Representations Of South Asians In Japanese Animation

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Abstract

This thesis examines the representations of South Asians in Japanese animation in the context of increased South Asian visibility in Japan within the last 30-40 years. Depictions of South Asians in mediascapes across the world have often fallen into globalised tropes and stereotypes and assumptions made by both creators and audiences. This research examines the codification of these stereotypes as racialised cultural markers to provide a basis for measuring and examining the depiction of South Asians in Japanese animation. Analysis of the chosen case studies has been done by centring the racial and cultural politics of race representation in anime. As there is little to no research specifically on the subject of South Asian representation, I have drawn from and applied cultural, film and race theories and contextualised anime depictions within the wider context of the Japanese mediascape. In doing so I have determined the extent to which South Asians are "Othered" in Japanese media through a range of globalised and indigenised tropes as well as issues regarding cultural homogenisation of South Asians, racial and cultural hierarchies within South Asian communities. Despite a growing population of South Asians in Japan, this topic remains a relatively new one in academia, this thesis aims to provide a foundation from which future research into race representation in Japanese animation may go beyond the usual scope.

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1. Chapter One - Introduction

1.1 Context of Research

My undergraduate degree in Film Studies first sparked my interest in race representation in visual culture. As a South Indian Muslim growing up in the United Kingdom. the issue of representation has always been deeply significant and important to me. After having previously examined the depiction of South Asians in British cinema during my MA in Japanese Cultural studies I turned to the medium of Japanese animation due to the cultural and racial politics surrounding its aesthetics as well as the large and growing South Asian population in Japan which certainly increases the merit behind this research. As a second-generation South Asian immigrant, myself I have a close proximity to and understanding to this topic. This research ultimately aims to add to and help further develop academic literature on and awareness of South Asian representation in anime. which provides fertile ground to develop academic understanding of South Asian representation in Japanese animation.

1.2 Problem Statement

This thesis examines the representation of South Asians in Japanese animation, a relatively new topic which is positioned in the context of increasing South Asian communities and their visibility in Japan. I therefore seek to deconstruct portrayals of South Asians in animation, contextualise them, and see whether there are any identifiable patterns or overlap in modes of representation to determine the process of how South Asians are "Othered" in Japanese media as well as the cultural and racial politics behind their depictions in Japanese *anime*.

1.3 Why Japanese Animation

Figure i: Taniguchi, G. 2006. *Kōdo Giasu* Rakshata Chawla from Kōdo Giasu.

The above image is of the recurring character Rakshata Chawla from the *anime* series *Kōdo Giasu* (Taniguchi, 2006-2008). She is almost immediately recognisable as Indian due to her *tilak* and her skin tone which act as cues to the audience. Her "Indianness" becomes even more prominent when contrasted against the majority of the other characters in *Kōdo Giasu*.

Rakshata, whilst not a regular cast member, is an important and recurring character in the *Kōdo Giasu* series which features a predominantly light-skinned cast of Asian and Caucasian characters. Rakshata and the cast of *Kōdo Giasu* demonstrate a wider trend in the cultural and racial politics of character design in Japanese animation. Whereby Japanese characters are often seen as indistinguishable from their Caucasian White counterparts described by scholars as *mukokuseki* or "lacking cultural odour" (Iwabuchi, 2002: 54). Cultural odour refers to the degree to which the exports of any particular nation state retain a sense of

national character and convey a way of life associated with said nation-state. When discussing cultural odour in relation to Japanese animation, settings and narrative are essential elements to consider, but equally crucial are the aesthetics and visual design highlighted as lacking any distinctive Japanese "look." Animation can then be more easily adapted and localised for different audiences. For example, dubbing not only erases the use of the Japanese language and voice actors, but can also be used to make changes to the dialogue and narrative by replacing Japanese cultural references with more localised ones (Iwabuchi, 2002: 67): such as rice balls (*onigiri*) being referred to as jam donuts in the English dubbed version. By extension, this prompts audiences to dissociate the design of *anime* characters from any sense of Japaneseness. The question of why *anime* characters "look White" can be therefore partly explained through Iwabuchi's arguments regarding lack of cultural odour but requires a deeper interrogation into race theory and race representation in Japanese mediascapes. Iwabuchi's arguments, however, rely on the characters being light-skinned and either Japanese and/or Caucasian White, and does not include characters such as Rakshata whose ethnicity and race are made obvious through visual cues. Iwabuchi's work reflects a wider trend in academic scholarship on the topic of race in *anime* whereby the scope of discussion is largely limited to the construction of Japanese, Caucasian White and "Other" (non-Japanese, mainly East) Asian characters. The discussion of South Asian characters in *anime* consists of a few mentions rather than any theorisation or overall consideration of South Asian representation in Japanese visual culture. Nevertheless, some of the scholarship does provide a starting point from which we can start to build a foundation for discussing the representation of South Asians.

How the Japanese "Self" has been aesthetically constructed in Japanese animation is a crucial aspect of race representation. Amy Shirong Lu and John G Russell, for example, explore the

cultural and racial politics of *anime* character design. Lu identifies three main cultural politics at play, all three forms of internationalisation. In the context of Lu's study, internationalisation signifies an incorporation of non-Japanese elements (2008: 170). The first, de-politicised internationalisation, seemingly supports and boosts the work of scholars such as Iwabuchi and Terry Kawashima regarding the racial ambiguity of *anime* characters. De-politicised internationalisation is built on the idea that Japanese animations lack cultural odour which allow them to be easily localised (2008: 173). Part of this relates to the use of international settings or even alternative fictional universes which have a scrambled racial and ethnic backdrop. In terms of *anime* character designs, Lu builds on Iwabuchi's arguments regarding the need for *anime* to be culturally odourless in order to appeal to international audiences, a crucial element of de-politicised internationalisation (2008: 175-176). Whilst this can be certainly considered, John G Russell's arguments are given somewhat more weight as *anime* is primarily produced with Japanese audiences in mind as international audiences only surpassed domestic viewership in 2020, and that too by a small margin (Masuda et. al, 2022). The arguments of Russell and Lu do not conflate Whiteness and Japaneseness as the same. These constructions and the use of aesthetics are not done so that Whiteness and Japaneseness become interchangeable, but so that Whiteness is marked out as a cultural "Other," although one to which Japaneseness is in close racial proximity. One of the end results of such constructions is the racial ambiguity of Japanese *anime* characters.

This racial ambiguity, however, is one that conflates Japaneseness with Whiteness only. For example, audiences with darker skin tones cannot so easily transplant their own racial and sometimes cultural, identities onto *anime* characters designed with a "global hybrid look." John G Russell argues against theorisations, such as the one by Terry Kawashima, that the reading of this "global hybrid look" solely as Caucasian White stems from a system of

background knowledge which privileges the association of particular phenotypes with Whiteness and incorrectly assumes a Japanese desire to emulate Caucasian Whiteness (2002: 163-164). Russell counters these arguments by stating that the role interactions and encounters with the West have played in certain ideological formations of Japanese self-regard cannot be discounted (Russell 2017: 25). Russell cites a lineage of conflating racial identity between Japaneseness and Whiteness within Japanese visual culture dating back to the first Sino-Japanese War (2017: 34). Whilst animation is cited as a modern-day example, Russell also examines how this process is carried out in a range of visual culture ranging from contemporary adverts and games to toys (2017: 29-32). As a result, the Caucasian White "Other" in visual culture is racially delineated and "Othered" culturally instead, a media trend which Russell identifies as being prevalent in *anime* and the design of Japanese *anime* characters (2017: 34-36). Amy Shirong Lu's third theorisation of cultural politics: self-Orientalised internationalisation also lines up with Russell's arguments, putting forth that Japan is situated as a cultural and racial pivot between the West and "Other" Asia (2008: 182).

Media constructions of "Other" Asia becomes a key element in the discussion of race representation in this thesis. "Other" Asia is a term in academic discussion of Japaneseness to denote Asian countries that are not Japanese. Lu argues that the depiction of "Other" Asian characters in animation are also an extension of racial "Othering" whereby Asian features are often exaggerated and caricatured. Lu offers a basis for further exploration of the representation of race in Japanese animations (2008: 183-84). In this thesis I examine to what degree "Other" Asia is racially "Othered" in Japanese animation to contextualise the constructions and representations of South Asians in Japanese animation. The premise of this research, however, examines how South Asia and South Asians often sit outside of this

"Other" Asia which is situated in academic discourse and background knowledge as Japan's former subalterns, mainly East Asians but also Southeast Asians. This thesis will explore how this is achieved and the context in which these conceptualisations of South Asians have formed as well as the ideological basis for them.

1.4 South Asians in Japan

The last 25 to 30 years have seen an increased visibility of South Asians in Japan. Numerous factors and conditions have propelled migration from several South Asian countries prompting a noticeable shift in Japanese ethnoscapes, for instance through the emergence of community areas such as Asagaya and Nishi Kasai in Tokyo which have been dubbed Little Nepal and Little India, respectively. There are also international schools where education is based on South Asian curriculums, grocery stores, restaurants, places of worship that all form a part of the South Asian presence in Japan. In addition to this, the nation-states of Japan and India have seen a rapid development of political ties since the 1990s in what I argue is a special relationship between the two, boosting in particular India's visibility and inclusion in Japanese media and political discourse.

There has been an increased presence and visibility of South Asian migrant communities in Japan. Starting with Nepalese and Bangladeshi migrant workers arriving in the 1980s . This wave of immigration was followed by a surge in Indian citizens also arriving in Japan from the 1990s. The experience of different South Asian migrant groups is varied and diverse, largely dependent on the context in which they arrived, legal status in Japan, and several other factors. To clarify, South Asians did not first arrive in the 1980s, however this period

marks an era of inconsistent but increasing immigration patterns from a few South Asian countries.

The representation of South Asians in Japanese media has been in somewhat positive correlation with their increased visibility and presence in Japan. For example, the *manga Wārudo Apātomento Horā* (1991) by Satoshi Kon and its movie adaptation (Ōtomo, 1991) demonstrate rare depictions of Bangladeshi and Pakistani migrants in Japan and the struggles they face. South Asia and South Asians in Japanese media, particularly live-action media, have largely existed in the background and as a means to facilitate the character growth and development of Japanese protagonists and even secondar characters. Early examples include *Fukai Kawa* (Kumai, 1995) and *Sôgen No Isu* (Narushima, 2013) whereby India and Pakistan respectively become the settings and mise-en-scène within which Japanese characters embark on spiritual and emotional journeys of self-realisation. This pattern continues into more contemporary cinema such as *NHK* Fukuoka's locally produced movie *Tonari no Masala* (Ando, 2021) centred around a Japanese man who returns to Fukuoka and immerses himself with the local Nepalese community. Whilst there are Nepalese characters and actors who are a part of the cast of characters, some with speaking roles, they largely remain as secondary or even background characters (with Nepalese women having almost no speaking roles throughout) who are catalysts for the progression of the Japanese protagonists' narratives.

In terms of non-fiction, South Asians have been frequently featured in TV specials and documentaries which typically look at grocery stores, religious practices, and communal activities. Of all South Asian nations, however, India has been developing and cultivating a special relationship with Japan, which began in the 1990s and rapidly progressed from the

2000s. Economic and political ties have helped to bring about the introduction of special visas for Indian migrants and numerous high profile media events as well as an increased visibility in media, including *anime*. As a result, the majority of South Asian depictions in Japanese media are related to India and Indians, and these depictions often propagate a culturally and racially homogenised representation.

1.5 Significance Of The Research

Before I say more, a few words about what defines South Asia. South Asia itself is comprised of several countries which are located in the South of the continent of Asia including Nepal, Sri Lanka, Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Pakistan, the Maldives, Bhutan, and India. Within these countries is a diverse number of racial, ethnic, and social groups. In this research I use the term South Asianness as an umbrella term for the various constructions and representations of communities and characters from the South Asian region. This does not mean to encapsulate all South Asian identities as one and, where characters are defined by an assigned identity (usually in the form of nationality), I will specify my terminology accordingly (Indianness, Pakistaniness and so on). It is crucial to remember, however, that there are South Asian groups, communities and individuals who do not identify themselves through nationality. These terms, therefore, are not used to encapsulate and homogenise South Asian identities but rather to contextualise how they have been constructed.

I acknowledge here, and throughout the thesis, how even specific South Asian identities (such as *Dalit* communities, Nepalese migrants in Japan) are not monoliths. Spivak's work further identifies how an intersectional response is required to the erasure of South Asian voices in the platforms and medias where they are typically constructed as racial and cultural

"Other" including a consideration of the multiple layers of marginalisation and heterogeneity within subaltern communities (1994: 79). Perhaps at the forefront of problematic representations of South Asianness is cultural and racial homogenisation. Spivak's work identifies a tactic of "Othering" by British and South Asian racial and cultural groups as a means of upholding unequal power relations. Whilst this may not always be the intention when it comes to media representations, they often and inevitably feed into a practice of homogenisation which reduces South Asianness and even national identities down to one particular social group. For example, despite the diversity of South Asians and South Asian communities, media representations largely represent South Asianness through Indianness. Even where there is representation of South Asians who are definitely not Indian, they are defined by the racial cultural and social majority of that country. Similarly, whilst the main aim of this research is to examine the representation of as many South Asian identities as possible, the frequent use of Indian characters in Japanese animation unfortunately limits this exploration and discussion.

This thesis contextualises the topic of South Asian depiction in *anime* through wider representations in media and their visibility in Japan. Each chapter is therefore similarly built around the most common themes which have emerged from the wider context as well as the medium of *anime* itself. I will now highlight the theoretical foundations that the main questions and topics of this thesis are built around. Key frameworks will be identified along with how they will be used to frame discussions of race representation, South Asian representation, and "Otherness" in Japanese media.

1.6 Methodology

I have approached this research through the lens of Critical race theory (CRT) and the concept of background knowledge as theorised by Norman Fairclough. I will be going into further detail of how these theories relate to the construction and representation of South Asians in the following chapters. First, I wish to lay out the theoretical scope of this thesis.

CRT is a branch of legal scholarship, which developed in the 1970s due to a lack of focus on race in the critical legal studies movement (Ladson-Billings 1998: 11-12). CRT has revealed that whilst race is a social construct, it continues to have a lasting legacy into the present day which entails the categorisation of human beings on the basis of their physical appearance. Race is therefore determined visually, most notably (but not always) through the differentiation of skin colour and results in a hierarchical power structure which privileges certain groups over others. Race is distinct from, but not always unlinked with, ethnicity which denotes cultural identity rather than race. In 1978 Edward Said discussed how the practice of categorising humans into racial and ethnic groups may be dated back as early as 1312 and named this process, 'Orientalism.' Orientalism describes the involvement of various institutions and individuals in Europe who sought to represent nations, cultures, and people from Africa and Asia through their own cultural perspective (Said, 1978: 49). The practice of Orientalism continues in the present day as well and has also seen the emergence of literature on Occidentalism – the construction of the West through a non-Western lens.

Both Orientalism and Occidentalism can be viewed as a method of "Othering." It is a process of constructing an "Other" which acts in opposition to and therefore determines a "Self" based on particular social differences (Brons 2015: 69) which can be rooted in race, language, sexuality, gender, ethnicity etc. Michael Weiner asserts that discussions on race and

ideologies regarding race and "Othering" (based on race) are typically rooted in two contexts: the first is the colonial context and the second is the equally politically charged context of migration involving immigrants and refugees (2013: 12). Weiner further argues that ideologies about race are varied – existing as what he describes as "a loose set of discourses" rather than being a product of a trickle-down system created and perpetuated by certain institutions and involving subjugation which is purely a result of imperialism and capitalist ideology.

Diana Dimitrova asserts that there are two main schools of thought regarding the practice of "Othering," the first is rooted in what is described as a phenomenological perspective which asserts that "Othering" is typically centred around a constructed "Self" that is asserted as superior and dominant. The second, "post-phenomenological" theorisation of "Othering" de-centralises the concept of the "Other" as a subject to be known and discovered (2013: 1-2). Dimitrova concurs with Stuart Hall's appraisal that racial and cultural identities are not strict labels and are characterised by fluidity rather than adherence to a strict set of codes and characteristics (2013: 2). These discussions underpin my theoretical analysis of South Asian representation in Japanese animations and examine the degree to which the diversity and heterogeneity of South Asian identities are successfully conveyed, or whether South Asianness is indeed "Othered" through an assumed background knowledge and assumption of which typically homogenises South Asianness. To what extent, therefore, are South Asian identities spoken for and represented by an interlocutor who perpetuates a system of hierarchy and marginalisation?

Gayatri Spivak's main question in *Can The Subaltern Speak?* (1994) revolves around the lack of platforms available to marginalised "Other" groups to represent themselves, and how their depictions are a construction rooted from the perspective of those who benefit from a position of privilege within a gender/caste/racial power hierarchy (1994: 79) despite what is considered the end of colonial hierarchies. The inequalities which persist between and within nations in the present-day help form the basis of postcolonial studies, part of which examine the continuation of "Othering" discourses and practices and any agency the "Other" may have in their own constructions. Rahul Gairola further examines these practices in contemporary media contexts, and how the vastness of platforms available to produce, disseminate and consume visual culture is characterised by Arjun Appadurai through the term "mediascapes" (cited in Gairola, 2002: 315). This expansion of platforms has allowed for the voices of those previously marginalised because of their "Otherness" more opportunities and platforms to convey their own stories and voices. Often, however, even self-representations of those discursively constructed as the "Other" are also rooted in an ideological process of subordination and superiority. Gayatri Spivak's work locates foreign colonial perspectives within a hierarchy of power in which local and global forces play a role in upholding unequal power relations. Spivak's discussion, which uses the specific example of India, involves the intersectionality of race, class, caste, gender, and other social factors upon which one's degree of marginalisation from this system and hierarchy of power depends (1994: 77). These marginalised groups are characterised by the term "subaltern."

The terms Japaneseness and Japanese "Self" are used to denote the construction and portrayal of those who identify as Japanese. In terms of media representations, therefore, I refer to these terms as constructions rather than definitive representations of all communities and groups who identify as Japanese. The work of Spivak, which forms the basis for

understanding postcolonial power relations, highlights racial cultural and social hierarchies which exist within determined nation states and communities as well as between them. Japan is no exception and so with the examination of race in the Japanese mediascape, constructions of the Japanese "Self" and the discourses surrounding these representations must also be interrogated. I will be using the theoretical framework of *Nihonjinron* in order to measure the degree to which media representations and constructions of Japaneseness align with *Nihonjinron*'s ideological foundation of racial, cultural, and national exclusivity. It is important to note that this is not intended to essentialise Japaneseness and understandings and constructions of the Japanese "Self." This discussion utilises how this particular ideologically charged construction of Japaneseness may have been upheld or challenged within the Japanese mediascape.

It is impossible for any one nation to be represented or summarised by one "race" alone. The very nature of nation states has been to create fixed boundaries and fence in a number of different communities within a sovereign territory. Representations of that nation state as a racial and cultural monolith presents a representation based in falsehood and an ideological stance which actively seeks to exclude minorities. One of these ideological stances which exist within Japanese discourses on race is that of *Nihonjinron* – *Nihonjin* meaning Japanese person and *ron* meaning theories of – literally theories on Japaneseness. *Nihonjinron* carries various theories and discourse surrounding the formation of "Japaneseness" and Japanese national identity however a common thread running through these theories is that the Japanese people are unique and can be defined through particular racial and cultural characteristics.

Initial theories on Japaneseness emerged out of the unification and formation of Japan as a nation state in the 19th century and the establishment of the Meiji era (1868-1912). These political developments prompted a demand for theories on Japaneseness which would be instrumental in the construction of a national identity (Lie 2001: 150). Theories on Japaneseness and national identity during this period, and during the period of Japanese expansionism suggested that the Japanese people were culturally unique, rather than racially unique (Ko, 2013: 13-14). The idea that the Japanese people had a shared racial heritage with other Asian communities gave rise to the Mixed Nation Theory which gained momentum under military expansionism and was used to boost Pan-Asian ideologies and sentiment. Under this ideology Japan could be distinguished from its conceptualisation of an "Other" Asia through cultural, rather than racial, difference (Ko, 2013:13-14; Oguma, 2002: 289).

The post-war period saw a major shift in Japan's governing style therefore theories and national polity on Japaneseness also needed to shift in accordance away from the wartime and imperialist constructions of "Self." Writings on *Nihonjinron* grew in popularity after Japan's economic growth of the 1960s where they mostly emphasise the positive characteristics of the Japanese people (Aoki, cited in Lie, 2001: 151). The "Japanese people" as determined by *Nihonjinron*, however, is a reduction and essentialisation designed to ignore cultural and racial diversity in Japan. Ko examines how the death of Emperor Hirohito in 1989 has been instrumental in the resurgence of nationalist discourses surrounding Japanese national identity (2013: 16). Ko also draws on the work of Sakai Naoki to determine how the increase in discourses surrounding *Nihonjinron* during this period construct Japaneseness so as to deliberately exclude different ethnic and racial groups within Japan such as Ainu and Okinawans (cited in Ko, 2013: 17). Japaneseness is therefore determined through a strict formation of "Self" based in an exclusivity with the goal of marking out and constructing

through a regime of differentiation, the existence of the racial and cultural "Other" in Japan. As Yoshio Sugimoto highlights the all-encompassing nature of *Nihonjinron:*

> "The discourse on exceptionality covers the whole: from the biological makeup of the Japanese, prehistoric cultural development, language, literary and aesthetic qualities, human relations, and social organisation to philosophy and personal character." (Sugimoto, 2009: 25)

Some discourses on *Nihonjinron* employ what is seemingly at first a progressive outlook which celebrates multiculturalism and diversity. Mika Ko points, however, to the problematic nature of these theories which continue to rely on and re-enforce the supposed uniqueness of Japaneseness, the construction of which is frequently reliant on also constructing "Otherness" (2013: 28-29). The weaponization of multiculturalism to reinforce nationalist ideology is a practice labelled "cosmetic multiculturalism" (Ko, 2013: 28-29). Whilst the presence of the "Other" in Japan is celebrated by these discourses of *Nihonjinron*, they continue to uphold a system of hegemony by which Japanese national, racial, and cultural identity is defined. This remains the central tenet of *Nihonjinron* which claims uniqueness of the Japanese people and their character (Lie, 2001: 151; Sugimoto, 2009: 25-26; Sugimoto, 1999: 83).

In this thesis I discuss how the construction of the "Other" in Japan is also at times complex and varied according to who is being represented. Constructions of Whiteness, however, are used to create a liminal space against which Japaneseness is measured and constructed (Lie, 2001: 151; Creighton 1997: 220-221). In a discussion on representations of Whiteness and Blackness in Japanese advertising, Millie Creighton determines how representations of Whiteness are used to "Other" Caucasian Whiteness by demonstrating their cultural

opposition to Japanese cultural norms, but also to affirm the superiority of Japanese culture. Creighton argues that the use of Whiteness to do so demonstrates or "suggests the possibility that mainstream Japanese have moved into the "*symbolic space* of 'white,' the cognitive space of prominence and ascendancy" (1997: 221). The West and Caucasian Whiteness are the main "Other" against which the Japanese "Self" is created and measured, centralising, and bringing Whiteness in close racial proximity (but still with varying degrees of cultural opposition) to Japaneseness. Creighton determines that whilst depictions of Blackness are also constructed in opposition to the Japanese "Self," these depictions are typically couched in stereotypes and suggestions of cultural and racial inferiority in contrast to the "glorification" of Whiteness (1997: 225). In an examination of the medium of animation and the theorisations of the cultural politics surrounding race representation I will further explore this relationship and racial hierarchy which *Nihonjinron* produces.

Nihonjinron therefore must play a significant role in discussing the representation of race representation in Japanese media, including *anime*. It is important to note that this research does not aim to suggest that these are the only theorisations or ideologies regarding nationhood and national identity in Japan. Instead, I will be drawing on Ko's argument that *Nihonjinron* is a "discursive space" (2013: 17), or as suggested by Yuiko Fujita, "reflections on 'ideology" (2009: 57) that has been utilised to affirm certain political and ideological stances on Japaneseness and Japanese national identity. Again, this helps to better discuss the racial and cultural politics of *anime*, such as how we may reconcile the cultural and racial exclusivity of *Nihonjinron* with the racial politics of *anime* character design highlighted by John G Russell, and how "Otherness" may be formed through a series of ideological and cultural layers.

1.7 Overview

Whist this may, at first glance, appear to be a niche subject – South Asian representation in *anime* spans back as far back as over 40 years ago. The timeline of *anime* examined in this research varies from Layla in *Kidō Senshi Gundamu* (Tomino, 1979-1980) to the most recent *Shokugeki no Sōma* (Yonetani, 2015-2020). The recent surge in characters of South Asian origin, however, also coincided with a growing visibility of South Asians in Japanese media and visual culture. The organisation of topics in this thesis, are from watching a variety of material and finding common links, themes, and trends among these various representations. This is why the first three chapters of this research, which all look at a different common theme which emerged across various *anime*, are also considered within the wider realm of Japanese visual culture such as live-action medias, and so on.

The first of these themes examined is religious culture (Religious Culture). This was among the most obvious and transparent tropes of South Asianness utilised in the research phase of this project and so naturally comes as the first topic of discussion. Religious culture and spirituality are one of the most prominent globalised accents of South Asianness used in media representations and so this is unsurprising as it is often used as a vehicle through which South Asian identities can be homogenised. This discussion is contextualised with the real-life implications of such readings which actively feed into myths, misconceptions and essentialising of identities which are exploited for socio-political reasons. The topic of religious culture covers theoretical framework which provides a launching base for discussing the topic of subsequent chapters. This includes the degree to which South Asians are positioned and contrasted against the Japanese "Self" through a process of racial and

cultural "Othering," the use of cultural markers which blur the boundaries between national, racial, and cultural South Asian identities and also the aesthetics of Japanese animation and to what extent this creates a racial and cultural binary of "Self" and "Other." This chapter also includes one of the only examples of a specified South Asian identity that is *not* Indian and we are able to examine constructions of Pakistan and "Pakistaniness," allowing us to explore beyond the typical homogenised and essentialised construction of South Asianness as the Indian Hindu. I wish to also go further into the work of Spivak and whether the subaltern can speak by examining representations of the caste-system.

The following chapter (War and Colonialism) examines a more localised construction of South Asianness within Japanese media, one that emerges within the context of war and colonialism. This examines how Indianness specifically has been shoehorned into particular revisionist and sometimes glorifying narratives surrounding World War 2 memory but also constructed in more contemporary war and colonialism narratives as an ally to Japan. When discussing war memory and the representation of war memory as well as the discourses surrounding this topic in the Japanese mediascape, it should be made clear that revisionist narratives are not the only ones that exist. This chapter focuses on how atrocities and acts committed by the Japanese Imperial Army have been minimised by history revisionists and how certain constructions of Indianness are utilised to prop up such narratives and therefore sit within a system of knowledge that is in turn based on a specific ideology, one that is not wholly representative of discourses and ideologies regarding war memory in Japan. It is also during this chapter that the socio-political context of Indo-Japanese relations is most relevant and can to a large degree be seen as an influence on depictions which code Indianness according to a specific knowledge base. Again, the intention of this chapter is not to claim that the India-Japan special relationship has directly impacted and caused a new wave of

Indian representation, but rather how Indianness specifically typically sits in the Japanese

mediascape and visual culture within the context of war and colonialism. This topic is also

situated within a wider discussion on representations of "Other" Asia and why South Asia,

specifically India, may not be considered a part of this construction. As the chapter on

religious culture brings in the issue of gender and how it intersects with racial, cultural, and

national identities, so does this chapter examine how the context of war and colonialism

produces gender-specific depictions of Indianness in Japanese animation. The topics of both

"Other" Asia and the intersection of race with gender again brings into focus the issue of

homogenisation based on national identities and how such constructions sit within the

Japanese mediascape.

This issue of homogenisation will also be examined in the fourth chapter (Food Culture)

which looks at food culture. Food, along with religious culture, is among the most common

global threads and tropes used in the constructions and portrayals of South Asians. The initial

research of this project demonstrated that this was also the case in Japanese animation. Like

religious culture, this offers an insight into how a global trend of constructing Indianness

through food culture may be localised within Japanese medias. The main discussion of this

chapter is built on Simona Stano's arguments on how food and food culture are inevitably

part of a semiotic system of background knowledge, including one's own cultural identity. As

with chapter two, I establish to what degree ideologies of *Nihonjinron* help shape

constructions of the "Self," and in this context, to what degree food culture becomes a

semiotic vehicle to accomplish such ideological-based constructions. It is important to

interrogate and measure how the racial and cultural "Self" has or has not been established in

order to better situate any discussion on representations of the "Other." I also consider how

food culture has become one of the most visible aspects of the growing South Asian presence

in Japan leading to a wider range of visual culture in which to situate and contextualise this discussion. Whilst this opens the research up again to communities that are specifically not Indian, the only affirmed form of South Asian identity established in any of the analysed visual texts is Indianness and Hinduism. I discuss the implications of this but also potentially a new form of South Asian identity which is not necessarily defined by nationality. I also examine how food culture intersects with other accents or markers that are typically used and exist as stereotypes or tropes in media constructions of South Asianness. This includes religious culture but also examines the use of an audio, rather than visual, marker: music. The topic of music explores how it can be used as an extension of brownvoice, an audio imitation and another "accent" used to convey South Asianness without the presence of South Asians.

The fifth and last chapter (South Asian Students in Japanese Schools) delves into considering the medium of animation itself as well as genre. In particular I will be examining the context of school, specifically the depiction of South Asian students in Japanese schools. School establishments are often a frequent featured setting in Japanese animation, especially in television series and it is therefore unsurprising that it was also one of the most typical settings used in series featuring South Asian characters. Here I look at the wider context of how animations, and specifically animated series, frequently use school as a small-scale representation of wider societal issues in order for them to be subverted and challenged. These subversions are then normalised to varying degrees, disrupting certain systems of assumed background knowledge. The topic and the focus here will be to what degree school has become a space for subverting social conventions regarding the representation of the racial "Other," specifically the South Asian "Other." Here I will examine three series in chronological order of their release and "check" them against a list of conventions found in constructions of South Asianness observed from the first three chapters. The previous

chapters will have relied on contextualising the representations seen in Japanese animation through other forms of media, visual culture and even animation both in and outside of Japan, and the information surmised from these will be in turn used to contextualise a particular setting frequently used in Japanese animations. I especially examine how school settings have been used to upturn social conventions regarding gender and sexuality. As both second and third chapters examine the intersectionality of gender and race, the topic of school settings provides solid ground for examining constructions of the South Asian "Other" through gender and sexuality. This provides a prologue to the summarisation of findings from this thesis and research.

Each chapter will recontextualize the overall theoretical framework and scholarship so as to make it specific and particular to each topic. In order to illustrate each discussion, the main case studies and texts of analysis will be identified. As I have already mentioned, the majority of these are animated television series although there are mentions of animated movies, only one of which could potentially fall into the *manga eiga* category, and some *manga* as well. Some of these case studies are part of a series, some with multiple seasons each of which have at least twelve episodes and huge casts of characters. For the ease of reading and following each case study therefore, there are plot summaries for each main text analysed at the end of this dissertation which can be found on page 256.

2. Chapter Two – Religious Culture

Religious culture has been central to representations of South Asians in mediascapes across the world. Whilst race and ethnicity are two separate modes of identity - they frequently intersect to form cultural markers which are then used to signpost a character's racial and cultural identities. This process is highly problematic as it assumes a homogeneous cultural experience for South Asianness, which is common in representations of South Asians as "Other" but also in South Asian self-representations. This topic examines the wider socio-political and economic as well as media context in which systems of knowledge surrounding South Asian religious cultures and identities are constructed and the degree to which they are used in Japanese animation. Part of this contextualisation includes consideration of the special relationship between Japan and India, a term which denotes a strong diplomatic, political, and particularly economic relationship between the two countries. This special relationship is sometimes played out through media events and appearances as well as the use of discourse which exploits historical connections to fit into a particular system of knowledge and ideology. The theoretical framework surrounding constructions of the racial and cultural "Other" from an outside perspective will therefore be reframed to explore to what extent South Asians in Japanese animation are "Othered" through religious culture as well as what role, if any, religious cultural identity plays in constructions of a racial and cultural Japanese "Self."

Much of this chapter will centre around how such depictions may be rooted in an assumed background knowledge base. The concept of background knowledge base is described by Norman Fairclough as being a set of social cues, codes and norms which may be rooted in ideology but are presumed and taken as fact (2010: 45-46). These cues and codes can be used

to assign certain characteristics to any number of social groups that can be based on age, gender, ethnicity, race, and religion to perpetuate ideological discourses. In the context of South Asian representation within South Asian countries and across global media, both local and global institutions have contributed to the formation of an assumed background knowledge that conflates religion with national identity. Such systems of background knowledge sometimes unintentionally become an element in the homogenisation and erasure of South Asian identities through the broad label of nation state which is used to further essentialise racial and religious cultural identities. Part of this discussion will involve using media texts other than animation to establish a common thread of representation which ultimately feeds into an ideological narrative. Norman Fairclough states that media texts, rather than being one large type of text, is "a class of texts which are specialised for moving resources for meaning-making between texts and more abstractly between different social practices, fields, domains and scales of social life" (2010: 73). It is therefore important to use other media texts as a form of contrast which allows us to exploit the uniqueness of animation as a medium as well as how these different media platforms impact portrayals of South Asian characters:

> ….as meanings move from text to text, they are open to transformation. Meanings do not simply circulate unchanged between texts; movement of meanings involves both continuity and change and, I would add, how much continuity and how much change is contingent upon the nature of the events and the texts that mediated meanings move into. (2010: 73)

The relevance of continuity and change to this discussion relates to different forms of media texts as well as socio-political context and the extent to which these have had an impact on representations of the South Asian "Other." This chapter will therefore begin with a discussion on how religion has been utilised by Japanese and Indian government

organisations to deliberately maintain a system of assumed background knowledge which is often rooted in myth or misconception. In an effort to examine the degree to which South Asianness is "Othered" through religious culture, it is also important to consider representations of the "Self" in the Japanese mediascape and the role religion may or may not play in these depictions.

In order to determine to what extent religious culture is used in media constructions of Japaneseness and a Japanese "Self," I will be drawing from the work of Mitsutoshi Horii (2018). Horii discusses in great depth the landscape of religious culture in Japan, starting with a focus on the term religion, or the Japanese translation *shūkyō* developed in the 19th century to make sense of Western-centric understandings of religion and faith-based practice (2018: 9). Horii argues that the term religion is at once both meaningless and meaningful; it is an "empty signifier" to which cultural and social meaning is ascribed (2018: 23; 27). In this chapter I extrapolate on this notion of the term being at once symbolic but also not, that Japaneseness and a Japanese "Self" may be determined through either an absence of spirituality and faith, or through Buddhism and/or Shintoism. The immediate Japanese translation of *shūkyō* is determined as being centred around the main world religions but is not deemed appropriate to describe the existence of Buddhist and Shinto institutions in Japanese society, which are instead viewed as a part of culture and tradition. In discussing how constructions of the Japanese "Self" are usually unmarked by any strong adherence to faith or religion, it is important to consider *Nihonjinron* which homogenises and essentialises Japaneseness as a cultural monolith. In this chapter, *Nihonjinron* will be examined through the prism of religious culture. By drawing on the discussions of religious culture and Japanese cultural identity by Mitsutoshi Horii and Harumi Befu, I will be examining how, if at all, Japaneseness is defined through religious culture and whether it is used to add another

layer of cultural exclusivity and homogeneity within *Nihonjinron* discourse. In doing so, I can then further explore to what extent the Japanese "Self" is culturally contrasted against the South Asian "Other" through the dimension of religious culture.

We can also expand on Horii's explanation of the term "religion" as an empty signifier to determine their use in the construction of South Asians, allowing the exploration of two main points within this chapter: 1) How South Asians may be "Othered" and measured against the Japanese "Self" through religious culture and 2) how these portrayals play into power structures and hierarchies within South Asian communities.

This analysis must also consider theoretical framework on the representation of race: namely the construction of "Self" and "Other." To what extent is the Japanese "Self" defined through Buddhist spirituality whilst the South Asian "Other" is defined through Hinduism and Buddhism or Islam (depending on national affiliation)? What are the ideological implications of these representations? To explore constructions of the "Self" through the lens of race and culture I will be using John G Russell's discussion on cultural constructions of the Japanese "Self" which exist in tandem and close association with Whiteness to be distinguished from an Asian "Other" (2017: 4). Spivak's work on depictions of the "Other," specifically how subalterns are constructed subjects rather than real representations or projections of subaltern voices and realities is also central to the analysis of South Asians in Japanese animation (1994: 66). Although her analysis focuses on India, Spivak's discussion highlights how it is always the dominant groups and forces of a country that are used for its representation as "Other" and self-representation (1994: 78-79). Of pertinence is how Spivak points out a gap in intersectionality when it comes to constructions of the subaltern, with regards to the caste system and the subaltern woman (1994: 82-83). These two issues combine in a discussion on

how representations of the caste system are largely feminised and relegated to narratives surrounding India and Hinduism. Gender also becomes relevant in a further examination of the representation of the caste system as well as depictions of South Asian identities that are not definitively Indian. In order to navigate this discussion, I draw from Laura Mulvey's cinematic theory of the male gaze. Mulvey's original work on the subject of cinematic gaze determines that the camera assumes a male perspective and point of view. Narratives and visuals are therefore built around a "male gaze" (1989: 58). This "gaze" therefore constructs the world around the camera, including various social groups, according to this perspective. Women are constructed in a manner that is hypersexual and objectifying according to the male gaze (1989: 62-63). In the context of this research, I use the term gaze to identify the degree to which constructions of South Asian femininity are rooted in a Japanese "gaze" or constructed perspective which is "Othered" through both race and gender.

After the historic-religious context has been set up, I will move onto analyse the following *anime* texts: the series *Kuroshitsuji* (Shinohara, 2008-2009) and the animated adaptations of Osamu Tezuka's *manga Tezuka Osamu no Buddha - Akai Sabaku yo! Utsukushiku* (Morishita, 2011) and *Yuugo: Kōshōnin* (*Yugo: The Negotiator*) (Kishi, 2004). These three animations were initially released between 2004 and 2011, the first being *Yuugo: Kōshōnin*. *Kuroshitsuji* was released in the UK in 2011 by *Animax*, three years after its original broadcast in Japan whereas *Tezuka Osamu no Buddha - Akai Sabaku yo! Utsukushiku* has not seemed to have secured the same UK-wide release. *Yuugo: Kōshōnin* was licensed to air in the UK by *Anime Network*, a British programming block which airs Japanese animations. It was also part of an *anime* season at The Barbican in London in 2007 where the first three

episodes were screened and introduced by Helen McCarthy[1].

I will be examining *Kuroshitsuji* and *Buddha* in relation to the representation of Hinduism and Buddhism in Japanese animation. *Kuroshitsuji* was chosen as it remains a popular and internationally recognisable series more than ten years after its release and therefore presents another example of South Asian representation in mainstream media. This is also a period drama, taking place in Victorian England prompting a discussion on the establishment of the "Self" and to what extent Japaneseness is being culturally aligned with British Whiteness at the height of British imperialism. It is against this backdrop of cultural politics that a discussion of South Asian representation is situated and discussed. To what extent does this series use religion to construct a form of Indianness rooted in stereotypes to contrast culturally against an established racial and cultural "Self"? *Kuroshitsuji* and *Buddha* also both offer insight and exploration of the issues surrounding the caste system, particularly through the use of female characters. This discussion demands a further exploration of the work by Gayatri Spivak as well as the real-life problems that exist due to caste systems across South Asia to better situate its representation in Japanese medias and animation.

