Mixing Them Together:
Discursive and Intertextual Elements in Contemporary Anime and
Manga

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Abstract

Apart from being multibillion dollar industries and commodity exports which target all walks of life, Japanese anime and manga are said to be providers of information through the means of entertainment. This research dissects a number of popular contemporary anime and manga into their various interdiscursive and intertextual elements to show the types of information and inclusion of knowledge that are embedded in anime and manga for teenagers and adults. This research also argues that the use of discursive and intertextual elements acts as a catalyst for captivating audience attention and ultimately increases sales and consumption of anime and manga.

Keywords: Anime, manga, intertextuality, discursive, discourse Analysis

1. Introduction

Japanese animation and comics (henceforth, ‘anime’ and ‘manga’ respectively) have been produced in Japan on a small-scale since the 1930s, but manga artist Osamu Tezuka helped turn these popular art forms into the multi-million dollar industries they have become today (Whitehead, 2004: 123; Wong, 2006). As a case in point, Tezuka’s manga Astro Boy, which was first published in 1952, paved the way to the Astro Boy anime TV series in the 1960s. The anime became popular not only in Japan, but world over, as it reached out to the masses through translated languages and dubbings (Whitehead, 2004; Schodt, 1996; Profile: Tezuka Osamu, n.d.). After the Second World War, the anime and manga industry became one of Japan’s prime exports (Allison, 2006: 13). According to an article on the Wall Street Journal,
the anime market for the United States alone is “worth approximately $4.35 billion” as of 2007 (Bosker, 2007).

Apart from their monetary value, anime and manga are also seen as a means of promoting Japanese cultural and identity to the world. Take for example, *Manga Nihon Keizai Nyuuumon (An Introduction to Japanese Economics in Manga)* which was translated into English by the University of California Press in 1988 and translated into French in 1989 (Kinsella, 2000: 70-71). Kinsella writes that the success of this manga was due to the “rendering of a complex and professedly boring subject [economics] into a more interesting and digestible form” that provides the following service: “economics and management theory is combined with a drama about a company employee and office ladies working for a large Japanese trading company” (ibid.).

The merging of such discourses made Japan Inc., the company that produced *Manga Nihon Keizai Nyuuumon*, a pioneer in ‘information manga’ (ibid.). Information manga eventually became the new ‘infotainment’ medium in Japan that encouraged audiences to think again in a newly positive light about key political and economic institutions such as large corporations, diet, or military forces (Kinsella, 2000: 96).

The power of manga and anime was soon recognised by the Japanese government as a means of educating its citizens. Kinsella (2000: 73) reports that the Japanese Ministry of Education and Culture approved the manga, *Manga Nihonshi (The History of Japan Manga)* to be suitable educational material in state schools. In fact, 14 Japanese universities and colleges offered some form of teaching in manga studies by 1997 (ibid.: 95).

Given the importance of anime and manga in contemporary culture, this research shows how discursive elements are used to create credibility and authenticity for some popular (and amongst them, award winning) anime and manga. Following Fairclough (1995), the use of interdiscursive elements (i.e. the mixing of various discourses) is a common strategy to captivate audience attention which in turn increases sales and consumption of anime and manga, as well as spin-off merchandises like action figures, all of which are driven by capitalistic practices.

2. The Anime/Manga Distinction

Perhaps at this juncture, it would be helpful to elaborate on the terms ‘anime’ and ‘manga’. ‘Anime’ and ‘manga’ are Japanese words which have been accepted into the English lexicon¹.

¹ Online Oxford Dictionary website: http://www.askoxford.com
‘Anime’ stands for cartoon and animation; however, its specific meaning depends on one’s ‘locality’. In Japan, anime refers to any and all animation or cartoon – regardless of the genre, style, or nation of origin – whilst outside of Japan, the term refers specifically to animation of Japanese origins (Anime News Network, n.d.a). Furthermore, anime is also considered to be “moving manga” in Japan, but elsewhere, anime is referred to as “drawn movies” (Anime News Network, n.d.b).

