani's playfulness concerning exaggerated facial expressions and anamorphic distortion.

In the original manga series, Shin and Mick are stylized characters representing their respective countries, but the military equipment they operate also took on an organic appearance. The fighter planes themselves are not portrayed as mere machines, but as Shintani "cheats" on their proportions and distorts their dimensions for a more dramatic image, they take the form of beautiful, living entities. As their control surfaces deflect and they strain through violent maneuvers, they exude an animalistic quality; when they are ripped apart by gunfire and explosions, the planes' structures take on the appearance of skeletons and internal organs. The pilots of the machines are clearly visible through their cockpit canopies and they die the same gruesome deaths as their airplanes – a symbiotic relationship as the pilots represent the brains of a single entity.

This almost erotic imagery, as fighter aircraft are "penetrated" by missiles and gunfire, presents a spectacle of "masculine imagery... of militarized conflict" (Nagel 406). As noted earlier, a main component of war fantasy is the almost fetishistic depiction of military technology, which was (as admitted by the author) a major driver of *Area 88*. The anime, however, dispenses with these stylized depictions of warplanes – each is an exact representation of its real world counterpart. The transfer from one medium to another necessitated these changes, as a still shot in the manga needed to

create an illusion of movement through use of dynamic images but the anime has no such restrictions. Also, possibly due to technological or budget restrictions, the planes' canopies are mostly opaque with rarely any view of the pilots inside their machine. The effect is a more clinical representation of warfare, as the fighter aircraft are clearly mechanical and there is a disconnection between the pilot and the plane, particularly as the pilot's death is rarely depicted. That is not to say that the genre's mechanical fetish is downplayed, quite the opposite – similar to the manga, a wide selection of 70's warplanes are the focal point of the series. The different models of fighters borders on the ludicrous (it would be a logistical nightmare to service such a hodgepodge) but the attraction of these exotic machines in ferocious combat fulfills the military mecha fan's expectations admirably – though perhaps not realistically!

Coinciding with the stylistic changes is the plot condensation necessitated by the 12 episode limit. While the main theme is unaltered – Shin is still betrayed by his friend Kanzaki and fights in order to escape Area 88 – the structure and scope of the anime series is much more restricted as its episodes are based around the outlandish but spectacle-filled early episodes of the manga. Perhaps this is best exemplified by the ludicrous “fang” weapon – a steel girder structure which acted as giant mosquito netting against low flying aircraft. Absurd and hopelessly impractical, such ideas were

downplayed by the second half of the manga series where it took on a more realistic edge, but the anime recycles this idea with relish (51).

Individual episodes function as their own self-contained story, each with a high-tension crisis that must be overcome within a 20-minute window with the underlying Kanzaki/Shin feud to tie the series together. The anime emphasizes action with minimal characterization of most of the cast, while the manga in contrast would have long periods of action-free exposition to develop the characters' personalities and back stories. Because of these limitations, characters are simplified personality-wise, similarly much as they were stylistically.

Most striking of these character changes is the depiction of the protagonist Shin Kazama. Portrayed as a sensitive, guilt-riddled reluctant warrior in the manga, the anime version of Shin is an emotionless loner, accented by his more masculine features. Other than the occasional private outbursts of anger at Kanzaki or a brief flashback of his girlfriend Ryoko, Shin is otherwise a cipher. Shin interacts with his fellow mercenaries in the air where he is (as always) skillful and courageous, saving their lives many times – but that is where the interaction ends. There is little to define Shin on the ground away from the battlefield and, unlike the manga, any guilt or crisis of conscience he suffers is endured in stoic silence. Because of this, the relationships between Shin and his fellow mercenaries remains underdeveloped and unexplored. Most pilots, such

as Mickey, appear to befriend Shin simply to boost their chances of survival and their respect seems to stem only from his martial prowess rather than any humanity – Shin comes across as a very cold individual. Mickey is similarly underdeveloped. The Shin/Mickey friendship is downplayed; the only indication that Mickey is an American is a single episode that recounts his Vietnam experience. While there are some visual clues of Mickey’s past (a picture of his fiancé and family is present in the cockpit during his Vietnam flashback), nothing is explicitly stated. Therefore Mickey’s motivations for coming to Area 88 remain a mystery for the viewer. These style and content changes reinforce Cavallaro’s contention that adaptations must be viewed as “different texts”. As Cavallaro states, commentators typically follow two approaches when evaluating adaptations: whether it is faithful “at the levels of content, style, and figurative structure” or whether the adaptation “interprets it by suggesting a particular way of reading it or... (Speculates) about issues it implicitly raises” (8). The *Area 88* anime is certainly not a transcription of the manga’s “content, style, and figurative structure”. It is, as defined by Julie Sanders, an “appropriation” where the anime adaptation represents “a decisive journey away from the informing source into a wholly new cultural product and domain” (26). The *Area 88* manga series was “appropriated” from the Cold War era of the 80’s and completed a “decisive journey” to the multi-polar world of 2005. In doing so, it became a “new cultural product” to retain its relevancy. As the