As we will also see, *Kuroshitsuji* and the setting of Victorian England provide a rich ground for exploring how the politics of race, ethnicity and culture are constructed. Along with *Buddha*, *Kuroshitsuji* also examines the issue of the caste-system in Hinduism. Considering the more recent *manga* publication, *Baahubali* (Fukaya 2018), based off a South Indian movie (Rajamouli, 2015) and wider media franchise which has been accused of upholding

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[1] Joe., 2007. 'London Barbican anime Screening Details for October 2007 until June 2008.' *Otaku News*, 25 Sept. 2007, https://www.otakunews.com/Article/1211/london-barbican-*anime*-screening-details-for-october-2007-until-june-2008.

casteist stereotypes, this points us to the question as to whether the critical issue of the problematic caste system is only being addressed as a means of "Othering" Hinduism and by consequence, Indianness. Whilst one of the themes of the discussion will be the extent to which Indianness is shown as having a cultural overlap with Japan through Buddhism, this discussion also entails understanding how Hinduism (and by association Indianness) may be "Othered" to show its contrast and difference to a Japanese "Self" which, like Indianness, is a construction.

This chapter also explores South Asian identities which are definitively not Indian, the representation of which in Japanese animation remains a relatively new subject of academic discussion. *Yuugo: Kōshōnin* is an animated series featuring a plot arc set almost entirely against the backdrop of Pakistan. Among animated series and movies, this was the only representation of Pakistan that could be found. This immediately speaks to the high visibility of India and Indianness in constructions and depictions of South Asia and South Asians and the relative invisibility of characters from South Asian backgrounds that are not defined as Indian. This invisibility can be starkly seen in discussions of South Asia within the Japanese mediascape. Public broadcaster *NHK* runs a website called *kokoza,* aimed at high school aged audiences featuring a number of different subjects and topics presented in an educational format. As part of the geography area, there is a section which specifically discusses South Asia but which focuses largely on the case study of India. Each subject covered on the website consists of a PDF file factsheet, descriptions, data, and other information on the website as well as a transcript of videos with the hosts of the programme who interview various experts according to the subject they are covering (in this instance, Professor Sakura Tomozawa). The main description only refers to India by name and is centred in the discussion as the other countries are only referred to when mentioning their geographic

location in relation to India, and because India becomes the main case study[2]. I examine the reasons behind this flagging of Indianness as a dominant mode of representation in constructions of South Asianness and suggest that this is in part rooted in systems of background knowledge but also how these representations may be in part due to the special relationship between Japan and India. I also consider *manga* representations of Afghanistan and Pakistan through the webcomics *Afuganisu-tan* (Tima-king, 2003-2005) and *Pakisu-tan* (Tima-king, 2005). This will allow for a slightly wider exploration on the depiction of South Asians in Japanese animation which is otherwise dominated by representations of India.

2.1 Religion And National Identity In The Japanese Mediascape

Mitsutoshi Horii discusses the use of the term "religion" in the Japanese context and in doing so interrogates the meaning of the very word itself. Horii establishes that "religion" should be viewed as a cultural vacuum and is ascribed meaning through various socio-political and historical contexts (2018: 24). This refutes the idea that there is a universal experience and understanding of religion and that instead religion must be viewed as being more complex and dependent on several environmental factors rather than purely existing ideologically. Horii describes religion as an "empty signifier" in Japan (2018: 24) and it is through this understanding I discuss the representation of South Asians in terms of religious culture. The religious culture of the South Asian "Other," however, has become a focal point of representation. Religious culture exists as a straightforward way of marking out the South

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[2] Tomozawa, K., 2021. 'NHK高校講座 | ライブラリー | 地理 | 第30回 現代世界の地誌的考察 【現代世界の諸地域】編 世界のさまざまな地域を見てみよう 〜南アジア〜.' *NHK*. [online] Available at: <https://www.nhk.or.jp/kokokoza/library/tv/chiri/archive/chapter030.html> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

Asian "Other" to compare against the unmarked "Self" which is, by contrast, more fluid and remains either unmarked by religion and religious culture or by Shintoism and/or Buddhism. Does the unmarked nature of the Japanese "Self" in the context of religious culture speak to a construction of Japaneseness that is rooted in an ideology of Japanese cultural uniqueness?

The 1995 film *Fukai Kawa* by Kei Kumai is based on a 1993 novel by Shusaku Endō, a Japanese Catholic writer who spent much of his career attempting to reconcile his Catholic faith with his Japanese cultural identity (Hagiwara, 2000: 125). Catholicism, in Endō's own views, is viewed as incompatible with Japanese society and culture. Harumi Befu has contended that *Nihonjinron* itself constitutes a type of religious practice in Japan whereby characteristics specific to the Japanese race and culture supposedly form the basis on which Japan as a country and society operates (2001: 112-113). In the context of religion, Endō clearly agreed that Japaneseness may be identified and characterised by a lack of adherence to faith, spirituality, and organised religion (Hagiwara, 2000: 127). The dilemma and clash of cultural identities experienced by Shusaku Endō is evidenced throughout his works and particularly through *Fukai Kawa*, later adapted into a movie. *Fukai Kawa* tells the story of a group of Japanese tourists on a holiday trip in India, most of whom are on an emotional journey in a quest to find fulfilment. Takao Hagiwara argues that Endō chose the setting of India to explore his religious and cultural identities due to India being the birthplace of many world religions and existing in a cultural middle ground between the monotheist West and unreligious (according to Endō) Japan (2000: 147). Immediately we see, therefore, how India is constructed as a country that is primarily marked by spirituality and religious culture in cultural contrast to the Japanese "Self," including many of the Japanese characters who are disappointed to not find the spiritual fulfilment they thought they were seeking and would find in India.

Whilst at once existing as a separate category to other institutions operating in the public sphere, religion or *shūkyō* is a highly ambiguous and nuanced term in present day Japan. Quoting a 2016 Japanese General Social Survey, Horii highlights how over two thirds of the respondents do not explicitly adhere to or proclaim to be a member of any religion. Nevertheless, it is important to note that of those (approximately a third) who took their family's religion as theirs, more than half considered it to be Buddhism (2018: 92). Horii argues that Buddhism and Shinto, though prevalent in the Japanese landscape in the form of temples and shrines, are largely relegated as cultural rather than being associated with the religious or *shūkyō* (2018: 95). As with any country or society, it is important to recognise how any cultural landscape is never one fixed reality and that there is a great deal of nuance and context relevant to its discussion and representation. I argue that nuance and diversity is largely afforded to representations of the Japanese "Self" in Japanese animation. The "Self" in this chapter may be defined through Buddhism, agnosticism, even repulsion against religion whereas the South Asian "Other" is habitually summed up through a series of religious stereotypes visually achieved through cultural marking and coding. This coding categorises and flattens the religious diversity of South Asianness and draws on globalised stereotypes to produce cultural markers which are to be politically deconstructed by viewers.

2.2 Religion As A Cultural, National, And Racial Marker

In a 2016 episode of the long running animated comedy series *Family Guy* (MacFarlane 1999-present)*,* character Brian travels to India with his friend Stewie after falling in love with a tech support worker named Padma. Upon arriving in India, most Indian characters are marked by a *tilak*, a religious cultural marking placed on the forehead. When, due to a

cultural faux pas made by Brian, he and Stewie are attacked by members of the Indian public, the latter advises him to press the "dot" or *tilak*. Doing so causes the "Indians" to shut down as if they are robots. This scene is a primary example of how religious culture is used as a reductive "accent" in representations of Indianness and is enabled through the exploitation of cultural markers.

In examining the context of the United States of America, Khyati Y. Joshi discusses the "racialization of religions," where the cultural marking of the South Asian "Other" through religious culture results in a seemingly symbiotic relationship between national, cultural, and racial identity (2006: 216). Joshi confirms how Indianness has frequently been flattened and its diversity erased through an assumed background knowledge (which is frequently displayed in media depictions) that reduces national identities down to a majority (such as Hinduism and Indianness) but is also rooted in ideological stances that blur the boundaries between racial, religious, and national identities. The dangerous nature of these reductive processes of "Othering" and representations is (sometimes unknowingly) feeding into ideological stances which intentionally reduce religious culture down to race and nationality. For example, the post 9/11 era and subsequent acts of Islamophobic violence have seen a number of Sikhs and other non-Muslim men being misidentified as Muslims and attacked or subject to institutional prejudice. These misidentifications are typically caused by the victims' race paired with a form of religious attire which, due to its perceived "Otherness" and use by someone who is visibly South Asian, is deconstructed by the perpetrators (who lack religious literacy) of these hate crimes as "Muslim" (Joshi, 2006: 223; Jhutti-Johal and Singh, 2019: 3). Assumed background knowledge rooted in an ideological standpoint can also be utilised to further a political agenda. In the context of India, religion is at the forefront of creating an assumed background knowledge that roots Indianness in the cultural identity of select

religious groups.

India is often (mistakenly) understood to be the birthplace of Buddhism and Buddha. Narendra Modi, the Prime Minister of India, has also claimed this to prove that India is a country that practises non-violence in an attempt to quell criticisms of his tenure as Prime Minister[3]. Amid growing concerns about the rise in hate crimes, religious intolerance, and economic inequality since his election, India has seen a significant rise in right-wing religious nationalism. Narendra Modi is a champion of the *Hindutva* movement – an extremist faction of political Hinduism that has enshrined its political agenda through groups such as the hard-line RSS (Rashtriya Swayamsevak Sangh), and the political party BJP (Bharatiya Janata Party). *Hindutva* seeks to define Indian national consciousness through Hinduism, in other words it is a form of religious cultural nationalism which excludes religious minorities, especially Muslim communities in recent years. In 2014, Indian television channels ran an advertisement for the upcoming Cricket World Cup, featuring a hypothetical match between India and Pakistan. The Indian audience is shown to be a mixture of Hindu, Sikh, and religiously unmarked participants and therefore marks India as a pluralistic nation whilst the Pakistani audience is exclusively Muslim. Indianness here is clearly defined by a range of different religions *except* Islam and the "Other" is marked exclusively by Islam, despite Muslims being the largest religious minority in India[4]. These attempts to politically construct Indianness through religious exclusion by politicians and media are nothing new, as *Hindutva*

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[3] Panthi & Kishore (2016) 'Yes, Yes, Buddha Was Born in Nepal, Please No More Debate About Buddha's Birthplace.' *Huffington Post.* [online]. Available from: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/kishor-panthi/yes-yes-buddha-was-born-i_b_9989224.html (Accessed 31 August 2018).

[4] Krishna, T.M., 2014. 'You are Muslim, not Indian.' *The Hindu.* [online] 29 Mar. Available at: <https://www.thehindu.com/features/magazine/you-are-muslim-not-indian/article5844197.ece> [Accessed 1 May 2018].

has existed for decades, but are certainly now at the forefront due to Narendra Modi's status as Prime Minister. These exclusions do not only encompass minorities such as Sikhs and Christians, but also Hindu minorities such as *Dalits*. Whilst Hinduism is therefore central to how Indianness is defined, Buddhism has become equally important in affirming the close ties between India and Japan. In fact, Modi has been utilising Buddhism to reshape India's relationship with many East Asian countries as a part of his political "Look East" policy[5].

A very vivid example of both the homogenisation of India as a Hindu nation and the use of India as the birthplace of Buddhism to draw ties with East Asia is former Japanese Prime Minister Shinzō Abe's 2015 visit to India, where Abe and Modi attended the *Ganga Aarti* in Varanasi. *Ganga Aarti* is a special prayer which is performed simultaneously in the evening by temples in the Holy cities of Haridwar, Rishikesh and Varanasi as an offering to the Goddess Ganga. With Abe as a participant during his state visit to India, this was a carefully orchestrated media event covered by various news channels. The two heads of state were dressed in similar, traditional Indian attire and Abe actively participated in the Hindu prayers. Later in the year, during the 2015 "Shared Values and Democracy in Asia" symposium in Tokyo, Abe gave an address which strongly incorporated topics of spirituality, such as how the different representations of Buddha in Myanmar, Thailand and Japan mirror the cultural peculiarities of each nation. The concluding passage of this address points to a spiritual kinship between Hinduism and Buddhism (and therefore India and Japan) where he recounts his experience of the *Ganga Aarti* and how the Hindu prayers had reminded him of Buddhist

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[5] Chaudhury, D., 2017. 'Buddhism: How Buddhist outreach has always been a key element of PM Narendra Modi's Act East Policy.' *The Economic Times* [online]. Available at: <https://economictimes.indiatimes.com/news/politics-and-nation/how-buddhist-outreach-has-always-been-a-key-element-of-pm-narendra-modis-act-east-policy/articleshow/59168093.cms> [Accessed 2 Jan. 2017].

rituals, and that the teachings of Buddha connected both nations[6] . Whilst diplomatically

opening up to affinitive transnationalism through religious culture, the Indian government is

determined to put Hindu religious culture as *the* focal point of national identity and cultural

heritage of Indian national identity. This determines why the racialization of South Asian

religious identities and reduction into the majority are sometimes unwittingly placed within a

wider system of background knowledge. The flattening of racial, cultural, and national

identities into a system of assumed background knowledge is rooted into an ideological

stance which makes automatic connections through the use of visual markers. These markers

have in turn, become tropes and stereotypes typically used in representations of South

Asianness. This is made clear through the turning of a state visit into a religious prayer which

was mainly used by both leaders to gain further political capital, but also helped to visually

cement Modi's and the *BJP*'s ideological stance of religious nationalism which asserts a

particular construction of Hinduism as representative of Indianness. I present here an original

approach to my analytical methodology by asking and exploring the following question: to

what degree are these political ideologies feeding into media discourses and representations

of South Asianness whereby these depictions are homogenised and reduced down to fixed

ideological boundaries which simplify and conflate national, cultural, and racial identities?

2.3 Religious Symbolism - Political Semantics

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[6] Abe, S., 2016. 'Address by Prime Minister Shinzō Abe at the "Shared Values and Democracy in Asia"
Symposium (Speeches and Statements by the Prime Minister).' *Prime Minister of Japan and His Cabinet*.
[online] Available at: <https://japan.kantei.go.jp/97_abe/statement/201601/1215564_10999.html> [Accessed 6
Nov. 2018].

Norman Fairclough stresses that textual analysis of media texts should be a multimodal form of analysis incorporating various elements. With regards to media texts, semiotic forms of analysis and understanding are among the most important (2010: 7). In the case of race representation, semiotics (more than language) are often central in conveying information to audiences. With the depiction of South Asians this is particularly pertinent where assumed and skewed background knowledge is recycled into visual tropes. Khyati Y. Joshi summarises not only the racialization of religion through its use as a cultural and racial marker, but how this racialization is conveyed through the use of visual markers which have become stereotypes and tropes of nationality and race rather than religion. Joshi specifically uses the example of the *tilak* and how a hate group in the US named themselves "dot-busters" and would target Indian Americans in the late 1980s. In contrast to the post 9/11 climate of Islamophobia, these attacks were racially motivated and had nothing to do with religion, and yet the group titled themselves by (often mistakenly) conflating the religious and racial identities of their South Asian victims (Joshi, 2006: 219). Although pre-dating the post 9/11 wave of Islamophobia in the USA, the "dot-busters" share an ideological foundation of background knowledge with those carrying out anti-Muslim violence. Even though one is rooted in race and another in ethnicity, both sets of hate crimes demonstrate an ideological stance whereby the assumed background knowledge it produces racializes religious cultures and associates them with a common enemy or "Other."

In animation, minorities are often highlighted through cultural markers that are often (but not always) conflated with their national, racial, and religious identity (Davé, 2013: 3). Japanese animation is certainly no exception to the rule, and it is clear that Indianness is homogenised through religious modes of cultural expression such as the turban in *Tsuritama* (Nakamura, 2012), the *tilak* in *Kōdo Giasu* (Taniguchi, 2006-2007)*, and *Kuroshitsuji* (Shinohara, 2008-

2009). These more specific cultural markers immediately highlight not just religious affiliation but also conflation with national identity. Whilst this is not unusual, I point it out to show how the national identity of different South Asian groups is often homogenised into fixed preconceptions and stereotypes surrounding religious culture. This flattening of culture allows for its representation to be fixed into what the host nation/culture imagines it to be. Shilpa S. Davé determines, through examining the representation of South Asians in Hollywood cinema, how spirituality has become a commodified and globalised cultural marker, usually of Indianness: "Indian pop spirituality represents another Indian accent that can be consumed and performed just like a vocal accent can be performed." (2013: 90). Davé discusses this in context of *The Love Guru* (Schnabel, 2008) which is written by and starring Mike Myers (2013: 101). Myers used cultural markers and stereotypes of Indianness such as a turban and long moustache in the movie poster to "perform" an image of Indianness centred around Hindu spirituality that was confused, steeped in stereotypes, and flattened to "Other" Hinduism.

The Hindu symbols and customs that are presented in Japanese animation similarly tend to be mixed or confused but sometimes go further by not even being relevant to the characters, yet they are unequivocally equated with Indianness. For example, the scientist Rakshata in *Kōdo Giasu* (Taniguchi, 2006-2008) who works for the main protagonist/antagonist Lelouch as a weapons developer and whose Indianness is immediately visible from her *tilak*. Although it is established that she is indeed of Indian origin she displays no other religious traits either visually or through her actions/personality. Within this narrative, the skin tone is the same for both Britannian (the occupying North Americans) and Japanese characters. Rakshata's "Otherness" therefore is indicated by her skin tone but her Indianness is marked by a *tilak*. This is modernised and revamped however from the traditional red circle (this shape and

colour is more representative of the *tilak*), as it comes in the shape of a blue diamond. The next chapter will further elaborate on the character of Rakshata and how this version of the *tilak* is a mark of both Indianness and Modern India. The focus on cultural markers such as the *tilak* in this chapter, however, is to do with how Japanese animation exhibits a clear visual pattern where the construction of the Indian "Other" is concerned, with the same religious symbols acting as cultural and racial markers. It could also be argued however, that such symbols - though problematic are sometimes used to assert a character's uniqueness or individualism through cultural hybridity and (re)innovation.

I will also be examining how spirituality is similarly racialized and aligned with national identity where South Asian Muslims and Islamic spirituality are represented. As Indianness and Hinduism sit within a system of knowledge which assume an immediate link between the two and project it onto a character, so is Islam associated with particular South Asian nations – especially Pakistan. I examine how the diversity of South Asian identities are similarly constructed through a narrow system of background knowledge in Japanese animation.

2.4 Hinduism, Buddhism And The Indian "Other"

This section compares two main texts – Osamu Tezuka's *Buddha* (including the movie adaptation by Kōzō Morishita) and the animated horror series *Kuroshitsuji* (2008) based on Yana Toboso's *manga* which began serialisation in 2006. *Buddha* was released on May 28, 2011, with local Japanese Buddhist temples actively taking part in the marketing through posters and other merchandise. Being released during the 750th memorial service of the Japanese Buddhist monk Shinran, it is clear to see how the distributors of the film capitalised on interlinking the religious motif of the film with local public spaces and collective memory.

The key narrative difference between these two animations is that the movie of *Buddha* features an entirely South Asian "cast" whereas South Asian characters appear as a cultural and racial anomaly in *Kuroshitsuji*. As we will see, a subplot within *Kuroshitsuji* which starts from episode thirteen, is used to establish two supporting (but irregularly appearing) characters who are of Indian origin. I start with *Kuroshitsuji* to first examine how the Indian "Other" is constructed in relation to the Japanese "Self."

Kuroshitsuji begins with the protagonist, a young teenage earl, the 12-year-old Ciel Phantomhive, in a dungeon asking a demon to help him kill his captors. This forms a contract between the two and the demon conducts Ciel's request before taking on the shape of a human butler. The series then follows Ciel's day to day life taking on his late father's duties as Queen Victoria's "dog" watching over the world of organised crime. From an affluent background, Ciel resides at the Phantomhive estate maintained by a group of hapless but loyal and military-trained team of servants headed by the demon butler, Sebastian. Ciel's goal as he drifts from mystery to mystery is to avenge the murder of his parents and his own torture by a mysterious religious cult. In solving many mysteries, Ciel often requires Sebastian's supernatural demonic abilities of fighting and investigation which he always completes on Ciel's order with his catchphrase "yes, my lord."

The two main protagonists establish a racial "norm" arising from the specific historical setting of *Kuroshitsuji.* Set in Victorian England, the established "norm" is inevitably constructed through a largely White European cast. Ciel is an English earl whereas Sebastian's human form permits for more racial ambiguity and has features which can be more readily identified as being Japanese to an international audience. It may also be argued that the animated bodies of the two main characters are deliberately encoded in a way that

visually blurs the boundaries between the binaries of Orientalism and Occidentalism, or more specifically Japaneseness and Whiteness. The world of Victorian England and English people has been constructed by Japanese animators, but it has been rendered so that viewers establish Whiteness as the "Self" in the universe of this series. So that Whiteness is asserted as the cultural norm in Hollywood, for example, our perspectives as audiences are immediately aligned with White protagonists as well as secondary characters, their existence is visually normalised to the extent that the appearance of the racial "Other" is more notably marked by audiences (Foster, 2003: 1-2). We are immediately introduced to the setting of the series through the perspective of Ciel, a member of the British White aristocracy, and it is this social group which is established as the "norm" of the series. The Whiteness of Japanese *anime* characters is deliberately used to distinguish the Japanese "Self" from the Asian "Other." John G Russell deconstructs this "Caucasianisation" as a practice which was first evidenced in Japanese woodblock prints during the first Sino-Japanese War - in a response to the derogatory representations of Asians by Western artists, including Japanese people. Japaneseness was visually reinvented so that it could be distinguishable (and inferred as being superior) to "Other" Asia (Russell, 2017: 34). Japaneseness in this series is deliberately identified with Caucasian Whiteness, although this blurring of race and culture is enabled by the medium of animation. Russell also argues that this style of self-representation has become deeply rooted and normalised within Japanese visual culture, citing the depiction of Japanese and Caucasian characters in *anime* and *manga* as prime examples (2017: 34). The roots of such practices have also been obscured; however, in a series such as *Kuroshitsuji* we may explore the direct relationship between how this style first developed and representations of Japaneseness in relation to "Other" Asia. The Caucasianisation of Japaneseness is the direct result of a desire to project an image of cultural and racial difference to (in this case) the non-

Japanese Asian "Other"[7].

Waiyeeh Loh further supports Russell's arguments by highlighting the Gothic style and Victorian setting of *Kuroshitsuji* as being a sartorial choice which deliberately identifies and aligns Japaneseness with the West (2012: 115-116). Minorities, particularly non-European minorities, are highly visible and typically flagged through cultural markers. The character of Lau, for example, is affirmatively marked out as an Asian "Other." His Chineseness is immediately visible to us as Soma and Agni's Indianness due to his clothes and appearance. When he is first introduced and in the majority of his appearances throughout the series, Lau is clad in a *changshan* (long shirt) and runs an opium den in London. Although his skin tone matches that of Ciel and other Caucasian characters, his most prominent and obviously Asian feature, his eyes, are constantly highlighted as he keeps them closed and rarely opens them. He is also accompanied by his mostly mute companion Ran-Mao, who sports a *cheongsam* (Chinese dress). The Caucasian "Self" of Ciel fits the cultural mould of sophisticated Britishness presented through aristocracy and privilege (Russell, 2017: 27). Though Sebastian is a demon, according to Waiyeeh Loh, he espouses character traits, tropes and phenotypes associated with both Japaneseness and Whiteness (2012: 122). This is exemplified in the first episode when, due to the ineptitude of the other house staff, Sebastian must create alternative dinner arrangements for Ciel and his house guest. At the last-minute, Sebastian re-creates a Japanese Zen garden in the mansion's courtyard and has the chef make beef *donburi*, a Japanese dish. Sebastian Michaelis embodies Japanese cultural hybridism (discussed further

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[7] The live-action movie adaptation (Ōtani and Satō, 2014) changes the setting to an alternative Georgian-era style in which the world is split into two main powers, the East and West, with the story taking place in the vague geopolitical location of "the East" in order to accommodate for the mostly Japanese cast. Themes of Western colonialism and its association with Japaneseness are carried on into the movie, however they are less pronounced as a result of solely establishing the "Self" through Japaneseness.

in chapter four) whilst also presenting racial hybridity; both he and Ciel come together to form a collective "Self" which strongly identifies Japaneseness with Caucasian Whiteness and against which "Other" Asianness may be identified and measured.

Figure ii: Toshiya, S. 2008*. Kuroshitsuji.* Ciel Phantomhive (left) and Sebastian Michaelis (right)

Prince Soma and his butler/disciple Agni are first introduced at the beginning of Episode 13. Soma and Agni are immediately framed as "Others" in London through their race, their clothes and fascination with snow. Unlike other minorities depicted in the series, these are the first characters to be rendered with brown skin. Like Lau and Ran-Mao, their ethnicity can be almost instantly identified due to their clothes and character design. Whilst Soma has a more androgynous aesthetic with long purple hair, it is Agni, his butler, who has the more significant cultural and religious markers of a grey turban and a red *tilak*. They are situated as strangers in a foreign land for the first time with no further explanation.

The narrative then switches to Scotland Yard Investigating a rich man's assault in East London, the latest in twenty similar incidents to have happened recently. The inspector in charge reads an angry letter left by the perpetrator which accuses Western culture of being blasphemous, arrogant, and rotten. With the accusation of blasphemy, there is an immediate association with religion and therefore implications of associating migrant religious culture as aggressive or violent. Ciel and Sebastian come across the scene, angering the inspector who knows and dislikes Ciel. After the inspector claims that the murderer must be Indian, Ciel remarks how most of the illegal Indian immigrants linger in the criminal underbelly of East London, upon which Scotland Yard have yet to crack down. He and Sebastian then take a walk around these pockets of criminal activity only to be confronted by a band of impoverished-looking and angry Indian migrant workers. They claim that British people are not welcome in these parts as they drag Indians to England and then drop them - making the migrants both victims and aggressors, who Ciel dismisses as "cliché thugs." This episode therefore opens with an antagonistic perception of Indians as suspected murderers and aggressive criminals.

Intervention soon arrives in the form of the Indian Prince Soma and his butler Agni. Initially, due to cultural affiliation with their compatriots, Soma, and Agni side with the labourers. At this point, Ciel angrily questions whether all Indians are such "savages" that they will randomly attack people walking down the street. After learning that it was the Indian workers who initiated the confrontation, Soma orders Agni to switch sides against their fellow compatriots. Agni easily defeats the substantial number of labourers. His entire performance (including his fight against Sebastian, during which Sebastian remarks that "he is fast") coupled with Soma's childlike demeanour set the tone for Soma and Agni to be presented as binary opposites to each other, and also "Other" versions of Ciel and Sebastian, respectively.

Figure iii: Toshiya, S. 2008. *Kuroshitsuji.* Agni (left) and Prince Soma (right)

This becomes clearer later on when Soma and Agni arrive unexpectedly and without invitation at the Phantomhive estate. It is here that a stark contrast is made between not only the Indian "Other" and the Japanese "Self," but between the Indian characters themselves. Agni radiates a strong and disciplined demeanour which is juxtaposed with the flamboyant Soma. Though at once appearing wise, knowledgeable, and clearly superior in intellect to his master, Agni discloses a desperate need to be led and guided. Agni explains how he was once a "Godless soul" that partook in all of types of sins, however Soma intervened when Agni was to be executed and gave him a second chance. Since that day, Agni reveres Soma and wishes for nothing but to serve him and make him happy. Sebastian smartly remarks under his breath that he finds the real Gods to be unworthy of praise out of Agni's earshot. Here, Japanese Sebastian is deriding what he views as Agni's backwards adherence to religion, faith and "the Gods." A clear cultural distinction is made between the Indian characters who

are largely motivated by their spirituality and religion and Sebastian and Ciel who are far more secular in nature. Sebastian and Agni are also seen to go head-to-head in their abilities and skills. Their relationship as binary opposites is firmly cemented in a fencing duel between the two and a tense split screen of the fight just before the interval which visually presents them as equals. Agni, alongside the rest of the Indian characters presented in this series, is no doubt "Othered" - but he is also shown to be culturally sophisticated and postured, affording him a dignity which allows him to compete with Sebastian on an equal level.

Soma and Agni are not just highlighted as visual but also cultural anomalies in British society through their strict adherence to faith and religious customs, which are routinely undermined by Ciel and Sebastian. Soma and Agni are not just binary opposites to one another, but also to their "Self" counterparts of Ciel and Sebastian. This is evidenced in their prayers to a stone statue of the Goddess Kali the next morning (which has been somehow transported to the Phantomhive estate). The prayers interrupt Ciel's violin lesson with Sebastian, as Ciel is playing a difficult piece by Bach. Ciel's lesson is an example of European culture being used to create a benchmark of civilisation against which Indianness is marked as "uncivilised." Ciel's perfect violin recital is suddenly drowned out by a low-pitched murmuring, the source of which is Soma and Agni. They are sat cross-legged in front of the statue of Kali, rubbing and raising their hands as they say unintelligible prayers. Religious culture is woven into the personality, visuals, and narratives of each Indian character in this series. From the use of cultural markers, explicit scenes which exploit the spirituality of Soma and Agni, to the storylines and motivation of each character, *Kuroshitsuji* constructs a traditionally stereotypical image of Indianness, deeply steeped in religious culture, at times to comical and even ludicrous effect. Parallels are frequently drawn between the two protagonists, Ciel and

Sebastian. Hindu spirituality and devotion to faith have been heavily used in the development of Soma and Agni's characters. It is also used, however, as a source of ridicule and mockery, acting in opposition to the two protagonists whose relationship with the supernatural is based on convenience and mutual benefit rather than faith and devotion. Hinduism is portrayed as irrational and at times, intimidating, existing outside of cultural norms associated with the "Self." Despite these negative connotations, the characters of Soma and Agni themselves are also shown to become friends and allies of Ciel and Sebastian and therefore become intimately associated with the "Self."

The construction of "Self" and "Other" through religious culture becomes more blurred in *Buddha* through a crossover between Buddhism and Hinduism. Although the adaptation of *Buddha* is not only allowed a new visual platform on which Hinduism and Buddhism interlink but it also breaks the mould of what is seen in both Japan and the West as an "Other" religion. The seriousness of the subject matter and the original *manga*'s author, Osamu Tezuka (dubbed "the godfather of *anime*") are perhaps factors contributing to the more sombre nature of this animation. There is little reduction or manipulation of characters' bodies. *Kuroshitsuji*, belonging to the horror genre, frequently features comic overtones, such scenes are emphasised by the *chibi* rendering of characters. *Chibi*, meaning "small," refers to the excessively distorted characters which range from large heads to characters who are faceless or have overly simplified/exaggerated features. *Buddha*, however, is not one of these animations. This immediately shows us the seriousness with which the subject matter is dealt.

The film itself starts with a short parable of an Indian *Brahmin* saint - Saint Gosala struggling through a blizzard in the Himalayas. With the introduction of Hindu Saint Gosala, a direct link is highlighted between Hinduism and Buddhism. Gosala's disciples are shown as

a sea of shaven heads in simple clothing, strongly resonating with images of Buddhist monks and so immediately setting up a direct visual connection between *Brahmin* Hinduism and Buddhism. It is important that the first character the audience is introduced to is a religious scholar/saint, mirroring Japan's first encounter with what was considered "The Holy Land" to early Japanese Buddhists. From the depiction of Saint Gosala to the following narrative centring around protagonist Prince Siddhartha, the movie depicts examples of both Hindu and Buddhist imagery co-existing side by side. It is made clear in the *manga* that the characters we are seeing are from Nepal and, later on, North-East India and that significant effort has been taken to replicate the time in which Prince Siddhartha was born. We see different tribes with varying cultural practices, unequal power structures which create rigid hierarchies and importantly an almost equal number of male and female characters. Though this may not seem particularly significant, where Indian characters in other animations tend to be limited to one character in a series and are usually male, equal renderings of both female and male characters is a much-welcomed change from the norm.

The construction of South Asianness in *Buddha* sits differently to most representations in Japanese animation and visual culture as the normalised cultural and racial "Self" are South Asians. As the story is set in ancient Nepal (albeit is referred to by the website as India), South Asian characters are a part of the racial and cultural "Self" of this particular series. As a result, the design of characters is diverse, ranging in skin tones and character designs. The depiction of Prince Siddhartha/Gautama Buddha and his family, however, portrays him as being the fairest skinned. Buddha himself is therefore constructed in a manner which is consistent with how Japanese and Caucasian White characters are typically constructed and therefore aesthetically problematises the representation of race in this series. Both the visuals and narrative determine that Prince Siddhartha/Gautama Buddha is not fully a part of this

society, that he does not culturally belong within this practice of spirituality hence his spiritual journey which leads to enlightenment. This adds a layer of racial ambiguity to his character and can almost be seen as an attempt to assimilate and impose a racial and cultural Japanese "Self" onto the character of Gautama Buddha in order to make him more palatable to Japanese audiences. The cultural and racial politics of representation in *Buddha* are not as cut and dry as *Kuroshitsuji*, although it maintains a cultural contrast that constructs South Asian religious culture through tradition and sometimes barbaric practices. The construction of South Asianness in the movie is also brought into question with regards to homogenisation through national and cultural identity.

Like the *manga*, there is great attention paid to historical accuracy and in respectfully portraying the rich culture of the subcontinent at the time. This is achieved through the detail devoted to settings such as palaces, jewellery and clothing that differentiate between subcultures and subgroups of people. It is common in *manga* to provide readers with extra information about the story's settings through spreads of maps and detailed descriptions. *Buddha* is no exception, as the *manga* includes a map which demonstrates key moments in Buddha's life. This map sets out in detail the journey of Gautama Buddha, from his birthplace to his travels around the Himalayas and North Eastern India and therefore establishes the genre of this story as a dramatic retelling of historical events. It is important to emphasise again that it is most likely thanks to the medium of animation and *manga* that this story was granted a level of authenticity.

It becomes clear, however, that the birthplace of Prince Siddhartha is asserted as being India by the creators and producers of the animation. Firstly, by Osamu Tezuka's official website, where in a character description of Prince Siddhartha it is mentioned that "Siddhartha" was

not an uncommon name in India at the time [8]. Secondly from an article featuring an interview with the director of the first movie (Kōzō Morishita) where a brief synopsis of the movie (preceding the interview) also situates Siddhartha's birthplace as being India [9]. Nepalese migrants are not a negligible community, rather they make up the largest South Asian migrant community in Japan and have been part of a trend of migration since the 1980s. This simple act of attributing Prince Siddhartha's birthplace as India rather than Nepal is a clear demonstration of South Asianness becoming homogenised and assimilated into Indianness. Attributing Prince Siddhartha and his birthplace as India again comes from a position of assumed background knowledge which associates the origins of Buddhism, and therefore the birthplace of Buddha himself, with India rather than Nepal. This system overlaps with but does not necessarily belong to the same system of background knowledge propagated by Narendra Modi, one which is positioned within his own ideological stance of religious nationalism and political propaganda.

The practice of homogenisation is one element of how the use of religious culture in constructions of South Asianness typically falls into the trap of being (often unconsciously) within an ideological stance of religious, cultural, and potentially racial nationalism. Another crucial element is the depiction of subaltern communities, in particular representations of "lower-caste" women.

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[8] ブッダ｜キャラクター｜手塚治虫. 2021. *Tezuka Osamu Official*. [online] Available at: <https://tezukaosamu.net/jp/character/301.html> [Accessed 4 May 2021].

[9] Morishita, K. 2021. '森下孝三監督「『ブッダ』は命の大切さを描いたエンターテインメント」｜最新の映画ニュースなら.' *Movie Walker Press*. [online] Available at: <https://moviewalker.jp/news/article/22286/> [Accessed 21 May 2021].

2.5 The Feminisation Of The Caste System

Gayatri Spivak in her book *Can the Subaltern Speak?* examines former subaltern countries

and the representation of further marginalised groups within them. In her study of the agency

of these more underprivileged groups such as subaltern women, Spivak notes how these

groups are frequently spoken for and are ultimately posited as subjects through the lens or

gaze of dominant or oppressing groups and forces (1994: 70). The most notable example that

Spivak uses is that of *sati*, a tradition among certain South Asian communities of widows

being burnt alive on their husband's funeral pyre. Whilst the British Empire banned this

practice, Spivak demonstrates how the subalternity and diminished agency of subaltern

women is highlighted by their peripheral inclusion in mainstream debate around *sati*. The

opposing arguments, one constructed by a colonial gaze and the other by dominant native

groups and forces among subaltern communities converge in their homogenisation of

subaltern women and denial of platforms to the marginalised groups themselves (1994: 93).

A recent controversy on British Public broadcaster BBC brings the alignment of dominant

forces over subaltern women into focus. The newly appointed leader of the Muslim Council

Zara Mohammed was invited onto the Radio 4 programme *BBC Woman's Hour* (Collins and

Quigley, 1946-present) with host Emma Barnett. The tone of the interview was heavily

criticised by intersectional groups for Emma Barnett's "hostile" line of question which

focused on female subjugation in Islam and Muslim communities, repeatedly asking about

the topic of female *Imams* (religious scholars and leaders who typically lead Muslim

congregations in prayer, of which there are many) rather than focusing on what Mohammed's

new role signified for many Muslim women in Britain. The host also frequently interrupted

Zara Mohammed which clearly shows that in 2021, subaltern women continue to face challenges in being able to speak for themselves [10]. Further to this discussion is the concept of dominant and oppressing forces operating within subaltern communities or societies that have themselves been colonised or dominated. In order to illustrate these hierarchies, Spivak looks to how India's history has been largely constructed from a *Brahmin* ("upper-caste") male perspective (1994: 77). Uma Chakravarti also discusses how scholarship and representations of the caste system often perpetuate a patriarchal, *Brahmin* ideology part of which presumes consent of participation in the caste-system from those marginalised by it (2018: 6-8). A presumption of consent to these systems of inequality and a lack of listening to subaltern voices at times leads to the reproduction of semiotic codes which uphold systems of power such as colonialism and patriarchy. In this section I build on Gayatri Spivak's work to argue that in Japanese animation, "lower-caste" women's bodies have become a space through which their marginalisation is not only exploited but used to perpetuate Orientalist constructions of Indianness. In the same way that the *sati* was posited as a backwards tradition from which Indian women had to be rescued by their White saviours, so too is the caste-system used to mark a clear distinction between religious culture of the civilised Japanese "Self" and the semi-civilised Indian "Other." I wish to understand how these issues are constructed and explored under a Japanese "gaze."

John Lie discusses how systems of knowledge regarding "Other" Asian femininity revolve around stereotypes of submissiveness and victimisation from a system of patriarchy and

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[10] Mohdin, 2021. 'BBC under fire over 'strikingly hostile' interview of Muslim Council of Britain head.' [online] *The Guardian*. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/media/2021/feb/17/bbc-under-fire-over-strikingly-hostile-interview-of-muslim-council-of-britain-head> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

misogyny and demonstrates this through perceptions of Arab women from a Japanese perspective and in turn perceptions of Japanese women through a Western perspective (2000: 79). Lie's discussion certainly overlaps with Spivak's assertion that discussions surrounding subaltern women (or in the case of Lie's work, "Other" women) lack a nuanced perspective or lens (1994: 79). This underlies the portrayal of women through the "gaze," and specifically, how the Japanese "gaze" is typically used in constructions of marginalised Indian women, including groups and communities impacted by the caste system.