Like anime, the definition of ‘manga’ also depends on one’s ‘locality’. ‘Manga’ may refer to all forms of comics, regardless of origin. However, in Europe and America, manga specifically refers to Japanese comics because Japanese drawing styles differ from their Western comic counterparts (ibid.).

Manga and anime are difficult to separate in terms of their content (e.g. plot and genre) because anime are typically adapted and based on manga (Whitehead, 2004: 124-125). In fact, the Japanese anime industry is “a spin-off of the manga industry” and most anime are “based on already existing and successful manga” (Anime News Network, n.d.b). Each anime title (as described in Section 3) is based on the manga of the same name.

2.1. Social and Genre Categories of Anime and Manga

Apart from having commercial value, Grigsby (1998 in Wong, 2006: 28-29) points out that manga and anime have social functions, as readers are provided with:

…information about the beliefs, values and practices of the culture in which they are conceived; it is important to recognise that the relationships of the creators and readers to the larger social, economic and political systems within which a given comic is created, published and made available for purchase are key elements in the production of the comic and in the reproduction of culture.

With rich information and cultural values embedded in anime and manga, it is not a surprise then that manga and anime have become Japan’s most suitable cultural ‘envoys’ in improving Japan’s image abroad (Kinsella, 2000: 96).

According to Wong (2006, p. 28), comic magazines (manga) fall into some broad categories that can be subdivided into genres. It is argued here that since anime is typically based on manga, these categories can also be applied to anime. Wong states that these genres are “classified according to the age and gender of the target readers, as well as personal
preferences and tastes”. Target-specific audiences include *Shounen-ai/Yaoi* (teenage boys), *Shoujo-ai/Yuri* (teenage girls), *Younen* (children), *Josei* (women) and *Seinen* (men) (ibid.).

A non-exhaustive list of anime and manga genres includes the following forms *Garo* (alternative, underground and avant-garde), *Gekiga* (dramatic pictures), *Maho shoujo* (magical girl), *Mecha* (giant robots), *Moe/maho kanajo* (magical girlfriend), *Shoujo-ai* (lesbian romance), *Shounen-ai* (gay romance), *Joho* (information), *Seiji* (political), *Kyoyo or gakushu* (education) and *Bunkashi* (literary) (Wong, 2006; Kinsella, 2000), and these genres form the components of discourses (Fairclough, 1995).

Although she did not mention the term ‘interdiscursivity’, Kinsella (2000) seems to imply that manga and anime are the amalgamation of various discourses. She writes:

> As a whole, information manga (and anime may apply here) have been described as ‘cultured’ (*bunkateki*) and ‘high-quality’ (*johin*) and linked favourably with art (*geijutsu*) and literature (*bungaku*) (p. 71).

The next section discusses theoretical notions of discourses, interdiscursivity and intertextuality in detail.

### 3. Discourse Realms (Countable Nouns), Interdiscursivity and Intertextuality

Discourse realms have an intrinsic relationship with interdiscursivity and intertextuality. The discourse realms discussed in this paper refer to Fairclough’s (1995: 132) ‘countable nouns’ – the idea that discourse is a “way of signifying experience from a particular perspective”. This perspective should not be confused with the ‘abstract noun’ discourse, which Fairclough defines as “language use conceived as social practice” (ibid.: 135) i.e. sociolinguistic interaction between interlocutors based on variables such as location, topic, social status and so on.

Broadly conceived, discourse realms are “ways of signifying areas of experience from a particular perspective and genres” (ibid.: 132). Examples of discourse realms include medical discourse, political speech discourse, historical discourse, comical discourse and so on. These realms, according to Fairclough (1995: 133), are marked by the following characteristics:

- the representation and signification of the world and experience
- the constitution (establishment, reproduction, negotiation) of identities of participants and social and personal relationships between them
• the distribution of given versus new and foregrounded versus backgrounded information in the widest sense.

Different discourse realms are constantly amalgamated and used in the construction of ‘text’ (i.e. disseminated information regardless of media; e.g. speech, broadcast, newspapers etc.), and this, according to Fairclough (1995) is a salient point in the consumer society because the use of different genres attract and persuade consumers of the ‘texts’ to pay for a certain product. The use of different and diverse genres in a text refers to ‘interdiscursivity’. So for instance, a doctor may use counseling discourse to advise patients how to deal with their medical problems, and medical discourse to explain to patients what is wrong with their bodies.