manga encapsulated the desires of an emasculated Cold War Japan, the anime represents the desires of a nation in a period of transition from political dependence to an uncertain autonomy.

As noted above, character development in the anime was de-emphasized; particularly noticeable was the relative unimportance of the Shin/Mickey friendship. This lack of development is compensated by shifting the emphasis of the series by resurrecting the character Rocky and giving him a position of prominence throughout the anime. Rocky is superficially similar to his manga counterpart – he is still a photojournalist that regularly enters warzones for dramatic stories. His motivations for coming to Area 88, on the surface, also appear to be the same as before; he is interested in photographing the sole Japanese mercenary on base, Shin Kazama. However, this is where the similarities end. While Rocky was exposed to good-natured ribbing when he first arrived in Area 88 during the manga series, he is greeted with outright hostility in the anime. Shortly after arriving at Area 88, as he rushes forward to photograph a crashed plane, he is knocked unconscious by a furious Mickey who demands “Is it fun to watch others die?” Eventually gaining a grudging respect from Mickey and the other mercenaries (due to his willingness to expose himself to danger), he is still treated with reserve and as an outsider. Rocky initially regards his assignment as another job, but as he becomes friendlier with the mercenary pilots, their deaths begin to affect his

detached professionalism. After a pilot that he just finished photographing dies during a mission Rocky angrily declares: “I want to take a photo of someone who will survive, even if he’s in the hottest hell of them all!” As he becomes more emotionally invested in his subjects he finds it harder to stay out of the action, eventually pressuring Mickey to allow him to fly in a mission as an observer.

His transformation from bystander to participant is complete when he takes part in the defense of Area 88 – when a sniper terrorizes the pilots and ground crews working the flight line, Rocky uses his photographic equipment and keen sense of observation to pinpoint the sniper’s position. (Interestingly, this episode was not present in the manga and is a rather silly story in any case.) This attachment to his subjects is aggravated by the guilt he eventually feels about his real assignment – he is to take a photo of Shin’s dead body on behalf of Kanzaki. Through his development from uncaring observer at the beginning of the anime to a guilt-ridden participant, Rocky becomes a surrogate for Shin’s emotions. The anime series utilizes Rocky to convey his revulsion and horror of warfare (and thereby to drive a pacifistic counter narrative) while allowing Shin to remain a stoic warrior without any betrayal of weakness. This is tacitly acknowledged in the anime, as Rocky privately remarks when he first meets Shin: “We share the same name, but how did we turn out so differently?” (The Chinese based kanji writing system utilized by the Japanese can have multiple readings for the same character.) Compared

to the manga, Shin and Rocky's positions have been reversed. As argued previously, Rocky represented the ideal Japanese man in the manga series, an observer/pacifist who heroically refuses to take human life. Shin, in contrast, was an exceptional warrior but displayed moral and emotional weakness. In the anime, Rocky's non-combatant status is a source of derision while Shin is the consummate warrior, free of emotional distraction (and feminine features).

CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSION

Shin's shift in style and demeanor as well as his altered relations with his fellow pilots coincides with the changing status of Japan and its relations with its neighbors. Japan has been accused recently of "punching below its weight" in international affairs. Conservative analyst Bruce Klingner characterized the Japanese/American security arrangement as "[Japan] utilizing a minimalist, cost-effective, reactive approach designed to derive maximum security and economic benefits from its alliance with the U.S. [while providing] minimal reciprocal gestures". Klingner was suggesting Japan's submissive position was in fact exploitive in nature, with little incentive for "disturbing the comfortable status quo" (3). Beginning in the 90's however, this "comfortable" relationship began to change quite rapidly. In the first major post-Cold War conflict, the United States led a coalition of allies to liberate Kuwait from Iraqi occupation in 1991. While Japanese financial contributions paid for nearly one-fifth of the operational costs of the war, this internationally derided "checkbook diplomacy" was publicly condemned by the U.S. as "too little, too late." More pointedly, Kuwait did not publicly express appreciation for Japan's contributions while thanking every other coalition partner that provided troops (Liason). This diplomatic black eye was a clear lesson to the Japanese – human contributions are viewed as much more valuable than financial.