The caste system, though officially outlawed in present-day India, remains prevalent in various sections of Indian society (Singh et. al, 2018: 2). Believed to be over three thousand years old, the caste system is a concept that upholds social hierarchy initially based on a class division decided by and at birth. This social stratification involves *Brahmins* who are self-established as the ruling class and were deemed the caste of teachers and priests, then the *Kshatriyas* (warriors and rulers), *Vaishyas* (farmers, traders and merchants), *Vaisya* and *Sudras* (labourers) and outside of the supposed realm of purity are *Dalits* (also known as outcasts or untouchables who were relegated to the menial tasks of street sweepers and latrine cleaners, although this persists to a degree today, caste does now not necessarily determine one's economic class in Indian society). Beyond this, however, there are many other groups, divisions and subdivisions of caste groups which are based around roles and hierarchies within society (Singh et al., 2018: 9). Despite caste-discrimination now being illegal in India, *Dalits* remain marginalised and "Othered" in various states. Caste-based prejudice is widespread but is most notably still enforced in villages where local kangaroo courts (*khap panchayat*) (which are also officially illegal) enforce traditional law and strict hierarchical structures in their local areas. The status of untouchable or *Dalit* women, particularly in these

areas, remains negligible and inter-caste fraternising such as marriage can be violently punished. Under incumbent Prime Minister Modi's tenure, we have seen the continued marginalisation of *Dalits*, sometimes in the form of violence and political manoeuvrings to the disfavour of already impoverished *Dalits* living in rural areas. It is important to remember, of course, that social hierarchies based on caste are not particular or unique to Hinduism or India.

Caste-based discrimination which produces economic and social inequalities is also prevalent across the South Asian continent from Muslim communities in Pakistan [11] (Gazdar, 2007: 86-88) to Buddhist communities in Nepal (Singh et. al, 2018: 2). Discourse surrounding representations of the caste system by organisations and institutions outside of South Asia have tended to construct and represent this as a unique characteristic of Hinduism. Caste-discrimination has also found its way into depictions of Hinduism in *anime*, sometimes being a key focus where Hindu spirituality is at the forefront of a story. It is, again, equally imperative to emphasise that the issue of caste-discrimination does not solely impact Hindu communities as can be often perpetuated through media discourse, it is present and prevalent in religious communities throughout South Asia. I refer again, here to the *kokoza* website which aims to educate high school aged audiences and has a segment in the Geography section examining South Asia using the case study of India. Whilst Islam is correctly highlighted as being the second largest religion in India and the diversity of religious cultures is also made clear, the information provided to audiences falls drastically short as it once

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[11] Aqeel, A., 2018. ''Untouchable" caste identity haunts Pakistani Christians like Asia Bibi.' *World Watch Monitor*. Available at: <https://www.worldwatchmonitor.org/2018/11/untouchable-caste-identity-haunts-pakistani-christians-like-asia-bibi/> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

again centres Indianness and Hindu spirituality as the only theological spaces and cultures where the caste system persists. This is information provided by Professor Sakura Tomozawa who even goes so as far to say when questioned by the TV hosts whether one can escape the inequality of the caste system, that the only way to do so is to convert to another religion as the caste system is unique to Hinduism [12]. In 2019, the *NHK* also screened the documentary *We Have Not Come Here to Die* by Deepa Dhanraj charting the continued legacy of the caste system in India. Along with the case studies featured in this chapter, these representations of the caste system situate it as an issue largely relegated to India and Hinduism. Whilst it is certainly important to depict, challenge and criticise the caste system, these challenges fall short when they exclude the impact it has had on the rest of South Asia, and when the *manga* and *anime* industry itself perpetuates casteist ideology. This section will examine attempts throughout Japanese *manga* and *anime* to explore the impact of the caste system as a means to "Other" Indianness, and how the space of "lower-caste" women's bodies is used in these representations to at times limit and homogenise discourse surrounding the caste system as well as perpetuate casteist discourse itself.

The South Indian Tollywood Tamil/Telugu film *Baahubali* (Rajamouli, 2015-2017) is a two-part epic which eventually went on to become a multi-media franchise, also producing a television animated series in 2018 (Rajamouli and Devarajan). The international success of this film was hailed as a victory for South Indian and Dravidian-language cinema against the hegemony and dominance of Hindi-language Bollywood. Controversy arose, however, over

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[12] Tomozowa, K., 2021. '*NHK高校講座 | 地理 | 第30回 現代世界の地誌的考察 【現代世界の諸地域】編 世界のさまざまな地域を見てみよう 〜南アジア〜.*' *NHK.* [online] Available at: <https://www.nhk.or.jp/kokokoza/library/tv/chiri/archive/resume030.html> [Accessed 6 May 2021].

the use of casteist slurs and the normalisation of caste supremacy throughout the film, which

was attributed by one critic, to the director's own support and validation of the caste-

system [13]. Soon after the film's release, and despite the controversy and criticism

surrounding *Baahubali* [14] a *manga* adaptation by Akira Fukaya was produced and released,

although it is only available to read in Japanese. Fukaya made this *manga* after criticisms of

caste supremacy in the live-action movie were widely published (including the director of the

original movie referring to *Dalits* as parasites, affirming his support for caste-based

supremacy [15]). Fukaya therefore reproduced casteist ideologies and rhetoric (such as

affirming a natural and social hierarchy rooted in caste, Aryan *Brahmins* and *Kshatriyas* are

heroes whilst "lower-caste" and darker skinned characters are the savage villains [16]), in the

manga adaptation. Such an understanding of *Baahubali* may require a degree of religious

literacy on behalf of Fukaya and readers of the *manga*. It is unclear, therefore, whether

Fukaya was fully aware and appreciated the social implications of what he was doing by

adapting *Baahubali*. Unlike the *manga* of *Baahubali* which (albeit perhaps unknowingly)

perpetuates casteist ideology, other depictions of the caste system in Japanese mediascape

certainly indicate an awareness of the caste system and the issues surrounding them, although

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[13] Ramathan, S., 2017. 'As Rajamouli's post on caste re-emerges, don't forget that 'Baahubali' is casteist, racist too.' *The News Minute.* [online] Available at: <https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/rajamouli-s-post-caste-re-emerges-don-t-forget-baahubali-casteist-racist-too-61235> [Accessed 21 May 2021].

[14] Naig, U. and Ramakrishnan, D., 2015. 'Blockbuster caught in a caste controversy.' *The Hindu*. [online] 24 Jul. Available at: <https://www.thehindu.com/news/cities/chennai/baahubali-blockbuster-caught-in-a-caste-controversy/article7459615.ece> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

[15] Ramathan, S., 2017. 'As Rajamouli's post on caste re-emerges, don't forget that 'Baahubali' is casteist, racist too.' *The News Minute.* [online] Available at: <https://www.thenewsminute.com/article/rajamouli-s-post-caste-re-emerges-don-t-forget-baahubali-casteist-racist-too-61235> [Accessed 21 May 2021].

[16] Kuttaiah, P., 2017. 'The Problem With Baahubali's Casteist, Supremacist Logic.' [online] *The Quint.* [online] Available at: <https://www.thequint.com/entertainment/cinema/rajamouli-post-caste-re-emerges-dont-forget-baahubali-casteism> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

there may not be a full understanding of the nuance of how caste hierarchies operate across South Asia and permeates South Asian media itself. In this section I go further to examine depictions of the caste system in this chapter's chosen case studies.

Kuroshitsuji and Buddha, though different in format and demographic audiences, deal explicitly and frankly with depicting the ongoing issue of caste-discrimination in Indian society and certain cross-sections of Hindu religious practices, although there are certainly pitfalls in these representations. Mina from the *anime* series *Kuroshitsuji*, the revered, mystical, and elusive maidservant is the one who Soma has come to England in search of with the help of Agni, believing she was kidnapped from India and forced to marry an Englishman. It shortly transpires, however, that Soma has naively idolised Mina who married not only one Englishman, but also several others out of her own will and planning as a means of gaining wealth and status. In order to hide the truth from Soma, Agni agreed to help Mina's husband win the curry competition by beating up his biggest rivals and representing his company in a national curry competition, all in exchange for Mina's agreed silence. During the competition at the Crystal Palace however, Mina reveals to Soma how her "lower-caste" (her caste is never specified) status condemned her to a life of hardship as a maidservant in the palace. Her image as a Goddess in Soma's mind is shattered by the harsh revelations of Mina's life in a society where he and Agni reap the benefits of "upper-caste" and class privilege. Soma and Agni's characterisations are built around their adherence to faith whilst Mina's is built on how the caste system has shaped her personality. This can be seen as an earnest attempt to convey the social and cultural hierarchies produced by the caste system, although Mina is largely framed and constructed within the narrative as an antagonist whilst

her "upper-caste" counterparts are more prominent and sympathetic characters who recur throughout the series.

Not long after Mina's admonishment of Soma for his privileged ignorance, Queen Victoria arrives at the Crystal Palace and her butler delivers a speech on her behalf. In this speech he re-iterates British values where no one is judged according to their creed or class, drawing a clear and deliberate distinction between the "civilised" order of life in Victorian England compared with its "backwards" colonies. This overt criticism of the caste system in the series is largely undermined, however by a perpetuation of casteist tropes presented through Mina herself. The series itself also imposes on the construction of Indianness, the Orientalist lens of Victorian England. As Waiyeeh Loh surmises from the setting and context of the series, Victorian England becomes a constructed subject onto which the Japanese "Self" may be projected and constructed as a means of establishing racial and cultural capital and hierarchy (2012: 124). Merging of the Japanese and White British "Self" becomes the cultural and racial norm against which the "Other" is measured. During the competition, Mina (and other guests) accidentally consumes a "forbidden" spice used by one of the contestants. This spice is identified by Soma as one which amplifies the negative feelings residing in the consumer, prompting them to enter a demonic rage. Mina is shown to have the worst reaction to it, becoming increasingly violent and out of control. Whilst radiating an "evil aura" like the other guests under a trance, Mina's skin tone becomes strikingly darker. She is shown to be resembling the Goddess Kali in the story of her demonic rampage as it was earlier described by Agni. In Mina's earlier depictions, through Soma's flashbacks, Mina is shown to be faceless. All that audiences are able to read from these flashbacks are her Indianness and gender. When trying to find her, Soma also draws a crude, childish sketch of her. Mina is

depicted from Soma's memories as he understood her, incomplete. Soma's lack of awareness of Mina's situation and lifestyle as a "lower-caste" woman in India is reflected in the unthreatening, faceless, and warm images he remembers her by. The first time the audience sees Mina properly, her true nature is quickly revealed. Her most dramatic rendering is during her demonic trance, during which the spice has manifested all of the negative feelings built up within her. Eventually her rampage is stopped by Soma who manages to subdue her. Whilst Mina's negativity and villainous behaviour is shown to be justified, she is also depicted as being unable to control her emotions. She behaves the most erratically and violently out of all the guests, doing so whilst her skin hue has become visibly and noticeably darker. This colourism is not an unusual trope in media texts which serve to uphold the caste-system. The South Indian movie *Baahubali* and its *manga* remake, "Othered" "lower-caste" communities through a series of casteist, racist and colourist tropes achieved through binaries of heroes/villains kings and warriors/servants and barbarians civilised/uncivilised. *Kuroshitsuji* similarly deploys a binary of good/bad and even light skinned/dark skinned to differentiate between the "upper-caste" characters and "lower-caste" Mina. In the *manga* version, Mina is killed later on along with her husband whilst she simply never appears again in the animation and so her character within the franchise is very short-lived. Unlike *Baahubali* which completely and intentionally creates these binaries, *Kuroshitsuji* tries to highlight and explore the issue of the caste-system although it falls into the same pitfalls and traps as *Baahubali* in the process of doing so. Putting to one side that these are indeed constructions of Indianness rooted in an assumed background knowledge with clear limitations, the characterisation and portrayal of Mina lacks any degree of nuance or further development. She is briefly featured during one arc and before then is only talked about and has very few lines. Her motivations and personality are largely one-dimensional and she is

also the only "lower-caste" character featured in this series whilst the "upper-caste"

characters feature more frequently throughout the *manga* and *anime* series.

Figure iv: Toshiya, S. 2008. *Kuroshitsuji.* Mina in a demonic rage.

Heavily contrasting with *Kuroshitsuji'*s depiction of caste, where Soma's detachment from

reality blinded him from Mina's status, it is an integral part of Prince Siddhartha's character

development in *Buddha* that he is consistently exposed to the brutal realities of caste-based

hierarchies, making it a recurring theme rather than a character's plot device. The first chapter

of Osamu Tezuka's *manga* is titled "*Brahmin*" and before the introduction of Saint Gosala,

we are briefly given some historical context to the caste system. The first few pages establish

Brahmins as the superior, ruling class among the four castes, describing them as "pure-

blooded." It is noted how the *Brahmins* were originally from among the Aryan conquerors

and this is highlighted alongside a detailed rendering of what is considered *Brahmin*

architecture. The impact of the caste system on Indian society in the present day is also

touched upon as well as the corruption of leading *Brahmin* castes. Brahminism, like

Hinduism, is a faith-system based on the ancient texts known as the *Vedas*. Considering its

distinct influence on some practices of Buddhism, it is unsurprising that so much focus is given on explaining the nature of Brahminism and its key role in Prince Siddhartha's society. In the *manga*, the page preceding Master Gosala's introduction presents us with an important contrasting image. The top panel examines the indulgences of the *Brahmin* caste which corrupted religion and religious practices. This is illustrated with priests engaging in a religious ceremony celebrating *Ganesh*, the elephant God who features heavily in depictions of Hinduism throughout the story. The priests are all depicted as old men with long hair and beards, effectively indistinguishable from one another. The bottom panel features those who are on the bottom rungs of society and describes them as dissatisfied with religious culture and awaiting a new teacher. In the depictions of Prince Siddhartha's early life where attempts are made by those in the palace to condition him into accepting his privileged status, the four groups of the caste system associated with Brahminism is clearly explained to the Prince and the audience. As a *Kshatriya* and royalty, he is told that he is to enjoy his high social status although Siddhartha himself is shown to be doubtful and unsure of these social hierarchies. The strong permeation of the caste system in Prince Siddhartha's society is repeatedly presented and emphasised. The concept of hierarchies which produce human suffering continue as key themes into the second movie which detail Siddhartha's journey toward enlightenment.

Unlike the movies, the *manga* contains more *chibi* and simplistic renderings of characters, their faces, and bodies. This difference in visuals can be directly attributed to the long-time difference between the publication of the *manga* series and the decision to adapt this into an animated movie franchise. It is evident therefore, that great care has been taken to adapt the *manga* for a different audience. Nowhere is this clearer than in the depiction of "lower-caste"

characters. The impoverishment and marginalisation of the latter is visually hammered home in the *manga* through their clothing or "costumes." After the introduction of Master Gosala, the story switches to the story of a young *Sudra* (slave) named Chapra, and his mother. In an interview, Kōzō Morishita (the director of this first movie) highlighted his conscious decision to tell Prince Siddhartha's story alongside that of the character of Chapra [17]. Chapra and his nameless mother are "owned" by her pimp with a higher caste ranking. After Chapra loses an important item, he is violently punished by the pimp, when Chapra's mother requests that she be punished in his stead, her pimp notes that her body itself is his commodity and damaging it would mean devaluing it. This exchange reflects the real issue of sexual exploitation by "upper-caste" men in South Asian communities. In the 19th century, "lower-caste" women in parts of South India were prohibited from wearing a blouse to ensure that their breasts (along with the rest of their bodies) are always sexually available for men. In the present day, sexual exploitation of "lower-caste," especially *Dalit* women, continues to be rife across South Asia existing as a flagrant form of caste discrimination [18]. This aspect of the derogatory caste system is consistently highlighted through the female characters in the *manga*. Siddhartha and his family (alongside the other upper echelons of society) are entitled to fine clothing which covers their body and even jewellery, Chapra's mother is paraded around topless by her pimp (who, like the *Brahmin* priests, is wearing a sheet of cloth). In a scene from Siddhartha's privileged childhood, he is shown a glimpse of the harsh realities which exist

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[17] Morishita, K., 2021. '手塚治虫のブッダ：森下孝三監督に聞く 宗教を扱い「いかにエンターテインメントにするか.' *Mantanweb* [online]. Available at: <https://mantanweb.jp/article/20110605dog00m200021000c.html> [Accessed 11 May 2021].

[18] Feminist Dalit Organisation (Nepal) et al., 2013. 'The Situation of Dalit Rural Women: Submission to Discussion on CEDAW General Comment on rural women – Article 14.' *Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.* [online] Available at: <https://www.ohchr.org/sites/default/files/Documents/HRBodies/CEDAW/RuralWomen/FEDONavsarjanTrustIDS.pdf> [Accessed 4th January 2015].

outside the palace. An almost naked half-starved woman clutching her baby is shooed away from the palace; the young Siddhartha is naturally distressed by this scene but is quickly ushered into his "playroom." This "playroom" consists of a few dozen or so "lower-caste" women, whose job is to dance and sing in their naked state for the Prince's pleasure.

Both *Buddha* and *Kuroshitsuji* emphasise the issues faced by lower caste women to fully explore the implications of the caste system in (Hindu) society. The different perspectives with which the caste system is represented also indicates the alternating representations of Hinduism which they entail. Both the *manga* and animated movies of *Buddha* associate the Hinduism practised at the time of Siddhartha with tribalism, violence, and strict social codes. As I have already discussed, however, Hinduism in *Kuroshitsuji* pops up anomalously against the backdrop of an established Judeo-Christian society and secular main characters who are the series' constructed "Self." It is highly "Othered" and by its very nature situates a *Brahmin*-centric construction of Hinduism (alongside India) as backwards and rigid (the lower caste Indians being the most backwards and uncivilised) in comparison to the established racial and cultural norm. Although Mina is a victim of the caste system, her portrayal is not entirely sympathetic, and the narrative is skewed more in the favour of the "upper-caste" characters. The feminisation of the caste system in *Buddha,* however, allows for the brutality and indignity of the caste system to be made more explicit. From the "street thugs" who rob Chapra, to Siddhartha's love interest Migaila – "lower-caste" characters are consistently contrasted as victims of their ruling classes.

The large gap between the release of the original *manga* by Osamu Tezuka and the release of the animated movie will inevitably produce differences with its source material, as is true of

any adaptation. In the movie, the character of Chapra and his story is paralleled alongside the privileged upbringing of Buddha who was born into the *Kshatriya* (warrior) caste. The *manga*, however, only begins the story of Prince Siddhartha's upbringing and personal development after the conclusion of Chapra's tragic tale. The decision to narrate as parallel stories Buddha's spiritual journey and eventual decision to renounce his life of privilege with the life and death of Chapra rather than following the chronology of the *manga* ensures that the theme of the first movie revolves around the inequalities of the caste system and in particular their impact on female characters. The director even stresses the importance of Chapra and the caste-based subplot surrounding his character, going even further to say that this movie was a tale of "women's tragedies" [19], evidenced through the persistent threat of physical and sexual violence towards Chapra's mother, and the other *Sudra* women. Chapra's mother is deemed no better than a commodity as described by her pimp and "master." Whilst attempting to prevent his mother being sold off, Chapra becomes side-tracked and manages to save the life of an "upper-caste" general. Adopted by the general, Chapra goes from becoming an oppressed victim to a high-ranking soldier of an imperialist and bloodthirsty tribe. It is only when he is confronted with the sight of his estranged mother that Chapra is forced to reflect on his new-found and hard-earned status. The story ends with the both of them being killed together upon Chapra's true caste being discovered by his adoptive father. Chapra's attachment to his mother is mirrored in Buddha's romantic relationship with "lower-caste" bandit, Migaila.

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[19] Morishita, K., 2021. '手塚治虫のブッダ：森下孝三監督に聞く 宗教を扱い「いかにエンターテインメントにするか.' [online] *Mantanweb*. Available at: <https://mantan-web.jp/article/20110605dog00m200021000c.html> [Accessed 11 May 2021].

The movie vividly depicts the famous story whereby Buddha was first exposed to the horrors of poverty, famine, sickness and so on. when he ventured outside the palace walls. The *manga* and movie retelling of the story adds another layer to this by introducing the young Prince Siddhartha to *Sudra* character Migaila in a romantic subplot. The pair fall in love but when Siddhartha's father discovers their affair, he arrests Migaila and demands Siddhartha marry a princess (someone worthy of his station) in exchange for Migaila to be spared. As Siddhartha reluctantly concedes, Migaila is violently blinded at the palace with hot metal rods to ensure she never again lays eyes upon Prince Siddhartha. This punishment is equally graphic in both the *manga* and the movie adaptation. It is also a dramatization and symbolic of the horrors witnessed by Prince Siddhartha upon leaving the comforts of the palace. Many stories of the life of Prince Siddhartha relay that he was already married with a child before leaving the palace for the first time. In the movie, he meets Migaila on his first excursion and after their relationship is exposed, is forced to marry his wife (Yashodhara). Prince Siddhartha's love interests have been deliberately manufactured, dramatised, and used in parallel with the story of Chapra and his mother. This storyline allows the caste system to be brought to the forefront of the narrative, associating it strongly with a faith system (Hinduism) that Siddhartha chooses to leave by the end of the movie to find his own spirituality (Buddhism). Whilst Buddhism is shown to have cultural and spiritual crossover with Hinduism, this scene is a clear distinction which marks Hinduism as the religion of the South Asian "Other" and Buddhism as the spirituality of the Japanese "Self."

There is evidence in both *Buddha* and *Kuroshitsuji* that religious culture often plays a key role in media constructions of South Asians. In the next section I explore this further beyond the realm of Indianness and Hinduism to discuss the construction of the Pakistani "Other" and South Asian Muslims.

2.6 Representing South Asianness Through Islam

The late 1980s saw a large influx of South Asian, especially Bangladeshi migrants into Japan. This is portrayed in *Wārudo Apātomento Horā* (*World Apartment Horror*) (1991), a *manga* by Satoshi Kon which was based on the movie of the same name (Otomo, 1991), released four months earlier. The title of the movie is also the main setting - an apartment in Japan where immigrants live and where the protagonist is sent to conduct evictions. Both the *manga* and the movie coincide with a time in Japanese immigration history where there were a considerable number of Bangladeshi and Pakistani migrants living and working in Japan. Many of these were visa overstayers who had entered the country as tourists, leading to a revoking of visa waivers for Bangladeshi Nationals in 1989 (Higuchui, 2007: 2). This *manga* and movie, both released in 1991, feature sympathetic portrayals of South Asian migrants living in Japan as well as a breakaway and even a challenging of the racially homogenised constructions of South Asianness which typically and immediately assume a reading of Indianness upon seeing the South Asian "Other." The South Asian characters themselves are diverse and often at the centre of the narrative. This is also a rare example of South Asian representation that is not definitively Indian and does not associate national identity with any particular religious identity.

Edward Said remarks how religious culture has been one of the cultural dimensions used in the process of "Othering" and highlights this point using the example of how Islam practiced in the Middle East was depicted as a backwards, primitive version of Christianity (1978: 120), and how established religious culture and religious cultural practices can be manipulated to become a form of nation branding. In the context of this research, the practice and process of Orientalising is not done through a lens of Western imperialism but is rather a

form of Japanese Orientalism. As a result, constructions of Hinduism and India are presented in Japanese animation as being at odds with the established cultural norms of Japan and the West, at times even being ridiculed. In this section I will argue that representations of Muslim majority South Asian countries in *anime* similarly flatten their diversity of South Asian religious and non-religious cultural identities down to Islam, as well as examine to what extent they are Orientalised. I will also be examining, however, how representations of Islam and Muslims may have been impacted by certain noteworthy events. The first is an increased awareness and trend of *halal* tourism in Japan whilst the second is media constructions of Islam and Muslims in the climate of post 9/11 and the war on terror. As meaning is inscribed into Hindu religious culture through these representations in *anime*, so are they integrated into depictions of Islamic religious culture and Muslims. Shinzō Abe's iteration that his *Ganga Aarti* visit reminded him of Buddhist rituals and traditions draws a thread of commonality and cultural affinity with other Asian countries. India is associated with not only Hinduism, but as shown through the *anime* representation and political discourse of Buddha's origins, Buddhism. In this way, India whilst largely viewed and presented as a Hindu nation, can be associated with religious pluralism, providing a spiritual landscape through which those of other faiths may co-exist.

This was also the case almost ten years prior to Abe's pronouncements in the Japanese film *Fukai Kawa*, telling the story of a group of Japanese tourists on a trip in India. During the trip, they are prompted to engage with their own spirituality through Hinduism, Buddhism, and Christianity - all of which are shown to be a part of the Indian cultural landscape. Notably, however, despite being the second largest religion in India, Islam and Muslims are almost non-existent throughout this film. Again, this unintentionally feeds into political rhetoric which seek to actively exclude Indian Muslims from the realm of Indianness, as

evidenced in the recent citizenship bill put forth by India's centralised government to offer refugees and migrants opportunities for citizenship unless they identified as Muslim. Whilst these ideologies may not have had a direct impact, they certainly fed into Shusaku Endō's vision of India. As already mentioned, in Horii's dissection of how religion operates in Japanese society and the relevance of the Japanese word *shūkyō* in determining this, Islam is identified as a foreign religion. In contemporary Japan we can determine two meanings ascribed to Islam and Muslims: one is rooted in tourist-based commercialism and cultural exchange for profits; the increase in *halal*-certified eateries and *hijab* (headscarf) *kimonos* have allowed new images of Islamic religious culture to blossom with the Japanese public sphere. The other is a homogenised vision of Islam associated with desert landscapes and post 9/11 stereotypes (Miura, cited in Nakhleh et. al, 2008: 95). As with depictions of Hinduism, the connotations associated with Islam includes national identity and geopolitical context. The former mode of meaning based on commercialism is centred around outreach to a large influx of tourism from Southeast Asian, Muslim majority countries. The latter mode of representation is largely associated with Arab nations as well as the South Asian countries Pakistan and Afghanistan.

Portrayals of Islam and Muslims in Japanese media are not a monolith. They are, however, contingent and limited to national identities and geopolitics. Since 2012, Japan has seen a rise in demand for *halal* tourism due to increased tourism from Muslim majority countries (Yasuda, 2017: 65). This has resulted in a greater awareness of Islamic culture and attempts to attract more tourists through *halal* food restaurants and *kimono* with matching '*wagara*' (traditional Japanese pattern) *hijabs* for Muslim women who wear the *hijab*[20]. This trend,

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[20] K, B., 2021. 'Muslim women can rent 'wagara' hijabs to match kimonos in Kyoto.' *Japan Today.* [online]. Available at: <https://japantoday.com/category/features/lifestyle/muslim-women-can-rent-'wagara'-hijabs-to-match-kimonos-in-kyoto> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

however, sees the adoption of aspects of Islamic religious culture framed alongside Japanese culture driven by consumerism and is contingent on Muslims being active consumers who are beneficial to the economy of Japan.

In the post 9/11 era, mass media depictions of Islam and South Asian Muslims changed significantly along with their status in the Japanese public sphere. It has been further argued that certain connotations of Islam and Muslims are a result of post 9/11 Western media narratives, bolstered by attempts from the Japanese government to carry out mass surveillance of Muslims living in Japan (Nakhleh et. al, 2008: 103) (Obuse, 2019: 8-10). Emilie A Nakhleh, Keiko Sakurai and Michael Penn claim that the events of 9/11 combined with the close US-Japan alliance has brought Japan firmly into the central sphere of the war on terror (2008: 100-101). To explore the knowledge bases used to construct the South Asian Muslim "Other," I will be drawing from the *manga* and animated series *Yuugo: Kōshōnin*.

Firstly, however, I wish to draw on a *manga* representation of Afghanistan and Pakistan through the webcomic series, *Afuganisu-tan,* and *Pakisu-tan*. These representations are not necessarily tied to any religious representation, however, they both provide important context and material to consider how the setting of South Asian countries which are not Indian are depicted through the medium of *manga* and animation. They also provide an interesting representation of socio-political situations which have been reduced down and simplified in order to educate audiences on the histories of Afghanistan, Pakistan, and their geopolitical relations with the international community.

Afuganisu-tan was originally released in 2003 as a *yonkoma* or 4-panel gag *manga*/webcomic

online, written by Tima-king and later published as a single *manga* volume by *Sansei Books* and was followed by another series entitled *Pakisu-tan*. *Afuganisu-tan* uses female *chibi* characters to personify and represent entire countries. The title character (and female protagonist) Afuganisu-*tan* is used to explain and educate the country's history through four-panel gags. For example, Afuganisu-*tan*'s house catching on fire forcing her to seek refuge at Pakisu-*tan*'s home depicts the civil war and displacement of many Afghan people prompting their seeking refuge in Pakistan. Each four-panel gag is accompanied with a small description of key events in Afghanistan, for example the opening four-panel presents Afuganisu-*tan* as a wretched individual who is constantly picked on by others, and her decision to fight back is marred by her ineptitude. The title character's continuing wretchedness is used to symbolise Afghanistan's standing in the international community of geopolitics, but also to perpetuate an ongoing narrative of eternal victimhood and suffering. "*tan*," is a variation of "*chan*," an honorific suffix used for children or close relatives, this process of infantilization is applied to all countries ending in "*tan*," including Pakistan; by contrast the powerful Western countries (who often pick on Afuganisu-*tan*) are shown to be physically larger and dominating. Whilst these may be deemed helpful allegories for explaining history, they run into problems by over-simplifying South Asian history and personifying the history of entire countries through *chibi* characters. For example, the characterisation and personification of Kashmir is written and described as Pakisu-*tan*'s little sister. This is a highly problematic allegory, which on the surface appears to demonstrate sympathy for the struggles faced by the Kashmiri people. By figuratively calling Kashmir Pakistan's little sister however, the author unintentionally reproduces a Pakistan-centric narrative which denies the autonomy and voices of the Kashmiri people themselves and also aligns them in an ideology promoted by the Pakistani government which is largely rooted in religious nationalism. It is important to note that the representations of Afghanistan and Pakistan respectively here are not necessarily steeped in

religious culture and iconography. In an attempt to simplify and explain different identities in the region, however, the diversity of South Asian communities, identities and various forms of self-determination are eclipsed through a process of racial and cultural compartmentalisation and homogenisation into a system of knowledge that is seemingly more digestible. This can be largely attributed to the format of this series - an online webcomic that is aimed at educating readers about the geopolitics of Afghanistan and Pakistan. *Yuugo: Kōshōnin*, however, is a mystery/detective series and provides a representation of Pakistan that is specifically steeped in religious narratives and iconography.

Yuugo: Kōshōnin is the only example that could be found of an animated series featuring a South Asian country (Pakistan) and characters that are definitively not Indian. *Yuugo: Kōshōnin* is a series which, like *Kuroshitsuji* (and many other *manga*-based animations), has episodes and short subplots which divide the overarching narrative into two overall arcs – each completed by different studios and directors. The first arc, set in Pakistan was directed by Seiji Kishi at C&G Direction whilst the second, taking place in Russia, was directed by Shinya Hanai with Artland. The first arc of *Yuugo: Kōshōnin* sees the Japanese protagonist, Yugo Beppu, called to Pakistan to save a Japanese diplomat who has been kidnapped by a group of bandits (or dacoits). An introductory title clearly establishes the role and nature of the main protagonist Yugo with a brief definition of the word 'negotiator.' The opening scene features another Japanese 'negotiator' being kidnapped by South Asian bandits whilst trying to secure the release of a diplomat. The mountain settings and frightening depiction of the dacoit leader directly mimics images of the Taliban in the mountainous regions of Afghanistan and Pakistan. South Asian countries defined through Islam (as India is defined through Hinduism) are immediately presented through threatening images of violence,

religious fundamentalism, and instability. Media images such as news reports on terrorism are replicated and further dramatized.

Figure v: Kishi, S. 2004. *Yuugo: Kōshōnin.* A still from the opening scene

In the *manga*, released almost 10 years earlier in 1994, the first image of Pakistan we see in the present day is of the protagonist, Yugo, in a bustling urban city scene rather than the darkly dramatic landscape of mountains and military operations in the animation. A conscious decision has been made here, therefore, to break away from the visual narrative of the source material, On *Yuugo: Kōshōnin'*s official website, the land of Pakistan is described as a "scorched land" [21], mirroring the stereotypes that have been formed by media representations of Muslim majority countries. Rather than focusing on the lively opening of the *manga*, the animation chose to depict a scene of failed negotiation and present the inclusion of this scene which immediately constructs Pakistan as frightening. The imagery that is used mirrors many of the negative connotations and perceptions surrounding Islam and Muslims in the mass media post 9/11. The *anime* was released at a time when surveys among high school students demonstrated negative attitudes towards Islam and Muslims. A 2006

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[21] 勇午オフィシャルホームページ., 2004. *Web archive.* [online] Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20040617141848/http://www.yu-go.jp/story/intro.php> [Accessed 18 May 2021].

research paper published by high school teachers Takaaki Matsumoto and Professor Toru Miura features a survey conducted among university and high school students in order to gauge views on Islam. Over 50% of the participants associated it with "backward regions of the world", "practiced by bearded men living in desert areas" (Miura, cited in Nakhleh et. al, 2008: 95) and more than 60% making other negative connotations of "intolerance", being "strange" and "aggressive" (Miura, cited in Nakhleh et. al, 2008: 94). These associations are largely attributed to a knowledge base of media and news representations which construct Muslims as a monolith. Whilst the same knowledge base cannot be directly attributed to the creators of *Yuugo: Kōshōnin*, the overlap in assumed background knowledge is clearly demonstrated visually and through the narrative of the arc set in Pakistan.

The animated series' first Pakistani characters pictured are carrying large guns and other weaponry, glaring menacingly at the Japanese negotiator. This scene unnecessarily pre-empts Yugo's arrival in Pakistan, (shown at the beginning in the *manga*) in a taxi. Used in conjunction with the crescent moon symbol (I will later elaborate on its semiotic use), Pakistan is further established as a Muslim nation through the sound of the *Adhan* or call to prayer. This was a practice which started in the early days of Islam, as a method of reminding Muslims of the five times in the day when they should pray. In the modern day, an *Imam* recites the call to prayer into a microphone and it is broadcast to the local area through a loudspeaker, this remains commonplace in Muslim-majority and other South Asian countries (including India). It is recognised at once by Yugo sitting inside a cab and the driver says that he is impressed with Yugo's local knowledge. Similar to the homogenisation of India, Pakistan is flattened to only include Islam within its religious landscape and to mark it as a Muslim country. This erases the existence of religious minorities within Pakistan, perpetuating a Pakistani national identity rooted in religious culture. As with the

representations of Indianness which have been homogenised through religious culture, this has been largely achieved through the use of symbols which have gained globalised connotations of both religion and national identity. Discussion on the representation of Pakistaniness and Islam in *Yuugo: Kōshōnin* therefore again requires a semiotic reading of the visuals used to flatten Pakistaniness through Islam and how this construction of Pakistan is Orientalised from a Japanese perspective.

It is worth noting that the Japanese government does not share the same diplomatic relationship with its Pakistani counterpart that it does with India. This can be evidenced from Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs website. Where relations with each country are listed, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had made efforts to include a detailed and redacted version of relations between Japan and India. In this summarisation, the Japanese government begins by relating political relations between the two countries to the exchange and history of Buddhism that the two countries share. This suggests a form of affinitive transnationalism whereby the two countries embellish their political relationship through seemingly common ground, going as far as to say that "this is the source of Japanese people's closeness to India" [22]. By contrast, the site which outlines Japan's relationship with Pakistan has no such context and history provided, instead a list of data is used [23]. Again, this is not to imply that Japanese bilateral relations necessarily have a direct impact on the narratives and characters of *manga* and animated series, but that these constructions and representations are certainly built

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[22] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan., 2021. 'Japan-India Relations (Basic Data).' *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.* [online] Available at: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/data.html> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

[23] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan., 2021. 'Japan-Pakistan Relations (Basic Data).' *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.* [online] Available at: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/pakistan/data.html> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

around a knowledge base that is rooted in other forms of Japanese media. In comparison to India, Pakistan and other South Asian national/racial/cultural identities are largely invisible and underrepresented, usually being brought under the umbrella of Indianness which has seen increased representation since the development of an Indo-Japanese special relationship.

The "Othering" of Pakistan continues in both the *manga* and *anime* when the narrative switches from urban Pakistan to Yugo's residence in Japan in a flashback. The loud, disorderly streets of Karachi, coupled with the military operation scene at the beginning of the animation, are immediately contrasted with the more peaceful and quiet landscape of Tokyo. Pakistan is heavily "Othered" through this visual clash of two urbanscapes and it is in Japan we learn about Yugo's mission, another adaptation in the animated series which disrupts the *manga*'s narrative and chronology. It is in Yugo's Tokyo apartment, that he is approached by a client requesting his help in negotiating with a group who has kidnapped their father residing in Pakistan. After gaining further information about the dacoit leader (Yusuf Ali), the second chapter starts with Yugo arriving in Karachi. The *manga* version's first scene is of Yugo walking on the road next to a horse-pulled cart before he complains about the heat and the noise. Whilst horse-pulled carts are common in Pakistan, so are automobiles. This opening image of Pakistan, however, acts similarly to the *anime*'s juxtaposition of the two different cities, directly playing into Orientalist stereotypes of Pakistan being uncivilised and underdeveloped.

Rashid, Yugo's friend in Japan, is the only Pakistani character shown wearing Western-style clothing whilst all other Pakistani men wear traditional Pakistani clothes. Rashid works as a journalist for an international newspaper in Japan, and Yugo visits him to gain information on the leader of the group, Yusuf, with whom he is to negotiate. Rashid questions Yugo's ability

to do so due to him being an "unbeliever" when Yusuf is so deeply religious. Clothes are another visual element central to establishing the cultural differences between Pakistan and Japan. Yugo himself changes his attire when starting his mission, combined with his local knowledge he is presented as being culturally malleable and resilient. This is shown to be his only way to operate within such a strict cultural and religious environment. Attire in Japan is depicted through characters largely sporting office wear such as trousers, shirts, and ties whereas attire in Pakistan is almost exclusively depicted through *salwars*, *kurta* and head wear. This denotes not only traditional values and customs but also economic status. All the characters in Japan appear as white collar, middle-class workers, including Yugo's Pakistani friend Rashid. All the Pakistani civilians wearing *salwars* and *kurtas* are trying to sell to Yugo and/or need his financial help. Travelling to meet and negotiate with the dacoits prompts Yugo to also don traditional attire. Clothes are used as a cultural marker, and to a certain degree, of Pakistan, allowing a distinction at first between Yugo and the setting of Pakistan. As Yugo becomes further immersed in culture and Islam to help with his negotiation, he adorns the same clothes as a means of cultural assimilation.

The representation of Pakistan and its religious landscape is also littered with acts of extremism and violence. The opening scene and a flashback scene depicting Yusuf's slaughter of Sheikhs both occur against a heavily symbolic backdrop of the full moon. The "Otherness" of this place is constructed in tandem with perceptions of Islam garnered from Takaaki Matsumoto and Professor Toru Miura's survey, such as it being a religion "practised by bearded men living in desert areas" (Miura, cited in Nakhleh et. al, 2008: 95). Before this entire scene begins, the camera pans down from a crescent moon in the sky, a potent symbol which carries a significant meaning throughout this series. The crescent moon is a symbol used to represent Islam, which has gained further religious, social, and political connotations.

If we consider Morii's arguments of how religion is an empty cultural signifier to which meaning may be prescribed, the same can be suggested of the crescent moon. For example, it is a part of the Pakistani flag, a notion used to re-enforce Pakistani national identity through religious culture. Similarly, the crescent moon in *Yuugo: Kōshōnin* is used as a national and religious signifier to viewers, deliberately situating it within two acts of extremist violence within the arc.