Discourse realms are manifested through the use of various texts which reflect the knowledge and information of the discourse (ibid.). For instance, historical discourse may have textual elements bearing incidents that occurred in the past as well as references to real individuals, while medical discourse may have textual elements that refer to the diagnosis of one’s illness and discourse management (e.g. turn-takings) in doctor-patient interaction (see Wodak, 1996). When there are many textual elements in a discourse realm, they form an ‘intertexual’ relationship (Fairclough, 1995). Kristiva (1986: 39) who made the concept of intertextuality popular, explains that intertextuality is the insertion of a text into history to authenticate and create the credibility of the text. In this context, history refers to other ‘older’ texts which have been adopted to create new text. Furthermore, (see van Dijk, 1995: 4) says that people tend to accept knowledge and/or opinions through discourse which they see as authoritative, trustworthy or credible, unless it is inconsistent with their own beliefs and experiences. Intertextuality is used to boost credibility of one’s text to make it more convincing and persuasive. An example of intertextuality is found in most academic papers. Academics refer and cite different sources to boost credibility of their research.

4. Research Sources and Methodology

Five anime and manga titles referred to in this study are Zipang, Rurouni Kenshin, Full Metal Alchemist, Nodame Cantabile and BECK: Mongolian Chop Squad.

Zipang (literally, ‘Land of the Rising Sun’) is a story about the crew of a Japan Maritime Self-Defence Force (JMSDF) Arleigh Burke class missile guided destroyer warship that mysteriously time warped back into the early days of the Pacific War. Being a warship of the future, the technologically superior warship named Mirai (literally, ‘Future’) soon became a concern for both warring Japanese and American forces; the latter wants to use the warship to
their advantage whilst the former sees the Mirai as a dangerous phantom ship. However, the crew of the Mirai wants no part in changing the course of history and wishes to return back to their era.

*Rurouni Kenshin* (also entitled ‘Samurai X’), on the other hand, includes references to a different timeline in Japanese history. *Rurouni Kenshin* is a story of a wandering swordsman living in the early days of the Meiji Restoration era (mid 1800s). The protagonist, Kenshin Himura, was once an assassin for the Ishin-Shishi (an anti-Tokugawa Shogunate group) who carried out assassinations in the dying days of the Tokugawa Shogunate and he (fictionally) helped paved way to the Meiji Restoration era. At the end of the civil conflict, Kenshin vowed not to murder anymore and carries a reversed edged sword; a weapon that does not inflict death upon anyone. In the course of the story, Kenshin is haunted by his enemies and by those who seek to defeat the once-master swordsman.

*Full Metal Alchemist* is an epic story of two prodigious teenagers who journey to seek the fabled ‘Philosopher’s Stone’ after their attempt to ‘recreate’ (or revive) their deceased mother through alchemy goes terribly awry. As a result of performing a forbidden alchemy transmutation to revive their mother, Edward Elric loses his arm and leg while his brother, Alphonse Elric became bodiless and had his soul sealed into an empty amour. Wanting to put things back in order, the brothers seek the Philosopher’s Stone to restore their bodies back to normal. In the journey for the fabled stone, their prodigious talents are recognised by the Military State of Amestris and Edward is recruited to become an elite member of the State Alchemist. It should be noted that unlike many anime and manga in the market, the characters of *Full Metal Alchemist* are non-Japanese.

*Nodame Cantabile* is a story about a group of tertiary music students undergoing musical performance studies and how they mature musically and individually over time. In the course of the story, the characters are seen practising as well as giving live performances of common practice and modern chamber music.

Harold Sakuishi’s *Beck: Mongolian Chop Squad* is a story of a teenager who develops his sense of identity through subculture music by participating in a five piece rock band as a guitarist and vocalist. Subculture music differs from modern music in its ideology: the latter is based on expressionism, impressionism and musical fundamentals (inwardness) whilst the former is based on consumerism and popular culture (outwardness) (Beverly, 1990).

