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From Baker Street to Tokyo and Back: (para)textual hybridity in translation

ABSTRACT

Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's 1887 novel, *A Study in Scarlet*, has been widely translated and adapted for both film and television, including the BBC series *Sherlock*. Following the popularity of the series around the world, the Japanese artist Jay has produced a series of adaptations as Manga in his native Japan (2014), subsequently translated into English (2017), among other languages, with some of the distinctive (para)textual features of its previous Japanese incarnation (it reads 'back to front' and right-to-left, is produced in black and white, has vertical balloons). The hardcopy texts are surrounded by online material (screenplays, reviews, fansubs, scanlations, etc.). This paper analyses the (para)textual features of the volumes and, in particular the English, French and Italian editions, highlighting the conscious hybridity of the text.

These publications are evidence of a dynamic textual exchange, an overlapping of translation and adaptation, a blurring of media and genre, an interlingual and intercultural *métissage*.

Keywords: *translation, adaptation, manga, paratexts, scanlation, Sherlock Holmes, Sherlock*

RÉSUMÉ

Le roman policier Une étude en rouge d'Arthur Conan Doyle, paru en 1887, a été largement traduit et adapté pour le cinéma et la télévision, en particulier dans la série Sherlock pour la BBC. Suite au succès de la série dans le monde entier, l'artiste Jay a produit une adaptation manga dans son Japon natal (2014), par la suite traduite en anglais (2017), parmi plusieurs autres langues, avec certains des traits (para)textuels distinctifs de sa première incarnation japonaise (il se lit « à l'envers » et de droite à gauche, est imprimé en noir et blanc, les bulles sont verticales). Les exemplaires papier sont entourés de contenus en ligne (scénarios, critiques, fansubs, scantrads, etc.). Cet article analyse les traits paratextuels des volumes, notamment ceux en anglais, français et italien, mettant en avant l'hybridité consciente du texte.

Ces publications témoignent d'un échange textuel dynamique, un chevauchement entre traduction et adaptation, un gommage des distinctions entre les médias et les genres, un métissage interlinguistique et interculturel.

This paper addresses part of the “textual web” surrounding one individual source text, and the many different subsequent manifestations that all now co-exist in the same cultural space. The analogy we are using here is that of the *réseau* or network, one of the most powerful of our age: the Rhizomatic Model, based on the work of Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari and outlined in their 1980 volume, *Mille plateaux*, takes its inspiration from rhizomatic plants or rhizomes, such as orchids and bamboo, that have no center and no defined boundary; rather, they are made up of clusters of semi-independent nodes, each of which is capable of growing and spreading on its own, bounded only by the limits of its habitat. A rhizome does not consist of units, but of potential dimensions and directions. In this model, therefore, knowledge is a flexible multiplicity with no center, no hierarchical structure and no defined boundaries. It is a “messy” network of—interconnections—including dead-ends: the internet, for example, is a profoundly rhizomatic structure (Wardle: forthcoming).

How a text migrates from one part of the rhizome to another is the business of a number of disciplines including Translation Studies, Cultural Studies and, increasingly, Adaptation Studies: while the practice of translation from one code system to another, such as from literature into film, or intersemiotic translation to use Jakobson’s terminology, boasts a longstanding tradition, it is only relatively recently that Adaptation Studies has emerged as an autonomous field of enquiry with a significant number of academic volumes, journals and conferences. Moving away from the frequent understanding of “adaptation” as some looser version of “translation” (as in “adapted for children”), Mark O’Thomas defines the difference between adaptations and translations as being the fact that the first take place across media while the latter are produced across cultures (2010: 48). However, this distinction, while useful, is not always clear-cut: we are witnessing the multiplication of “hybrid” texts that move between languages and cultures, while simultaneously playing with traditional text types and formats. By adopting a descriptive rather than a prescriptive approach, I also hope to sidestep notions of faithfulness (or otherwise) to the “source text”, textual equivalences and issues linked to perceived hierarchies among genres and media. The moralizing vocabulary commonly adopted in discussions of adaptations—*infidelity*, *betrayal*, *violation*, *vulgarization*, etc. (Stam, 2000: 54)—will be avoided. I will argue that the two principal texts analyzed (*Sherlock* the TV series and its later adaptation into manga) both set out to attract an international audience of young adults and that this widening of the target audience is achieved through appealing to the different senses, and in particular the feeling of experiencing something relevant and authentic. This paper will analyze the (para)textual features of both works, how language is conveyed, highlighting the conscious hybridity of the texts.