Rashid gives Yugo information regarding the dacoit leader, Yusuf Messah Ali, who has kidnapped the Japanese diplomat. Rashid directs Yugo to find the sole survivor of Ali's slaughter of enemy dacoits and sheikhs in the Pakistani province of Sindh. Rashid believes that this survivor, Haji Rahmani, was spared because he was the only one who had completed *Hajj*, the religious pilgrimage Muslims make to Mecca, in Saudi Arabia. Perhaps one of the most recognisable images associated with Islam is that of the *Kaaba* – one of the holy sites that are encompassed by the *Hajj* pilgrimage. As Rashid makes mention of the *Hajj*, two painted images of Mecca – including one of the *Kaaba* are shown. Again, Islam is brought to the forefront of this series due to the setting of Pakistan, as with the Indian characters in *Kuroshitsuji* this becomes a method of "Othering," a method of easily categorising the vast diversity of South Asian religions according to national identity. There are also valid points of comparison concerning the representation of South Asian women. The previous exploration of how the caste system has been feminised and largely portrayed from a singular perspective, as the next chapter will explore, however, is only one aspect of how Indian femininity has been portrayed in Japanese animation. This is perhaps the most startling example of the contrast between Indianness and Pakistaniness, embedded in the depiction of South Asian women from these respective countries.

In writing about the experiences of ethnic Japanese Muslims living in Japanese society, Kieko Obuse discusses some of the perceptions of Islam that are embedded within Japanese society. For example, she discusses how Muslim schoolchildren have been mocked as terrorists by their classmates, how Islam has been likened to *Aum Shinkryo* (2019: 8-10) (a cult that enacted a sarin gas attack on the Tokyo Subway in 1995) and the perception of Islam as being a religion rooted in patriarchy and subjugation of women (2019: 15). Here I draw from Obuse's point about how Japanese women who become Muslim and have spouses who are Muslim migrants are frequently perceived as having been forced to adopt an Islamic way of life due to their partner's wishes or demands of Islam as being a religion of terrorism and female subjugation (2019: 11). This again echoes Spivak's central argument that constructions of subaltern women are rooted through a gaze which ignores their agency. These are the main two tropes heavily perpetuated throughout *Yuugo: Kōshōnin*'s Pakistan arc plot and especially through the character of Layla.

Gayatri Spivak's discussion on how the subaltern is produced and constructed rather than given a platform to portray themselves becomes further pertinent in this discussion of South Asian femininity. *Yuugo: Kōshōnin* is the only example of an animation set in Pakistan and featuring Pakistani characters. Despite this, however, there is only one Pakistani character who is a woman in this arc, a mute prostitute named Layla. She is rescued from her physically abusive pimp as Yugo trades his watch to free her. She immediately becomes attached to Yugo, follows him everywhere and helps him in his attempt to negotiate with the dacoits. Layla's character brings special importance to Spivak's work here, where the Pakistani woman has literally been rendered voiceless and at the mercy of the Japanese protagonist's kindness. Here, the construction of Pakistani women is one that has been constructed through two main gazes: male and Japanese.

Layla is objectified and commodified under a male gaze through her character design (highly sexualised), personality (dependence on Yugo), and storylines (all centred around being saved by or helping Yugo). The fact that she is voiceless means that other characters and audiences have to rely on male characters' interpretations of what she has to say. Layla is not only a construction of South Asianness which has diminished input from actual South Asian voices, but within the world of the series itself, Layla cannot speak for herself. Instead, she is completely centred and reliant on male characters, including the development of an attachment to Yugo after he rescues Layla. The Japanese gaze does also construct Layla as a cultural and racial "Other" who is vastly different from the Japanese women shown at the start of the series. Not only are these women able to speak for themselves, but they are also shown to be independent contrasted with Layla's submissiveness and dependence on men, tropes which have long been associated with the construction of South Asian women, and especially Pakistani Muslim communities.

The depiction of "lower-caste" women in *Buddha* and *Kuroshitsuji* are similarly constructions used to highlight the backwardness and rigidity of Hinduism and, by association, Indianness. As the next chapter further explores, however, Japan's close political ties with India have allowed space for a greater scope of representation in terms of Indian femininity. This is, again, limited to Indian femininity. *Yuugo: Kōshōnin*'s Layla provides us with the only example of Pakistani femininity in Japanese animation. Much how discussion and exploration of the caste system is essential and important, the subject of patriarchy and gender-based discrimination is also important and worthy of discussion and representation. Such portrayals, however, fail to properly address these issues due to the subject of representation being spoken for and constructed from the perspective of a Japanese "Self."

2.7 Conclusion

Religious culture has been chosen as the first topic of analysis in the representation of South Asians due to its prevalence within a system of background knowledge which frequently uses spirituality and religious culture as an accent of South Asianness. It is also, unfortunately, the only aspect of South Asianness which exhibits a much broader scope of representation than just India. India, Nepal, and Pakistan are all depicted in series or films yet what becomes clear over the next few chapters are that this diversity is not a consistent trait among constructions of "South Asianness" in Japanese animation. South Asian identities, even in this chapter, follow a pattern of homogenisation and blurring between racial, cultural, and national identities whereby religious culture is attributed to national and racial identities in a process that affirms the homogeneity of a particular nation's majority. India is constructed through Hinduism and Buddhism and Pakistan through Islam.

These practices and processes involved with "Othering" South Asianness and essentialising South Asian identities through religious culture is evident in the wider realm of Japanese mediascapes as evidenced through *Fukai Kawa*, as well as the specific medium of Japanese animation. Cultural markers become the most obvious way in which this is achieved, particularly highlighted through the *tilak*. Even where characters do not have any strong religious affiliation and spirituality is not in any way associated with the character's personality or storylines, a *tilak* is used by creators for audiences to easily "read" and interpret the character as being Indian. This speaks not only to a racialization of religion, but also a nationalisation of religious cultures. Where we see perhaps the least amount of "Othering" is in the animated adaptation of Osamu Tezuka's *Buddha*. As this *anime* is set in South Asia, immediately establishes South Asianness as the racial and cultural "Self" which

blurs the boundaries of any racial "Self" and "Other" however there are further complications and issues with regards to this depiction. This includes the homogenisation of what should be modern day Nepal as India by the creators of the animation (rather than the *manga* source material) and the aesthetics used in the depiction of race. The character of Siddhartha who goes on to find Buddhism, is shown to be at odds with the established racial and cultural "Self" of this series, especially his positioning and privilege within it. A strong distinction is made between Prince Siddhartha, his beliefs, and teachings (which go on to form the foundations of Buddhism), and the Hindu culture and traditions of the society in which he was born. This is also shown visually through the rendering of Prince Siddhartha, particularly after he achieves enlightenment. John G Russell's arguments regarding the Caucasianisation of Japanese characters is demonstrated and complicated in *Buddha* as well and most strikingly with the character of Prince Siddhartha himself who, it can be argued is heavily "Whitened" in contrast to even other light-skinned characters in the movie, bringing his aesthetic and character design closer to that of a constructed Japanese (rather than South Asian - the premise and setting of the series) "Self."

Whilst *Buddha* complicates any firm distinction between a Japanese "Self" and South Asian "Other," *Kuroshitsuji* uses the setting of Victorian England to re-enforce these distinctions. In a series where the "Self" is a blurred racial amalgamation of Japaneseness and Caucasian Whiteness, South Asianness (or more specifically Indianness) is used as a point of cultural comparison. The "Self" is marked by Christianity although the character of Ciel has antagonistic feelings towards faith and Sebastian (who is racially ambiguous but can be interpreted as Japanese) is indifferent to religion due to his own positioning as a demon. Here Indianness is heavily marked and constructed around spirituality, including both the visuals of the characters and the narrative, both of these elements serve to contrast the Indian

characters against the established cultural and racial "Self" of *Kuroshitsuji*'s universe.

Both *Kuroshitsuji* and *Buddha* also use their representations of Hinduism and Hindu religious culture to explore the issue of the caste system. South Asian women and their bodies actively become a space to symbolise unequal power relations and the, sometimes violent, consequences these may have. These depictions, whilst rightly criticising the caste system, fall into several traps, which includes homogenising and narrowing the issue down to Indian Hindu communities. Whereas this is certainly a prevalent and ongoing issue within Indian Hindu communities, the caste system also impacts wider South Asian groups and religious practices. "Lower-caste" characters are often framed as antagonists within the narrative and in the case of *Kuroshitsuji*, these representations perpetuate colourist, casteist and racist ideologies. This is mirrored in the pitfalls of depicting the caste system and reproducing casteist and colourist narratives in the *manga* adaptation of the South Indian epic movie franchise *Baahubali*.

Pakistaniness and Islam are similarly intertwined within this process of "Othering" South Asians through religious culture. In response to the growing boom of Muslim tourist, Japanese establishments and organisations have actively sought to integrate *halal* tourism into aspects of Japanese culture such as food and dress. The overall depiction and systems of background knowledge with regards to Islam are therefore varied and contingent on the context in which they are presented for consumption and reading by audiences. South Asian Muslims are however frequently pigeonholed according to nationality in the realm of Japanese animation as evidenced through *Yuugo: Kōshōnin*. The construction of Pakistaniness and the practice of Islam in *Yuugo: Kōshōnin* is also clearly rooted within a particular system of background knowledge that is built on media representations and lack of

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interactions with Pakistanis and South Asian Muslims. *Afuganisu-tan and Pakisu-tan* use their gag *manga* format to simplify and reduce each respective nation state down to a series of tropes and stereotypes. Whilst this is done under the intention of educating audiences about world history, representations which personify entire nations through one character will undoubtedly have problematic traits (including the erasure of Kashmiri identity). These representations, however, are not the only representations of South Asianness which are explicitly not Indian. Satoshi Kon's *Wārudo Apātomento Horā* notices and plays on how South Asianness is typically read as Indianness and explores not only South Asian identities outside of the realm of India, but also the positioning of South Asian migrants as subalterns in Japan demonstrating a rare insight into the struggles faced by South Asian migrant communities. *Wārudo Apātomento Horā* is therefore a welcome shift of representation which, despite being a construction of the "Other," subverts preconceived notions and ideologies regarding South Asianness and South Asians.

We can therefore establish that representations of South Asians through religious culture are certainly situated within a wider context and global system of background knowledge. This system of background knowledge may stem from various ideological roots and individual experiences and interactions which merge into one process that racializes religion but also attributes religious culture and spirituality according to nationality. This is particularly true of Hinduism and Islam; however, the lines are slightly more blurred when it comes to depictions of Buddhism and this is where the localisation of particular tropes is made clearer. Many of these representations also have the pitfalls of portraying monolithic characters as well as unintentionally reproducing ideological narratives and systems of background knowledge which are rooted in a nationalist, racially supremacist and/or ethnocentric view.

These representations usually sit in contrast to the constructed racial and cultural "Self" which in the context of the examined case studies is not necessarily a monolith. *Kuroshitsuji* and *Yuugo: Kōshōnin* feature a more established Japanese "Self" against which the South Asian "Other" is used as a visual and characteristic contrast. The processes of "Othering" therefore use a traditional system of background knowledge which makes use of binaries through which the "Self" and "Other" can be identified. Religious culture produces binaries including the ambiguously religious "Self" (in the case of *Kuroshitsuji* and *Yuugo: Kōshōnin*) and the strongly religious "Other," the socially archaic and traditional "Other" and modern "Self," the barbaric practices of the "Other" rooted in religious philosophy which the "Self" attempts to stop. These binaries certainly play a role upholding particular systems of knowledge, discourses and ideologies of race concerning both the South Asian "Other" but also a Japanese "Self," which may be diverse and varied – but ultimately defined in racial and cultural opposition to the "Other"

What has also emerged from this chapter, is that depictions and constructions of India and Pakistan are not only each rooted in religious culture, but that the symbiosis of religious culture with national identity in systems of background knowledge are to a degree also rooted in Japan's own constructed and perceived cultural proximity with India. Again, whilst certain mythologies such as India being the birthplace of Prince Siddhartha/Gautama Buddha are not specific to Japan, they have merged out a of a particular political ideology and other elements, such as the supposed cultural affinity this brings to the people of the two nations, which are specific to Japan.

3. Chapter Three – War And Colonialism

This chapter examines how South Asianness, and particularly Indianness, has been constructed against the backdrop of war and colonialism, a backdrop which, again, emerged as a recurring theme when researching representations of South Asians in Japanese animation. The previous chapter touched on how religious culture has been utilised in diplomatic and media exchanges between Japan and India as a means of boosting diplomatic ties between the two countries and further embellishing their "special relationship." In this chapter, India and Japan's special relationship comes under closer scrutiny, particularly the role it has played in constructing Indianness as an ally to Japan and as a space to re-affirm revisionist and glorifying narratives of Japan's military past and war memory. Unlike religious and food culture, the topic of war and colonialism centres around a localised construction of South Asianness (and especially Indianness) which is particular to Japanese media. I will also examine to what extent constructions of South Asianness fit within a system of background knowledge where "Other" Asianness exists as a separate conceptualisation of "Otherness" in Japanese mediascapes. What are the political implications of this? How does this impact representations of race?

This chapter contextualises representations of war and colonialism through both the wider realm of the Japanese mediascape but also diplomatic and political relations between Japan and India. I will be examining to what degree this has resulted in South Asianness, but particularly Indianness, being rooted in a system of background knowledge and iconography which constructs Indianness as a political ally to Japan and therefore a separate entity and conceptualisation to "Other" Asia. These particular systems of background knowledge are certainly rooted in an ideological stance which exploits selective narratives and histories

(propagated by senior diplomats and leaders of each respective nation-state) regarding Japan's military history and the involvement of South Asian soldiers in World War II conflicts and efforts. These narratives are selectively centred around collaborations between the Indian National Army (*Aazad Hindh Fauj*) and the Japanese Imperial Army in a type of imagined united Asian front against Western imperialism (that is, Pan-Asianism and the *Dai Tōa Kyōeiken*) (Lebra, 2008: 54). Also, at the forefront of these narratives are the Tokyo Trials, at which the only judge who objected, not only to the punishment of Japanese officials but also the very premise of the trials themselves, was Indian national Radha Binod Pal (Maga, 2000: 66-67).

In this chapter, my main arguments centre around recurring trends in the construction of Indianness against the backdrop of war and colonialism. As in the previous chapter, it is important to situate the analysis of Japanese animation within the wider frame of the Japanese mediascape. This chapter further aims to evaluate and identify the consistent threads that make up the construction of Indianness within the context of war and colonialism. Analysing these representations within this backdrop whilst considering portrayals of "Other" Asians is even more necessary, although in doing so it is again important to note that these discussions do not suggest that the particular narratives discussed here concerning Japan's military and wartime history and the racial and cultural politics surrounding them are the only discourses and narratives regarding this topic in Japanese media and the wider public sphere. The focus of this chapter is to explore why South Asians are excluded from the construction of "Other" Asia, particularly within revisionist and glorifying narratives surrounding Japan's military past.

This chapter also expands the discussion of race representation to include mainly the Asian "Other" and Caucasian White "Other." The wider theoretical context of how the "Other" is constructed also demands an interrogation of the Japanese "Self," including its construction and situation within the international community. We can thus better understand the construction of the South Asian (especially Indian) "Other" in Japanese animation. Amy Shirong Lu and John G Russell discuss the representation of the Asian "Other" and Japanese "Self" in relation to Caucasian Whiteness. Russell's focus is on how the aesthetics of Whiteness have been transposed onto the Japanese "Self" to be marked as being culturally and racially distinguished from the rest of Asia and specifically refers to the aesthetics of Japanese animation as an example (2017: 34). Russell's discussion feeds into arguments developed in the third chapter whereby visuals may promote or trigger a response rooted in assumed background knowledge, such as a *tilak* prompting audiences to identify characters as being both Indian and Hindu. Amy Shirong Lu also examines, however, a thread of cultural politics identified as Occidentalised internationalisation which involves the political and racial construction of the West and Western characters in *anime* (Lu, 2008: 176). Occidentalised internationalisation certainly complicates the discussion of racial politics and war memory in Japanese animation as constructions of the Caucasian White "Other" are not monolithic and have at times changed according to the demographics of *anime* audiences (Lu, 2008: 177-178). In this chapter I examine the aesthetics of character design with regards to constructions of the Asian "Other," Japanese Whiteness and Caucasian Whiteness to better frame the cultural and racial politics in which depictions of South Asianness are positioned.

Whilst the previous chapter was able to further explore representations of South Asia outside the realm of India, this chapter is limited and centred largely on the depiction of Indian *anime* characters but also tackles the issue of cultural, racial, and national homogenisation. There

will be brief references made to the depictions of Pakistan and Afghanistan in *Yuugo: Kōshōnin* (Kishi, 2004) and *Afuganisu-tan* (Tima-king, 2003-2005)*.* These are however used to situate the focus of this chapter on war and colonialism, where unfortunately all the case studies (and other potential series found during research) exclusively feature Indian characters. I argue that the historical and political contexts are a key (but not the sole) reason and explanation for the dominance of Indianness in South Asian representation, especially within the context of war and colonialism. The comparison with *Yuugo: Kōshōnin* and *Afuganisu-tan* is prompted by a furthering of the discussion on Indo-Japanese relations in the context of war, colonialism, and the international community through gender. In identifying the similar threads of how Indianness has been constructed, I will examine a notable trope that has emerged of Indian women as high-achieving students, professionals, and scientists. The previous chapter drew from Gayatri Spivak's work on the construction of the subaltern woman as "Other" and how these are constructed through an imperialist lens (1994: 66). In this chapter I similarly draw from Spivak's work as done with religious culture to identify how Indian femininity has been constructed to propagate certain narratives. I will be examining the depiction of Indian women as a continuation of my earlier discussions surrounding war memory and Japan's role in contemporary geopolitics. As we have seen from chapter two and will see from now on, gender does not exist separately from the discussion of race. There is, therefore, a demand for extending our analysis of *anime* texts through a lens of gender theory. After making clear the political, historical and media contexts related to the topics of the chapter, three main animated series will be the subject of discussion. Here, I will explain the rationale behind the choosing of these texts.

In this chapter the main focus will be on two *anime* texts: *Kōdo Giasu* (Taniguchi, 2006-2008) and *Burakku Ragūn* (Katabuchi, 2006-2011). Both series were released on DVD in the UK by *Kazé*, a French *manga* and *anime* publication company and are now available to stream on *Netflix*. The topic of war and colonialism is more flagrant in some series than in others, for example *Kōdo Giasu* is set in an alternative reality whereby most of the world has been colonised and annexed by the fictional Britannian Empire. Most of the animations discussed in this chapter will be framed within a media context of live-action series and movies. The animated and live-action medias discussed have largely emerged from a time frame that coincides with contemporary Indo-Japanese relations warming as well as a shift in Japan's role in the international community, the late 90's to the present day. There is one earlier series however, which also fits into the topics discussed in this chapter and is perhaps one of the earliest examples of a recurring, main Indian character in an animated Japanese television series: *Kidō Senshi Gundamu* (Tomino, 1979-1980). Both this series and *Kōdo Giasu* are of the mecha genre which has long been identified as being closely tied with themes of war and colonialism. It could be argued that *Burakku Ragūn*, has a more tenuous link with the subject. Nevertheless, through an international cast of characters, it brings to the fore many of the themes and theoretical arguments that are relevant to this discussion.

3.1 India's Position In Japan's Construction Of "Other" Asia

One of the main arguments made in this chapter is that South Asia, but especially India, exists outside of the constructed "Other" Asia in Japanese media. One of the reasons behind India being situated as such (the focus again being primarily on India rather than Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Pakistan, Nepal, Afghanistan etc.) is due to Japan's shifting relationship with its constructed "Other" Asia concerning war memory. The preceding chapter touched on

Russell's arguments that representations of the Japanese "Self" have been established as being racially, and at times culturally, in tandem with Caucasian Whiteness to be purposefully distinguished from "Other" Asia, citing animation and *manga* (among other forms of media) as evidence. (2017: 34). Similarly, arguments are put forth by Amy Shirong Lu in discussing the use of de-politicised internationalisation and self-Orientalised internationalisation . Both discussions centre "Other" Asia around countries which were victims of past military aggression by Japan. These are also countries which, during Japan's wartime, mixed nation theory national polity, whose people were at once constructed as having a shared racial heritage with the Japanese Yamato race but also being culturally inferior (Oguma, 2002: 286-288). As the post-war period demanded distancing from Japan's military past, "Other" Asianness came to be further steeped in racial terms rather than just cultural. That is, Japanese national polity changed significantly from suggesting a shared racial heritage between Japanese and non-Japanese Asians (the mixed nation theory) to arguing that the Japanese race had a unique and unbroken lineage of racial heritage stemming from the Emperor's ancestors (Oguma, 2002: 289). Russell's arguments that Whiteness has been drawn into constructions of the Japanese "Self" as a means of being culturally and racially separated from "Other" Asia, are validated in the live action movie *Wārudo Apātomento Horā* (Ōtomo, 1991), based on the *manga* by Satoshi Kon. The apartment named in the title is depicted as a haven for Asian migrants living in Japan, described by Griseldis Kirsch as "…a microcosm of the Asian hemisphere, without Japan" (2015: 42). When a Japanese character arrives to give the Asian migrants notice of eviction, they try to appeal to his humanity by suggesting he should share some Asian solidarity with them, the Japanese character makes clear that Japanese people are "not Asian" they are "White." Caucasian Whiteness is suggested by Russell to exist in Japanese media as a cultural, rather than racial "Other" (2017: 26). Caucasian Whiteness is therefore de-racialised and its "Otherness" is

ascribed through cultural aspiration (2017: 25). An early example listed by Russell is woodblock prints during the Meiji period. These prints would present Japanese characters as being closer in appearance to Caucasian White characters than non-Japanese Asians, and Russell demonstrates this as a link to the aesthetics of Japanese animation today.

Amy Shirong Lu's theorisations of cultural politics in *anime* involve three different forms of internationalisation (the incorporation of non-Japanese elements); de-politicised internationalisation, Occidentalised internationalisation, and self-Orientalised internationalisation. De-politicised internationalisation involves the ambiguous nature of race in *anime* characters as a means of gaining international appeal and audiences (2008: 173). Lu determines that as a result *anime* character designs are a "hybrid global 'look'" (2008: 172) which Koichi Iwabuchi sees as an ongoing trend among Japanese cultural products of being culturally odourless (2002: 54). This hybridised 'look' is put forth by Lu and Iwabuchi as being part of an effort to appeal to international audiences (Lu, 2008: 172-173; Iwabuchi, 2002: 54), but also exemplifies the unmarked nature of Whiteness in *anime* identified by Russell. "Other" Asians and darker skinned characters are not afforded the same level of racial de-politicisation or delineation as Japanese and Caucasian White characters. Amy Shirong Lu determines this process as self-Orientalised internationalisation in animation. Citing *R.O.D. The TV* (Masunari, 2003-2004), Lu notes how the Japanese "Self" "Orientalises" or constructs itself using Western stereotypes and by being situated in a racial hierarchy where it exists in between the West and "Other" Asia (2008: 180-181). As always, however, it is noted by Russell and Lu themselves, that the identification of these patterns is not indicative of the entirety of Japanese media and even animation, neither is it suggested to be a summarisation of racial phenotypes which we know to be varied and sometimes unidentifiable. Instead, they provide us with a framework for identifying patterns of

representation, which certainly do exist, and have a degree of prevalence in Japanese animations. They also allow us to scrutinise other media texts and identify challenges or transformations of these patterns to varying degrees. The work of Griseldis Kirsch and Kinnia Shuk-Ting Yau provide a basis for examining the complicated nature of how "Other" Asia has been constructed in Japanese media.

Kinnia Shuk-Ting Yau and Griseldis Kirsch both write on the long and shifting relationship of China and Japan as well as representations of the Chinese "Other" in Japan. Wartime Japanese cinema relied on a narrative of a weak and unstable Asia, usually in the form of a poor Chinese female character who would be rescued by a rich Japanese man (Yau, 2008: 138). In the 1980s, a new narrative surrounding foreigners, and by consequence the Chinese "Other", in Japan emerged. This was a narrative largely centred around violence and crime (Yau, 2008: 137) which presents the Chinese "Other" as a threat to the Japanese "Self." As we will see, these are stereotypes which have persisted in representations but we will also see how these tropes have changed and shifted along with the very aesthetic design of the Chinese "Other." As the economic landscapes of both Japan and China have changed dramatically, Yau argues that Japan dealt with its economic woes cinematically through deprecation of the Japanese "Self" and elevation of the Chinese "Other" (2008: 142-143). Kirsch similarly argues that China has become a space of salvation and hope for Japan. Kirsch identifies how "Other" Asianness has been used in Japanese television to signify a return to traditional values against which Japanese modernity may be contrasted (2015: 31). Japanese media has also sought, however, to tackle the marginalisation of "Other" Asians in Japanese society as evidenced in *Wārudo Apātomento Horā*.

Representations of "Other" Asia in Japanese media is varied and diverse. It is important to

note however, that "Other" Asia is signified by largely East Asian identities and countries. Scholarship and representations are centred mostly around the Chinese, Taiwanese and Korean "Other." Lu, Kirsch, and Yau, for example, all use China as their main example and theorisation of "Other" Asia. In the same way, however, that "Other" Asia is signified and marked by East Asia, South Asia is marked and signified by India and usually only India. This becomes especially pertinent and flagrant in the context of war and colonialism. I will expand further on the flattening and erasure of South Asian diversity in favour of India, but for now I would like to focus on why India has been deliberately constructed as existing outside of Japan's "Other" Asia.

Charles W. Nuckolls argues that India is in a special position having never been invaded by (despite being engaged in battle with) the Japanese Imperial Army (2006: 821). The main argument put forth in this chapter is an expansion of Nuckoll's argument, that India is being increasingly positioned as a political and strategic ally to Japan. A large part of the two countries' supposed kinship involves India's role in Japanese war memory and the use of the Indian "Other" to further revisionist narratives. It is precisely down to this role and mythology that India is not encapsulated within the realm of "Other" Asia, as it is a conceptualisation which involves Japan's postcolonial relations with former victims of its past military aggression. Ironically, the large areas of the South Asian subcontinent (including India) could be included here, but conflicts with the Japanese Imperial Army are largely ignored through a refocusing on Indian freedom movements which were at times aligned with Japan's vision of Pan-Asianism, the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere (*Dai Tōa Kyōeiken*) and the Japanese Imperial Army itself. The selective retelling of Japan and India's past relationship, however, excludes not only India from "Other" Asia but renders other non-Indian South Asians invisible altogether.

In his work on Japanese media representations of Blackness, John G Russell examines how scholarship on the representation of race in Japanese media has largely focused on the construction and depiction of Whiteness (2009: 85). A new awareness of Blackness in Japanese visual culture was prompted in the 1980s from controversial remarks by the then Japanese Prime Minister Yasuhiro Nakasone whereby he claimed that intelligence levels in the United States of America were suffering due to the multicultural nature of its population, particularly targeting Black and Latino communities (Russell, 2009: 84)[24]. Encounters with Black people and representations of "Blackness" in Japanese culture, however, can be traced back to Japan's encounters with Portuguese and Dutch traders in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (although there is debate that these encounters could have occurred earlier due to China's trading with Africa) (Russell, 2009: 86). The new awareness in the 1980s was therefore limited to contemporary constructions of "Blackness" within Japan, ignoring its complex historical background. The discussion of the Black "Other" thus remained as a secondary subject to that of Whiteness, and ignores the Western (primarily American, especially in post-war Japan) filter through which certain images of "Blackness" have been conceived. The term "Other Other" refers, therefore – to a subdivision that signals a racial and cultural hierarchy.

By drawing in this theorisation, I do not attempt to draw direct comparisons between constructions of Blackness and Asianness in Japanese media. The intention here is to instead identify how South Asianness, and especially non-Indian South Asianness, similarly exists

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[24] Page, C., (1986) 'Nakasone Puts Foot In Melting Pot.' *Chicago Tribune.* [online]. Available at: <http://articles.chicagotribune.com/1986-09-28/news/8603120570_1_prime-minister-yasuhiro-nakasone-puerto-ricans-japan-doesn-t> (Accessed 31 August 2015).

outside the usual debate and scholarship surrounding construction of Asianness in Japanese media.

3.2 "Other Asia," The Indian Ally And War Memory In Japanese Media

Akiko Hashimoto identifies three main patterns that characterise the narratives formed around collective war memory in Japan. The first emphasises and glorifies those deemed as heroes who died during the war such as *kamikaze* pilots, the memory of whom is honoured through statues and memorials (2015: 8). The second is a focus on victimhood and the consequences that defeat had on Japan, evidenced through the presence of peace museums, including the Hiroshima Peace Memorial and Museum which is focused on the impact of atomic bombs being dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki (2015: 8). The third narrative opposes the former two by discussing war memory around Japan as a perpetrator and aggressor (2015: 8). The first two narratives determine revisionist perspectives which either minimise or downplay atrocities committed by the Japanese Imperial Army. Hashimoto argues that controversies around war memory in Japan wrongly assume a singular narrative of honouring Japan's military past through a right-wing nationalist lens, rather than paying attention to the socio-political conflicts surrounding all three narratives, especially the shift to the second narrative of victimhood which diminishes, rather than celebrates Japanese imperialism (2015: 8-9).

The centring of nationalist perspectives on war memory has been enabled by statements from Japanese officials as well as pressure on media and artistic depictions of wartime atrocities perpetrated by the Japanese Imperial Army, especially with regards to comfort women (women forced to work in brothels to serve Japanese Imperial Army soldiers). In 2016,

former Prime Minister Shinzō Abe issued Japan's first official apology to the South Korean government for the use of military brothels. Statues commemorating the one-year anniversary of Abe's apology were placed outside the Japanese embassy's consulate in Busan, drawing criticism from the Japanese government[25]. The yearly urban international art festival, The Aichi Triennale, faced controversy and criticism in 2019 when the exhibition's inclusion of comfort women sculptures by Korean artists were met with backlash and even threats to the art museum where it was being held[26]. This prompted the statues to be pulled from the exhibition leading to other artists also withdrawing their contribution although it was later re-opened in October 2020 with extra security[27]. The *Violence Against Women in Japan Network* (*VAWW-Net*) filed a lawsuit against the public broadcaster *NHK* (*Nippon Hōsō Kyōkai* or *Japanese Broadcasting Corporation*), claiming that there had been political pressure and government interference regarding a 2001 documentary on comfort women (Field, 2007: 2-4). As these events are reported by non-Japanese medias, they also presume that nationalism and celebration of Japan's imperial past is the central narrative within Japanese collective memory. Ian Condry points out how nationalist and victimhood narratives are used to homogenise Japanese discourses surrounding war memory, including media depictions (2007: 3-4). This is a key point to establish as the focus on this chapter examines India's role specifically in nationalist discourses surround war memory. The discussion of

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[25] Cascone, S., 2017. 'Japan Recalls South Korean Ambassador in Protest of Statue.' [online] *Artnet News.* [online] Available at: <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/comfort-women-statue-south-korea-japan-814244> [Accessed 4 May 2021].

[26] Kyodo Staff Report., 2019. 'Controversial art exhibition featuring 'comfort woman' statue reopens in Nagoya.' *The Japan Times.* [online] Available at: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/10/08/national/controversial-art-exhibition-comfort-woman-statue-nagoya-south-korea/> [Accessed 4 May 2021].

[27] Kyodo Staff Report., 2019. 'Controversial art exhibition featuring 'comfort woman' statue reopens in Nagoya.' *The Japan Times.* [online] Available at: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2019/10/08/national/controversial-art-exhibition-comfort-woman-statue-nagoya-south-korea/> [Accessed 4 May 2021].

these depictions is in no way a complete and holistic representation of narratives and discourses in Japanese society but examines the significant role Indianness has played in enabling and boosting in particular nationalist narratives which honour Japan's military past through a justification of Pan-Asian ideology. I will examine how this construction of Indianness has been further catalysed by Japan and India's current special political relationship and how this allows South Asia, but especially India, to be constructed separately from a Japanese conceptualisation of "Other" Asia. The exploitation of historical ties between Japan and India for the benefit of nationalist and revisionist narratives and how they feed into the topic of modern geopolitics (including Japan's standing as a military power within the international community) will also come under scrutiny to further contextualise the analysis of South Asian representation against the backdrop of war and colonialism.

In the immediate post-war period, Japan was occupied by the United States of America and adopted article 9 into its constitution. This article does not permit Japanese governments to engage in international military combat and has been upheld by successive administrations through an approach of pacifism and neutrality (Beer, 1997: 818; Miyashita, 2007: 100). Whilst there has been opposition to the suggested removal of article 9 by the Japanese public, conservative commentators and (more recently) politicians (including former Prime Minister Shinzō Abe) have been pushing for Japan to take a more prominent role within the international community by revising it – something which is shown to have strong opposition among the Japanese public [28]. Again, I will be examining the role India plays in Japan's recent attempts to reposition itself within the international community and in turn how this

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[28] JIJI, 2020. '69% oppose change to Japanese Constitution's war-renouncing Article 9, poll shows.' *The Japan Times* [online]. Available at: <https://www.japantimes.co.jp/news/2020/06/22/national/japan-oppose-change-article-9-constitution/> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

has played out in *anime* representations of both countries as well as the racial and cultural identities constructed around them.

Japan's current political relationship with India has warmed from diplomacy and economic partnership to incorporate military and naval ties. This includes Japan permanently joining Exercise Malabar in 2015, joint navy drills being conducted in the Indian Ocean originally started in 1992 by India and the United States of America[29]. Japan and India are also part of G4, a group consisting of UN member states India, Japan, Brazil, and Germany who have pledged to support each other's bids for permanent seats on the UN security council. In 2005, China (the sole Asian member state that has a permanent seat) openly moved to prevent the goals of the G4 (Clark, 2017: 258). Whilst the Chinese government is still opposed to Japan gaining permanent status, they expressed an understanding for India's aspirations to do so. Chinese leaders also recently criticised Japan's cut-price sale of amphibious aircrafts to the Indian military, indicating strategic regional alliances based on geopolitical interests[30]. India is therefore playing a role in Japan's more recent attempts to break out of softpower status within the international community. Here, I will pay more attention to the special relationship between Japan and India and how they have been embellished through political rhetoric to situate Indianness as an ally to Japaneseness. There will be a focus on how this particular ideological stance of allyship between the two countries is used to construct a system of

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[29] Panda, Ankit. "India-Japan-US Malabar 2017 Naval Exercises Kick Off With Anti-Submarine Warfare in Focus | The Diplomat." *The Diplomat*. [online] Available at: <https://thediplomat.com/2017/07/india-japan-us-malabar-2017-naval-exercises-kick-off-with-anti-submarine-warfare-in-focus/>. [Accessed 1st May 2018]

[30] Krishnan, A., 2016. 'China says Japan 'shameless' for cutting price on weapons sales to India - World News.' *India Today*. [online] Available at: <https://www.indiatoday.in/world/story/china-japan-weapons-sale-defence-deal-india-340892-2016-09-13> [Accessed 30 Sep. 2016].

background knowledge whereby India is not just a present day, but historical ally to Japan and how this may have filtered into Japanese media constructions of South Asians.

In the current political climate, Japan and India are both focusing on aspects of history which will help to embellish their political rhetoric and military ambition. These aspects of history include the benign World War II memories that Japan holds of India as a collaborator and supporter of its imperial ambitions (although they are not framed as such) which ultimately feeds into media representations and constructions of Indianness. The Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs website, after its brief description on India's cultural ties to Japan through Buddhism, fails to address Japan's relationship with India during World War II. Instead, it shifts straight to the gifting of a baby elephant to Ueno Zoo by Jawaharlal Nehru and establishment of diplomatic ties between the two countries in 1952[31]. Redacted from this summary is Japan's outrage over India's step towards developing nuclear arsenal and decades of political indifference to one another (Yamada, 2008: 147-148), the official Japanese account focuses on the cordial relations enjoyed between the two nations before jumping straight to the rapid economic and political ties developed between the countries at the start of the 21st century. The summary continues with the thread of perpetuated myths that Japan and India have enjoyed a continuous and historical link, ranging from religious culture to having similar anti-Western sentiments. The official account by the Indian consulate in Japan, however, does not just remove facts but almost completely subverts the truth. The following extract comes from the opening paragraph of a bilateral brief from the Indian Embassy in Tokyo:

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[31] Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan, 2021. 'Japan-India Relations (Basic Data).' *Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Japan.* [online] Available at: <https://www.mofa.go.jp/region/asia-paci/india/data.html> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

Friendship between India and Japan has a long history, rooted in spiritual affinity and strong cultural and civilizational ties. India's earliest documented direct contact with Japan was with the Todaiji Temple in Nara, where the consecration or eye-opening of the towering statue of lord Buddha was performed by an Indian monk, Bhodisena, in 752 AD. In contemporary times, prominent Indians associated with Japan were Swami Vivekananda, Nobel laureate Rabindranath Tagore, entrepreneur JRD Tata, freedom fighter Netaji Subhash Chandra Bose and Justice Radha Binod Pal. The Japan-India Association set up in 1903 is the oldest international friendship body in Japan. Post World War-II, India did not attend the San Francisco Conference but decided to conclude a separate peace treaty with Japan in 1952, marking a defining moment in the bilateral relations and setting the tone for the future. The sole dissenting voice of Justice Radha Binod Pal at the War Crimes Tribunal struck a deep chord among the Japanese public, that continues to reverberate to this day. [32]

This bilateral brief which summarises relations between the two countries gives an incredibly simplified and partial account. The fact that Indian (and other South Asian) soldiers fought against the Japanese Imperial Army is absent in this summarisation of relations between the two countries. The distortion of war memory is done in a similar fashion to the editing of religious culture in historic accounts made by both Indian and Japanese officials. The manipulation of history regarding religious culture has therefore become purposely intertwined with the redaction of World War II memory. Economic and military alliances are developing under a mythical context of natural kinship whereby the two nations have endured long-standing ties with one another and these redactions contribute towards this notion.

During the early 1940s, the Japanese Government's promulgation of the Greater East Asia

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[32] Embassy of India, Tokyo, 2021. 'India-Japan Relations Bilateral Brief.' *Embassy of India, Tokyo.* [online] at: <https://www.indembassy-tokyo.gov.in/eoityo_pages/MTE,> [Accessed 5 May 2021].

Co-Prosperity Sphere began to take an interest in the *Aazad Hind Fauj* or Indian National Army (INA) movement (Dhar, 2004: 119; Lebra, 2008: 61). Led by Rash Behari Bose, and later Subhash Chandra Bose, the INA was a nationalist movement, which rejected Gandhi's non-violent approach to ousting Britain from India. Rash Bose first established connections with the Japanese whilst living in exile in Berlin (Dhar, 2004: 119) and subsequently arrived in Japan in 1915 to escape arrest by the British against whom he had been fighting. Initially, the Japanese government were obligated to surrender Rash to the British due to an extradition agreement and so he was forced to go into hiding with the help of a Japanese friend and businessperson (Dhar, 2004: 119). Diplomatic relations became strained however, after the British navy raided a Japanese steamship and in January 1916 the arrest warrant was lifted. Japan's interest in the INA continued and during the 1940s they took on the training of their leaders and members (Dhar, 2004: 120). At the same time, the Japanese army was training these Indian nationalists, they were also fighting South Asian soldiers enlisted by the Allied powers. Indian prisoners of war captured by the Japanese were pressured to join the INA movement. Those who refused on principle to adhere to the Axis ideology were forced into hard labour and severely punished by the Japanese army. The memoir of John Baptist Crasta (Crasta and Crasta, 2012) testifies to the brutal treatment of Indian soldiers who refused to join the Axis powers. Although the liberation of India from British imperialism became a more critical issue for the Japanese authorities with the outbreak of World War II, their alliance with the INA was largely used to further justify Japan's military expansion by co-opting its ultimate goal of independence from Western colonial rule (Lebra, 2008: 54). Subhash Chandra Bose was a prominent figure as the second leader of the INA army which collaborated with Japan and the other Axis powers. South Asian soldiers fighting on the allied side under the flag of British India were also instrumental in fighting against the Japanese Imperial Army. The battle of Imphal, which took place between March and July

1944, resulted in heavy losses by the Axis powers due to efforts by the Allied side which consisted largely of South Asian soldiers. Again, these histories and narratives have largely been erased in depictions of South Asianness, which are used to prop up the ideologically charged knowledge base from which revisionist narratives stem.