Table 1 provides an overview of the anime and manga genres, target audiences as well as some interdiscursive and intertextual elements.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Anime/ Manga</th>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Target audience</th>
<th>Some interdiscursive elements (discourse)</th>
<th>Some intertextual elements (examples)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zipang</td>
<td>Drama, Historical, Military, Science Fiction</td>
<td>Teenagers</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>World War II</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Politics</td>
<td>Military hierarchy and rank</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Warfare</td>
<td>Naval warfare</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rurouni Kenshin</td>
<td>Adventure, Comedy, Drama, Fantasy, Historical, Romance, Shounen</td>
<td>Teenagers, Mature</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>Early days of the Meiji Restoration</td>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Martial arts</td>
<td>Kendo and other sword fighting styles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full Metal Alchemist</td>
<td>Adventure, Comedy, Drama, Fantasy, Historical, Military, Shounen, Supernatural</td>
<td>Teenagers</td>
<td>History</td>
<td>World War I, World War II</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Science</td>
<td>Alchemy, chemistry</td>
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<td>Politics</td>
<td>Military hierarchy and rank</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mythology and Religion</td>
<td>Serpentine dragon, Ouroboros symbol, 7 deadly sins, Philosopher’s stone</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Literary</td>
<td>Dante’s Divine Comedy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nodame Cantabile</td>
<td>Comedy, Romance, Shoujo, Slice of Life</td>
<td>Teenagers</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Common practice, contemporary and modern music</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Pedagogy</td>
<td>Classroom interaction</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Subculture music vis-à-vis alternative rock, nu metal</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BECK: Mongolian Chop Squad</td>
<td>Comedy, Drama, Romance, Shounen, Slice of Life</td>
<td>Mature</td>
<td>Sociology</td>
<td>Subculture</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Psychology</td>
<td>Freudian, social psychology</td>
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</tbody>
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Table 1. Anime and manga list for analysis

In essence, the focus of this research centres on Fairclough’s (1995) discourse and textual practice levels, which are derived from his 3 dimensional framework, as shown in Figure 1.

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2 Information acquired from the Anime News Network website http://www.animenewsnetwork.com
The ‘sociocultural practices’ level refers to the ‘sociological’ explanation of the institution whilst the ‘discourse practices’ level refers to the production, dissemination and distribution of texts, and this level serves as the median point for the ‘sociocultural practices’ and ‘textual practices’ levels. The ‘textual level’ is the level that is the manifestation of the ‘discourse practices’.

When applied to the data, the sociocultural practice refers to the consumer culture and the practices of exporting anime and manga as monetary and cultural commodities. The discourse practice refers to the use of discourses in the production of anime and manga, and interdiscursivity is the presence of multiple discourses in an anime and manga title. Finally, textual practice refers to the ‘realisation’ or ‘materialisation’ of discourses in textual form and intertextuality is the presence of multiple textual practices (also see Section 2).

5. Analysis

Because discursive elements can be very large and almost inexhaustible, a number of discursive elements have been identified for analysis, and they are, historical discourse (chronological events, historical items, historical individuals), mythical discourse (folklore, legend, etc), scientific discourse (scientific methods and approaches), sociopolitical discourse (organisation and administration of society) and musical discourse (musical genres and practices e.g. common
practice and contemporary and modern music, and subculture music). These discourses are realised through textual references.

5.1. Historical Discourse

Generally speaking, ‘history’ refers to actual events that happened in the past. Historical discourse in this research is realised through three types of references: references to actual historical events, reference to items of historical value, and reference to real people. These references are realised through textual practices. Intertextuality is realised when the textual elements ‘interact’ to each other to create credibility and realism. Three anime and manga titles, *Rurouni Kenshin*, *Zipang* and *Full Metal Alchemists* are particularly interesting from a historical discourse perspective because the script writers interweave historical accounts events with fiction.