I will also avoid referring to the TV series (or any other text) as the “source” text and the manga as its corresponding “target” text for, as Pym queries: “How can we blithely assume that the text we translate from is not itself made up of translations, reworked fragments of previous texts, all tied up in never-ending translational networks?” (2014: 2)—again the rhizomatic concept of a textual network. Pym suggests the adoption of the term “start text” to describe the material from which the translation (or adaptation) is produced: “Why assume some kind of pristine or natural ‘source’, somehow like a river bubbling up from the earth?” (*ibid.*: 2).

So, our “start text” is Sir Arthur Conan Doyle’s novel, *A Study in Scarlet*, published in 1887 in *Beeton’s Christmas Annual*, where we are introduced to Sherlock Holmes and Doctor Watson

for the first time in what was to be the first of four full-length novels and fifty-six short stories featuring the “consulting detective”. Each investigation is famously written through the device of Watson’s case studies, showcasing Sherlock’s powers of disguise, observation and deduction. The stories are peopled by a set of recurring characters such as Mrs Hudson, the housekeeper, Inspector Lestrade of Scotland Yard, Sherlock’s brother Mycroft and his arch enemy, Professor Moriarty.

Since its first appearance in English, the novel has been published in many different editions as well as translated into numerous different languages. Subsequently, within most languages, there are several cases of multiple translations, or retranslations, into the same language: for example, to date, there are at least nineteen Italian translations of the same novel, with a higher concentration (eight of the nineteen) appearing since 2000, the year all of Conan Doyle’s works entered the public domain in the European Union.

As well as the interlingual translations (again, Jakobson’s terminology), the book has also undergone intersemiotic translation or adaptation and has been widely transposed to the screen for both film and television: the majority of these adaptations appears first in English and is subsequently dubbed or subtitled for foreign markets but there are also examples when the opposite is true. Consultation of hardcopy volumes such as *The World Bibliography of Sherlock Holmes and Dr. Watson* (De Waal, 1974) and the numerous more recent websites dedicated to Conan Doyle’s creations are evidence of the wide range of adaptations into different media alongside film and television, including radio, theatre, ballet and musical. There are statues depicting the characters, cartoons, video games and competitions, themed events, societies and clubs.

The most recent screen adaptations include the two films directed by Guy Ritchie (*Sherlock Holmes*, 2009 and *Sherlock Holmes: A Game of Shadows*, 2011) starring Robert Downey Jr and Jude Law and the popular, critically-acclaimed CBS television series *Elementary* (2012 – present), now in its fifth season, featuring Jonny Lee Miller as a present-day Sherlock, relocated to New York and Lucy Liu, who adds a further twist as a female companion, Dr Joan Watson. The first adaptation to be examined here, and arguably one of the most well-known, is the BBC series *Sherlock*, created by Steven Moffat and Mark Gatiss, first broadcast in the UK in 2010. The episode in question, *A Study in Pink*, based on the novel *A Study in Scarlet*, is the first of the thirteen episodes that have aired to date.

As in any adaptation of a canonical text, there are some elements that “survive” the passage from one media to another, and others that do not (most noticeably, here, the entire Mormon episode set in Utah) and this is already obvious from the title. The on-going relationship with the start text is constantly acknowledged in the adaptation while, at the same time, there are very clear departures from the text that inspired it, or more precisely, from what we sometimes imagine the start text to be: for in this case—a text that has already been adapted numerous times over many different platforms—our “mental image” of the characters and their affairs is not necessarily derived directly from Conan Doyle’s words but is, more probably, based on an aggregate of many depictions. Indeed, the words of the French film theorist André Bazin, with reference to oft-adapted characters such as *The Three Musketeers*, are true also of Conan Doyle’s protagonists, in that they “enjoy in some measure an autonomous existence of which the original works are no longer anything more than an accidental and almost superfluous manifestation” (2005 [1967]: 53). Viewed within the paradigm of the rhizome, there is no hierarchical textual order with one “root” from which all information derives but rather an interconnected textual fabric where content flows in all directions. A good illustration of this point is the age of the two