The various roles of Indian soldiers who fought for both the Allied and Axis powers during World War II have been homogenised within mainstream Japanese discourse to solely reflect the alignment of South Asian fighters with the Axis side. For example, a Japanese Indian co-production by director Alberrt Antonio is currently being made on Aiyappan-Pillai Madhavan Nair (A.M. Nair). A.M. Nair or Nair-San was an Indian freedom fighter who joined the Indian Independence League in Japan and stayed in the country after the war, establishing a restaurant before passing away in 1990 and being awarded the Order of the Sacred Treasure by Emperor Hirohito in 1984. In addition to the celebration of South Asian soldiers who were part of the INA army, the judge Justice Radha Binod Pal has become a key figure in revisionist narratives which aim to paint the efforts of the Japanese Imperial Army as heroic defenders of Asian sovereignty.

Radha Binod Pal was the sole dissenting Indian judge at the Tokyo Trials, he objected to the premise of the trials, claiming that they represented a double standard between how Allied and Axis, especially White and Non-White imperialists, and war criminals, were being held accountable. Pal has become a central figure in recent Indo-Japanese mythology, through media representations and also being invoked by many Japanese and Indian officials. In 2014, a newly elected Narendra Modi gave a speech to the Japanese press directly invoking the figure of Pal:

While Japan is the 'land of the rising sun;' India is the land of the 'shining sun.' While in Japan the sun rises, in India, the sun shines and it stays warm. The friendship between India and Japan; its historical and its cultural. Both our countries have been bonded together for centuries. In one way, ours is a relationship of an umbilical cord. One of the key specialities of India-Japan friendship is that if in the Japanese life there has been most minute of contributions by an Indian, Japanese people and Japanese society have never forgotten about it. Even today, you can take the name of Justice Pal. Even the younger generation of Japanese get excited about it. During challenging times in Japanese society, Indians had contributed to building of a place where people could drink water.

Till date, Japanese people have not forgotten about it. Whether it is Swami Vivekananda or it is Rabindranath Tagore or Subhash Chandra Bose, the love for them is reflected in Japanese society and the Japanese people.'[33]

In this speech, Modi uses two key figures (Bose and Pal) who are instrumental in upholding Pan-Asian ideology and have frequently been utilised in representations and discourses surrounding revisionist and victimhood narratives. Within the mythology perpetuated by official government account of Indo-Japanese ties, Radha Binod Pal is a recurring figure who has maintained a linear presence in Japanese history and visual culture, especially since the late 1990s. In 1997 a memorial was established for Pal at the Kyoto Ryōzen Gokoku Shrine, with an identical one later built at Yasukuni Shrine in 2005. He featured as a main character in a 1998 film entitled *Puraido: Unmei no toki* (*Pride: The Fateful Moment*) (Itō, 1998). The four-part mini-series *Tokyo Trial* (Verhoeff and King, 2016) is a recent co-production

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[33] Modi, N., 2014. 'Transcript of Prime Minister's interaction with the Japanese media.' *Ministry of External Affairs – Government of India.* [online] Available at: <https://mea.gov.in/media-briefings.htm?dtl/23959/Transcript+of+Prime+Ministers+interaction+with+the+Japanese+media > [Accessed 1 May 2021].

between Japanese public broadcasting channel *NHK* and Dutch studio *FATT Productions* and originally aired on *NHK* before being made available to international audiences through online streaming service *Netflix*. Indian actor Irrfan Khan stars as Justice Pal who again becomes one of the central characters among the court proceedings. Further to these live-action depictions of Radha Binod Pal are *manga* depictions by nationalist *mangaka* Yoshinori Kobiyashi in a *manga* series named *Shin Gōmanism Sengen Supesharu – Sensō Ron* (*Neo Gomanism Manifesto Special – On War*), a response to criticisms of his earlier works promoting revisionist and glorifying narratives of Japanese history. This *manga* was published between 1995 and 2003 in *Sapio manga* magazine which usually focuses on political and military topics in Asia. The positioning of Radha Binod Pal within the Japanese public sphere has given way to misinformation and mythology regarding Indo-Japanese relations. Whilst he did indeed dissent and object to the trial, he was also vehemently critical of Japanese imperialism and war atrocities (Takeshi, 2011: 16).

These representations which centre the narrative of the trials around Pal's objections and his anti-Western rhetoric foster an idealistic image of India, superficially promoting the notion of Pan-Asian solidarity and simultaneously endorsing nationalist rhetoric in both India and

Figure vi: Memorial to justice Pal at the Kyoto Ryōzen Gokoku Shrine

Japan. Charles W Nuckolls states that India, having never been colonised or successfully invaded by the Japanese Imperial Army, is able to be constructed as a symbol of an Asian country which managed to gain its independence because of Japan's military efforts and ideology of Pan-Asianism (2006: 821). Disregarding nations which were invaded and colonised by the Imperial Japanese Army, India is presented through Radha Binod Pal and Subhash Chandra Bose. Leading the production committee of *Puraido* was the right-wing former head of the Japan-India Goodwill Association (and former advisor to Prime Ministers Takeo Fukuda and Yasuhiro Nakasone) Hideaki Kase (Nuckolls, 2006: 818). The involvement of other Japanese and Indian conservative figures and history revisionists such as Isao Nakamura (Nuckolls, 2006: 818), Anupam Kher and Suresh Oberoi make the intended reading and ideological foundation of representation in this film clear.

The myths concerning exchanges between Japan's relationship with India are in many ways dependent on the revisionist history surrounding World War II created by the Japanese government. It relies on narratives surrounding Japanese victimhood and Western imperialism. In *Paru Shinron*, *Tokyo Trial* and *Puraido*, discussion of military aggression and colonialism is centred on the American occupation of Japan and the hypocrisy of the Western judges during the Tokyo Trials. The miniseries *Tokyo Trial* perhaps goes the furthest in acknowledging the atrocities committed by the Japanese Imperial Army. Nevertheless, the focus of the series being on the main two dissenting judges – Indian Radha Binod Pal and Dutch Bernardt Roling make room for the premise and decisions of the Tokyo Trials to be questioned. Radha Binod Pal appears in deliberate and stark contrast to the two other Asian judges – Mei Ju-ao from China and Delfin Jaranilla from the Philippines. Whilst they (along with the British and American judges) are represented as being almost vengeful, Radha Binod Pal remains calm and collected when presenting his arguments. When Pal first raises his

objections to the premise of the trial itself, pointing out that Japan had merely acted as Western nations had acted in his home country, British judge William D. Patrick is visibly angered and suggests Pal return to Calcutta. This is one example of many whereby Pal is treated with disdain or outright racist attitudes from his White counterparts, giving further weight to his arguments. As in *Puraido*, India occupies a space *in Tokyo Trial* where it is at once Asian but not "Other" Asian as in the Japanese construction. It is necessary for India to exist as a special entity separate from "Other" Asia, whereby Japan may use its successful struggle for independence as reassurance for and validation of its own past.

Again, I want to make it clear that India and India alone has become the space for such validation. Despite the celebration of INA figures such as Subhash Chandra Bose and AM Nair, there is little acknowledgement that members of the INA and certain key figures who were born and raised in British India, but in areas which would today also encompass Pakistan and Bangladesh. Pakistani, Bangladeshi, even some Indian identities, however, do not enter these discussions of war memory at all. Let us take for example the most recent iteration of Justice Radha Binod Pal who was from Bengal in the 2016 series *Tokyo Trial*. Actor Irrfan Khan stated in an interview that he was told specifically by the director not to give his character an authentic Bengal accent. He wanted instead an internationally recognisable Indian accent, even though it is made clear throughout the narrative at several points that Pal is Indian. When given a choice by the actor, the director insisted on an accent that would fit in with the preconceived background knowledge of what English-speaking audiences expect Indian accents to sound like [34]. Deviance away from what is considered "the legitimate group" of a country can seemingly be justified by asserting what audiences

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[34] Khan, I. 2017.B'ehind the Scenes with Tokyo Trial: Melting Pot of Nations.' 2017. *YouTube* [online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uyP3H7EKdYI> [Accessed 5 May 2021].

are used to and considering their limitations of background knowledge. The argument that Irrfan Khan should not have used a Bengali accent to represent Radha Binod Pal because international audiences will not recognise it as Indian can be easily dismissed due to the narrative and dialogue of the series which highlight his character as being Indian. Irrfan Khan's suggestion created an opportunity to contribute to and diversify audiences' background knowledge regarding the South Asian "Other." Instead, the directors chose to flatten it rather than stretch and add heterogeneity to their vision of South Asians and specifically, Indians. By also focusing on Indians and continuing to use Indianness as a monolith for South Asianness, the experiences and voices of South Asian victims of Japanese military aggression, both military and civilian, are erased.

War memory is not the only subject which is pertinent to the discussion of war and colonialism in this chapter. It also involves the role of Japan within the international community. Yongwook Ryu argues that the events of 9/11 and the rhetoric of the war against terror evoked an unprecedented response from the Japanese government, which subsequently sought to establish a stronger voice concerning international relations (2005: 13) and a more assertive shift in identity politics surrounding national security, where previously it was characterised by peace and pacifism (Singh, 2012: 61). In the 1990s, Ryu states, Japanese foreign policy began to expand out of its pacifist shell (which had been strongly moulded by a security alliance between Japan and the USA) and become more involved in humanitarian issues and peace efforts (2005: 17). The Japanese government wishes to be a more visible player within the international community, which is clear not only in efforts through international bodies such as the UN and ASEAN, but also internally with the controversial, proposed revision of article 9. Article 9 is an element of the Japanese constitution, created after World War II by the SCAP (The Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers),

prohibiting Japan's combative military involvement in international conflicts and affairs, which shaped its post-war foreign policy for decades. The *manga* by Yoshinori Kobayashi further conveys the conservative nationalist interpretation of article 9 as a form of slavery and oppression by American occupiers and the need for Japan to re-establish itself as a military superpower once again. *anime* has also been used as a device by the Japanese government to promote the Japanese Self-Defence Force (JSDF), including exploiting *anime* tropes such as *moe* (the featuring of "cute" (usually) female characters who elicit an emotional response from viewers). Examples include cartoons for young children explaining the role of the JSDF and the development of characters as part of a PR campaign [35], and animated television series featuring the JSDF as in the case of *Gate: Jieitai Kano Chi nite, Kaku Tatakaeri* (*Gate: Thus, the Japanese Self-Defence Force Fought There)* (Kyōgoku, 2015-2016) (Martin, 2020:168). I will be examining to what extent these themes of war memory, and the tension regarding Japan's role in the international community, are explored in the series *Burakku Ragūn* and *Kōdo Giasu* in the next section.

3.3 The Imperial "Self" - War Memory And Neo-Colonialism

So far, I have detailed how various media texts have situated India and Indians as a geopolitical ally of Japan. India is framed outside of Japan's conceptualisation of "Other" Asia, an imagined geopolitical landscape with which Japan's complex military past can be a source of diplomatic friction. This construction of India goes further than the pervasive use of religious symbolism, which is rooted in assumed background knowledge, as this is a more

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[35] Gad, J., 2015. 'The Japanese Military Is Getting Offensively Cute.' *Vice*. [online] Available at: <https://www.vice.com/en/article/pa4ee7/the-japanese-military-is-getting-offensively-cute> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

localised representation that is specifically rooted within a particular narrative and background knowledge base that essentialises South Asianness and exploits specific South Asian figures. We have already established animation as a unique medium, one that can bend the usual norms, conventions and therefore limitations of live-action cinema. We must also consider, however, the further nuances of animation as a medium: particularly whether they are a cinematic movie or television series. Sometimes there may be overlap between the two depending on a franchise but media type is a crucial factor to consider in terms of production and distribution. For example, the previous chapter examined how the adaptation of Osamu Tezuka's *Buddha manga* (1972-1983) and theatrical release differed greatly in tone from the *manga* as well as the contrasts between the *manga* and *anime* adaptations of *Yuugo: Kōshōnin*. Cinematic films are longer features which must be ready before release. *anime* series (like television series) are more malleable, which at times may allow creators more freedom but can also make then susceptible to changes according to the demands of sponsors, broadcasters, and audiences. This is clear in series such as *Senkō no Night Raid* (Matsumoto: 2010)*.*

Senkō no Night Raid takes place against the backdrop of Japan's invasion of Shanghai. Set during the period of Japanese military expansionism, this TV series follows a crew of Japanese spies known as *Sakurai* who also have special powers. The series has been noted by fans for not creating a revised version of history and war memory[36], particularly episode seven which features a controversial account of The Mukden incident of 1931. This incident involved Japanese government officials bombing their own railway (The Manchurian

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[36] Divine (2010) 'Senkō no Night Raid – 06.' *Random Curiosity*. [online]. Available from: http://randomc.net/2010/05/11/senkou-no-night-raid-06/ [Accessed 31 August 2018].

railway) in China. With support from the press and media, these officials then successfully placed the blame on Chinese rebel groups, thereby rationalising the Japanese invasion of Manchuria (Young,1998: 56). *Senkō no Night Raid* challenged revisionist narratives surrounding the Mukden incident by accurately presenting the Japanese officials as the real perpetrators, albeit their reasons for doing so are treated sympathetically. Although this series is not the first to truthfully depict the actions of the Japanese Imperial Army, it is nevertheless a worthy example which demonstrates how the medium of animation has a greater freedom to explore topics which move away from mainstream narratives. In the previous chapter we examined how the medium of animation has allowed greater flexibility in terms of the representation of race, and how it may be used to manipulate an image of the "Self." Here, it is used to subvert mainstream political discourse surrounding Japanese wartime history. As result however, it was not allowed to air on television as per its usual timeslot, but was rather livestreamed online as a webisode [37] , with broadcasting network *Tokyo Television* instead airing an alternative version of episode seven the day before.

It is again crucial to note that victimhood and nationalist narratives are by no means the only discourses surrounding war memory in Japanese media and socio-political discourse. I will later discuss *Burakku Ragūn*'s metaphorical representation of war and colonialism which subtly draws on the war memory narrative of Japanese institutions' role as perpetrator and aggressor and challenges narratives of victimhood and revisionism. For now, however I would like to refocus my analysis back toward the construction of "South" Asianness in tandem with "Other" Asia. This construction again emphasises Japan and India's special relationship as allies to one another and frames India as the perfect vehicle to perpetuate Pan-

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[37] Loo, E. (2010) 'Senkō no Night Raid's 7th Episode Streamed, Not Aired.' *Anime News Network* [online]. Available at: <http://www. animenewsnetwork.com/news/2010-05-10/senko-no-night-raid-7th-episode-streamed-not-aired> [Accessed 31 August 2015].

Asianist ideology, demonstrated in *Senkō no Night Raid*. Episode 6 (directly preceding the controversial episode on the Mukden incident) takes a focused look at the Pan-Asian ideology and highlights the tensions that arose from Japan attempting to assert itself as leader of Pan-Asianism and thereby default leader of revolutionary and anti-(Western) colonial movements across Asia. It begins almost immediately with a meeting involving leaders of anti-Western colonial movements from various Asian countries, and a Japanese government official. The meeting is meant as a round table discussion on the benefits of the Pan-Asian movement and joining the Greater East-Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. It posits the Indian participant, among others, as being naturally suspicious of Japanese motives and conceptualisation of Pan-Asianist ideology. India is almost a leading voice among the opposition. The Indian representative is clearly made to stand out and afforded a more visually prominent role in this scene than "Other" Asian countries through the discussion which is conducted in English. Although the series is recorded with Japanese voice actors speaking in Japanese, this scene features the various Asian leaders speaking in English. Whereas most speak in heavily accented English, the Indian leader speaks with a strong American accent in flawless English.

Each representative of their country embodies a cultural marker or representation of their national identity. In the case of the Indian representative, he is accented and signposted through his turban and is also the first to speak, lamenting on how the British Army had falsely assured independence to India if they were to help the Allied war effort. Delegates from China and Cambodia similarly discuss how they wish to reject the imposition of "Western values." The need for unity among Asian countries in the struggle against Western imperialism is stressed and universally agreed upon. The Indian delegate, however, is the one to lead the conversation and make clear his distrust towards the Japanese representative who

used to work for the Japanese Imperial Army. India is highlighted as being a potentially powerful ally for Japan however, as with the Mukden incident, *Senkō No Night Raid* does not also shy away from depicting the reservations held within the Indian independence movement towards Japanese imperialism. Detracting from mainstream depictions of World War II, this series situates India as part of "Other" Asia, whereas most narratives seek to position India as a separate entity, with a special and unique relationship with Japan compared to that of "Other" Asia. Such constructions of India can also be seen in the work of right wing *mangaka* (*manga* artist) Yoshinori Kobayashi.

Yoshinori Kobayashi's *manga* entitled *Shin Gōmanism Sengen Supesharu – Sensō Ron* is a prime example of how Japan's military past has been openly glorified by a small number of *mangakas*, illustrators and animators. The *manga* itself ran between 1995 and 2003, initially being produced in a political context of strong debate regarding Japanese war memory. The political stance of Yoshinori Kobayashi has been made clear in several of his works and *Shin Gomanism* features himself as a protagonist presenting his own arguments over the illustration of various events. In one chapter named *Paru Shinron* (*The True Arguments of Pal*) (2008), Kobayashi uses the words of Radha Binod Pal to frame his arguments that the Japanese Imperial Army was seeking to liberate Asia through the Greater East-Asia Co-prosperity Sphere. Pal is depicted as a heroic figure, vehemently against not only the judgement of Tokyo, but also strongly in favour of Japan's Pan-Asian ideology. A year after the first monument to Pal was built at Kyōto Ryōzen Gokoku Shrine, director Shunya Itō released the movie *Puraido: Unmei no Toki* (*Pride: The Fateful Moment*) (1998) which features not only the character of Radha Binod Pal but also Subhash Chandra Bose, leader of the INA. The INA and its members continue to be pushed as a powerful example of Japanese Pan-Asianism.

In both *manga* and live-action media which feature a backdrop of war and colonialism, there is a continuous thread of Indianness being constructed and used to prop up and justify Japanese led Pan-Asianism. These representations provide a firm basis for reading *Kōdo Giasu*, a mecha genre series [38]. *Kōdo Giasu* is an original series created by Ichirō Ōkouchi and Gorō Taniguchi which premiered on *Mainichi Broadcasting System* (*MBS*) between 2006 and 2007. The idea first came to series creator Taniguchi after working on the series *Planetes* (Taniguchi, 2003-2004), a hard science fiction series also set in the future. Taniguchi has a history of working on mecha themed *anime* including series which are a part of the *Gundam* franchise. In the universe of *Kōdo Giasu*, most of the world has been colonised and is split into three main empires: The European Union, The Chinese Federation and the largest: The Holy Britannian Empire. This particular empire has colonised more than a third of the world and replaces the names of their colonies with numbers as a means of suppressing their national identity. The series begins in 2010 after the annexation of Japan by Britannia. The Holy Britannian Empire itself is comprised of remnants of the British Empire but, despite the name, does not include the British Isles. Therefore, whilst the geopolitical landscape of the series is an alternative reworking of the present and future, the past has been selectively re-created. Although the legacy of the British Empire remains, there is no mention of the Japanese Imperial Army.

Through the work of Frederick Schodt, William Ashbaugh states that whilst various Japanese media have posed challenges to revisionist history narratives, *manga* and animation have usually shied away from tackling Japan's wartime past and where it does exist, it is usually through a revisionist and/or glorifying perspective (Schodt, cited in Ashbaugh, 2010: 328).

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[38] These robots are usually controlled by a human who will be seated inside of them.

Kōdo Giasu does not directly deal with the issue of war memory and Japan's military past. Instead, the issue of colonialism is reworked into an Occidentalist perspective which situates the Japanese nation-state as victim rather than aggressor within this alternate universe. The success of imperialist domination by the Britannian Empire is attributed to their development of the "Knight Frame." This Knight Frame effectively acts as a giant robot extrapolation of the human soldier seated inside of them. The whole depiction of the Britannian Empire at once draws on the classical modern version of empire which was acquired during much of the 18th and 19th century. In this vision of the near future, "Britannia" has not only invaded and occupied most of the world but has also stripped each country of their national identity by naming them through a numerical system. The focus of the narrative is of course, Japan which is constructed in this series as a subaltern nation. Japan has been re branded "Area 11" after its invasion and annexation by the Britannian Empire in 2010, and the Japanese are simply referred to as "Elevens."

The central plot of the first two series revolves around the character of Lelouch, son of the Emperor of Britannia and his Japanese wife (one of his many wives). Lelouch fled the palace with his sister when they were still children, after their mother was assassinated by their father and Lelouch feared he and his sister would be next. In the present day, they live covertly by pretending to be Britannian with no Japanese heritage and Lelouch secretly plans revenge against his father and the Britannian Empire (or at the very least, to secure a political climate where he and his sister can live peacefully without having to hide their identities). Whilst coming across a Britannian army base one day, Lelouch accidentally gains supernatural powers known as the "*Giasu*" which allow him the power to have people follow his command. He is then able to mobilise against the occupying Britannian Empire by masquerading under the pseudonym "Zero." His movement gains momentum until he

eventually commands an army called "The Order of the Dark Knights" - a revolutionary group of native Japanese or "Elevens" labelled as a terrorist organisation by the Britannian authorities. Lelouch lives a double life, carrying out his duties as Zero, leader of the Dark Knights whilst simultaneously acting as a normal Britannian student at a prestigious Britannian high school. The character of Zero, though a product of the imperial system develops into a revolutionary figure fighting against the tyranny of the Britannian Empire.

The alternative universe of *Kōdo Giasu* situates Japaneseness and the Japanese people as subalterns within a racial and cultural hierarchy. Imperialism and empire come in two main forms: the Britannian Empire and the Chinese Federation. Whilst these are fictional entities, they actively rework geographical locations and draw from individuals' understanding of past empires as well as current geopolitics. In this alternative reality the sovereign nation of Japan fought against the invasion of the Britannian Empire, the Japanese Prime Minister was then killed by his son (Lelouch's best friend Suzaku) to stop the war in favour of peace, prompting the annexation and occupation of Japan.

The most obvious form of cultural politics at play here is Occidentalised internationalisation. Amy Shirong Lu determines that Occidentalist narratives which portray Caucasian Whiteness as a threat or danger to the Japanese "Self" were mostly prevalent before *anime* and *manga* gained international attention and audiences (2008: 178). *Kōdo Giasu*, however, was a series which gained international recognition and fans, yet employs Occidentalised internationalisation to construct the West as a believable military threat to Japan and is cited by Lu as a prime example of Occidentalised internationalisation at play (2008: 180). The empire and noun "Britannia" are fictional and geographically situated in North America. Nevertheless, the name strongly prompts a connection with "Britain" and the British Empire

which similarly colonised a sizable percentage of the world between the 19th and 20th century. Japan therefore not only is situated as a victim by drawing on its own history of post-war occupation but claims solidarity with other postcolonial nations. Occidental internationalisation, however, is not the only form of racial and cultural politics at play in this series. The Chinese Federation is initially situated as a potential ally to the Japanese Independence movement. The fact that Japan has been colonised and annexed by the Britannian Empire, unlike most of Asia, which is under the territory of the Chinese Federation, is significant. Japan is shown to have held its independence and sovereignty against the Chinese Federation unlike all the other Asian countries, instead succumbing to the more technologically advanced Britannian Empire only when faced with either annexation or never-ending war. The Britannian Empire's success is owed to its technological prowess, particularly through the development and use of robot soldiers called Knight Frames. The Knight Frames are a crucial aspect to the narrative and premise of the series.

William Ashbaugh cites Susan Napier's discussion on science fiction as a genre that can use allegory and metaphor to tackle topics such as war memory (2010: 328). The Knight Frames are an indication of the prowess of the Britannian Empire and evidently indicate how technological advancement enabled the expansion, development, and maintenance of empires. The dominance of Britannia's Knight Frames, however, becomes further complicated when Lelouch as Zero, is able to successfully attain the mecha weaponry needed and tackle the military prowess of the Knight Frames. These weapons are developed by Indian arms specialist Rakshata Chawla. The settings of both *Burakku Ragūn* and *Kōdo Giasu* are highly politicised, and involve characters of diverse backgrounds, social groups, and nationalities. However, the genre of mecha immediately inserts *Kōdo Giasu* into an aesthetic tradition of dystopian futures/alternative timelines, which, like *Gundam,* actively mirrors contemporary political

discourses through its narrative. In this re-scrambling and decoding of contemporary politics, India is not represented through groups or organisations, but rather an individual character. In episode seventeen the Black Knights and Chinese Federation form an alliance as Lelouch agrees to help the Chinese Federation break out one of their members from imprisonment by the Britannian Empire and it is during this episode that we are introduced to Rakshata who has been supplying the Black Knights already for a long while and is overseeing a shipment in her first appearance. Here, Lelouch as Zero and Rakshata have an exchange affirming their mutual respect for one another.

The Chinese Federation rule over India and discussions among the Dark Knight soldiers reveal that Indians are subjugated by the empire through a racial hierarchy whereby they are considered barbarians and therefore viewed as semi-civilised. Rakshata, the Indian scientist working with the Dark Knights, bears a great deal of resentment toward the Chinese Federation as a result. Multiple cultural politics are used to highlight the dependence of empire and colonialism on racial hierarchies and the systemic oppression they produce. The live-action 1998 film *Puraido: Unmei no Toki* (Itō, 1998) uses India as a space for affirming Japan's own national identity by drawing comparisons between India's occupation by the British and Japan's occupation by the United States. Similarly, India's oppression by the Chinese empire in *Kōdo Giasu* is reflected in Japan's subjugation by the Britannian Army. Japan's alliance with India is also used in *Kōdo Giasu* to therefore negate Japan's role as aggressor and affirm the narrative of Japanese victimhood. India's alliance with the Japanese freedom fighters (or "terrorists") appears as a natural result of Pan-Asian ideology which is reframed within a dystopian future dominated by a Western nation and China.

Amy Shirong Lu argues that though Occidentalised internationalisation in Japanese

animation is not necessarily a particularly potent version of some forms of Occidentalism (2008: 179), it nevertheless exists to essentialise and stereotype the West. As the practice of Orientalism essentialises "Arab, Indian, Chinese and Japanese cultures," Occidentalism is an inverse of Orientalism. It typically involves the construction of the West, and in doing so often constructs the Western "Other" in a negative and demonised manner (Lu, 2008: 176) including personality and character traits such as selfishness or arrogance. Although negative depictions of the West as enemies and antagonists in *anime* were most common before it became a recognised cultural export (Lu, 2008: 177-178), as Japanese animation gained international popularity, Lu believes that Occidentalism has become subtler. Although not clearly identified as any specific country, Britannia is strongly suggested to be of North American origin (Lu, 2008: 180). The fictional Holy Britannian Empire could be a classic case of Occidentalism, although it is important to note that the protagonist leading the main fight against the Empire, Zero (aka Lelouch) himself is half Britannian, whilst his main opponent fighting on behalf of the Britannian Empire is Japanese. The aesthetics of both characters, however, convey the blurred lines of race representation between Caucasian Whiteness and Japaneseness. Caucasian Whiteness of Britannian characters is therefore marked culturally and continues to overlap with representations of Japaneseness, even where Occidentalised internationalism is strongly at play.

British India, a term which was used to flatten and "unify" diverse South Asian identities, races and cultures is viewed as being synonymous with the India of today. This term ignores the self-determination of states formed post-partition and demonstrates once again how "India" is a blanket term used to refer to South Asia. The former colonial "subjects" of British India, therefore, who are highlighted as having fought alongside the Japanese Imperial Army, are viewed as Indian in accordance with the present-day India, excluding South Asians

who were also part of India during World War II but would not necessarily identify or determine themselves as Indian. India is the only South Asian country mentioned to be under the rule of the Chinese Federation Army and is also the only South Asian nation depicted and mentioned throughout the series. The character of Rakshata and the narrative surrounding her alliance to the Dark Knights make this kinship between Japan and India countries clearer, going as far as to mirror India's long-running disputes with China and situating Japanese freedom fighters as India's saviours. Mecha series such as *Kōdo Giasu* and *Gundam* are highly politically charged series. Their settings and backdrops immediately and naturally bring to the fore issues relating to war, trauma and colonialism and the racial cultural politics which they involve. As Ashbaugh notes, *manga* and *anime* usually criticise the notion of victimhood cautiously rather than overtly (2010: 328). *Burakku Ragūn* similarly situates constructions of Indianness as an ally to Japan within the international community. The premise and setting of the series do not immediately make clear how this series may be discussed in the context of war and colonialism; however, this series provides a solid basis for exploring the topics of war memory and a propagation of ideological and political proximity between Japaneseness and Indianness within the international community.

Burakku Ragūn is a *seinen anime* (meaning that it is largely aimed at older teenage boys and young adult men) set in the early 1990s. The narrative begins from Rokuro Okajima's perspective as we are immediately introduced to his life in Japan. Scenes of him travelling to work during rush hour and his workplace are accompanied by Rokuro's voice over explaining how he followed through the process of studying well at school only to eventually enter a bland lifestyle of a salaryman where he is mistreated by his superiors. Rokuro's voice-over then switches to his desire to escape to somewhere else. The initial scene serves to solidly establish a Japanese "Self," or Japanese perspective before the narrative is launched

into various international settings including South-East Asia and Latin America. Rokuro's dreary life as a salaryman is visually presented through a colour palette of greys, black and white. A Japanese "Self" is created here but one that is situated within an assumed shared experience with a section of Japanese society. Rei Hiroe, the *manga* creator, has stated in interviews that he initially wished to create a story centring around modern-day pirates and that the character of Rokuro was not an original part of the narrative. After Japanese readers had a challenging time identifying with the story, however, Hiroe decided to introduce the salaryman character[39]. From Hiroe's own comments we can surmise that there was a need for Japanese audiences to be able to identify with at least one character. This was something that was pushed for commercial reasoning by managers and editors who predetermined how audiences may be able to relate to particular characters according to race, nationality, and ethnicity. That character is the salaryman Rokuro Okajima, who also ended up being the protagonist, from whose cultural perspective the narrative and world of the Black Lagoon crew unfolds.

With an important item from his company targeted, Rokuro is soon taken hostage by a group of American pirates (the crew of the Black Lagoon ship) involuntarily entering an international dispute involving his company, nuclear weapons, and the pirates' client - the Russian Mafia. His frustration with the situation is increased when Rokuro's boss tells him that he must be sacrificed to protect the company's reputation. The opening sequence quickly summarises Rokuro's sudden displacement from his everyday life, which is signalled by the sharp visual contrast of his grey and dreary existence as a salaryman with the colourful and vibrant South China Sea, followed by a fist coming through the air to knock him out. Rokuro is seen

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[39] Hiroe, R. 2011. 'APA Interview with Rei Hiroe About 'Black Lagoon'.' *YouTube*. [online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bDJlHAqbFNw> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

surrendering to the American pirates, invoking the lack of Japanese military power of post-war Japan, and pitting the Westerners as aggressors on the weak and pitiful-looking Japanese man. Eventually Rokuro joins forces with the American pirates; Dutch (African American), Revy (Chinese American), and Benny (Jewish American), and completes his transition by taking on the nickname 'Rock.'

Dutch is the first personified indication of internationalisation. Rock's change from his Japanese lifestyle is signalled by two conflicting images: the peaceful and beautiful South China Sea and Dutch's fist striking Rock, knocking him down. The mix of beauty and colour with acts of violence bring immediately to the fore patterns surrounding constructions of "Other" Asia: namely those of exoticism and crime. Both stereotypes come together here to demonstrate that Rock is powerless as a Japanese salaryman and out of his depth with pirates within an international setting. As he is taken hostage by the pirates, and their boat (named Black Lagoon) which he has been forced aboard speeds away he comments "we are getting further and further away from Japan," a suggestion that he is also drifting further from a place he understands to be safe and stable.

The crew visit Roanapur whilst waiting to hear from Rokuro's company. Roanapur is a fictional town in Thailand that is largely populated by Vietnamese refugees. Signposted by a half-destroyed statue of Buddha, Roanapur is well-known in the underworld as a hotspot for criminal activity. Whilst the crew visit various places throughout the series, Roanapur is one of their main bases where the crew feel familiar. The significance of Roanapur is one that could be argued, furthers stereotypes of "Other" Asianness by rooting their representations in violence and criminal acts. On the other hand, when Rokuro's company decided to have him and the Black Lagoon crew assassinated, Roanapur and a life of crime prove to be his salvation

and escape from his dreary, grey-palette life shown at the beginning. Rokuro rants when being pursued by the assassin that he has done what was expected of him; go to school, university and get a job in a good company yet has ended up in such a predicament. After helping the Black Lagoon crew eliminate the assassin, he joins them and re-christens himself "Rock" which expresses his new cultural and social identity.

The first two episodes establish a universe of cultural and racial politics which sometimes blur any racial distinction between the Japanese "Self" and "Other" Asia as well as Caucasian Whiteness through the aesthetics of character design. As already mentioned, an extrapolation on the discussion of Whiteness is necessary to challenge the binary of Japanese and Caucasian Whiteness in *anime*. The framework of cultural politics identified by Amy Shirong Lu and John G Russell are imperative to analysing this text, yet they also require expanding on. Revy, the Chinese American female protagonist complicates the discussion of "Other" Asia. If Caucasian and Japanese Whiteness are de-racialised and unmarked, then so is Revy's "Other" Asianness. In the second season, when a mission brings her and Rock to Japan, Rock asks Revy what she thinks of Japan. Revy responds that a few guys have attempted to flirt with her but are disappointed that she is not Japanese, calling her a *gaijin* (foreigner) and walking away from her whenever she responds. Revy is not the only "Other" Asian character who is designed with the "global hybrid look." Hong Kong triad leader Mr. Chang also similarly shares an aesthetic which blurs the boundaries between Asianness and Caucasian Whiteness, diminishing the separation of Japaneseness from Asianness whilst maintaining a link with Caucasian Whiteness.

My argument here is not to suggest that *Burakku Ragūn* can be considered an animation which has moved beyond the processes and practices of "Othering." It can be argued that the character

design of Dutch appears highly marked as a Racial "Other," not just by his skin tone but also by his size. In the very first episode, Dutch is shown to be the only one to have power and control over the often-volatile Revy. This is demonstrated as she randomly fires shots in the ship and he envelops her entire body to restrain her. Though, as captain of the Black Lagoon ship and crew, Dutch challenges many Japanese media conventions regarding the representation of "Blackness" (such as emotional volatility and lack of emotional development), he visually upholds some of these stereotypes (physical strength) accented further by the normalisation of the other character's (Jewish, Japanese, and Chinese) Whiteness. The Asian "Other" can also appear racially marked such as the character of Shenhua, a Taiwanese assassin later introduced in the series. Visual marking of the Asian "Other" comes in the form of exaggerated narrow eyes and cultural (as well as visual) markers in the form of her dress and weaponry. She is also one of the few characters who is shown to speak in highly accented Japanese.

Figure vii: Katabuchi, S. 2006. *Burakku Ragūn.* Shenhua (left) and Revy (right)

The different forms and constructions of racial Whiteness in *Burakku Ragūn* are therefore culturally marked through the narrative rather than racially marked through their character design and/or voice. With Revy, her cultural "Otherness" is highly contrasted against the character of Rock from the very first episode, resounding with Rei Hiroe's acknowledgement that the character of Revy was used to challenge what are considered constructions of Japanese femininity which are typically built around *kawaii* (or cuteness) [40]. Along with his other comment remarking the need to insert a Japanese character, Hiroe acknowledges a racial paradigm that exists and is marked by cultural "Otherness" (which at times extends to gender and sexuality, an intersecting topic that will be developed further in the next section). In contrast to the conventions of *kawaii*, Revy is brash uncouth and highly sexualised. After being mockingly challenged by Revy to a drinking match, Rock accepts the competition claiming that his national pride is at stake. Evoking his status as a salaryman, Rock claims that years of drinking with colleagues have developed his drinking skills to be on par with those of Revy's. In similar scenes throughout the series, Rock and Revy are aligned together in various missions and their different approaches to work highlight cultural differences which cause varying degrees of tension between the two protagonists. Revy is not only marked by cultural stereotypes (crime and exoticism) but also her relationship and interactions with Rock.

Revy's "Othering" is complex and also entails a scrutinization of Japan's relationship with Asianness, especially in the context of war memory. In Episode 3, the first after Rock has joined the Black Lagoon pirate crew, the crew and their ship come under attack from several boats. Revy, also known as "two-hand," can eliminate them all as Rock looks on in awe and

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[40] Hiroe, R. 2011. 'Rei Hiroe Interview - AX 2010 Press Junket.' *YouTube*. Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2lb86jey42c> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

amazement. Episode five shifts interactions between the two to explore more than cultural differences, including Japan's position as a former imperial power and war memory. Rock flagrantly expresses his distaste at Revy's corpse-robbing whilst they are on board a sunken Nazi submarine; her response is a cold-blooded speech about how money makes the world go around and is the only thing that matters. In the submarine, Revy partially reveals her background to Rock and her experience of being a Chinese American. Revy even says of her past situation before all is revealed, 'What could a Chinese bitch do?' In this episode, Revy only tells Rock (and the audience) some of her experiences and only speaks of being beaten up by the American police officer. It is not until the third season through a series of flashbacks that audiences learn the whole truth of how Revy was neglected at home before being wrongly arrested and raped by an American police officer. After only hearing Revy's brief and partial story, Rock becomes immediately subdued and claims he wishes he had never heard her story as it has so profoundly shaken him. This use of memory, evoked from beneath the water in a sunken Nazi submarine, conjures up the brutality of the Japanese empire's own military past which includes sexual violence towards subalterns and colonial subjects. This scene is also intercut with flashbacks of the original crew of the Nazi submarine. Ian Condry's article discussing *Buraddo Purasu* (Fujisaku, 2005-2006) similarly examines how the protagonists' flashbacks to the Vietnam War are used to reflect Japan's tension and unease with its own military past as well as to convey strong anti-war sentiment (Condry, 2007: 12). Revy's flashbacks are not set in the context of war, nevertheless, the place in which she first discusses her brutal treatment is in a setting with direct links to World War II. Whilst *Kōdo Giasu* deliberately manipulates historical timelines and geopolitics as a manner of evading Japanese war memory and to instead focus on Occidentalist critiques of empire, *Burakku Ragūn* makes use of a subplot and the metaphor of a Japanese and Chinese character debating morality in a sunken Nazi submarine. Rock's reluctance to further delve into Revy's past, and even his desire

to forget what little he had heard, is strongly critical of particularly revisionist war memory narratives that minimise atrocities and war crimes.

The discussion and situation of Revy's Other Asianness positioned against Rock's Japaneseness paves the way for discussing the positioning of Indians in the construction of "Other" Asia. The narrative of *Burakku Ragūn* shifts from country to country, society to society, culture to culture. The fictional Roanapur acts as another extension of "Other" Asianness which is constructed in tandem with a system of knowledge where it is closely linked with crime and criminal activity, an association also illustrated through the "Other" Asian characters. Jane, the South Asian character, is first introduced in the episode entitled *Greenback Jane*. We are introduced to her whilst she is in the middle of a meeting with her criminal employers and over a voice over monologue given by Rock. This voice over makes clear to the audience Rock's position and role in the Black Lagoon crew; Rock's lack of physical involvement in the Black Lagoon's day to day activities are symbolic of Japan's role within the international community by culturally situating him away from the "Other" characters. Whilst sometimes organising missions, aiding, and supporting acts of violence, Rock is never directly involved in the violence or fighting himself. Rock re-emphasises his role and status to the audience at the start of *Greenback Jane* as the crew arrive in Roanapur. Rock's voice over reminds the audience that Roanapur is a dangerous place and that he is only safe and protected there as he is surrounded by his fellow pirates, going as far as to call himself a "sacrificial lamb" and claims that another has now entered Roanapur (Jane). By making clear that both he and Jane are out of their comfort zones in Roanapur, both Rock's Japaneseness and Jane's Indianness are distanced from the social and cultural climate of Roanapur, creating a cultural proximity between the two characters.