To create an aura of credibility and realism in *Zipang*, script writer Kaiji Kawaguchi includes numerous real-life references to historical naval warfare accounts of the Pacific War and the Second World War, such as the Battle of Midway in June 1942, the occupation of Malaya (today known as Malaysia) and Singapore by Japanese forces during World War 2, the heavy handed policing methods of the much feared *Kempetai* (an elite military police group), the consolidation of American forces on the island of Guadalcanal, and the withdrawal of Japanese forces in 1942 from the island. *Zipang* also has a canonised fictional event which shows the destroyer, *Mirai* sinking the USS Wasp with a Tomahawk missile on September 15, 1942.

In Episode 5 of *Zipang*, a rescued Imperial naval officer whose plane was shot down in the Pacific Ocean was granted access to the historical archive in the *Mirai*’s library database. There, he discovers (actual) historical details of the future which include the suicide of *Der Fuhrer of Deutschland*, Adolf Hitler, the loss of 100,000 civilian lives in the battle of Okinawa, the sinking of the grand battleships, *Yamato* and *Mushashi*, the establishment of the *Kamikaze* (suicide plane squads) and *Kaiten* (suicide human torpedoes) by the IJN (Imperial Japanese Navy) during the last years of the war, and the Great Tokyo Air Raid which claimed 84,000 civilians lives.

In *Rurouni Kenshin*, the script writer, Nobuhiro Watsuki draws on numerous references to factual historically-based sociopolitical accounts of the Meiji Restoration eras including the resistant activities of the *Ishin-Shishi*, an armed and revolutionary anti-Tokugawa Shogunate group (Gluck, 1978), the *Shinsengumi*, first formed in 1863 by the Tokugawa Shogunate as a special police force, the clash between the *Ishin-Shishi* and the *Shinsengumi* in the Ikedaya
affair, and the murder of Okubo Toshimichi on May 14, 1878 (in the ‘canon’ fictionalised anime, Okubo was murdered by a fictional assassin).

Full Metal Alchemist has historical bearings on the First and Second World Wars, although the story takes place in a fictional but parallel world of Amestris, where alchemy is ‘science’. The script writer, Hiromu Arakawa, makes numerous references to historical events in the World Wars such as the bombing of London by the German Zeppelins in 1915 (towards the end of the anime after the protagonist Edward Elric was ‘killed’ and his soul is transported to this world), the economic collapse of Germany in 1923, the rise and politics of Nazi Germany militarism, the existence of the elite and occultist Thule Society (an organisation that was endorsed by Adolf Hitler) and Germany’s rocket development project in the follow up film, Full Metal Alchemist the Movie: Conqueror of Shamballa.

The fictional world Amestris too has resemblance to Nazi Germany. A number of references seem to suggest this\(^3\). For example, Amestris, like Nazi Germany is a totalitarian state headed by a dictator referred to as “\(\text{Führer}\)”. Also, Amestris has a history of conducting human experiments during the Ishbalan War (parallel to the human experiments on Jews and Communists by the Nazis during World War II) and Amestris performed acts of aggression towards its neighbours (parallel to Germany invading its neighbours before spreading outwards).

Zipang, Rurouni Kenshin and Full Metal Alchemists have references to items of historical value. Such items of historical value, or ‘artifacts’, referred to in the anime and manga complement the historical timelines of the anime and manga stories.

A number of items are included as textual elements in the Zipang story to create historical credibility to the World War II naval conflicts such as non-rocket aircraft fighter planes of that era; e.g. Japanese Zeros, American F6F Hellcat, World War II Japanese and American issued military uniforms, gears and weapons, coal powered trains in Malaya and Singapore, the United States aircraft carrier USS Wasp and the battleship Yamato.

As for Rurouni Kenshin, references to historical artifacts which reflect the early days of the Meiji Restoration period include the Kimono, Yukata and Hakama clothes worn by civilians and the Shinsengumi, Japanese swords, katanas and early war gun-powered rifles, wooden buildings occupied by commoners and horse carriages as common land transportation.

In Full Metal Alchemist, artifacts bearing historical value dated to the eras of the First and Second World Wars include Nazi military uniforms, Led Zeplins, early German automobiles,

\(^3\) An entry in Wikipedia provides an eloquent analysis of the nation of Amestris (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Amestris_%28Fullmetal_Alchemist%29)
the use of horse carriages by Gypsies, early rocket prototypes in Germany’s rocket development project, Swastika symbols in Nazi Germany and London’s Big Ben.