protagonists in *Sherlock*, where the actors are in their early-to-mid thirties, which, while being close to the age of the characters in the book (the novel is set in 1881 when, according to Holmes' age mentioned in a much later story, he would have been twenty-seven), is in contrast with that typically portrayed on screen by older actors such as Basil Rathbone and Nigel Bruce or Jeremy Brett and Edward Hardwicke. There is a clear intent to broaden the appeal of the series and in particular to attract a younger demographic: indeed, the lower age of the protagonists, while in contrast with the received image of the characters, is entirely intentional and partly credited with the success the series has enjoyed and the international fame it brought to both Benedict Cumberbatch and Martin Freeman. This fame, in turn, contributed to securing further series of the show.

The TV series is set very much in the present day with all the technological content that this new time frame entails. One aspect I want to analyze in more detail is the way written language is represented, permeating the series as it does, echoing the reality of today's digital natives: Watson no longer records his case studies to be published in the press but rather writes a blog. Messages are no longer conveyed by telegram or hand-delivered notes but ping onto the screen as text messages "in a plain, uniform white sans-serif font that appears unadorned over the screen image, obviously added during post-production". Dwyer continues: "this text is superimposed, pure and simple, relying on neither text bubbles nor coloured boxes nor sender IDs to formally separate it from the rest of the image area" (2015: n.p.). Indeed, this artful use of superimposed free-floating text on the screen is integrated into the series just as it is an integral part of contemporary life. *Sherlock* is widely recognized as the first television series to make extensive use of on-screen text with such success: it is clearly tapping into a young adult sensitivity and their sophisticated reception of multiple forms of communication.

As described above, the text is used in relatively "straightforward" contexts to relay the information on a phone screen, sent from one individual to another, but also to convey the speed at which news can be disseminated via text message: there is a scene, for example, where the caption "wrong" appears, with accompanying audible "ping", by each of a roomful of journalists at a police press conference, as Sherlock texts them his opinion of the police's version of the facts; it is also used to show the results of an internet search on Sherlock's phone, detailing the links he clicks through to investigate the local weather forecast.

The superimposed text, however, is not limited to reproducing onscreen written text: it is also used, more intriguingly, to represent Sherlock's thought process, highlighting the elements he observes, and the deductions he draws from such clues. Mirroring Guillaume Apollinaire's *Calligrammes*, at times the text takes on the form of the objects it denotes, as when the letters recreate the shape of the dead woman's wedding ring, revolving across the screen, transforming into the deduction "frequently removed", suggesting the speed of Sherlock's excogitation. The conceit is exploited further in the scene, when the detectives notice that the woman has scratched the letters "R-a-c-h-e" into the wooden floor. This is a nod to Conan Doyle's book where the letters appeared written on a wall and the solution to the murder lay in recognizing the German word *Rache*, or "revenge". Here, Scotland Yard's forensic expert, Anderson, is quick to proffer this information, and the dictionary translation "Rache: German (n.) revenge" duly appears on the screen, as though the world itself were a hypertext. Sherlock considers this information, before quickly dismissing it—he will later reveal that the woman was trying to spell out "Rachel", the password to her phone. As Sherlock observes the woman, the dictionary caption is flipped around and seen by the audience in reverse angle, as though we were, somehow, inside Sherlock's head, seeing what he sees. The diegetic silence—on screen, no one is talking—means

that Watson and Lestrade remain altogether oblivious to the workings of Sherlock's mind, while the extra-diegetic text—the super-imposed captions that we do see—let the audience in on his thoughts. All this is done seamlessly, with no instructions as to how to “read” what is going on—understanding it all requires sophisticated skills of interpretation.