We learn that Jane has been hired as an expert and professional manufacturer of counterfeit money by a criminal organisation. She is shown to oversee an important project but has also earned the wrath of her employers by going beyond her deadline in her attempts to produce perfect results. She is threatened by the assassination of her colleague right before her eyes, to scare her into producing the goods on time which instead prompts her to escape with all of her work. As she wanders around Roanapur and the gang begins to give chase she comes across the Church of Violence for refuge where Revy and her friend, Eda, are having a drink and catch up.

The Church of Violence is, like all other organisations and companies in Roanapur, a criminal organisation fronted by nuns such as Eda (later revealed to be an undercover CIA agent). Eda and Revy, along with two others of the Church's members reluctantly engage in a gun-battle against Jane's pursuers and have little sympathy for her plight when she later explains her situation. These introductory scenes of Jane cement her status as a highly skilled worker, someone who has exceedingly proficient IT skills. They also demonstrate her complete reliance on the Church of Violence for protection in a city like Roanapur.

Unlike most other Indian *anime* characters, Jane has almost no visual cultural markers which assert her nationality or racial heritage. Her skin tone is certainly brown but there is no *tilak*, no head dress, she is dressed entirely in the culturally unmarked attire of a skirt and blouse and has blonde hair and her Japanese is not accented either by her voice actor. It could be argued that her character, to a degree, though not exactly existing in the realm of Caucasian or Asian Whiteness, has been left largely culturally unmarked. It is only when Eda refers to her as an "East Indian" that the audience is informed of her background. The lack of visual cultural markers makes it easier for Rock to be identified with Jane as a fellow "sacrificial lamb" with

intellect but who is physically out of their depth in a violent city such as Roanapur.

Jane is introduced in *Burakku Ragūn* as a skilled professional, an image that can be seen in line with the Indian government's own nation rebranding to associate Indianness with the IT industries rather than more traditional images of Indianness (Yahya, 2008: 131). Jane is intelligent and highly capable in IT whilst also being dedicated to her work. Despite her intellectual prowess, however, she is largely viewed by the other characters of *Burakku Ragūn* as someone who is physically incapable, depicting her as a counterpart to Rock's character when he is first introduced to the Black Lagoon crew and Roanapur in episode one of the series. Jane is eventually tricked by Eda to accept her and the Black Lagoon crew's protection from her former employers. Eventually there is a shoot-out with a group of assassins hired to kill Jane, which spills on to the Black Lagoon boat. Here again it is made obviously clear that the physical workforce of the Black Lagoon crew is limited to Revy and Dutch (with Eda also joining forces) whilst Rock and Benny occupy largely management and technical support, respectively. Jane and her skills situate her somewhere, therefore in-between Benny and Rock. The entire backdrop of *Burakku Ragūn* is a multicultural world where characters from various nationalities help to form the sub-plots and narratives of different arcs. Within this arc, we see many nationalities come together to form a mini battle at the Black Lagoon headquarters in Roanapur. Rock, as always takes a side-line when it comes to the violence and is joined by Jane in simply fleeing or avoiding the violence. It is perhaps, of no coincidence that the Japanese and Indian characters are thrown together in such a violent and dangerous situation - shown to be terrified in the face of attacks whereas Revy and Eda (whose characters are constructions of Chineseness and American Whiteness) manage to keep their cool in increasingly dangerous battles. Their pacifism is an extension of their apparent pacifist roles as members of the international community which is scrambled and condensed to the criminal

underworld operating in Roanapur. Through these intense fight scenes, the similarities between Rock and Jane are highlighted.

Rock's Japaneseness exists in tandem with Jane's Indianness as they are pushed together in an increasingly violent environment, through which India is in no way depicted as a physical threat. As seems to be a common thread within all these *anime* series, Indian characters are often domesticated through their alliance with the established protagonist and therefore the established "Self" of the series in which they feature. Therefore, whilst Indian characters may be flawed, Orientalised and objectified they are usually favourable characters who are either associated with or supported by the protagonist[41]. Although constructions of "Other" Asia are emerging which racially delineate characters in the same way Japanese and Caucasian White characters are delineated, the context of war and colonialism situates Indianness in closer cultural and political proximity to the Japanese "Self."

3.4 Modern Women Representing Modern India

The previous chapter drew from Gayatri Spivak's work on whether the subaltern woman has a voice. Spivak's theorisations were used to interrogate the intersectionality of how "lower-caste" and Muslim women are represented and treated in Japanese animation. The topic of war and colonialism, like many, also demands an examination of the role gender plays in race representation. This conversation shifts to how new modes of constructing South Asian

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[41] This is true from the characters of Prince Soma and Agni, Prince Hakeem in *Emma: A Victorian Romance* (Kobayashi, 2005), and Akira in the more recent *Tsuritama* (Nakamura, 2012). Another example of this is the comedy series *Hetalia: Axis Powers* (Shirohata, 2010-2011). Like, *Afuganisu-tan* (Tima-king, 2003-2005), *Hetalia: Axis Powers* began as a webcomic series. Its popularity meant that it was soon adapted into short *anime* episodes streamed online. Again, like *Afuganisu-tan*, characters are literal personifications of their respective countries and nationalities. Historical events are presented as everyday interactions between the countries.

(especially Indian) femininity sit within a system of background knowledge linked to the wider scope of Indian representation in the context of war and memory. I have already stated that representations of South Asian femininity are not a monolith in Japanese popular and visual culture; however, it is also important to note consistent threads and trends which have helped to form emerging or maintain existing tropes. The previous chapter examined two case studies of representation: "lower-caste" women and Muslim women. From these discussions it emerged that there is indeed frequent usage of these marginalised, subaltern groups' bodies to highlight pain and suffering. This section sees a new trope emerging, however, of Indian (and again only Indian) femininity within the context of war and colonialism. This new trope is rooted in success, intelligence, and empowerment as well as Indian allyship to the racial and cultural "Self." I also use this discussion as an extension to the previous chapter's examination of how gender is utilised to further explore the representation of South Asianness in the context of war and colonialism. Similarly, to the previous section, therefore, I will also draw on theories on how "Other" Asian femininity has been constructed in Japanese mediascapes. This framework provides a crucial theoretical framework for better understanding and contextualising depictions of South Asian (mostly Indian) women and opens the discussion up again to the question of how Indian femininity specifically is used to illustrate the special relationship between the Japanese "Self" and Indian "Other."

Yau examines the role of Chinese femininity in Japanese cinema, from poor damsels in distress during wartime propaganda to dynamic and inspiring characters which chart the complex political relationship between China and Japan (Yau, 2008: 137). As with the previous chapter, I must consider the constructions of Indian femininity by examining wider depictions of "Other" Asian femininity. For example, I have already identified how the

character of Revy was constructed, according to the creator of the *manga* series, to act in total opposition to what he considers to be the mainstream vision of Japanese femininity. In this case, Revy's *bitch moe* is deliberately contrasted against the *kawaii* tropes that are associated with Japaneseness. Revy's character design, character traits and relationship with the Japanese "Self" are indicative of how Asian femininity has become a space through which Japan's complicated relationship with "Other" Asia can be symbolised and conveyed. With South Asia, and more specifically, India firmly existing outside of the realm of "Other" Asia, we must consider the representation of South Asian women using a slightly different theoretical and socio-political framework. I remarked on how depictions of "Other" Asianness are seemingly dominated by East Asian nationalities, particularly Chinese. A similar issue of homogeneity is continuously present in the discussion and analysis of South Asian representation. Again, the focus here becomes the depiction of Indian women rather than South Asian women due to the level of visibility afforded to Indian women in the medium of *manga* and animation. As a result, the depictions of Indian women throughout *manga* and *anime* are varied and diverse. Whilst certain tropes of cultural coding and characteristics may persist throughout some of these representations, they are more varied than their non-Indian counterparts, who are either perpetually portrayed through victimhood or rendered invisible altogether. This was evidenced in the previous chapter through the character of mute dancing girl Layla in the series *Yuugo: Kōshōnin* and the hopelessness that plagues the female personification and characterisation of the nation of Afghanistan in *Afuganisu-tan*.

The characteristics associated with Indian women specifically within the war genre, (set against more contemporary backgrounds), are high intelligence, fiscal autonomy, independence and often (but not always) hyper-sexualization and/or romantic relationships

with the established racial and cultural "Self." It is first important to understand their positioning within the narratives as Indians. As already discussed, series such as *Kōdo Giasu* utilise the position of the Indian "Other" as a subaltern of Western dominance and imperialism. They are not, however, victims in these situations, rather they have active roles. They usually appear as experts and/or professionals who will be key to a narrative, yet do not have any physical prowess which allows them to actively engage in conflict themselves. These characteristics have largely coincided with the emergence of "Brand India" which aims to change the global image of India, turning away from tradition and embracing technology, particularly through the IT field (Yahya, 2008:131).

The very first of these stock characters, however, can be traced back to before the emergence of Brand India in the globally popular mecha genre *Kidō Senshi Gundamu* first televised in 1979. Amuro Ray is the hero of the series who engages in battle using a prototype robot at the start of the series. Lalah Sune, a female Indian character, is introduced in the 33rd episode of the series, as a star pupil of Amuro's arch-rival, Char. In a similar vein to her more recent contemporaries, Lalah is intelligent and brilliant in her field. Unlike most of the (female) characters discussed in this chapter, she also actively engages in combat, fighting against the protagonist and alongside one of the main antagonists of the series. At first, she is solely presented as Amuro's love interest, someone with whom he becomes immediately infatuated.

Like many of the other Indian characters encountered through this research, Lalah is also identifiably Indian by the cultural marker of the *tilak*. In line with the animation of the time, the *tilak* is smaller and less significant than in more modern renderings. It is, however, visible, and therefore deliberately present to assert the fact that Lalah is of Indian origin. Jane and Rakshata also do not follow the more conventional visual features associated with

Indianness (long black hair usually plaited, red *tilak* and wearing Indian dress, all of which are used as a template by most other series). Their blonde hair, however, is a design usually associated with Caucasian White and Japanese characters, especially within the respective series of Jane and Rakshata. I have already established that the character of Jane is culturally marked rather than racially or visually. In the case of *Kōdo Giasu*, Rakshata's Indianness is more flagrant, immediately indicated in her appearance through a *tilak* on her forehead. Unlike most renderings of the *tilak* however, Rakshata's differs from the traditional red dot and instead takes the shape of a large blue diamond. Her *tilak* is highly unusual – it is a subversion of a typical cultural marker that has been modified to signify the modern vision of India.

Whilst maintaining the use of the *tilak* as a cultural marker of religion, national identity, and racial heritage it is transformed to coexist with Rakshata as a character – a modern woman who represents modern India. Although these new modes of representation can be seen as positive tropes and associations, we must again view this new trope in a wider context of South Asian representation. Modern Indian femininity is contingent on India's role as ally and friend to the Japanese "Self." Rakshata helps Japanese revolutionaries fight against Western imperialism, Lalah is a romantic interest to the protagonist Amuro, and Jane allies herself with the Black Lagoon crew, is written as being a character who shares characteristics with the Japanese protagonist and also embarks on a sexual relationship with Benny. *Manga*, *anime*, and live-action media directly tackling the subject of Japanese military history similarly produce a positive, albeit conditional depiction of Indianness in an attempt at Pan-Asian comradery. Whilst these storylines and issues exist in alternative timelines in *Kōdo Giasu* and *Gundam* or during specific scenes and subplots in *Burakku Ragūn*, the added layer of gender to the discussion demonstrates a new angle. Yau's discussion on wartime Japanese

cinema "Othering" Asia through romantic relationships comes to the fore in discussions of Indian femininity. These relationships therefore hold political significance, especially within the time and contexts of their production, whilst those analysed by Yau were often used to denigrate "Other" Asia, in the modern context they are used to further establish "Other" India as a friendly nation to Japan as well as to fetishize and exoticise it. For example, the brilliant and capable student Lalah Sune from *Kidō Senshi Gundamu*, is only in her position due to being rescued from an Indian brothel by Char. Although she is the main love interest for the principal protagonist Amuro and his antagonist Char, it is Lalah's capabilities as a soldier which is one of the key features of her character. The focus of her character, however, becomes her relationships with both Char and Amuro. She dies to protect Amuro from Char creating a bitter rivalry between the two. Both Rakshata and Jane are also sexualised in their appearances. With Jane, such sexualisation comes in the form of voyeuristic upskirt panty shots and the abrupt way she initiates a sexual relationship with Black Lagoon crew member Benny. Rakshata's ex-fiancé is revealed to be the weapons specialist behind the Britannian Empire's "Knight Frames," who is also her rival and enemy on the battlefield.

Figure viii: Katabuchi, S. 2006. *Burakku Ragūn.* Jane initiates a sexual relationship with Benny

As I have already noted, however, these depictions of successful and accomplished young

women is a trope only associated with Indian femininity. The context of war and colonialism

elicits positive connotations between the Japanese "Self" and the Indian "Other"

demonstrated through a cultural understanding and allyship. South Asian femininity, which is

not defined by Indianness, however, is seemingly relegated to depictions that centre

victimhood and suffering.

It appears, therefore, that there are two main images of South Asian femininity being

propagated through Japanese animation. The first construction is one that centres around

victimhood in which women are eternal sufferers of South Asian patriarchy and/or their

personal circumstances, a construction which sometimes (but not always) relies on the

intervention of the Japanese "Self." This mode is used in the construction of women from

across the South Asian subcontinent. It is important to remember that representations of

South Asian women not limited to Indian femininity are scarce and rare in *anime* and *manga*,

and where they have been examined in this chapter, they are all definitively within the first

mode of representation, demonstrating a disproportionate imbalance not only in visibility but

also diversity. The second mode, by contrast, exclusively concerns the representation of

Indian femininity and is rooted within the context of war and colonialism. These

representations also align with the general tropes and characteristics of constructed

Indianness in the context of war and colonialism: mainly those of Indians as political allies to

Japan, whilst also providing space for diversifying depictions of Indian women beyond the

scope of victimhood and suffering. I have also highlighted how, whilst "Other" Asian and

even Japanese women have become a space for exploring Japan's military past, Indian

women and Indianness are frequently (but not always) used to promote a revisionist narrative of history.

3.5 Conclusion

Throughout this chapter, several factors have been emphasised when considering the construction of Indianness in Japanese animation. The political context of these representations is at times crucial to this discussion. For example, the coinciding of the movie *Puraido: Unmei no toki* with the establishment of memorials to Indian Judge Radha Binod Pal and the involvement of history revisionists in the production of the movie. This period, it can be argued was the catalyst for using Indianness as a device for promoting wartime Pan-Asian ideology. Without a doubt, many of these depictions capitalise on the growing closeness between Japan and India, drawing on Pan-Asian sentiments of resisting Western imperialism. It can also be argued that these constructions of Indianness have always existed in the background of post-war Japanese media but have been brought to the forefront and amplified through a revisionist and nationalist lens.

For Indianness to be constructed through a lens of historical revisionism, it must exist outside of the realm of "Other" Asia. The story of Indian independence is crystallised as an example of how Japanese efforts to rebuff Western colonialism could have been successful. As we must remember, however, these constructions and even these storylines are not monoliths. They adapt and change to different circumstances, alternative realities, or scrambled socio-historical settings. *Kōdo Giasu*, though set in an alternative reality and where the geopolitics of today are altered but not to the extent that they are unrecognisable. Here, cultural, and international politics are actively played out through a narrative which is rooted in fears of

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Western military prowess and domination. These politics recreate European colonialism in the 19th to 20th centuries and excludes Japan's similar role as imperialist aggressor, instead shifting that role to China. This chapter has therefore looked further to consider representations of "Other" Asianness and Caucasian Whiteness and situate depictions of Indianness within them. The cultural politics of the former two constructions in Japanese animation (as well as Japanese media) are even more diverse and complicated, especially when considering aesthetics. We cannot therefore discuss the issue of race representation, whether it be of the "Self" or the "Other," in terms of binaries (as in focusing only on the Japanese "Self" and South Asian "Other"). They must be considered within the cultural politics that inhabit the universe of each specific series and the role aesthetics and narrative have come into play. Whilst we have considered the cultural marking of Caucasian Whiteness through Occidentalised internationalisation, I have also identified how Caucasian Whiteness is racially delineated and conflated with Japaneseness. Building on these discussions, however, we have also seen a further extension of such practices to "Other" Asianness. The construction of "Other" Asia, like Indianness and the Japanese "Self" does not exist within a static nor fluid racial hierarchy. "Other" Asia typically signifies the Chinese, Taiwanese or Korean "Other" in academic scholarship but can be expanded to many countries which were the victims of Japan's past military aggression and imperial desire. The aesthetics of "Other" Asian characters are also becoming racially delineated as with their Japanese and Caucasian White characters. A notable issue stemming from this framework is the exclusion of South Asia from the realm of "Other" Asia, not necessarily through aesthetics but from the very conceptualisation of "Other" Asia itself. Constructions of South Asians, however, solely exist through the construction and existence of Indianness.

One of the threads running through this chapter is the invisibility of South Asians who are not definitively Indian. As seen in the previous chapter, even where there are stories specifically focused on countries that are not India (in the case of *Buddha*, Nepal), India is used to homogenise and claim the stories – erasing most of the South Asian subcontinent. Similarly, throughout this chapter, we have seen the erasure of even Indian diversity from live-action series *Tokyo Trial*, where the director insisted Pal's Bengali accent be replaced in favour of a recognisably Indian accent, to the repeated use of India as a space of furthering Pan-Asianist rhetoric. Indianness, whilst existing as a racial and cultural other, is constructed against the backdrop of war and colonialism as an ally to Japan.

Threads have also been drawn in terms of the representation of gender, more specifically of South Asian femininity in Japanese animation. It is important, of course, to acknowledge that there is a degree of variety in the constructions of Indian femininity. Due to the invisibility of Nepalese, Pakistani, Sri Lankan, Afghan, Bangladeshi, Bhutanese, Maldivian and other South Asian "Other," it is certainly unsurprising that these depictions of femininity are either highly monolithic or lacking altogether. Whilst this chapter was able to identify stereotypes and tropes of Indianness in the context of war and media specific to Japan, the next section again draws from wider, global representations and constructions of Indianness in order to determine how food culture is used to "Other" South Asians in *anime*.

4. Chapter Four – Food Culture

Previous chapters have examined the use of cultural codes to evoke meaning and elicit understanding from audiences. This discussion on cultural codes and signifiers draws from Fairclough's discussion on how assumptions can be made based on a range of cues and codes which have been embedded within one's system of background knowledge. The classifications and assumptions these codes entail are not only involved in the construction of the South Asian "Other" in Japanese animation but at times also in that of the Japanese "Self." This chapter examines the semiotic use of food in the construction and representation of race and culture.

In the discussion of food as a cultural and racial marker, I will similarly draw from Fairclough's premise of background knowledge but also bring in theorisations from Simona Stano, Sara Greco, and Hiroko Takeda to better understand and analyse how depictions of food culture may intersect with ideologies surrounding race and culture. Simona Stano has written extensively on the semiotics of food culture, drawing from the work of Lévi Strauss; Stano determines that food (being a primary need for human beings) becomes a part of every one's background knowledge, attributing meaning and symbolism to food (2015: 19). Greco uses the terms 'texts' and 'grammars' to refer to the structuring of food culture and food systems of any given society (2015: 61). Greco further determines that whilst these texts and grammars are indeed used to construct a system of meaning, they are also open to adaptation, individual change, and translation (2016: 63). These processes of determining and drawing out meaning are not limited to food itself, but can also be applied to all of the processes which surround it:

> In fact, analysing food implies considering several elements: the development of systems of classification in terms of edible or inedible substances, as well as the logics underlying such categorizations and the sociocultural changes affecting them over time; the gustatory perception and its links with both the physiological level and the intersubjective dimension; the concept of commensality and the delicate balance between social roles and subjectivity; table manners; the interpretation of food as a language and the analysis of the processes of translation between different foodspheres; the many languages and forms of communication related to the food universe; food design; and so on and so forth. (Stano, 2015: 20)

As Simona Stano suggests, the understanding of food culture in terms of cultural anthropology includes the systems of meaning behind its production and consumption (2015: 20). With the focus on systems of meaning in the representation of South Asian food culture in Japanese animation, I contextualise food as part of a global system of background knowledge through localised media representations of South Asian diaspora in the UK, US, and France/Australia through different media formats. The inclusion of these media depictions is to understand how the text/grammar of "Other" South Asian food culture has been coded and therefore translated into different societies, sometimes by members of the South Asian diaspora themselves. Examining these depictions and identifying consistent threads of markers and tropes will allow for a better understanding of the uniqueness (if any) of how South Asian food culture is represented in Japanese animation.

Whilst Stano stresses the importance of considering individuality and heterogeneity in terms of translating food culture as a part of a system of signs and symbology, one of the key elements that emerges in the discussion of food culture is that of homogeneity. Fairclough surmises that hegemony signals dominance across social economic and ideological domains of society (2010: 61). Throughout this research we have seen how South Asianness has been often reduced to India, and in turn the diverse ethnoscapes of India itself have been essentialised into cultural and racial monoliths through the use of visual codes and signifiers as well as narrative. In this chapter I continue to assess the diversity of South Asian

representation and the visibility of South Asians who are explicitly not Indian. The actual characters themselves may exhibit different experiences and adaptations which demonstrate diverse translations of the food texts with which they are associated. We have seen before, for example, that the representation of Indian women in Japanese animation ranges from mute dance girls to modern Indian women who are pioneers and experts in their field. Such diversity does not extend, however to Pakistani or Afghan women who are perpetually situated in narratives of victimhood. The dominance of Indians within the realm of South Asian representation within Japanese visual cultures therefore denotes a notable gap in representation characterised by the relative invisibility of South Asian identities which are not characterised by Indian nationality. The trends identified in this chapter are not unrelated to previous chapters, particularly the discussion on religious culture and spirituality, which become linked to translations of South Asian food culture.

In this chapter I will be first examining the semiotics of food culture among South Asian communities, including diaspora – and how these meanings have been translated to fictional medias. Previous chapters have examined the construction of Indianness through the theoretical framework of Gayatri Spivak's work on whether the subaltern has a voice. Whilst this work continues to have relevance in discussions on the construction of South Asianness, I also look to global trends in these constructions which may have at times been created by South Asians. In examining constructions of the South Asian "Other" through the lens of food culture, it is important to note to what extent South Asian diaspora themselves continue to play into and utilise associations with food culture, either to challenge or uphold particular stereotypes. Building on such issues, I will be able to contextualise depictions of the South Asian "Other" in Japanese animation by measuring it against the consistent threads arising in different production contexts. I will also provide theoretical frameworks to discuss

specifically the context of food culture in Japanese animation through Hiroko Takeda's work on banal nationalism and cultural hybridism. The medium of *manga* and *anime* are especially important in this chapter due to a trend of culinary themed series within these forms of media.

Of interest in the construction of Indian and Japanese food cultures in Japanese animation is the depiction of South Asian curry and Japanese *karē*. I will explore the historical link between the two but more importantly, use it as an opening for a discussion on cultural hybridism. Takeda's work on banal nationalism focuses on how hybridism is used to at times discursively characterise Japanese food culture and, as a result, Japanese national identity. The examination of how curry and *karē* are portrayed therefore allows us to explore these ideas and how much weight they hold when analysing the *anime* texts. It is therefore important to revisit Japaneseness or *Nihonjinron,* which was briefly referred to in the second chapter. *Nihonjinron* is a key part in discussing the construction of a racial Japanese "Self" and to what extent more diverse modes of identity can be explored through the depiction of food culture

Finally, this chapter also seeks to address the non-visual markers by which Indianness is coded in Japanese animation. This research has so far largely focused on the aesthetics of *anime* characters as well as visual cultural codes and signifiers and how these all play into cultural and racial politics. What has become evident throughout this research, however, is that such codes can also take on an audio form. Building on Davé's work on brownvoice as an extension of brownface where South Asians are constructed as a racial and cultural "Other" (2013: 41-42), I will be analysing the various character songs and other pieces of non-diegetic music used to codify South Asianness.

Before discussing the *anime* texts, which will form the bulk of this discussion, I would also like to point out the other medias used to situate my arguments. For example, I will be drawing from animated texts *Sally Bollywood: Super Detective* (Ducord and Hoarau, 2009-2013) and *Family Guy* (MacFarlane, 1999-present) to identify similar themes regarding how South Asian food culture is translated and coded. I will also be briefly drawing from live-action media including British comedy sketch show *Goodness Gracious Me* (Carrivick et. al, 1998-2015). I similarly examine both animated and live-action media from Japanese visual culture such as *Sushi Police* (Momen, 2016) and *NHK*'s cultural exhibition series *Cool Japan* (*NHK*: 2005-present). The main texts I will be analysing under the lens of food culture are the *manga Karē Naru Shokutaku* (Funatsu: 2001-2012)*,* and animations *Shokugeki no Sōma* (Yonetani, 2015-2020) and *Kuroshitsuji* (Shinohara, 2008-2009) (which was also analysed in chapter two).

Karē Naru Shokutaku has not had a UK publication or official release – it is only available to English-language readers through *manga* reading websites and has been translated by fans rather than the distribution companies. *Shokugeki no Sōma*, released in 2015, has gained a wide, international audience; it has been streamed on *Netflix* and has been noted by journalists and the creators as featuring a diverse range of characters. Unlike *Kuroshitsuji*, it was also released at a time where English-language distributors of Japanese animation were making use of streaming platforms in an effort to fight piracy and so this series was initially available to UK viewers through a subscription to the streaming service *Crunchyroll*. The first two seasons are now also available for UK audiences on *Netflix*.

The next section provides further media and theoretical context to the role food has played in representations and constructions of South Asians in medias and visual cultures from various

countries. I will examine how these representations are indicative of a global system of background knowledge which stereotypes and "Others" South Asians through food culture, a system to which South Asians also contribute.

4.3 Food As Cultural Markers Of India and Indianness In The Absence Of Indians

I will here examine the series, *Karē Naru Shokutaku* which explores the role of curry in Japanese food culture. Although the next section examines more in-depth comparisons between Indian and Japanese-style curry and *karē*, here I intend to focus on the use of food as a cultural marker of Indianness (and again, only Indianness), particularly how such an association is achieved through the absence of Indian characters themselves. Passing references to South Asian food and drink have become more frequent in Japanese animation, from *Ano Hi Mita Hana no Namae o Bokutachi wa Mada Shiranai* (Tagai, 2011) and *Shirokuma Kafe* (Masuhara, 2012-2013) to *Nami yo Kiitekure* (Minamikawa, 2020), where there are passing mentions and glimpses of *kheer*, *lassi* and *naan* bread. In most of these examples, Indian food appears as an unmarked part of the Japanese foodscape. *Karē Naru Shokutaku*, however, heavily features South Asian curries alongside cultural and racial codes. There are no Indian characters involved in the production of these dishes yet the food and drink itself are used to convey assumed knowledge and cultural understanding of Indianness. Here I will be critically examining such constructions of Indianness in relation to this assumed background knowledge which is facilitated through food culture.

The availability and diversity of South Asian cuisine in Japan, as in many countries across the world, has grown exponentially largely thanks to the efforts of South Asian diaspora. Food

culture is therefore also a key element of South Asian visibility in Japan. It has already been

established that the various countries which make up South Asian diaspora in Japan

(particularly those more heavily involved in the restaurant and food industries) are not fully

represented in Japanese visual culture, with "South Asianness" being singly defined as

Indianness . Even the construction of Indianness , however, does not necessarily merit the

inclusion or representation of Indian characters. Japanese animation and *manga* may depict

Indian food which then prompts the use of other visual tropes associated with Indian culture

in order to construct a superficial presence of Indianness in the absence of any Indian

characters. Instead, Japanese characters become the mediums and purveyors of Indian food

culture. Dwijendra Nath Bakshi describes how a sense of Indianness was cultivated in ancient

Japan through religion and spirituality, as well as the various forms of artwork and culture

(2004: 106). This Indianness was imported and constructed without the direct involvement or

presence of Indians themselves. Here it is argued that Indianness is similarly established in

Japanese animation and *manga* without Indian characters, but through the mere presence of

Indian food. It has become a cultural marker through which a semiotic reading of Indianness

may be taken. A further layer of homogenisation is added to these depictions of South Asian

food culture, as Indianness is portrayed as being symbiotic with religious culture. As chapter

two explored, religious culture and symbols have become powerful cultural markers of

Indianness through the flattening of the Indian religious landscape. The homogenous term

Indian food becomes associated with the equally homogenous term of Indian spirituality, all

constructed for us by the Japanese characters within the *manga Karē Naru Shokutaku*

(Addicted to Curry) (Funatsu, 2001-2012). *Karē Naru Shokutaku* is a *manga* series originally

published in *Weekly Young Jump* magazine. It consistently uses an array of visual cues and

cultural particularities to construct simplistic associations with Indianness , in the glaring

absence of actual Indian characters despite "Indian curries" featuring heavily throughout the

manga series. In contrast to the everyday Japanese *karē*, Indian food signifies the exotic, the mystical, the spiritual, and of course: the "Other."

Karē Naru Shokutaku tells the story of a father who leaves his high-school student daughter, Yui, in charge of his failing *karē* shop. The title of this series appropriates the term curry through the double meaning of the word *karē* as it is usually written in *katakana*, a Japanese writing system used for words of non-Japanese origin. The title of the *manga*, however, instead employs *kanji* (from the pictorial writing system) which uses the double meaning of curry and fine/beautiful. The title is therefore suggestive of how curry has become adapted into Japanese food culture and has become nipponized, although associations are consistently made with what is deemed "Indian culture," as shown by the main setting of the series. The protagonists' *karē* shop is called Curry House Ganesha. The *manga* immediately evokes the Indian origins of Japanese curry and does so by using the name of Hindu God of Ganesha*;* the elephant-headed male deity. This is the first in an extensive list of cultural references to India and spirituality, as both the title of Ganesha and the food served (curry) signifies a link between Indian food and Hinduism. As we will see throughout this chapter, Indian food culture does not just become a cultural marker of Indianness – it acts as an extension of religious culture which in turn is utilised as an Indian "accent."

The male protagonist, Makito, arrives in chapter one seeking out Yui's father. Upon hearing that he has left to learn how to cook better, Makito asserts himself as the new chef of Curry House Cooking Ganesha. To prove that he is a capable chef, Makito produces a ground beef curry. He claims that he has made this dish before but has modified it accordingly. He uses a different meat to his previous versions which had been made for Indian customers. Makito notes how he previously made this dish using lamb but as Yui is not Indian (he does not

specify religion) he is able to make a ground beef curry. As we have seen from the chapter on religious culture, this is a systemic presumption whereby a single religion is associated with an entire nation-state, that Hinduism must, by default, equal Indianness . There are several problems and misrepresentations which arise from Makito's statement. The first is that all Indians (and Hindus) do not eat beef. In fact, beef consumption has been common in India, particularly among religious minorities such as *Dalits* and Muslims. Secondly, recent years have seen a rise in religious and "upper-caste" Hindu ideology being aggressively pushed within the public sphere across India, making the consumption of beef highly taboo. There have been cases of members of minorities and marginalised groups being attacked and even killed for their (frequently presumed and/or rumoured) consumption and/or production of beef (Chigateri, 2008: 15). What Makito is conveying, therefore, is not just a harmless assumption made from his and the *mangaka*'s (incorrect) background knowledge. Makito's knowledge of Indianness and Hinduism is (albeit unknowingly) constructed around elitist ideology which uses culinary nationalism to assert its cultural superiority.

Religious culture becomes intertwined with food culture as markers of Indianness, however these are conveyed and posited in this *manga* series by Japanese characters, mainly by the protagonist Makito. His proficiency in Indian curry is attributed to his growing up in Singapore and learning from Indian chefs. His experience therefore allows him to convey his own translation of Indian food culture which assimilates and fits into pre-existing symbols and patterns of representations of Indianness whereby it becomes synonymous with Hinduism and Hindu religious culture. Makito, and the *mangaka*, go further, however with conveying cultural and racial markers of Indianness through the use of clothing and displays of brownface.

In chapter 3, Makito enlists Yui's help in handing out flyers to promote the curry shop. As a part of the promotion, the pair of them wear Indian "costumes," with Yui clad in a *saree*. Makito's costume goes a step further in using images of Indianness by creating a highly problematic masked costume of a turbaned Indian man with a disproportionately large head in order to propagate the notion that Curry House Cooking Ganesha sells authentic Indian food. Makito adopts a caricature of Indianness which is highly exaggerated and offensive. This 'costume' strongly resembles the caricature of Indianness assumed by the character of Chadha in *Niea_7* (Tokoro and Satō, 2000), an *anime* where many of the characters are aliens who have adopted the physical and cultural aesthetics of different countries. One alien takes on Indianness as his disguise in Japan and goes by the name Chadha. He first appears at the house of the Mayuko (protagonist), and immediately frightens her and she instantly brands him a "pervert." His "frightening" and "pervert"-like appearance includes an oversized head, which strongly mirrors Makito's costume in *Karē Naru Shokutaku* (see figures ix and x below). These almost-identical images of Indianness were produced within a year of one another and employ the same use of brownface in their depictions of Indianness. Obvious exaggeration of the body is intentionally used to give the representations of Indians a comic effect, and constructs Indianness as a highly visible cultural and racial "Other." Indian food becomes translated to this exaggerated visual image of Indianness. These crude misrepresentations from the early 2000s, however, have evolved considerably in more recent years (as the discussion on curry will explore).

When Yui is pressured to sell her father's *karē* shop by signing a contract with a competitor she refuses. In retaliation, efforts are made to steal all of Yui and Makito's customers by opening up a rival curry shop directly opposite. The new installation is simply called "India *Karē* Shop," another attempt to involve Indianness within a narrative heavily centred around

food, but where no South Asian characters are present.

Although the rival shop has a name which is less nuanced in its homage to Indianness , India

Karē Shop does not rely so heavily on Indianness to promote itself, instead opting for swimsuit-clad

Figure ix: Funatsu, K. 2001-2013. *Karē Naru Shokutaku.* Makito and Yui promote the Curry Shop Ganesha

Figure x: Tokoro, T., & Satō, T. 2000. *Niea_7. Chadha, the alien who has taken on an Indian appearance*

models. A cook-off between Makito and his new rival, where they must both present a

chicken curry to a panel of judges takes place across chapters 9 and 10. The title page[42] of

chapter 10 once again has Yui in traditional Indian clothes, standing in front of what appears

to be a Hindu temple (see figure xi below). This imagery translates to readers that by

specialising in Indian food, the protagonists are also able to take on other aspects of Indian

culture such as dress, spirituality, tradition, and even cultural values. It also prefaces and

symbolises what is to come in the following chapter as Makito declares victory over his

adversary aided by a cooking philosophy rooted in "Indian spirituality" (again, note the use

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[42] *Manga* chapters usually begin with a title page featuring the characters and themes of each respective
chapter.

of the term Indian rather than Hindu). The use of the *saree* and the temple again double up as symbols which immediately evoke images of Indianness but also Hindu spirituality for readers to make an instant connection.

This *manga* constantly conflates religious and food culture to cultivate Indianness . especially as Makito defeats his rival and claims a win for Curry Shop Ganesha. Despite using fewer spices and making a curry that is less rich in flavour, Makito uses butter which he claims brings out the "soul" of curry.

Clarified butter or *ghee* is certainly a staple medium for cooking across India, and its use in cooking is indeed rooted in ancient scientific Vedic culture (*Ayurvedic)* (Srinivasan, 2011: 53). Makito explains how "spiritual animals venerated by Indians" and the food they produce (such as dairy products) are "considered the food of the Gods" and so Indians believe butter to be the soul of curry. Once again, note the use of the term Indians, rather than specifically Hindu. It is directly inferred that, not only are Indianness and Hindu spirituality the same, but also that Hindu spirituality is consistently embedded in Indian food culture.
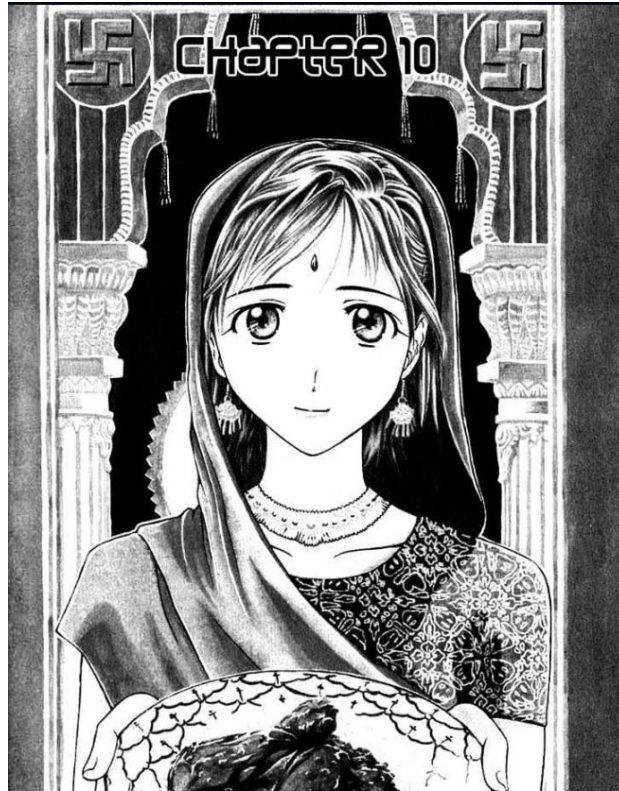
Figure xi: Funatsu, K. 2001-2013. *Karē naru Shokutaku.* The title page of Chapter 10 in *Karē Naru Shokutaku*

Spirituality and food become two interchangeable texts of culture that are used to flatten not just India and Indians but South Asia and South Asians. The image of Yui at the start of the chapter re-enforces the use of spiritual, and specifically Hindu imagery, heavily emphasising, over and over again, the role religious culture plays in Indian food culture (rather than specifying Hindu food culture, or even "upper-caste" Hindu food culture). Whilst this *manga* pays homage to India as the "origin" of curry, superficial cultural cues of Indianness are created to re-enforce India as a cultural "Other" which exists within the landscape of Japanese food culture. Food culture is defined by faith-based practices, which also serve to homogenise images of Indianness into flattened images of Hinduism and curry.

These food battles between chefs and styles are common within culinary *manga* and *anime*. In the case of *Karē Naru Shokutaku*, the food battle eventually boils into an arc whereby another rival appears wanting to assert that their chosen style of curry cooking is superior to

Makito's Indian style curry. The rival's style is translated in the *manga* as both "Oriental" and Japanese. From these differing translations it is clear that Indian style curry is being situated in opposition to Japanese style curry. Where specifically the depiction of Indian curry is concerned, contrasts against Japanese-style curry or *karē* has proven to be a consistent thread which I will explore in the next section. Though I have highlighted how Indian food becomes a cultural marker without Indian characters, here I examine its use in *anime* with the portrayal of Indian characters.

4.4 Curry And Karē - Cultural Hybridism

I have already remarked on how Indian food has become a global cultural marker of Indianness, and the problematic assumptions that can be inferred from representations that make heavy use of simplistic markers. In this section, I delve further into the use of food, but more specifically, the use of curry and *karē* to mark the South Asian "Other" and Japanese "Self." Again, it is important that this discussion does not assume a binary perspective of the "Self" and "Other." As we have seen in the previous chapter, the construction of a racial "Self" in Japanese media, and specifically Japanese animation, is situated within a wider realm of cultural and racial politics that go beyond the South Asian "Other." In order to better understand the construction of South Asians I must contextualise further by considering how other racial and cultural "Others" are depicted.