References to real people (or historical figures) are also strategies used by anime and manga writers to create a sense of historical relativism. It is perhaps interesting to note that despite the presence of individuals bearing names of real people in the anime and manga, these individuals only have supporting roles in the story. Few anime and manga take real people as main protagonists. There are notable exceptions such as the manga Made in Japan whose protagonist is Sony’s first CEO (Kinsella, 2000: 73).

A number of real people were referred to in the anime and manga, Rurouni Kenshin, and many of them came into contact with the protagonist, Kenshin Himura. Some examples of real characters who have been fictionalised in the story include Katsura Kogoro (1833-1877), who was also known as Kido Takayoshi, one of the leaders of the Ishin-Shishi (Craig, 1961). In the anime, Kenshin was an assassin for Katsura in the last days of the Tokugawa Shogunate. Another Japanese historical figure is Kondo Isami (1834-1868), the commander of the Shinsengumi (Kondo Isami, n.d.; Yamamura, 1978). In the anime, he is seen giving instructions to the Shinsengumi prior to the Ikedaya attack.

Kenshin also skirmished with Okita Soji (184?-1868), squad leader and master swordsman of the Shinsengumi (Mori, 1999; Yamamura, 1978.), however their fight was interrupted by Saito Hajime (1844-1915), the third division captain of the Shinsengumi (Yamamura, 1978). Later in the series, Saito fought alongside with Kenshin. Okubo Toshimichi (1830-1878), an influential Japanese statesman who introduced socioeconomic and political changes in the early days of the Meiji Restoration, made a few appearances in the anime and manga. Okubo sought Kenshin’s help to stop a dangerous assassin, but he was murdered before Kenshin could give his reply.

In the anime and manga Full Metal Alchemist, the protagonist Edward Elric came into contact with a number of historically factual personalities such as Hermann Julius Oberth (1894-1989), one of German’s early pioneers in rocket and astronautic sciences (Stange, n.d.), Karl Haushofer (1869-1956), a member of the Thule Society (McGaha, 2002) and Walter Richard Rudolf Hess (1894-1987), Hitler’s deputy in the Nazi Party. In the film Full Metal Alchemist: Conqueror of Shamballa, the Thule Society is seen planning an invasion of the fictional world of Amestris.
5.2. Mythical and Scientific Discourse

Myths are supernatural stories which particular cultures believe to be ‘real’ (Macionis, 2001) whilst science refers to the acquisition of knowledge through scientific method and research (Feyerabend, 2005). Often times, myths and science are seen as opposing forces. The anime and manga, Full Metal Alchemist clearly has numerous references to both mythical and scientific discourses, and the discourses are reflected through textual practices; references of mythological and scientific elements.

Some mythology examples include the Philosopher’s Stone. The Philosopher’s Stone according to Carl Jung (1983) is able to transmute any metal into gold, however in the anime and manga, the Philosopher’s Stone is able to transmute anything into any object, even humans. It was much sought after by the Homonculi, villains who are named after the Seven Deadly Sins and byproduct of attempted human transmutation. Jung (1983) mentions that the homunculus was first recorded in the Visions of Zosimos, a real-life Alchemist in 300AD. According to the Visions, the homunculus experienced extreme pain as his body became a mutilated and sank into himself to become another form. It seems that Full Metal Alchemist drew reference to the Visions of Zosimos because there was a graphic scene which shows the Elrics’ mother in a deform lump after the failed human transmutation.

In Alchemy, homunculus refers to the Ouroboros. The Ouroboros is a symbol depicting a snake swallowing its own tail and forming a circle, and this symbol of infinity has been used in (real life) ancient alchemy (Jung, 1983). In Full Metal Alchemist, the homunculi possess a tattoo on their body depicting the Ouroboros; a reference which perhaps signifies immortality and artificial life.