Subsequently, as part of its remit to “extend the global reach of British television” and “build the BBC's brands, audiences, commercial returns and reputation across the world”¹, BBC Worldwide has been particularly successful at expanding the audience for the series with sales to over 200 territories worldwide (Smith, 2016: 36). It is beyond the scope of this paper to analyze the subtitling and dubbing of the show although it is worth pointing out that the floating text does pose an additional technical challenge for adaptors worldwide.

The BBC's strategy to stimulate interest in the product included “a concerted effort [...] to develop the Japanese audience for the show” (*ibid.*: 36), building on a long tradition of interest in Japan for all things Holmesian, with the country boasting several societies and clubs that meet and organize events revolving around Conan Doyle's most famous character, and a consolidated tradition of visiting tourist sites around London associated with the fictional detective. The promotional drive embarked upon by the BBC, which also aimed to widen the show's appeal among a younger audience, included “personal appearances from the star Benedict Cumberbatch in Tokyo and a media campaign in which Cumberbatch wore a yukata kimono and was dubbed ‘King of the Magazines’” (*ibid.*). The trend of appealing to children and young adults follows the success in Japan of the 1980s anime series *Sherlock Hound* which took the “established European literary property and populated it with anthropomorphic animals [...] to create a children's TV series that could travel internationally” (*ibid.*: 37). A more recent but similar incarnation appears in the *Sherlock Bones* manga series (2011-2012) where a sixteen-year-old schoolboy and his dog, who speaks through the boy's grandfather's pipe, go on adventures and solve crimes. The lowering of the audience's age for Holmesian adaptations is further reflected in the 2014 launch by NHK Educational TV of a puppet series entitled *Sherlock Gakuen* (Sherlock Academy) which, with echoes of *Harry Potter*, features a teenage Holmes during his days at a London boarding school and the *Young Miss Holmes Casebook* series (2012-2013) that recounts the mystery-solving adventures of Sherlock Holmes' prodigy niece.

In amongst all this cross-media popularity, a manga adaptation of the BBC show began publication in Japan as early as 2013, published by Kadokawa Comics, only three years after the series first aired in the UK. It is the creation of Japanese artist Jay, a pseudonym, and the first to appear corresponds to the first episode of the TV series, *A Study in Pink*. The publication bears all the distinctive textual and paratextual features of its genre: it reads “back to front” and the frames on each page follow a right-to-left sequence. The volume is produced in black and white on relatively low-quality paper, to contain the costs, with a color dust jacket and four pages for “picture galleries” with additional illustrations of the main characters. Following the directionality of Japanese writing, the spoken dialogue is in vertical speech balloons.

The manga is a frame-by-frame transposition of the TV episode, almost like a storyboard, with the illustrations copying the same point of view as that chosen by the director Paul McGuigan and the irregular manga panels mimicking the, at times, frenetic camerawork of the televised version. The original dialogues (in some cases shortened for obvious reasons of space), translated into Japanese, are maintained. The only slight deviation from the filmed version is the linearity

1. <https://www.bbcworldwide.com/about-us/who-we-are/> (all URLs referred to in this chapter were accessed on 2 November, 2018).

of the plot: while the TV episode opens with Watson's war experience in Afghanistan, before moving to London and following him as he meets an old friend who then introduces him to Holmes, the manga postpones these scenes and begins instead directly with the four different apparent suicides that are then revealed to be murders.

The black-and-white drawings present detailed settings—both indoors such as in the famous Baker Street flat and outdoors with realistic London backdrops—and closely reproduce the actors' features, although they now appear younger than their real-life inspirations. This representation of a more youthful appearance is in line with both the traditional protagonists of manga but also with what is more likely to appeal to the target audience of the volume. As one reviewer comments: "Jay is able to capture Sherlock's weird childlike excitement about the case at hand. He somehow looks both more deranged and more innocent at the same time." (Anderson, 2016: n.p.)