I have previously identified the common threads that run through localised media representations in various different countries and how they are also prevalent in Japanese media. For example, the linking of food culture with religious culture and Hinduism, the homogenisation of South Asian cuisine into Indian cuisine, and of course the use of food

culture to culturally and racially "Other" South Asians, or rather Indians. The coding of food and food cultures as signifiers of the Indian "Other" involves a semiotic reading of depictions of South Asians. This section examines how the globalised marker of Indianness that is curry has been localised within Japanese mediascapes. When considering curry's use as a marker it is also important to understand the etymology of the word itself and draw further meaning from its nipponized term *karē*.

The word "curry" is a British adaptation of the originally Tamil word *kadi patta* (meaning curry leaf) and used as an umbrella term for sauce-based South Asian dishes. It is also used to label ready-made mixes and powders widely available in supermarkets. The broad category of curry is not so easily translated back into South Asian vernacular and yet, this English word has become an almost universal symbol of Indianness . For example, the meaning of curry or *karē* in Japan (and England) is used to define one particular type of dish which has sauce, whereas South Asian languages have a wider vocabulary for a range of sauce-based meals. These meals were well received when first introduced to England in the late 18th century. To combat the difficulty for their customers of understanding the complex blend of spices behind different curries, companies capitalised on the production of ready-made curry powders. English merchants introduced these curry powders to Japan during the Meiji period (1868-1912) (Sen, 2009: 114-115), later adapted in accordance with Japanese tastes to produce a new dish today recognised as *karē*. Both the dish itself and its name have been nipponized and adapted to become a part of Japanese food culture.

Hiroko Takeda's arguments centre around the non-Japanese influence on Japanese food culture and the assertion that it is Japanese skills and technique which have improved many of these influences. Takeda asserts that Japanese food culture can be at times characterised by

such assertions as a form of banal nationalism (Takeda, 2008: 12-13). I once again emphasise here that such practices are not limited to the country of Japan and that not all Japanese people are active participants of culinary nationalism. I highlight these theories to demonstrate how they have impacted discourses and representations of food culture specifically within the realm of Japanese media and of course, animation. These theories allow us, in the case of South Asian curry and Japanese *karē* to understand and better read the animation texts which may often make a direct comparison between the two. Whether such comparisons feature in a *manga* or *anime* that is specifically of the culinary genre or not, they are largely shown in the form of a curry competition where impartial judges decide on the best dish (curry or *karē*).

It is usually in the midst of a curry competition or cook-off between two chefs that a deliberate comparison is made between Indian and Japanese style curries. The *manga*, *Karē Naru Shokutaku*, features a rival who challenges the skills of the curry chef protagonist in a cooking showdown, wanting to prove that Japanese style curry is superior to Indian style curry. Similarly, *Kuroshitsuji* features a curry-cooking competition which forms an entire arc or subplot of the series. *Karē Naru Shokutaku*, however, features Japanese characters as the gatekeepers of Indian cuisine and food culture. *Kuroshitsuji* and *Shokugeki no Sōma* feature South Asian characters who are largely defined by their association with curry and Indian food culture.

The creators of *Shokugeki no Sōma* assert that its uniqueness lies in its emphasis of the food battles or *shokugekis* in most episodes. Acknowledging the long history of culinary *manga* and *anime* in the Japanese mediascape, the creators determine that the majority of these series are aimed at more mature audiences whereas *Shokugeki no Sōma* is essentially a *shōnen*

anime (aimed at young boys) which are typically characterised by action and battle scenes, hence the need for an emphasis on the food battles which are often used to resolve disputes between skilled chefs. In fact, the title of the show itself makes use of a unique and innovative phrase *shokugeki*, which literally translates to food battle. *Shokugeki no Sōma* is told from the perspective of 15-year-old high school student Sōma Yukihira who helps in his father's traditional Japanese diner which he aims to help run after graduating. The establishment, complete with its own uniform and logo is called the Yukihira diner. Some translations, including the one on *Netflix* specify that it is a Japanese eatery. The Yukihira diner, or Japanese eatery, establishes Sōma as a specialist in Japanese-style cuisine. Wanting his son to gain a wider range of cooking experience, Sōma's father enrols him in Totsuki academy, Japan's most prestigious culinary school. Before Sōma joins the elite establishment of Totsuki with a 97% expulsion rate, his everyday working in a diner run by his father solely features Japanese characters including classmates from his middle school. The first episode goes further in establishing the Yukihira diner as being a cultural signifier of everyday Japanese cuisine and culture when it is temporarily under threat from local landsharks who wish to build a shopping centre.

The Japanese foodscape in *Shokugeki no Sōma* is shown to be diverse, ranging from street food to high-class restaurants. Sōma's status as a specialist of everyday Japanese food is further emphasised once Sōma enters the Totsuki academy and is immediately looked down upon due to his culinary background. His experience is deemed too ordinary to compete with Japan's elite. In a press-junket interview with the creators of the show, journalists made a note that the series stands out as having a very international cast of characters. The creators of the *manga* and *anime* producer agreed that they were proud of such diversity as they wanted

to encourage younger Japanese audiences to learn about different food cultures [43]. This comment suggests that students from diverse backgrounds are essentially representatives and gate keepers of their country's food cultures.

Once in Totsuki academy, however, the international cast of characters that the journalists and creators of the series discuss are shown to be largely limited to characters of mixed Japanese and European heritage. This includes Alice Nakiri who is of Danish and Japanese heritage and the Aldini brothers who are Japanese Italian. As a result, there is a distinct continuation of cultural politics ascribed to this supposedly "international" cast of characters whereby the Caucasian White "Other" is woven into constructions of the Japanese "Self." The only character who is a student at Totsuki academy and visually marked as a racial "Other" is the South Asian character Akira Hayama. If we view the depiction and use of food as an extension of the cultural politics surrounding race and food culture itself, we can see how these characters, whilst being racially delineated, are flagged and coded by their ethnicity. For example, the Aldini brothers frequently create dishes influenced by Italian food culture and traditions. The aesthetic design of these characters once again highlights the importance of Russell's work on the significance of Caucasian Whiteness in the construction of the Japanese "Self" in animation. In previous chapters I have discussed the racial unmarking of light-skinned characters which allows for conflation in terms of coding Japaneseness, Caucasian Whiteness and (to a degree) East Asianness. Only South Asian Akira can be immediately recognised and labelled as an "Other," further specifying his South Asian background. On the official website of *Shokugeki no Sōma*, Akira's character

[43] Chapman, J., 2021. *Interview - The Creators of Food Wars!* [online] *anime* News Network. Available at: <https://www. *anime*newsnetwork.com/feature/2019-09-13/interview-the-creators-of-food-wars/.151017> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

biography details his speciality with spices, describes his hair and eye colour as well as his "exotic" look[44]. Takumi's biography mentions his Italian heritage[45] and Alice Nakiri's Danish background[46], yet neither comment on their appearance. The use of the word exotic to describe someone's appearance has been long associated with their dehumanisation and association with inanimate commodities such as food products. Whilst the use of "exotic" may not necessarily have been intended to dehumanise Akira, it is certainly used to fetishize and racially "Other" his appearance.

The initial appearances of Akira Hayama are deliberately marked both racially and culturally. Within the international cast of characters, Akira is the only recurring character and student at Totsuki of a noticeably darker skin tone. His very first scene is a brief moment as he watches Sōma give a speech at Totsuki's opening ceremony. As Sōma claims that he will reach the top spot at the school, Akira is shown to be smelling a stick of cinnamon. The cinnamon sticks he is frequently depicted with act not only as a cultural marker but also as a precursor to the most significant cultural markers of Akira's "Otherness" – spices and curry. We later find Akira has spent a great deal of his childhood growing up in Japan, and also speaks fluent Japanese; nevertheless, he is frequently shown with the cultural marker of cinnamon sticks (this is how he is introduced to the audience and he is also shown to be smelling one in the opening credits) and as previously shown, is characterised as "exotic" in his online character

[44] Character Bio – Akira. 2021. *CHARACTER -TVアニメ『食戟のソーマ 弐ノ皿』公式サイト-*. [online] Available at: < http://shokugekinosoma.com/2ndplate/character/akira.html > [Accessed 5 May 2021].

[45] Character Bio – Takumi. *CHARACTER -TVアニメ『食戟のソーマ 弐ノ皿』公式サイト-*. [online] Available at: <http://shokugekinosoma.com/2ndplate/character/takumi.html> [Accessed 5 May 2021].

[46] Character Bio – Alice. 2021. *CHARACTER -TVアニメ『食戟のソーマ 弐ノ皿』公式サイト-*. [online] Available at: <http://shokugekinosoma.com/2ndplate/character/alice.html> [Accessed 5 May 2021].

bio. The construction of Akira therefore raises questions regarding what it indeed means to be Japanese. Whilst Akira is a fictional character, we can see theoretical crossover between his depiction and the animated representation of real-life tennis star Naomi Osaka. In the controversial cup noodle advert by Nissin, Naomi Osaka's Blackness was erased in order to situate her as being racially and culturally Japanese only, for what may have been deemed commercial reasons. Osaka's Japaneseness, for the creators of this advert, therefore, was not "Japanese enough" and did not fit into their and their assumed audiences' conceptualisation and understanding of Japaneseness. Sugimoto discusses what it means to be seen and accepted as Japanese in his article on *Nihonjinron* (theories on Japaneseness). *Nihonjinron* is a wide-ranging form of discourse which asserts the uniqueness of the Japanese people and what it means to be Japanese. According to Sugimoto's interpretation, Japaneseness is ordered into different elements including language, culture, and race (2009: 25-26). Akira fulfils perhaps all but one of these elements due to his South Asian heritage which merits his "Othering" that is not applied to the light-skinned "Other" in this series. The racial delineation of Caucasian Whiteness with Japanese Whiteness provides space for such cultural politics to be at play whereby the darker skinned "Other" is visually singled out. This racial marking of Akira acts in tandem with the cultural markers of curry and spices, continuous tropes in Japanese animation that are associated with representations of Indianness.

The association between Indianness and spices comes from a lineage of depictions of South Asians in countries around the world, often appearing in self-depictions as well. The book and its movie adaptation, *Mistress of Spices*, for example by its very title at once exoticises and culturally fetishizes the Indianness of the main character through food. This iconography of spices with Indianness (again Indianness rather than Bangladeshiness, Sri Lankanness, or any other number of South Asian identities) persists in *Shokugeki no Sōma*, acting as a

preamble to Akira's main character trait: being the expert in fragrances (or as per his title song: *The Prince of Fragrance*). Both *Shokugeki no Sōma* and *Kuroshitsuji* utilise the special talent of proficiency with spices to characterise their depictions of South Asian characters of Akira and Agni. Despite their talents, both South Asian characters are defeated or equalled by their Japanese counterparts' attempt at making curry in a competition. The similarity of these series revolves around how food is used to further re-enforce the "Self" and "Other" binary and will be further examined and compared with more general trends in Japanese animation.

As already mentioned, the creators of this series assert its uniqueness among culinary *manga* and *anime* by emphasising the *shōnen* genre aspects, particularly the idea of food as a weapon with which chefs battle against one another. It is unsurprising, therefore, that many of the chefs are shown to have supernatural abilities and capabilities. In the case of Akira, it is his sense of smell. Akira remains a background character until episode nineteen in the first season, after which he becomes a prominent rival for the protagonist. It is announced that Totsuki academy will be running a tournament known as the "Autumn elections" to determine the most talented chef amongst first-year students. The theme for the first round is *karē*, prompting Sōma to visit Professor Jun Shiomi whose research specialises on spices. Akira Hayama is Professor Jun's research assistant and adopted son (hence his Japanese name which I will discuss later), and he offers to show Sōma a practical demonstration of Jun's theories regarding spices. It is here that Akira showcases his proficiency over the spices, a key element of curry-making, and asserts that the first round of the tournament's theme being curry guarantees his victory and establishes his character as (another) rival to the protagonist Sōma. This scene also serves to assert Akira as a racial and cultural "Other." Whilst he is never explicitly labelled through dialogue or the narrative as being Indian, he is constructed alongside both visual and audio cues that have been used solely in the

construction of the Indian "Other" in Japanese media and animation. When Akira first presents a curry dish to Sōma and to us, the audience, the music shifts from the recognisable tracks that have been previously used in the series to a new tune which can only be understood as a form or expression of brownvoice. This piece of music acts alongside spices and curry as cultural and racial markers in order to signpost the "Otherness" of both Akira and his dishes.

The first round of the Autumn elections has *karē* as its theme, an arc which immediately brings Akira's character to the forefront and establishes him as another rival to Sōma. South Asian, especially Indian, characters are repeatedly shown to be curry experts to the extent that it is almost an innate or cultural characteristic. For example, in the animated series *Gokujō Seitokai* (*Best Student Council*), during (of course) a high-school curry competition, one team spins the wheel of fortune which will give them an aid. The result is simply that they win an *Indojin* or Indian, and so Chadayama, mystically appears out of nowhere and her prayer over a bowl of *karē* is enough to enhance its flavour and make the winning dish. Even where food is completely disconnected from the plot and narrative of a series, the mere presence of an Indian character is enough to trigger a default association with curry. The character of Akira in *Tsuritama* (Nakamura, 2012) hides his secret organisation under the guise of a curry restaurant, and although Chadha from the *anime Niea_7* is Indian on a somewhat superficial level, he is deemed culturally authentic enough to be an expert on Indian food and therefore assigned as the judge for a curry competition between the aliens.

This trend also applies (but to a limited extent) to the Japanese-Italian Aldini brothers. Due to their Italian heritage, they are situated as gatekeepers of Italian cuisine and food culture. As Akira is marked by the cinnamon stick, the Aldini brothers are culturally marked by olive oil

and a mezzaluna (crescent shaped knife), their Italian surname and Takumi Aldini's catchphrase "*Grazie*" in Italian. It could be argued that to an extent, Akira is culturally unmarked through his Japanese name. Whilst the South Asian and Italian "Other" are defined by their region's cuisine and food culture, Japanese students are shown to be specialists in a wide range of cuisines and different countries' food cultures including Chinese, French, and so on. The Aldini brothers are semiotically marked through the ingredients and kitchen equipment they use. Akira is semiotically marked as culturally Japanese through his name and school uniform however his cultural "Otherness" is first flagged through the use of the cinnamon stick and his presence as a racial "Other" stands out within the cast of Totsuki student characters who are all fair skinned and against whom he has a heightened visibility.

The curry round of the tournament itself encompasses several cultural concepts and theories regarding food culture within the context of Japan. When the theme of curry is initially announced, it is presented as "*karē ryori*" meaning curry dish. Sōma's response is that they must simply have to make *karē raisu*, a typical Japanese dish of *karē* and rice. The response of *karē raisu* demonstrates an assumption in Sōma's perspective and understanding of curry. Sōma's cooking frequently draws on dishes deemed a part of the "everyday" Japanese food experience rather than the elite gourmet world associated with other Totsuki students. I have already established how the contrast between everyday cuisine and high-class cuisine is demonstrated through his family-run diner at the beginning of the series and how it is perceived by his peers at Totsuki academy; this connection with the everyday is also consistently highlighted through his use of ingredients such as readymade rice seasonings, dried tea snacks and squid tentacle to overcome challenges at Totsuki. Furthermore, Sōma demonstrates the ability to adapt and nipponize various different foods, including *karē*. The emphasis on Sōma's ability to make different cuisines evolve by using everyday Japanese

ingredients could be read as a form of 'banal nationalism' by which the food of other cultures benefits and are improved by Sōma's processes of hybridisation.

It is during the first round of the tournament with curry as its theme, that we see more firmly established the use of food culture to highlight a cultural and racial "Other." The term cultural "Other" largely applies to characters such as the Aldini brothers. As I have already established, their cultural "Otherness" is demonstrated through food-related cultural markers and catchphrases, emphasised in the tournament where Takumi Aldini beats his brother Isami Aldini's curry calzone with a curry-pasta dish. To console his brother, Takumi refers to the pair of them as Mezzaluna, the crescent shaped Italian knife.

Whether racial or cultural, an "Other" exists to further establish and construct a Japanese "Self." Japanese characters are able to master and adapt/nipponize curries and cuisines from all around the world, including South and Southeast Asia and Europe. One character presents a black *laksa* soup with a repulsively foul odour but wonderful taste. The *laksa* was described by the creators of the *manga* as one of their favourite dishes in the series (at least, at the time of the first season's release), which has origins in Southeast Asia. *Laksa* itself is a dish which stems from Malaysia, but the black coloured *laksa* presented in the competition is shown to be extra pungent due to a specific ingredient made in remote areas of Japan. The creator refers to this Japanese ingredient, demonstrating how *laksa* has been nipponized and transformed as a result[47]. Another character presents what at first the judges believe to be *chana masala*, a type of South Asian chickpea curry. At a closer glance it is shown to be a

[47] Chapman, J., 2021. *Interview - The Creators of Food Wars!* [online] *anime* News Network. Available at: <https://www. *anime*newsnetwork.com/feature/2019-09-13/interview-the-creators-of-food-wars/.151017> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

type of *natto* (fermented soya beans) blended with curry spices. Whilst the *laksa* and *chana masala* have Southeast and South Asian roots respectively, they have been transformed by what are deemed Japanese ingredients and practices. They have been re-translated and reinvented, adapted to produce something that is presented as being tastier than their original counterparts. Among the various candidates, it is Akira Hayama's presentation of his dish that is most clearly culturally and racially marked.

The same theme tune and background music are used during the presentation of all of these dishes produced by Caucasian White and/or Japanese students. When it is time for the judges to eat Akira's dish, however, the music changes suddenly to *The Prince of Fragrance* – Akira's character song. The use of this song demonstrates a form of instrumental brownvoice which is immediately used to designate Akira as a racial and cultural "Other." He cannot simply blend in with the other students visually or audibly, his dish itself is shown to emanate a golden mist demonstrating the fragrance that comes from his understanding of the spices. The dish itself is a Fish-Head curry originating from the recipe of an Indian migrant in Singapore. The key ingredient is identified by one of the judges as being "Holy Basil," the sweeter version of basil. It is also referred to by the judges, however, as being a sacred ingredient across South Asia and they refer to the Ayurvedic nature of Akira's dish. Whilst the character of Akira does not demonstrate any religious affiliation and does not sport any religious cultural markers, the depiction of his cooking falls into the stereotype/trap of assumed background knowledge. We have already seen the essentialising of South Asia and India into the perception of a homogenous culture with a monolithic foodscape that is ultimately tied to an equally monolithic construction of religious culture and spirituality. The character of Akira and his cooking spark a discussion (among Japanese characters) which supposedly demonstrates facts about different food cultures. In fact, it is the intention of the

creators to create awareness and interest in different food cultures. Whilst these scenes of enticingly aromatic South Asian curries undoubtedly would create interest, the background knowledge perpetuated in the series does little for fresh awareness and understanding. Food culture in any country and region are complex, layered and varied by intersecting discussion on class, gender, race, ethnicity and so on. The representation of South Asian food culture in Japanese animation, however, is continuously and repeatedly flattened and accented, usually via spirituality which acts as an additional "accent." Sōma serves his dish immediately afterwards, an *omurice* dish which also emanates a golden mist of fragrance. His dish shocks Akira who was not expecting to receive any tough competition in the realm of curry and spices. Sōma's dish scores one point less overall than Akira's – the battle aspect is heightened in this particular *shokugeki* from the metaphorical images used whereby chefs are "fighting" one another with weapons that symbolise their cooking.

At the end of the episode, Akira's past is briefly shown through a flashback. We see a glimpse of Akira as a younger child, looking dishevelled in a South Asian slum. Jun is shown reaching her hand out to Akira. This flashback is shown in more detail just before Akira is announced as winner of the tournament. In essence, Professor Jun Shiomi is credited with turning Akira's life around and allowing him to realise his full potential, even giving him his name. This scene features the only depiction of a South Asian country, and for the purposes of Akira's character arc and development what we see of South Asia is a slum from which Akira was able to escape. In this flashback, Professor Jun Shiomi is shown rescuing Akira, saying that he "deserves better than this." By "this" she suggests his South Asian environment is counter-productive to his growth and it is in Japan that his expertise and talents can be translated to their fullest potential. The term White Saviour is applied to both fiction and non-fiction narratives whereby Caucasian Whiteness is constructed as a catalyst

for the betterment of the cultural and racial "Other." If not for their intervention, the fate of the "Other" would be doomed for tragedy and failure. This subplot and scene indicate that, as the "rescuer" and mother figure to Akira, Professor Jun is Akira's Japanese saviour. Akira insists that it is through Professor Jun's theory that he is able to understand fragrances and spices so well. His talent is thus partly credited to Professor Jun.

There is further evidence that Akira Hayama is "Othered" racially more than he is culturally. Whilst his speciality lies in curry, spices, and fragrance his cooking is not limited to the realm of South Asian cuisine. He is able to win the tournament with an appetiser using only allspice seasoning. Unlike the Aldini brothers and Alice, his name is Japanese and he holds few cultural markers of South Asianness. His background is also ambiguously South Asian as he is shown to have spent a great deal of his cultural upbringing in Japan with Professor Jun Shiomi. Akira is not, however, the only representation of South Asianness in the series. Series three features a flashback to when first-year Totsuki students had to do their "stagiaire" or work experience. Kurokiba Ryo's stagiaire is shown to have taken place in an "authentic" Indian restaurant with an Indian head chef. This Indian character, though appearing briefly, is both culturally and racially "Othered" using a few different methods. Firstly, he speaks in accented Japanese to clearly situate him as an immigrant. He also bears the cultural marker of a *tilak* on his forehead. His overall appearance is akin to an exaggerated caricature of Indianness previously seen in *Karē Naru Shokutaku* and *Niea_7*. The restaurant itself infuriates Kurokiba as it reminds him of Akira and the head chef laments that he was not sent Akira, the spice expert, instead. This scene doubles down on the use of curry to signpost and mark out the South Asian, or rather Indian, "Other." For most of the series, Akira is presented as just another Japanese Totsuki student. Unlike the Aldini brothers and the Indian chef he is not shown to speak any other languages or in accented Japanese. As

previously discussed, even his name is Japanese, given to him by his adopted mother. Nevertheless, he is culturally "Othered" through his affiliation with curry, understanding over the spices and status as the prince of fragrance. Proficiency and understanding of spices are something Akira shares in common with the Indian chef, despite the stark contrast between the depiction of both characters. This same cultural marker is used to at once fetishize and exoticize Akira whilst it is used to ridicule or make light of the Indian chef. These caricatures of Indianness act as codes, one of many we have seen laid out. The codes of cinnamon stick and curry are used to classify South Asians as curry and spice experts. These codes are also, however, then turned into a text of shared experience. The Indian chef laments that he cannot have Akira working at his restaurant and must instead work with Kurokiba Ryo. He believes that Akira has a similar understanding of spice and fragrance to himself and must therefore have a shared experience of mastering curry. What is demonstrated throughout this series, and near the end of the final and fifth season, is that as curry is a cultural marker for Indian characters and Indianness, Indian characters and Indianness can also be used as cultural signifiers of food culture.

Near the very end of the *anime* series, protagonist Sōma faces an "ultimate challenge" of combining the "five grand cuisines" of the world: these are all the food cultures of five nation states: France, Italy, Turkey, China, and India. As the challenge is discussed, a background emerges with various imagery used as cultural signifiers to signpost the five grand cuisines. France features ballet, the Eiffel tower and a baguette, Italy is simply represented by pizza and Turkey by a kebab roast. China is signposted through the use of a panda chewing on bamboo and India by an Indian man in a turban sitting cross legged with an elephant behind it. Neither India nor China are represented by their cuisine or any particular ingredients, instead – animals, which have long been associated with each respective country have been

utilised as simplistic markers with little to no immediate relevance with food culture.

Figure xii: Yonetani, Y. 2015-2020. *Shokugeki no Sōma*. The nameless Indian restaurant head chef where Kurokiba is carrying out his stagiaire.

Whilst the Eiffel tower and ballet representing France also demonstrates no meaning connected to food culture, they are used in conjunction with baguettes to demonstrate how food is a part of France's culture. The Indian man who is pictured alongside the elephant is shown with the cultural marker of a turban but otherwise is simply sitting cross legged and does not immediately suggest that he is engaging in any sort of cultural activity. The food culture of France, Italy and Turkey is depicted using examples of food from each respective country whereas India and China are almost caricatured through their semiotic representation. Removed from their context, they would certainly draw associations with China and India,

but not necessarily with the food culture of these countries. Indianness and Chineseness here are amalgamated into an "Otherness" which uses food culture as a basis for creating semiotic imagery that prompts audiences to read and understand the association of each image with its respective nation state. Indian bodies (aside from a turban, divested from any other cultural practice or significance) are equated with Indian food culture and to a degree, the images can also be interpreted as a dehumanising encoding of Indianness and Chineseness through the use of animals. The only relevance to food culture pertaining to the imagery of the panda is of the panda eating bamboo whereas the images of the Indian man and elephant could be used interchangeably as signposts of Indianness. Food culture as a text throughout this series, can be used to map out a cultural and racial paradigm. Whilst this series demonstrates that depictions of South Asians do not necessarily have to be a cultural monolith, there are strong remnants of tropes which surround constructions of South Asianness and Indianness. These tropes, which largely revolve around curry, are not particular to Japanese animation and have been viewed in media from various countries, albeit applied in diverse cultural and socio-political contexts. One trope surrounding curry, however, is particular to the medium of Japanese animation: that of the curry battle which pits the South Asian "Other" against the Japanese "Self." Waiyeeh Loh considers this particular curry battle in *Kuroshitsuji* and determines it as a battle of cultural ideology.

Kuroshitsuji, being a series set in a pastiche of Victorian England, requires a re-examination of the term "food systems." Food culture is established in accordance with a universe described by Waiyeeh Loh as an aesthetic representation or simulation. This simulation of Victorian England is not intended as an accurate recreation of the historic context but is rather a setting whereby the accuracy of historical elements have been decoded and recoded with an idealised image of that era. Loh determines that this flattening of Victorian England

aims to provide an image of cultural sophistication and elegance (2012: 116), crystallised

through the protagonist, earl Ciel Phantomhive who has inherited his family's vast wealth and

estates. Food culture becomes one of these elements, cultural signifiers of Victorian

England's high culture. In the depiction of Indian characters and India, we have often seen

the flattening of realities in favour for a particular construction of Indianness. Whilst food is

not the main focus of this horror series, it does feature frequently and importantly as a

signifier that intersects and overlaps with other signifiers. Food is used to denote status and

class as well as culture and race, evidenced in various scenes of *Kuroshitsuji* episodes when

the demon butler Sebastian brings Ciel luxurious deserts and baked goods. Loh discusses how

these aesthetic choices which elevate the realm of Victorian England are also influenced by

Japanese rococo or *shōjo* gothic style. *Shōjo* gothic is a style popularised in Japan and has

been, in turn, heavily influenced by the fashion and aesthetics of Victorian England (2012:

122). The cultural elements and aesthetics of *Kuroshitsuji* are therefore a celebration of

Japanese national identity which is based on the ability to transform and adapt cultural flows:

e.g., cultural hybridism. Whilst it is suggested, therefore, that the character of demon butler

Sebastian symbolises these celebrations, Waiyeeh Loh also argues that the universe of

Kuroshitsuji and the use of *shōjo* gothic style erases any prominent cultural or racial binary

between the Japanese "Self" and British White "Other" (2012: 122). White and Japanese

characters once again, appear largely unmarked from one another. The Indian characters in

Kuroshitsuji, on the other hand, are prominently othered both racially and culturally from

their introductory scenes. I would like to go further in this section in the examination of

cultural and racial coding and the role food plays in this practice. Drawing on arguments

made in the previous section I would also like to consider the role spirituality and religious

culture play in this coding and perpetuation of assumed background knowledge. In both

Kuroshitsuji and *Shokugeki no Sōma* Indianness is not just coded by the dish of curry but by a

presumption of proficiency over the spices. Such presumptions have been also evidenced in other animations such as *Niea_7* and *Gokujō Seitokai*. I have already discussed biosemiotics which examines the embedding of cultural meaning and significance within human bodies. In *Kuroshitsuji*, Indian bodies are heavily coded through food culture, spirituality, and traditions/rituals. Biosemiotics can also be applied to constructions of the Japanese "Self."

Waiyeeh Loh's reading of Sebastian's character being a representation of Japaneseness (2012: 122) is never suggested or stated by the show. This is Loh's interpretation of Sebastian; however, Loh has made such an interpretation based on the use of food and food practices as cultural and racial signifiers (2012: 122-123). Food culture becomes another instance of celebrating Japanese cultural adaptations and is done so to elevate this form of culinary and cultural innovation over the racial and cultural "Other." Loh goes further, arguing that both the setting coupled with the character of Sebastian act as allegories for a form of Japanese national identity which is centred around the hybridisation and nipponizing of other cultures (2012: 122).

I have already established in chapter two, how representations of Indianness have become synonymous with Hinduism and Hindu spirituality. We have also seen in this chapter how Hindu spirituality has become synonymous with Indian food culture, at times unwittingly perpetuating racist and casteist tropes through a homogenisation of the Indian "Other." Again, it is the setting of a curry competition which emphasises and highlights all of these issues. It is revealed that Agni is entering a curry competition in London on behalf of a wealthy English merchant and has been beating up his rivals, then covering his tracks by leaving at the crime scenes messages of anti-colonial sentiment. Ciel pushes Sebastian to enter the curry competition and win against Agni, deemed by Prince Soma to be an

impossible task due to Agni's knowledge of spices. Being the only Indian chef at the competition, it is assumed that he will be the victor, as many of Sebastian's trial curries are dismissed as not being on the same level. Soma attributes this disparity to Agni possessing the right hand of the Goddess Kali, allowing him to fight on-par with Sebastian but more importantly, make perfect curries.

In the curry competition itself, "Japanese" Sebastian emerges as the victor despite Agni's proficiency over spices and the art of making curry. The victory of the racial and cultural (usually Japanese) "Self" becomes a recurring theme whereby Japanese-style curry is demonstrated as being superior to South Asian, or more specifically Indian, curries. In my discussion of *Shokugeki no Sōma* and the curry tournament, I remarked on how dishes of South and Southeast Asian origin have been reworked and translated into the Japanese foodscape using Japanese ingredients. We see similarities in Sebastian's entry in the Crystal Palace curry competition which is essentially *karē-pan*, a common food in Japan of curry in bread. The use of chocolate is shown to have been prompted by Ciel half-jokingly ordering Sebastian to put chocolate in the curries he was making in preparation for the tournament (Sebastian must comply with all of Ciel's demands due to their Faustian pact but chocolate is in fact a well-known ingredient in Japanese *karē*). Waiyeeh Loh argues that this scene is another example of cultural reinvention, Japanese adaptation, and cultural hybridism.

The Victorian England setting of *Kuroshitsuji* and its construction of "Self" is dependent on exoticising the Indian "Other" through an Orientalist lens. In chapters one and two I built on John G Russell's argument, that Caucasian Whiteness has played a key role in Japanese self-regard and therefore the construction of the Japanese "Self" in animation. Applied to *Kuroshitsuji* and considering arguments put forth by Waiyeeh Loh, the racial and cultural

"Self" of this series is blurred between British Whiteness and Japaneseness. By contrast, constructions of the "Other" are explicitly marked and constructed within fixed cultural and racial boundaries. Indianness is defined and signposted mainly by a flattened construction embedded in spirituality and food culture.

Constructing Indianness through curry is clearly not limited to *Shokugeki no Sōma* and *Kuroshitsuji*, or even Japanese animation. Curry as a marker of Indianness itself is however transformed in the Japanese context, immediately drawing parallels with Japanese *karē*. The cultural crossover between curry and *karē* at times re-enforces the Japanese "Self"-Indian "Other" binary and at times subverts it. Nevertheless, as the previous chapter explored, this binary must be seen within the wider context of cultural politics and race representation in *anime*. Curry may be agreed upon as the definitive cultural marker of Indianness , which is typically expressed and constructed visually. In the next section I will explore how audio cues and markers are equally potent in the construction of South Asianness in Japanese animation.

4.5 *"Exotic" India: Indian Scores For Indian Characters*

Many Indian restaurants in Japan play South Asian music (predominantly Bollywood soundtracks) in the background. In 2016, responding to the growing popularity of these restaurants, the Japanese company *Victor Entertainment Inc.* released a number of albums under a franchise entitled インドカレー屋の*BGM* (*Background Music of Indian Curry Shops*). Many of these albums have sourced and feature songs that may have been popularised by South Asian restaurants. The celebration of Indian music due to a shared experience of eating at Indian restaurants is certainly not problematic in itself. The

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iconography and cultural signposting used in this franchise, however, demonstrate how music and audio cues can also act as markers used for "Othering" South Asians. Each album cover and the songs on YouTube have pictures of Indian men with turbans, eating from a ladle and playing a sitar. In an overwhelmingly positive review of these albums in *Japan Today*, the author determines that the Japanese public will appreciate these songs based on their experiences of eating at South Asian restaurants. Many of these songs already have titles and are being re-used by Victor Entertainment, their titles are therefore changed to titles including *Hold the Rice*, *Spicy*, and *The Road to Maharajah*. インドカレー屋の*BGM* demonstrates how South Asianness (or again, Indianness as these albums only refer to India) in Japanese media is constructed, labelled, and highlighted by cultural markers which may be well-meaning but derogatory, problematic and Orientalist – including music. In this section I will be examining the use of background music and official soundtracks in Japanese animation, and to what extent they are used as a cultural marker of South Asianness.

Both *Kuroshitsuji* and *Shokugeki no Sōma* clearly utilise Indian characters and food as potent metaphors for exploring cultural politics. Whilst the character of Akira is the least comically "Othered" or mocked, he also demonstrates a tendency in Japanese popular culture to Orientalise Indianness through non-visual cues, that is music. Every animation which features Indian characters and has been analysed in this chapter accompanies its Indian characters with a non-diegetic soundtrack and these soundtracks have come to serve as a cultural signifier in their own right of Indianness . Davé discusses how the character of convenience store owner Apu's Indian accent (performed by White actor Hank Azaria) in the American animated comedy series *The Simpsons*, is a type of racial performance which may be called brownvoice (2013: 41-42). In the same way that White actors make efforts to darken themselves to play South Asian characters engage in brownface, so do those seeking to

"Other" South Asians by mimicking their sounds and music engage in brownvoice. As we will see, the similarities between music pieces across different series (and therefore studios, producers, directors, audiences etc.) construct a consistent thread of sounds associated with the South Asian (or usually Indian) "Other." In fact, these are sounds and rhythms highlighted by the reviewer of インドカレー屋のBGM – as traditional (even though traditional music is often mixed with contemporary music), up-tempo and bass-heavy [48]. This reviewer also determines that whilst he cannot tell the difference between different South Asian musical traditions, he can recognise it (presumably by the characteristics already mentioned) and that he, and other Japanese people are familiar with these styles of music. I argue that whilst food and spirituality may act as elements of an Indian "accent", the persistent use of supposedly "Indian style" music as a cultural marker act as a form or extension of brownvoice.

It is common for the official soundtracks of *anime* series to feature background scores from various scenes and themed songs for different characters. Sometimes, these come together to form background scores which doubles as a character's theme tune. The soundtrack for *Kuroshitsuji* first season was released in August 2009 as a collectible called *Kuroshitsuji Sound Complete Box*, featuring the complete set of background scores composed by Taku Iwasaki. Whilst Soma and Agni have their own individual character songs, they also both have a background score indirectly named after them. Soma's theme song is called *Stranger from India* whilst Agni's is *The Right Hand Of God*. The latter song, featuring female vocals singing in the Hindi language, features a very deliberate "traditional" style-rhythm repeated

[48] MasterBlaster, 2021. 'Curry is so popular in Japan there is a series of Indian restaurant music CDs. *Japan Today.'* [online] Available at: <https://japantoday.com/category/features/food/curry-is-so-popular-in-japan-there-is-a-series-of-indian-restaurant-music-cds> [Accessed 5 May 2021].

throughout the songs using percussion (which sound similar to Indian *tabla* drums).

Many of these "traditional"-style tracks with heavy percussion and sometimes sitar style instrumentals, are used not only when Indian characters appear in the series, but more often when they are accompanied by food. *The Right Hand of God* plays whenever Agni in *Kuroshitsuji* is cooking, or when his cooking abilities are discussed by other characters. Similarly, it is when Akira Hayama cooks for the first time, revealing his status as an expert in fragrance and spices when we first hear an accompanying theme of "Indian-style" music. The soundtrack of the second season features a character song named *The Prince of Fragrance* (Kato, 2015). The titles of the character songs in both *Kuroshitsuji* and *Shokugeki no Sōma* allow for audiences and fans to easily identify the song, not just with Indian characters, but also with curry and spices. Food and spirituality have been considered in this research as elements of an Indian "accent," but they are heightened and highlighted as being so through the help of non-diegetic music. They re-enforce traditional images of Indianness, becoming coded as exotic and mystical.

Whilst Akira is presented as an intimidating, professional and refined character, curry is still used as a way of "Othering" his South Asianness, at times in highly problematic ways. As one of the granddaughters of Totsuki Academy's principal (and Alice Nakiri's cousin) "God Tongue" Erina Nakiri is overseeing the curry battle, she smells the fragrance of Sōma's dish. When later reminiscing about it, she remains overwhelmed by the sensation it gave her, which is pictured as a swarm of tiny Sōma Yukihiras taunting her. This gag mirrors earlier scenes of her reluctant (and secret) appreciation of Sōma, such as the first time she eats his food and pictures an array of Sōma-resembling cherubs embracing her. This scene, however, features dozens of tiny Sōmas in crudely applied brownface and seemingly South Asian

clothes. Their hands clasp together and their heads move from side to side in unison chanting an apparently Indian tune and growing closer to Erina. This gag directly employs brownvoice – the voice actor of Sōma himself is (mockingly) singing a tune that is supposedly meant to resonate with audiences as a South Asian or Indian tune whilst moving his head from side to side (see image below).

Figure xiii: Yonetani, Y. 2015-2020. *Shokugeki no Sōma.* Protagonist from Shokugeki no Sōma appears in brownface

Chadayama's appearance in episode five of *Gokujō Seitokai* occurs randomly as she suddenly materialises to save the day during a curry competition. Her Indianness is immediately obvious as she is clad in a *saree* and also has a *tilak*. The music accompanying her appearance, comprises the same repetitive use of percussion in a flagrantly Indian/Bollywood style tune. Pucchan, the name of a puppet who is also a significant character in the series, recognises Chadayama as his old friend and reminisces about how *karē-raisu* brought them together and tore them apart and as we are shown flashbacks, the background music changes from Indian-style to a melancholier tune. We are shown a series of photographs documenting Chadayama meeting Pucchan (at the *Taj Mahal*) before they fall in love and must leave one another. Each stage of their relationship is presented with a single image and alongside the

melancholic tune, is Chadayama's voice repeatedly saying *namaste* (which means "hello/goodbye" in Hindi). The use of brownvoice switches here from the background music to Chadayama herself. Unlike most Indian characters who are often shown to be fluently speaking in unaccented Japanese, Chadayama is only ever capable of saying "*namaste*," even when others are attempting to engage her in deeper conversation. Chadayama exists as an amalgamation of all the cultural markers used across the previous series to mark out Indianness . Everything, from the *saree*, *tilak* and the selective muteness (which strongly links in with stereotypes of submissiveness regarding South Asian women), her spiritual relationship with curry, to the background music, Chadayama embodies all of the simplistic reductions used to construct Indianness as the racial and cultural "Other."