Examples of scientific discourse in Full Metal Alchemist include references to alchemy and chemistry. Alchemy is a scientific method that consists of three steps in the transmutation of objects; analysis (understanding properties and substance of object), decomposition (breaking down the object into individual chemical properties; e.g. sulfur, carbon, oxygen) and recomposition (rebuilding the object into another form consisting of the same properties). Alchemy in the anime and manga obeys the ‘equivalent exchange’ concept, a concept which relates to the principles of thermodynamics, that is, energy is transformable. According to the alchemists, the ‘equivalent exchange’ concept is the sacrificial of one, in order to gain something of equal value. At the beginning of each anime, Alphonse Elric narrates, “Humankind cannot gain anything without first giving something in return. To obtain, something of equal value must be lost. That is alchemy’s First Law of Equivalent Exchange. In those days, we really believed that to be the world’s one, and only, truth”. 
Also, in the first episode of the anime, Edward Elric made a reference to biochemistry when he says that the calculated components of a human adult are “35 liters of water, 25 kilograms of carbon, 4 liters of ammonia, 1.5 kilograms of lime, 800 grams of phosphorous, 250 grams of salt, 100 grams of saltpeter, 80 grams of sulfur, 75 grams of fluorine, 5 grams of iron, 3 grams of silicon, and 15 other elements”.

Some of the State Alchemists in Full Metal Alchemist also explain the fundamentals of chemical reactions such as Magnesium Oxide, which is the chemical reaction between Magnesium and Oxygen. Chemistry after all, was the product of early day alchemy.

5.3. Sociopolitical Discourse

Social politics refer to political organisation within an institution (Macionis, 2001), and political organisations are distinctively marked by power hierarchies. In the anime and manga Zipang, there are military rank types belonging to the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force (Mirai post World War II), Imperial Japanese Navy (IJN during World War II) and the United States Navy (USN). Onboard the Mirai, the crew’s ranks from highest to lowest are Captain (first in command), Executive Officer (second in command), Gunnery Officer (third in command), Navigation Officer, Lieutenant, Petty Officer and Seaman. It should be noted that the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force was establish after the Imperial Japanese Navy was dissolved at the end of World War II. A number of specific Imperial Japanese Navy ranks shown in Zipang (from top to bottom) are Admiral, Vice Admiral, Rear Admiral, Captain, Commander, Lieutenant Commander and Lieutenant. The American Navy ranks shown in Zipang (also from top to bottom) are Rear Admiral, Captain, Commander, Lieutenant Commander and Lieutenant.

Like Zipang, Full Metal Alchemist also draws reference to ranks in the military. The ranking has slight similarities that of the Nazi Germany military administration. The military ranks shown in Full Metal Alchemists are Führer (Commander-in-Chief), Lieutenant General, Major General, Brigadier General, Colonel, Lieutenant Colonel, Major, Captain, First Lieutenant and Second Lieutenant. Also, the State Alchemists have special status within the military. They report directly to the Führer, and to become one, all State Alchemist candidates have to undergo a series of vigorous examinations and upon passing, they acquire a new title (e.g. Flame Alchemist, Full Metal Alchemist etc.) in accordance to their special abilities and are promoted to the rank of Major.

In short, these rank titles form the textual practices of sociopolitical discourse.
5.4. Musical Discourse

Musical discourse in a nutshell refers to music or coherent and complex articulation of sounds made by musical instruments. Some anime and manga titles have musical discourse as their central theme, such as *Nodame Cantabile* and *Beck: Mongolian Chop Squad*.

*Nodame Cantabile* is rooted in two genres of music: ‘Common practice’ and ‘modern’ music. These genres are often mistakenly lumped together under the blanket term, ‘classical music’ but in actual fact, ‘common practice’ music is a category that encompasses these three musical periods (Perle, 1990; Schulenberg, 2001):

- **Baroque** (1600 – 1760); notable musicians include Johann Sebastian Bach, Antonio Lucio Vivaldi
- **Classical** (1730 – 1820); notable musicians include Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Ludwig van Beethoven
- **Romantic** (1815 – 1910); notable musicians include Franz Liszt, Robert Schumann