The Japanese manga version of *Sherlock: A Study in Pink* has now been published in several different languages including Italian (2016), French, German, Spanish and English (all 2017) and the following discussion will concentrate on the English version with some reference also to the French and Italian translations. It is no coincidence that Italy was the first country to produce its own version as the country represents Europe's largest manga market (Malone, 2010: 322). Their success can be gauged from the fact that a further two episodes of the *Sherlock* TV series, *The Blind Banker* and *The Great Game*, have already undergone the same international journey, or are in the process of doing so, in all six linguistic versions. As manga became increasingly popular in Western Europe during the last two decades of the twentieth century, there was initially a "strategy of assimilating Japanese cultural products to conform to Western expectations" (*ibid.*: 319) especially in the United States: the texts were "flipped" to be read from left to right and colorized; happy-ever-after endings were sometimes introduced. More recently, however, there has been a gradual move—mostly fan-driven—for the Japanese genre to be accepted on its own merit, with as little domestication as possible, and these publications are no exception.

The physical format is almost identical especially between the Japanese and Italian versions: the dimensions of the book and paper quality are those typical of manga—in both these aspects the UK and French editions are different—larger size and marginally better quality paper—in fact, these editions are significantly more expensive (£9.99 and €12.60 respectively—the Italian edition costs only €5 while the Japanese version retails at ¥600 or around €4.50). Following Panini's usual editorial policy, the Italian edition also has a color-coded stamp on the cover, specifically designating its target audience as the young-adult market. In all versions the directionality remains "back-to-front" and right-to-left. If the unsuspecting reader does open the English volume as they would any other Western book, they are met with a page with the following instructions: "STOP! This manga is presented in its original right-to-left reading format. This is the back page!" This is accompanied by some sample panels with numbered balloons, indicating the correct reading sequence. There is the added caption "Pages, panels, and speech balloons read from top right to bottom left, as shown above. Sound effects are translated in the gutters between the panels." The Italian edition appears to be aimed at a slightly more expert readership and only carries a short written text, redirecting the reader to the other end of the book: "Attention: this comic is to be read like the original: from right to left, starting from the back page. So go to the back of the album to start reading!"² The French edition gives no warning at all. The Japanese and French volumes have occasional page numbers—these two versions have identical black-

2. My translation.

and-white covers and color dust jackets as well as the same initial four colored pages—while the English and Italian publishers have opted for no dust jackets and they have also removed all page numbers. In all versions, the speech balloons remain vertical although the Western dialogue clearly does not “fit” the space: again, there has been no attempt at domestication.

Another defining characteristic of manga is the representation of sound effects in general (the English version includes “rustle”, “cough”, “deep breath”), what might be termed stage directions (“tremble”, “dumbstruck”) and, of course, onomatopoeia (“bam!”, “ba-dump”, “zrrroooooooooom!”) with the Japanese script integrated into the graphic content of each panel rather than placed inside speech balloons. In the English and Italian versions these Japanese characters are maintained, and a translation is added in the respective languages (the English places the translations in the gutter around the outside of the panels, the Italian inserts the equivalent sound effects inside the panel itself), so that the Japanese script remains, as part of the image, a constant reminder of the text’s provenance. The French version, on the other hand, opts for a different strategy whereby the Japanese characters have been erased and substituted with the French representations of the sounds: as a consequence the panels appear significantly “cleaner” but have lost one of their main points of contact with the original Japanese manga.

There are other tell-tale signs that these are translated texts. In the Japanese start text, for example, there are several instances where the panels reproduce English script from the TV series: the classic London street sign for Baker Street, the engraved name and dedication on the back of Watson’s phone—*Harry Watson, from Clara xxx*—and images of newspaper headlines. For the benefit of the Japanese readers, in all these circumstances, a box of Japanese text is added to the panel, translating the original English. In the case of the European versions these boxes have been maintained and their contents has been restored either into the same English that already appears in the panel or translated. There are, therefore, captions, telling us that the Baker Street sign actually says “Baker Street” or that “Harry Watson” means “Harry Watson”, that are obviously redundant for readers of the Latin alphabet, while “from Clara” becomes the somewhat superfluous “da Clara” and “de Clara”: again the audience is reminded that the text they are reading was not originally in this format.