The embarrassment of the first Gulf War was followed by a domestic crisis that further shook the “comfortable status quo”. As Japan flexed its economic muscle (supported and facilitated by the United States) the country gained international stature and respect. With this rebirth of Japan into a world (albeit economic) power there was an attempt to culturally modify Japanese perception of national masculinity. Since Japan’s post war recovery and evolution into an economic superpower, Sabine Fruhstuck claims that the Japanese “Salaryman” has taken up the mantle of militarized masculinity where economic security went hand-in-hand with social status. As Fruhstuck writes: “These ‘Company Warriors’ give their best for the company and sacrifice their health and family life” – this “sacrifice” of personal well-being to a greater cause (admittedly corporate profits) is analogous to a Samurai’s code and martial spirit. This “Samurai Spirit” is “decisively pre-modern” and therefore avoids any unpleasant connotations with Japan’s WWII past. Fruhstuck goes on to claim that Japanese advertisements targeting this decidedly male demographic promote the image of a corporate soldier “through their military references to battle, victory, defeat, and death in relation to the white-collar employee’s total devotion to his company, these advertisements fashion the white-collar worker as the peacetime incarnation of the warrior” (56). With the coming of the Japanese economic collapse of the 90’s, this model of masculinity through economic security began to lose its luster. Devotion to the

company did not automatically result in success, and a generation of Japanese graduates found that they could not fulfill their masculine role in society by securing a respected business position. This diplomatic and economic one-two punch coupled with the end of the Cold War made political and cultural change inevitable.

A rethink of foreign policy was conservatively pursued by the Japanese government, which culminated with the dispatch of the Japanese Self-Defense Forces (JSDF) to Honduras in 1998 for their first disaster relief mission. While favorably viewed by the international and domestic press, then Lt. Col. Saito Hiroyuki (military planner for the entire JSDF) expressed his frustration with the humanitarian rather than military emphasis of the mission: “The disaster relief mission to Honduras went very well and we got a lot of good press. But there is a downside to this kind of success as well. People must not forget that we are not a bunch of nurses! We are the Military!” Lt. Col. Hiroyuki’s comments encapsulate the dilemma faced by members of the JSDF – that of “[negotiating] their masculinity within a military organization that trains them for war, while limiting their experience to operations that prohibit violence” (Fruhstuck 50). This dilemma is exacerbated by the JSDF’s working relationship with the U.S. armed forces. In the eyes of JSDF service members “...the American soldier is identified with aggression and violence... but his modernity releases him from any similarity to the imperial soldier.” This relationship is conflicted, as the American soldier is

represents “a more desirable military and... a permanently emasculating threat” (Fruhstuck 76). However, with the United States overextended by two wars, former defense secretary Robert Gates sought to prod the Japanese to provide more resources to its own security. There has also been Japanese concerns that this overstretch of America’s military will limit its ability to fulfill security agreements with regards to immediate threat such as North Korea (Klinger 1). Changes to Japan’s strictly pacifistic and submissive foreign policy have quietly been implemented. In an almost unreported 2001 incident, the Japanese Maritime Self Defense Force sank a North Korean espionage trawler that entered Japan’s territorial waters and fired at coast guard vessels. This was the first hostile ship sunk since WWII, an outcome that would have been “unthinkable” a mere 10 years previously (Matthews 2). Shin’s anime incarnation represents these changes to Japan’s policy towards independent action. Shin fights for survival unapologetically; his ‘lone wolf’ demeanor suggests independence. This independence is intensified by the underdeveloped and relatively unimportant interactions with the American, Mickey. As noted previously, Shin’s only notable emotional response in the anime is masculine anger, driven by his equally masculine desire for survival and later, vengeance. Considering the enduring popularity of *Area 88*, the evolution of Shin Kazama will most likely undergo further change. Shin personifies the tension inherent in the conflicting desires of the Japanese and the

character will continue to struggle between the pacifistic influence of collective post-war memory and a seemingly more militaristic future.

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