Modern music on the other hand is primarily music of the 20th century (1900-present). In general, the contemporary and modern music periods feature a diverse variety of musical genres that are commonly associated with impressionism. Notable musicians include Joseph-Maurice Ravel and Dmitri Dmitriyevich Shostakovich (Schonberg, 1981; Wilson, 1994). In *Nodame Cantabile*, viewers of the anime are also able to listen to some common practice pieces, such as (see Table 2):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Baroque period music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Episode 14</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Classical period music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Episode 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Romantic period music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Episode 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 22</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Modern period music</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Episode 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Episode 21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Table 2. Musical genres and scores played in Nodame Cantabile*
The manga and anime also show the different instruments involved in the formation of a chamber orchestra such as string instruments (e.g. violins, violas, cellos, double bass), woodwind instruments (e.g. oboe, flute) and percussive instruments (e.g. timpani). *Nodame Cantabile* also highlights the differences between concertos and solo performances.

The relationships between the textual practices (e.g. musical instruments, musical scores) i.e. intertextuality form the larger discursive practices (common practice and modern period genres), and it is precisely the mixture of different musical genres that creates the notion of interdiscursivity in *Nodame Cantabile*.

In contrast to *Nodame Cantabile*, *Beck: Mongolian Chop Squad* has subculture music, notably punk music, as its central theme. Beverley (1990) describes punk as a genre that:

… would combine music, fashion, dance, speech forms, mime, graphics, criticism, new “on the street” forms of appropriation of urban space, and in which in principle everybody was both a performer and a spectator. Its key musical form was three-chord garage power rock, because its intention was to contest art rock and superstar rock, to break down the distance between fan and performer. Punk was loud, aggressive, eclectic, anarchic, amateur, self-consciously anti-commercial and anti-hippie at the same time.

Although the songs played in *Beck: Mongolian Chop Squad* are all original rock, pop and rap-rock tunes, there are a number of references that cite popular guitar riffs and techniques, such as the intro to Rage Against the Machine’s *Bombtrack* and Tom Morello’s (guitarist of Rage Against the Machine) trademark DJ-scratch-on-the-guitar technique in some episodes. Real-life artists and bands are also cited, such as the Rolling Stones, Freddy Mercury, Jimi Hendrix, Kurt Cobain and John Lennon.

The musical instruments shown in the show include real-life guitar brands like the Fender Telecaster, Fender Stratocaster, Fender Jaguar, Gretsch White Falcon, Gibson Les Paul, Gibson SG and in a ‘canonised’ version, the supporting character, Ryusuke has a damaged Gibson guitar that is named, *Lucille*, which closely resemble’s B.B. King’s guitar.

Like *Nodame Cantabile*, the intertextuality is realised when different textual elements (in this case, musical instrument brands, references to artists and bands, guitar riffs and techniques, and musical genres) come together in the anime and manga. These textual elements form the discourse of post-modern and subculture music.
6. Discussion and Conclusion

The research reveals that the five contemporary teenager-to-adult anime and manga studied have rich discourses, and these discourses are reflected through textual elements. Referring to the analysis in the subsections of Section 4, an illustration of the nature of *Rurouni Kenshin, Zipang, Full Metal Alchemist, Nodame Cantibile* and *Beck: Mongolian Chop Squad* is shown in Figure 2.

![Figure 2. Some of the discursive and intertextual elements in Rurouni Kenshin, Zipang, Full Metal Alchemist, Nodame Cantibile and Beck: Mongolian Chop Squad](image)

It must be noted that Figure 2 does not cover every form of discourse and textual practices of the anime and manga titles, as discourses and textual practices are many (so much so that it is perhaps not an overstatement to say that the discourses and textual practices are inexhaustible for any given anime and manga title). The insertion of numerous forms of discourse also suggests that anime and manga script writers are using more and more forms of discourses to attract and appeal to consumers due to growing competition for audience interest. Alternatively, this may also suggest that viewers are becoming more intelligent and inquisitive.

On a final note, anime and manga make interesting study cases from a discourse analysis viewpoint because they show that that contemporary anime and manga writers have to research their themes in a very thorough manner to produce complex storylines and themes which are credible, appealing and profound. Without the use of different discourses and textual
realisations, it is without doubt that anime and manga would be bland, and harder for writers to sell their stories.

REFERENCES