A further distinguishing feature of the European versions, and the English one in particular, is the inclusion of added “picture galleries” with artwork representing the protagonists of the TV series. Titan Comics opted to include an increased page count, new alternative covers, bonus art and a digital version online for their UK release. One of the main reasons for this supplementary content was to entice readers to buy the published volumes even though many had already accessed the text online through fan translations, or so-called *scanlations*, in the three to four years between the publishing of the first Japanese edition and the appearance of the translations in Europe. Indeed, such was the appeal of the manga to Western fans of the show that a host of scanlation sites had sprung up with the original Japanese text scanned in as pdf files and translated dialogues added by a community of fans, in the same fashion as the fansubbing phenomenon in audio-visual translation. One of the main features of scanlations is that they are produced by manga fans for manga fans and, as such, make few allowances for uninitiated readers, usually resulting in a heavily foreignised text. They always follow the directionality of the original and, with traditional manga set in Japan, tend to adopt strategies such as leaving in Japanese honorifics, as they expect their target audience to be aware of their significance (Rampant, 2010: 227).

From a linguistic point of view, it is interesting to analyse the text of the *Sherlock* scanlations as it highlights the hybrid nature of their start text. To take one dialogue exchange as an example,

we find the following exchange between two characters, as they hail a taxi, in one of the most popular English scanlations³:

A: Taxi! / Ah, shit... (*because it is raining*) / Wait two minutes, please. I'll get an umbrella from home!
B: We can share mine.
A: Just wait two minutes!!
B: Whey! / James!

The published Italian and French versions discussed above are both quite similar to the English scanlation version:

A: Ehi, Taxi! / Ah, merda... / Torno fra due minuti, vado a prendere l'ombrello!
B: Ma dai, possiamo usare il mio!
A: Ci metto solo due minuti, va bene?!
B: Ehi! / James!

A: Taxi! / Ah, et merde... / Attends ici deux minutes, je vais prendre un parapluie à la maison!
B: On peut partager le mien, non ?
A: T'inquiète, ça va prendre deux minutes!!
B: Mais... / James!!

The similarities (in particular the use of the swear words *shit/merda/merde* and the first name *James*) are due to the fact that all three versions are translated from the Japanese manga publication which, in turn, had taken its text from the TV series (presumably from the dubbed version of the show in Japan). When the English manga was published, on the other hand, rather than back translate from the Japanese manga, the text used was that originally spoken by the actors in the British TV show:

A: Taxi, taxi! / Come on... / I'll be just two minutes, mate. I'm just going home to get my umbrella.
B: What? You can share mine.
A: Two minutes, all right?
B: Wait! / Jimmy!

Indeed, as far as the three European book versions discussed here are concerned, only the French and Italian volumes include a translator credit: Fabien Nabhan for the French and Laura Giordano and Silvia Vascotto for the Italian, all established translators of manga from Japanese into their respective languages. Since the French edition, as mentioned above, also removed the Japanese sound effects and replaced them with French captions, this edition also includes a credit for “adaptation and lettering” carried out by Fabien Vautrin.

The intertextual web becomes increasingly tangled the further the exploration: one of the many threads that can be followed is the playful approach to sexual orientation as presented in the TV show. There are several tongue-in-cheek allusions to a possible sentimental and/or physical relationship between the two protagonists, usually made by a third party, vehemently quashed by Watson while Sherlock limits himself to a teasing, knowing smile. As in other matters, he neither confirms nor denies, maintaining a certain aloofness. In Japan, this aspect of the series plays into the tradition of the *yaoi* subgenre of manga, written almost exclusively by women

3. <http://sherlock-manga.tumblr.com/post/35063762913/sherlock-ch01-english-scanlation-by-kamibana>. The slashes indicate separate speech balloons.

for female readers and portraying an idealized and romantic love between two male characters. These *Boys' Love manga*, as they are called, “are part of the popular culture landscape in Japan [...], an accepted part of growing up female” (Levi, 2010: 3).

Yaoi has now reached North America and Europe where it was initially marketed for young gay males. Meanwhile the Western world has developed its own tradition within fanfiction, the “slash” subgenre, referring to “the forward slash on a keyboard, which is used by writers to indicate which characters from popular culture they are rewriting as a homoerotic couple” (*ibid.*: 3). Notable examples are Kirk/Spock from the popular *Star Trek* saga but now also Watson/Holmes, commonly referred to as *Johnlock* (Chin and Morimoto, 2013: 104). Indeed, fanfiction is one of the most active domains on the Internet and *Archive of our Own* (AO3) records an astonishing 110,000-plus *Sherlock*-related stories as of October 2017⁴. Almost half of these (c. 53,000) fall under the “slash fiction” category. These *Johnlock* stories frequently include images from both the TV series and the manga. It is perhaps no coincidence that within the tradition of Japanese Visual Language (JVL), of which manga can be considered a dialect (Cohn, 2010: 189), male characters are depicted as more angular (as Cumberbatch’s features are reproduced), while female ones are more rounded (Freeman’s character is frequently drawn as moon-eyed):

In [...] boys’ comics, [...] the male characters have thick, arched Kabuki-style eyebrows and glaring eyes, [while] heroines in girl’s comics are generally drawn with pencil-thin eyebrows, long, full eyelashes and eyes the size of window panes that emote gentleness and femininity. (Schodt, 1983: 91)

Traditionally divided into *shōnen* (boys’) and *shōjo* (girls’) manga, each with their own pictorial style, Jay’s artwork arguably brings the two together, through the representation of the two protagonists, hinting at a certain gender-fluidity.

This fresh take on the characters is, up to a large extent, the product of the highly participatory nature of the contemporary cultural environment. The enjoyment of texts, whatever their format, is now rarely passive: whether young adults take an active part in their creation (fanfiction, fansubbing, scanlations, etc.) or contribute to the texts’ afterlife (online comments, reviews, blogs, vlogs, fansites, conventions, etc.), they are increasingly implicated in the (re)production and reception of the cultural material that surrounds them.

To conclude therefore, when reading the English version of the manga—if we take into consideration the directionality of the panels and speech balloons, the Japanese characters that “cohabit” the panels with the translated sound effects, the explicitly Eastern tradition to which the artwork belongs—a number of elements should combine to create a strange, almost dislocating, effect as we approach what was once a quintessentially British text, that is now being reflected back into English through this Japanese prism. For, as Jüngst points out, over recent years, strategies within manga translation have moved “from adapting texts so that they would fit into the target cultures’ existing markets for comics”, paving the way for “special translation strategies reserved for manga, which preserve the cultural specificity of the texts” (2014: 50). And, while it is true that there are substantial financial advantages to maintaining the original layout, the increasingly popular traditional directionality and format are also a sign of the shift in attitude of today’s young readership: the “unflipped”, black-and-white manga enjoy the stamp of “authenticity”, appreciated by their audience. Readers are rewarded with a sense of exclusivity that comes with being part of the “in crowd”.

4. https://archiveofourown.org/tags/Sherlock%20Holmes*s*John%20Watson/works

Examples of transnational and cross-media adaptations such as *Sherlock* highlight the openness towards hybridity of today's digital natives who have grown up in an increasingly globalized world where cross-cultural pollination is often more prevalent than the much-discussed hegemony of North American cultural models propagated by the modern corporate reality, the so-called "McDonaldization" of the world. As Malone observes, "the European manga industry, like a series of Chinese boxes, defies the thesis that globalization entails homogenization" (2010: 315). Just as the Japanese audience are familiar with all things Harry Potter, so their Western peers have grown up with manga and anime. Just as the Japanese *Sherlock* manga imported the BBC TV show with all its inherent Britishness, so the European versions of the manga reflect the exquisitely Japanese quality of their start text.

The young adults of today are part of a generation who communicate via written word enhanced by emojis, photos with filters and added GIFs, who access music videos the world over and watch television series via streaming, with added fansubbing that allows them to hear the original soundtrack. Even with no direct geographical contact or linguistic exchange, they are literate in each other's cultural codes and deal seamlessly with the "mash-up" characteristic that defines their environment. Across the worldwide textual rhizome they navigate and, belying any notion of the homogenizing effects of globalization, the *Sherlock* publications are evidence of a dynamic textual exchange, an overlapping of translation and adaptation, a blurring of media and genre, an interlingual and intercultural *métissage* to be welcomed.

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