4.6 Conclusion

As with chapter two, the discussion of food culture has involved the semiotic use of food to represent culture, national identity, and race. Food culture as a symbol of identity concerns not just representations of the "Other" in Japanese media but also constructions of the Japanese "Self." From the Nissin cup noodle controversy to *Sushi Police*, it is clear that food culture is used by corporations and government institutions to promote a certain image of Japaneseness to both domestic and international audiences. This chapter confirms the significant role food has played and continues to play in the representation of South Asians, not just in Japanese animation, but in medias across the world.

Cultural hybridism, as defined by Koichi Iwabuchi, is a practice which capitalises on and commodifies transnational cultural flows across the world and communities. Series such as *Shokugeki no Sōma* and *Kuroshitsuji* showcase Japanese innovation and adaptation of the cultural and racial "Other" in a manner which promotes the use of cultural hybridism to

perpetuate ideologies of banal cultural nationalism. Curry and *karē* are pitted against each other with the Japanese counterparts always being shown as superior. This is documented over and over again in the depiction and use of curry as a cultural marker in *manga* and *anime*. Both settings of Victorian England and present-day Japan use Japanese *karē* as an example of Japanese cultural hybridism producing a dish that easily surpasses its South Asian roots. The use of curry as a cultural marker in itself is a repeated trope that exists outside of the realm of Japanese animation and *manga*, but nevertheless also persists within them.

Kuroshitsuji, Karē Naru Shokutaku and even the brief appearance of Chadayama in *Gokujō Seitokai* do not use food culture as the sole cultural marker of Indianness but is often used in conjunction with other cultural codes. The depiction of Indianness prompts audiences to just associate the Indian "Other" with curry, but also Hinduism and spirituality which is embedded into Indian food culture. Religious culture and food culture are thus used in harmony to homogenise the national consciousness and identity of South Asian communities. Even where Indianness is flattened to Hindu spirituality, Hinduism and Hindu food culture is also determined by a monolithic depiction. *Karē Naru Shokutaku*, for example reduces Indianness (and Indianness alone) down to "upper-caste" Hindu ideology regarding food culture and determines that it is Indian culture. Representations of the South Asian "Other" are constantly being done using simplistic cultural signifiers which continually reduce South Asianness to a particular, narrow image of Indianness (one that may be perpetuated by dominant nationalist ideologies in South Asia).

Shokugeki no Sōma stands out as the most layered and diverse representation of South Asian food culture. Whilst Akira is the curry and spices expert, largely makes Indian curries, and is coded with cultural markers that have been shown in other works to be cultural markers of

Indianness, he is never firmly acknowledged to be Indian. I have also demonstrated in this chapter how his character appears to be marked as a racial "Other" more so than a cultural "Other." Akira 's character, whilst not devoid of problematic elements, could certainly be seen as a positive development in terms of representation. It is important, however, to also consider how Akira is depicted in contrast to the Indian chef who is used as a representation of Indian restaurant chefs in Japan. In the latter, we see a return of the caricature depictions of the Indian "Other" seen from *Karē Naru Shokutaku* (2000) to *Niea_7* and even the final season of *Shokugeki no Sōma* (2020), where the Indian restaurant chef is marked out in greater opposition to the Japanese "Self" than Akira. Part of this can be credited to Akira being brought to Japan at an early age but also his enrolment at Totsuki academy which could be seen as facilitating his assimilation into Japanese society.

In the next chapter I wish to interrogate the use of school institutions in Japanese animations further. What role do they play in constructing a Japanese "Self" and holding up a mirror to Japanese society? How, if at all does this impact representations of race? As in the case of Akira and the nameless Indian restaurant owner in *Shokugeki no Sōma*, does the backdrop of school at all enable and catalyse the breaking down of binaries formed around a constructed social "Self" and "Other."

5. Chapter Five – South Asian Students In Japanese Schools

The use of school age characters in Japanese *manga* and animation is highly prevalent. In 2020, approximately thirty percent of animated series, including TV shorts, OVAs and movies were set in Japanese schools or institutions of education[49]. The genres of these animations are diverse, ranging from sports, fantasy, and science fiction to "slice-of-life" depicting everyday school life. Many of these genres are also gendered according to their target demographic. *Anime* aimed at young adult women is categorised as *josei* whilst its counterpart aimed at adult men is *seinen*. *Shōnen* is a genre supposedly aimed at teenage boys whilst *shōjo* is aimed at young women/teenage girls. There are certainly questions to be raised with assumed demographics of genres simply because they are labelled and classified according to a gender binary. The gender binary and therefore problematic nature of gendered genres is further proven as the visual and narrative conventions associated with them have become increasingly blurred and overlapping with one another since the 1990s and the emergence of series such as *Bishōjo Senshi Sērā Mūn* (*Sailor Moon*) (Takeuchi, 1991-1997) which combines visual and narrative elements that are typically associated with *shōjo* but also *shōnen* genre *manga* and *anime*. The actual viewership and fan consumption of these series frequently extends far beyond the target audiences, particularly in the case of *shōjo manga* and *anime*. *Shōjo* genre *manga* and *anime* are typically associated with the comedy and romance genres and has frequently proven to be a space for *manga* authors to challenge social norms and conventions. Susan Napier's 2008 arguments place most comedy romance series of the time in the backdrop of Japanese middle and /or high schools (2008: 42). Going further, Napier deems these settings as being more "culturally specific" and therefore a

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[49] Archive. 2020. *Anichart*. [online] Available at: < https://anichart.net/archive> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

supposed reflection or microcosm of society (2008: 42). Sharalyn Orbaugh demonstrates how male critics of *shōjo manga* and *anime* in the 1980s derided that what they viewed as negative traits of adolescent schoolgirls becoming associated with the national character and image of Japaneseness (Orbaugh, 2003: 204). From both Napier and Orbaugh's arguments two main points can be gathered: first, that the school settings may often act as a space to mirror societal issues and second, where these settings are used, there is also often room for these issues to be challenged. In this chapter, the use of school settings will be used to measure the racial and cultural "Othering" of South Asian characters.

The terms racial and cultural "Othering" signify methods and modes used to make a social distinction between and categorisation of humans based on phenotypes and ethnicity. This thesis has so far examined the many ways and degrees to which South Asian characters have been "Othered" and the systems of background knowledge in which they are rooted. This has resulted in the identification of a number of stock cultural markers and elements, which largely revolve around religion and food culture. These markers are tied with ethnicity rather than race, but they are often also racialised in a manner that homogenises South Asianness and South Asian identities. As highlighted in chapter two, the end result of using cultural markers such as food and religion as a form of "Othering" are usually twofold: 1) distinguish the South Asian "Other" from the series' racial and cultural "Self" and 2) homogenise the South Asian "Other" according to national identity and assumed association with religious/food culture. This chapter therefore aims to examine to what degree the school settings challenge these particular modes of South Asian representation. If the use of "culturally specific settings" such as Japanese schools are used to reflect on and challenge social norms, can we expect them to be used to also challenge some of the stereotypes and markers frequently used in the construction and representation of South Asian characters?

The principal areas of South Asian representation that will be discussed are gender, racial and cultural "Otherness," religion, and food culture.

Analysing animations through the lens of school settings firstly requires a more thorough examination of how school settings have been historically and deliberately employed as a space through which socio-political commentary can be made on various issues. It is also important to consider the degree to which gendered genres as well as school settings have provided a space in which social norms and conventions may be challenged. Following this consideration of animation and school settings, the typical tropes and elements used in constructing South Asianness will be highlighted and explained. Not all of them have been considered suitable for the purposes of this chapter and the reasoning behind this will be discussed. The consideration of these cultural markers once again brings in the theorisation of assumed associations, more specifically how they are rooted within a specific knowledge base which is usually ideologically charged (Fairclough 2010: 33-34). Those elements highlighted as being pertinent to the discussion of school settings will be used to examine and discuss three main television series in chronological order of their first seasons' broadcast and release.

The first of these series is an iconic and internationally popular *anime* which was seen to have successfully blended elements of both gendered genres into one series. It is also one of few examples available from the 1990s featuring South Asian characters in Japanese schools. *Shōjo Kakumei Utena* (*Revolutionary Girl Utena*) (Ikuhara, 1997) is seen as a classic *anime* series, one that solidifies the *shōjo* genre and school setting as platforms where social issues can be raised and debated. This provides an interesting insight and a chronological beginning to the discussion of South Asian representation in school settings. The series was licensed for

UK distribution by *Anime Limited*, a company set up by *Kazé* but is now available for UK

audiences to stream on *Amazon Prime Video*.

The second series I wish to consider here is an animation released almost twenty years later,

Tsuritama (Nakamura, 2012) which was licensed for distribution in the UK by *MVM* Films (a

British licenser of Japanese animation which has existed since the 1990s catering to niche

markets) via DVD and Blu-ray in 2015. Like *Shōjo Kakumei Utena,* this features a South

Asian character who is also a main character appearing in every episode. A slice-of -life

animation about the bonding experience between male characters, *Tsuritama* could also be

considered a subgenre of the *shōjo category* due to its exploration of friendships as well as

mental health. The third series I will examine in this chapter is one that I have already

discussed elsewhere, *Shokugeki no Sōma* (Yonetani, 2015-2020), perhaps the only animation

that is not classified as *shōjo*, but rather *shōnen* due to its association of cooking with fighting

and battles. All of these are television series with two being adaptations of an original *manga*.

Following the methodology of the previous chapters, I examine the construction of South

Asianness and the topic at hand (in the case of this chapter: school settings) within the wider

framework of Japanese media, although due to the specificity of the subject at hand, Japanese

manga and animations will be the primary focus and point of comparison for the texts

mentioned above.

5.1 Anime And The Institution Of School

In discussing the cultural specificity of *manga* and *anime* series taking place in schools,

Napier draws on a discussion between critic Ueno Toshiya and animator Oshii Mamoru. One

of their conclusions is that *anime* is a result of techno-Orientalism – the construction of the

Japanese "Other" as technically advanced and obsessed and that " *anime* may be seen as a dark mirror that reflects Japan to the West and to some extent vice-versa," (2008: 44). Napier builds on this to again claim that the medium of animation itself is popular in Japan as the medium is a space that allows freedom and resistance to some of the social norms and conventions that exist in Japanese society (2008: 45). In this thesis we have certainly seen areas in which animation has been used to challenge social constructions and hierarchies, but also uphold them. In this section, I will examine the medium of *manga* and animation and the elements which allow for a subversion of fixed and constructed identities, namely those built around gender, sexuality, and race. This section also builds on theories of *Nihonjinron* and Japaneseness to note how school may also be a space for challenging the usual stereotypes of race representation in *anime*. These discussions are important in understanding how school settings facilitate these challenges and also suggest a reconsideration of traditional constructions of South Asianness within this new context.

First, I wish to focus briefly on school as a space for subverting gender norms. Gender, particularly the representation of South Asian women, has been a recurring topic in this thesis. I will explore this in the context of South Asian representation further in the next section, but for now I would like to build a framework for that discussion, one that is particular to the realm of *manga* and *anime*. I have already mentioned the supposedly gendered genres of *shōjo and shōnen*, as well as *josei* and *seinen* which are targeted at young adult women and men, respectively. These categorisations traditionally relied on gendered expectations of audiences and therefore had distinct elements to them. It is worth noting that these gendered categorisations are not limited to realm of Japanese animation or Japanese media. Nevertheless, their consideration as genres ultimately indicative of gendered demographics is highly problematic (Turner, 2018: 467). For the purposes of this thesis, I

will be considering *shōjo, josei* and *shōnen*, *seinen* as umbrella terms that examine, respectively, relationships, the everyday and action battle genres. *Bishōjo Senshi Sērā Mūn* (Takeuchi 1991-1997), however, is viewed as the first example of elements of both of these umbrella genres being successfully integrated into one series. Since then, the boundaries between these genres have become increasingly blurred. The medium of *anime* and *manga* itself has become a form of media which often and frequently resists the gender binary (of femininity and masculinity, and heteronormativity). This is not to say that there have not been or are not problematic depictions of LGBTQIA+ characters in *manga* and *anime*, but that the medium of *manga* and animation has also been a medium which granted the freedom for these representations.

Napier's argument that school is typically the backdrop of comedy romance posits these types of *manga* and *anime* within the realm of the gendered genre *shōjo* (2008: 41). Although the term *shōjo can* be loosely translated to 'young girl' which also represents the target demographic and presumed audience, it is important to note that gendered genres are a construction and do not necessarily reflect the demographics who consume and enjoy series categorised as such (Turner, 2018: 465). It is within the development of these genres that we have seen firm challenges to societal norms regarding gender and sexuality as well as a normalisation of LGBTQIA+ relationships and gender fluidity (Taylor, 2016: 42). The origins of these stories can be largely traced back to the early 1970s and the emergence of the Year 24 Group – a group of mostly female *manga*kas who came to define the *shōjo* genre, not just through visual but also narrative elements which would tackle hard hitting issues ranging from child abuse and drug use to racism[50].

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[50] Up until the 1960s, the *shōjo* genre was dominated by male manga artists, however the emergence of boys' manga magazines prompted many of these authors to fill the demands of these new mediums. In turn, female *mangakas* who, until now, had been producing work for subversive and indie magazines such as *Garo* were now able to enter and help shape the *shōjo* genre.

Kaze to Ki no Uta (Takemiya) is a *manga* series which was serialised in Shōjo Comic *manga* magazine between 1976 and 1981 and can be considered typical of works produced by the Year 24 group. One of the many themes that emerged from the works of the Year 24 group were the depiction of homoerotic relationships, and the blurring of gender lines. This was the birth of *shōnen-ai*, a subgenre of *shōjo* that focuses on emotional and romantic relationships between adolescent boys. *Kaze to Ki no Uta* is considered a classic *shōnen-ai manga* and animation. Whilst certainly challenging heteronormativity and cis-normative social expectations, this series also suggests a premise through which we can consider how *shōjo genre* series (and by extension the school settings in which they frequently appear) present an area where conventions of race representation can also be challenged and subverted. It is worth noting that many of these early *manga* and *anime* would take place in European school settings. This element of the genre has evidently evolved in more recent years as Napier now assesses more contemporary *shōjo manga* and *anime* with Japanese school settings. *Kaze to Ki no Uta* takes place against the backdrop of a boarding school in France. One of the two protagonists, Serge attends the school as he is the illegitimate product of an affair between a French Viscount and a Romanian woman. The series delves into the discrimination Serge faces at the school which further mirrors the wider social prejudice Serge and his mother have had to face in French society.

Earlier in this thesis I have discussed *Nihonjinron* – an ideology which claims the uniqueness of the Japanese people in cultural and racial terms. A stark example of this was demonstrated in the previous chapter through the Nissin cup noodle advert which controversially erased tennis player Naomi Osaka's Blackness and Haitian identity, therefore defining Japaneseness through specific phenotypes and a constructed racial exclusivity. Such media depictions of

Japaneseness and Japanese culture align with the ideology of *Nihonjinron* ideology which is defined through fixed racial and cultural boundaries. Such constructions can also however be challenged through a reflection of multicultural Japaneseness, as in the case of series *Chihayafuru* (Asaka, 2011-2020). *Chihayafuru* tells the story of a high school *karuta* club and team. *Karuta* is a Japanese card game based around a famous anthology of one hundred poems known as *Ogura Hyakunin Isshu*[51]. The high school club enter the national high school *karuta* team tournament. During one of the rounds, the main cast/club are faced with a team from an international school. At first the main characters are dumbfounded by their presence, with one character's inner monologue expressing his specific surprise and lack of ease around a student who is Black. As the game of *karuta* relies on listening and then grabbing the card that corresponds to the poem being read out, the protagonists wonder how their opponents will be able to manage with their (presumably) low understanding of the Japanese language. As the match progresses, however, it becomes clear that the international school team are in fact fluent in Japanese. This scene critiques assumptions and stereotypes surrounding those deemed foreigners in Japan, as well as the reaction of Japanese people to the "Other" in Japan. *Nihonjinron* claims language and culture, symbolised in this match through *karuta*, the Japanese language and the outfits worn by the international school's team, as examples of Japanese racial and cultural uniqueness. These ideas are subtly alluded to as a part of the mindset of the main characters as they initially take their opponents lightly. As the match progresses their mindset and initial reactions are proven to be false and Japaneseness is proved to be a more fluid mode of identity.

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[51] *Karuta* is played using cards, with each having one of the hundred poems written on it. The two participants sit facing each other, with 25 cards each laid out in front of them. Over the course of the game, a certified poem reader will read out the hundred poems. As each poem is read, the participants must locate and grab the card with the corresponding poem before their opponent.

More recently, the fourth season of *Haikyuu!! (To The Top)* (Satō, 2020) gained praise for its representation of diversity. This series similarly tells the story of members of a high school club who enter volleyball tournaments. During the nationals in the fourth season, the protagonists encounter Arun Ojiro – a Black Japanese character who is also one of the best high school aged volleyball players in Japan. This representation, and the fact that such an important and strong character had not been whitewashed was praised by many fans of the show and celebrated as such on social media [52]. Arun's depiction also constitutes a defiant gesture against the normalisation of Whiteness as the sole representation of Japaneseness in *anime*. As John G Russell argues, the Caucasianisation appearance of Japanese *anime* characters is part of wider trends in the representation of Whiteness in Japanese visual culture which aim to associate Japaneseness with Whiteness and for it to be dissociated with the "Other" Asian (2017: 30). The fact that racially ambiguous characters, or as Amy Shirong Lu describes, characters with a "hybrid global look" (2008: 172) are reserved solely for Caucasian and Japanese characters serves to both blur the boundaries of the "Self" (with the Caucasian "Other") and be more easily distinguished and marked out from the racial and cultural "Other." Arun's "Otherness" exists, however, as the students of Chiba's international school in *Chihayafuru*, in tandem and parallel, not necessarily culturally, or even racially, opposed to the Japanese "Self." His Blackness does not negate his Japaneseness and vice-versa. *Haikyuu!!* is a sports *shōnen* genre *manga* that can be seen as blurring the seemingly fixed racial and cultural boundaries of Japaneseness, demonstrating that a series does not necessarily have to be of the *shōjo genre* to automatically make it a space of social resistance.

[52] Valdez, N., 2021. 'Haikyuu Earns Praise for its Diverse Cast and Art Style.' *Comic Book*. [online] Available at: <https://comicbook.com/ *anime*/news/haikyuu-aran-ojiro-diverse-cast- *anime*-praise-reactions/> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

In turn the use of school settings does not necessarily provide a safe haven of representation for the "Other." This thesis has consistently discussed the aesthetics of character design and the cultural and racial politics they produce as a result. This topic becomes salient within the "culturally specific" settings of Japanese high schools. Unlike fantasy, action and even science fiction *anime* which may have international or even alternative backdrops that are a hybridisation of different historical and national settings, the use of high schools often makes it clear that the animation is taking place in Japan. Yet the aesthetic of Japanese Whiteness which can be easily read as Caucasian Whiteness persists in many *anime* taking place in schools.

The construction of a Japanese "Self" through the aesthetics of Caucasian Whiteness can be clearly seen in *Shokugeki no Sōma*, the culinary *anime*. *Shokugeki no Sōma* takes place at the fictional Totsuki Academy, Japan's most elite culinary academy school where the protagonist is enrolled for high school by the end of the first episode. It can be argued that the "international cast of characters" hailed by its staff and *anime*/*manga* journalists[53] is not largely visible within the elite Totsuki academy itself. In chapter three, I have highlighted how the Japanese-Italian Aldini brothers are indeed culturally marked by their equipment and ingredients, but they are racially delineated along with the other characters of Japanese and mixed Japanese-European heritage. The only visible diversity at Totsuki academy comes from the South Asian character of Akira Hayama.

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[53] Chapman, J., 2021. *Interview - The Creators of Food Wars!* [online] *anime* News Network. Available at: < https://www. *anime*newsnetwork.com/feature/2019-09-13/interview-the-creators-of-food-wars/.151017 > [Accessed 1 May 2021].

The *anime* series *Gokujō Seitokai* (*Best Student Council*) (Iwasaki, 2005), as the name suggests, tells the story of a student council's activities at a private academy. It is during this series that we see Chadayama, whose construction of Indianness was also discussed earlier in chapter three and proved to be problematic on many levels: she is only ever heard to be saying '*namaste*' and also simplistically reduced to being labelled an Indojin*, or* "Indian." Chadayama's entire characterisation is reduced down to her Indianness as she is heavily marked through the use of several cultural markers, including only being able to say a word that acts a linguistic marker of her national identity which is also blurred with her cultural and racial identity. The problem, therefore, is not just her Indianness, but the need to affirm her Indianness and pigeonhole her character through a blurred racial, national, and cultural identity which forms the very basis of her personality, character traits and even character design. This animation demonstrates several stereotypes and tropes of Indianness which we have seen persist throughout this research, from religion to the reduction of South Asianness to Indianness, gender and food culture. In the next section I will be listing and exploring the cultural and racial markers as well as stereotypes typically used to mark out South Asianness as found so far in this thesis.

5.2 Summary Of Cultural And Racial Markers Of South Asianness

This section pinpoints the relevant markers of South Asianness that will be used to consider the three case studies. This thesis, whilst identifying global trends in media constructions of South Asianness, has also identified trends particular to Japanese media and more specifically, Japanese animation. In the study of the subgenre "school" *anime*, I will not be exploring all of the markers that have been previously discussed. Instead, I must consider which markers are more likely to be a subject and topic of relevance in the context of school settings. For example, as we will mostly be examining contemporary series set in their

present day, the topic of war and colonialism may not be at the forefront of their narratives. The main topics I wish to explore are religious culture, food culture, racial "Otherness" and gender. Here I will dissect how I will be measuring the relevance each of these topics, and what questions they will pose for each series examined. Many, but not all, of these markers are rooted in an assumption of background knowledge whereby audiences are able to decode meaning based on their knowledge base (2010: 45-46). Therefore, the first trope I will mark out here is the use of religious cultural markers.

I build on the use of religion as not only a cultural and racial marker, but also as a marker of national consciousness and identity. South Asian nations have been proven to be homogenised and flattened to the sole depiction of Indianness. India itself is a diverse country with people of distinct cultural, racial, linguistic, and religious backgrounds yet it has been easier in various global medias to reduce Indian religious culture down to Hinduism and often an "upper-caste" construction of Hinduism. In *anime*, this trend can be clearly identified through the use of cultural markers which have become globalised images of both Indianness and Hinduism. These cultural markers include the *tilak*, usually read as a symbol of Indianness and Hinduism, whilst the turban seems to denote a generic form of Indianness rather than specifying that it represents Sikhism or any other South Asian cultural identity. Religion then also becomes tied into other cultural markers such as dress and food as evidenced in *Yuugo: Kōshōnin* (Kishi, 2004), *Kuroshitsuji* (Shinohara, 2008-2009) and the *manga Karē Naru Shokutaku* (Funatsu, 2001-2012). The specific use of the *tilak* or a turban, however, does not necessarily mean that a character is inherently religious as in the case of Rakshata in *Kōdo Giasu* (Taniguchi, 2006-2007); yet the iconography of the *tilak* is certainly fixed in the audiences' background knowledge as a marker of Indianness and Hinduism. In this chapter, I will be asking the following questions: In what way is the iconography of

religious culture used to affirm the character's South Asianness and rooted in a knowledge base that associates Indianness with religious culture and religious culture with nationality? To what degree are these associations signposted by the narrative or an interpretation of the fan base?

The next area of discussion overlaps with the other stereotypes and trends of representation highlighted: racial "Otherness." Racial "Otherness" will be considered in tandem with the other markers scrutinised in this chapter. The very practice of "Othering" usually serves to re-affirm a sense of "Self." The "Self" is clearly defined through what it is not – the "Other," and for such an effect to occur the "Other" must be constructed as a contrast to the Japanese "Self." The premise of this thesis so far has been to measure and identify the several ways and degrees to which South Asian characters are "Othered." This chapter examines both the construction of the Japanese "Self" through the setting of school and how the "Self" responds to, and is therefore moulded by, the presence of the South Asian "Other." The construction of the South Asian "Other" through a defined nationality is also important. As with many of the other series and representations covered so far, is South Asianness homogenised through Indianness?

As I have already mentioned, race is not the only form of "Othering" which exists. "Othering" can also be done in the form of gender and sexuality whereby heterosexuality and the gender binary of masculinity and femininity are established as the social norm around which other gender identities and sexualities must be centred. In the previous section I discussed how Japanese *manga* and animation have proven to be mediums in which diversion from these supposed societal norms can be represented and celebrated. This discussion must

go beyond the wider discussion of gendered *and* other genre *anime*s and consider gendered typecasts and representations of South Asians in Japanese animation. South Asian women are usually shown to have heterosexual relationships or love interests. The object of their affection (or vice versa) is usually the constructed racial and cultural "Self" of the series. Through an analysis of the chosen case studies, I wish to expand further to consider constructions of South Asian femininity and masculinity, as well as the relationships, including romantic interests, they have.

By far the most frequently recurring marker used to symbolise South Asianness, or rather Indianness, is food, usually in the form of curry. The use of food includes particular ingredients as well as dishes, especially curry that are used in a similar vein to religious culture as an element of or accessory to a South Asian character and make the most out of its use as not only a cultural but also racial and national marker. I will therefore also be examining the frequency of its appearance, including its relevance to the South Asian characters and the overall narrative, allowing further consideration of why these cultural markers are being used and what overall construction of South Asianness they fit into. These elements of South Asianness will form the basis of the next section where I will measure their use in the chosen three case studies.

5.3 South Asians In Japanese schools

I will examine these animated television series in a chronological order of the animation's first release. Each of these series are not necessarily a benchmark of South Asian representation in all *anime* during the time of their release. Analysing them in such a

sequence nevertheless provides insight into how long some of these tropes may have existed in Japanese animation and to what degree they may have evolved and developed along with *anime* itself.

5.3a Shōjo Kakumei Utena

Shōjo Kakumei Utena was originally published as a *manga* series written by Chiho Saito in *Ciao* magazine between 1996 and 1997. It was then adapted into a 39-episode *anime* directed by Kunihiko Ikuhara and aired by TV Tokyo during 1997. In the present day, *Shōjo Kakumei Utena* remains a landmark story which is celebrated by the LGBTQIA+ community for its portrayal of gender and sexuality [54] and has had an influential impact on popular culture outside of Japan [55]. The reasons for such celebration can be immediately seen from the original *manga* and animations, but even more so from the 1999 animated movie *Shōjo Kakumei Utena Aduresensu Mokushiroku* written and directed by the series director Kunihiko Ikuhara. It is worth noting that Kunihiko Ikuhara was also a director for many *Bishōjo Senshi Sērā Mūn* episodes and series, a franchise which was viewed by critics as also transcending the gender binary of genre (Orbaugh, 2003: 215).

The protagonist of the *Shōjo Kakumei Utena* universe is the title character Utena. The story begins with a flashback to Utena's childhood when she lost her parents and was comforted by a prince. The story then establishes Utena's fluidity of gender roles whereby she resolves to

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[54] Wang, E., 2017. 'The queer as hell psychedelic anime you need to see.' *Dazed Digital.* [online] Available at: <https://www.dazeddigital.com/artsandculture/article/36654/1/atena-the-trippy- *anime*-film-directed-by-ikuhard> [Accessed 21 May 2021].

[55] Gramuglia, A., 2020. 'Revolutionary Girl Utena's Lasting Impact on Queer, Female-Led Storytelling.' [online] *CBR.* Available at: <https://www.cbr.com/revolutionary-girl-utena-influence-steven-universe-she-ra/> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

one day become a prince herself (instead of the typical story whereby she would presumably fall in love with the prince). In the present day of the series, we are introduced to the now high-school age Utena. The most prominent aspect of her gender non-conformity is her resolve to wear the boy's school uniform to the elite private Ohtouri academy. At the start of the first episode, Utena is being scolded by a teacher for her gender non-conformity. Utena's determination to be a prince and aspiration to do so by donning the boys' school uniform is not necessarily an entire negation of her femininity. Utena does not adopt, overall, a traditionally masculine appearance as she retains long pink hair. Throughout this series and franchise, the very constructions of masculinity and femininity are highly blurred through characters with androgynous appearances, not just Utena. In episode one whilst defending a friend who has been hurt by Kyouichi Saionji, a member of the elite student council, Utena fights against him in a duel.

The duels are central to the narrative of the *Shōjo Kakumei Utena* universe and franchise. Whilst perhaps framed as a *shōjo* genre *manga* and *anime*, the plot heavily centres around battles and duels which take place in a floating arena. The first episode's battle between Utena and Kyouichi ends in her "ownership" of the Rose Bride, Anthy Himemiya, the first of two characters of South Asian heritage. It emerges that the Rose Bride has supernatural powers which can be used by whoever her fiancé(e)/owner is. As the end of the first episode ends with Utena winning the battle and becoming engaged to as well as gaining ownership of Anthy, Utena's victory signals the start of a same-sex and interracial coupling. Napier states that Utena represents "brightness and assertiveness" whereas "Anthy embodies some of the more disturbing traits of feminine passivity" (2008: 192). This construction creates a binary opposition between the two characters and has been suggested as a convention typically applied in Boys' Love *manga* and *anime* in order for female fans to read them through a

heteronormative lens (Welker, 2006: 853-855). Anthy's passivity is however only one part of her character, and whilst such a character trait may indeed be used to re-enforce a gender binary within a same-sex coupling, it is not necessarily tied to her "Otherness." Nevertheless, both characters have been celebrated by fans for exploring gender identity and interracial LGBTQIA+ relationships as they demonstrate romantic feelings towards one another as well as towards other male characters [56] [57].

This series shares many traits with *Kaze to Ki no Uta*, most notably the intersection of race, gender and sexuality actualised through an interracial coupling. Whilst *Kaze to Ki no Uta* uses Serge's Romanian background as a premise for battling stereotypes and prejudice through the narrative and scenes of confrontation, *Shōjo Kakumei Utena* employs what can now be seen as a convention of cultural assimilation – particularly within the school environment. Anthy, and later her brother Akio's "Otherness" is merely suggested through cultural markers but never affirmed through dialogue and narrative. Other than the *tilak*, they both have Japanese surnames (Anthy Himemiya and Akio Ohtouri; the school has therefore been named after Akio) and are shown to be assimilated into Japanese life and there is little to no mention of their South Asian heritage or the fact that they are the only racial "Other" in the entire school. The name "Anthy" is not Japanese although it never seems to be a source of "Othering" when it comes to her character. Instead, these characters are more strongly tied and associated with the Japanese "Self," contrasting against the racial and cultural exclusivity that *Nihonjinron* constructions may suggest. As with the international school students in

[56] Pennington, L., 2017. 'Loving Magical Girls as a Black non-binary person.' *AfroPunk*. [online] Available at: <https://afropunk.com/2017/09/loving-magical-girls-black-non-binary-person/> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

[57] Rose., 2013. '"Revolutionary Girl Utena" Transgresses Gender and Sexuality.' *Autostraddle*. [online] Available at: <https://www.autostraddle.com/revolutionary-girl-utena-transgresses-gender-and-sexuality-204505/> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

Chihayafuru and Arun in *Haikyuu!!*, Anthy and Akio exist as part of the cultural and racial landscape of Ohtouri academy. Their cultural assimilation does not necessarily mean, however, that they are completely unmarked; instead, their "Otherness" exists through inferences and suggestions rather than any conflict based on their "Otherness." In addition to the small *tilak,* one of these inferred characteristics is the exoticisation of South Asian masculinity through Akio.

 Later in the television series, Anthy's brother and one of the school's governors, Akio, is introduced to the audience. Despite being the main antagonist who is encouraging members of the student council to challenge and duel Utena, he soon becomes the focus of Utena's romantic interest but is also revealed to be abusing and manipulating his sister Anthy. Akio has been remarked on by director Ikuhara as being representative of the adult world which immediately contrasts him with most of the other characters in this universe [58]. He is constructed as a handsome and popular heartbreaker who is able to even seduce the strong-willed main character of Utena. In *Shōjo Kakumei Utena* and other series examined in this chapter, a trend has emerged of South Asian, typically Indian, men who are handsome, often to a degree of exoticisation. Part of the allure of some of these characters is their "Otherness" tied into the character design itself. The *manga* of *Boku no Chikyu o mamotte* (Hiwatari) was serialised in *Hakusensha* between 1986 to 1994. The Original Video Animations (Yamazaki, 1993-1995) were made and released by *Production I.G.* between 1993 and 1994, situating it in close proximity to *Shōjo Kakumei Utena*. This series also features an Indian male character who is the main romantic interest and, like many of the South Asian male characters in this chapter, has to a large degree been culturally assimilated with the Japanese "Self." I will also

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[58] BePas, 2021. 'From the Mouths of Babes || Learn what the creators of SKU have to say for themselves.' *The Empty Movement*. [online] Available at: <https://ohtori.nu/creators/a_animage.html> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

highlight how this pattern of exoticisation has been utilised in the more recent *Shokugeki no Sōma*. Such exoticisation of the "Other" as a means of provoking sexual desire is not uncommon in constructions of the "Other" in Japanese animation (Suter, 2013: 550) and the exoticisation of Akio as an example of this trend has been noted by fans of *Shōjo Kakumei Utena*[59].

There are key differences between the movie and the television series relating to the portrayal of Anthy and Akio, the only South Asian characters within the series. In the movie, the romantic aspect of Anthy and Utena's relationship is more visibly demonstrated to the audiences through scenes of physical intimacy and affection. Kunihiko Ikuhara states "I tried to do in the movie what I wasn't able to accomplish in the series" [60] when asked if he was met with any "resistance to the movie's stronger romantic elements." In a separate interview, he acknowledged that Anthy Himemiya's personality in the movie was different to her series characterisation whilst also clarifying that the series and movie Utena are the same [61]. The character of Akio, however, is largely absent from the movie as his character is first shown after he has just died and is subsequently depicted in flashbacks.

The most notable difference, however, is in the endings of the movie and the series. The series ending revolves around Anthy's relationships with both her abusive brother and Utena.

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[59] Dunn, K., 2021. *'The Analysis of Utena: Controversy, Canon, Contemplation, and the Pursuit of Clarity.'* [online] *The Empty* Movement. Available at: <https://ohtori.nu/analysis/06_kayla_exoticism.htm> [Accessed 6 May 2021].

[60] 'Utena Right Stuff.' 2011. *Web Archive.* [online] Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20111209160712/http://utena.rightstuf.com/> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

[61] 'Utena Right Stuff.' 2011. *Web Archive.* [online] Available at: <https://web.archive.org/web/20111209160712/http://utena.rightstuf.com/> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

Anthy seemingly rejects Utena as her prince allowing Akio to supposedly emerge as the victor from the last duel of the series. As Akio muses over what is to come next, however, Anthy informs her brother that Utena is not dead but has merely vanished from "your [Akio's] world" before announcing her own departure from the school. Like the movie, the series ending revolves around Anthy's character development as she rejects both Utena and Akio as her prince and instead seeks out to "find" Utena. The series ends on a hopeful note, zooming in on a framed picture of Utena and Anthy suggesting a potential happy conclusion for the two. In the ending of the movie, Anthy suggests to Utena that they escape "to the outside world," Utena is subsequently transformed into a pink car (the same colour as her hair) which Anthy uses to leave the confines of Ohtouri academy. This ending proved to be iconic and spurred a lot of conversation about its meaning, particularly how it serves as a critique and rejection of traditional fairy-tale gender roles and endings (Napier, 2008: 199). The primary reason is the switching of roles as Utena has now become the princess and it is Anthy who demonstrates a regal demeanour as she rides herself and Utena away from Ohtouri academy. Whilst Utena has assumed what is perceived to be the "masculine" role for the majority of the movie, this end reversal of gender roles subverts the very notion of what masculinity and femininity entail. Both the series and the movie use the character development of Anthy finally standing up for herself and making her own decisions. In both of these versions, the school of Ohtouri academy acts as a metaphor for societal norms and conventions, especially traditional gender roles. With both Anthy and Utena physically breaking away and escaping from this space they also escape the gendered expectations placed on both their characters.

Director Ikuhara states that he developed Anthy as a unique character, unlike any other

character before her in fact[62]. It is therefore suggested that Anthy does not necessarily fit into any stereotypes or conventions regarding her character. Whilst initially situated as the damsel in distress, Anthy is able to change the dynamics of the world around her in an instant. Her character changes from meek, to strong and defiant of her abusive older brother and the school system of Ohtouri academy – all whilst wielding a tremendous amount of power. Although Anthy certainly carries a few stereotypes of South Asianness, she is also a complex and unique character, a fact which is important to establish before evaluating the cultural markers used in their character depictions.

Religion and food are the most prominent elements used to "Other" Anthy as well as Akio. One stereotype of South Asianness that is certainly used to mark out Anthy as a racial and cultural "Other" is the *tilak*. Both she and the character of her older brother Akio have a *tilak*. It is almost minute in size but still very visible to audiences and undoubtedly exists to establish them as a South Asian "Other" without their "Otherness" being explicitly addressed in the narrative and dialogue. The use of the *tilak* has prompted audiences and critics alike to interpret her powers along with her and Akio's background to be associated with Hinduism[63][64][65]. Whilst no such association or suggestion has been made by the creators of

[62] Ikuhara, K., 2015. '1997 Interview with 'Revolutionary Girl Utena' *YouTube*. [online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PAqIQ0glElA> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

[63] 'Anthy Himemiya.' 2021. *Revolutionary Girl Utena Wiki.* [online] Available at: <https://utena.fandom.com/wiki/Anthy_Himemiya> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

[64] LADYLOVEANDJUSTICE, 2021. *The Great Feminist Manga and anime List:...* [online] Available at: <https://ladyloveandjustice.tumblr.com/post/29038095341/the-great-feminist-manga-and- *anime*-list> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

[65] Mod Moo, 2021. 'Symbolism and Roses.' [online] Symbolism and Roses. Available at: <https://utena-explained.tumblr.com/post/61564892182/mod-moo-more-akio-and-anthys-ethnicity-is> *Tumblr* [Accessed 1 May 2021].

the series itself, the inclusion of the *tilak* has allowed audiences to speculate regarding the background of Anthy and Akio. It draws on the audiences' associations of the *tilak* with Hinduism to then move beyond the narrative of franchise and create their own theories based on these associations – all whilst the characters themselves show no other association with Hinduism[66]. This construction of "Otherness," however, is largely rooted in interpretations and extrapolations made by fans rather than any direct affirmation from either the *manga*, series, or movie. Fans have used the *tilak* and particular scenes/parts of dialogue to determine Akio's and Anthy's ties with Hinduism and Hindu mythology and therefore also their Indianness[67]. Fanart depictions of Anthy present her wearing a *saree*, the national dress of India and the reasoning behind these artists' interpretation is that they have always perceived Anthy as being Indian[68] [69].

Another stereotype that is used, but not heavily prevalent or even used to necessarily define Anthy (or Akio) is the curry episode (episode 8). Anthy makes a curry for Utena in home economics class, which is spiked by a fellow student, Nanami with a special spice from India. The spice causes an explosion in the class that further causes Anthy and Utena to switch

[66] Mod Moo, 2021. 'Symbolism and Roses.' [online] Symbolism and Roses. Available at: <https://utena-explained.tumblr.com/post/61564892182/mod-moo-more-akio-and-anthys-ethnicity-is> *Tumblr* [Accessed 1 May 2021].

[67] StrongButGentle, 2021. 'Utena review - Cultural connections by StrongButGentle on DeviantArt.' *Deviantart.* [online] Available at: <https://www.deviantart.com/strongbutgentle/art/Utena-review-Cultural-connections-746509404> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

[68] I am Tabby Chan, 2021. 'Anthy Himemiya, from Shoujo Kakumei Utena, wearing....' *Tumblr.* [online] Available at: <https://iamtabbychan.tumblr.com/post/169863061225/anthy-himemiya-from-shoujo-kakumei-utena-wearing> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

[69] Direndria, 2021. 'art by direndria.' *Tumblr.* [online] Available at: <https://direndria.tumblr.com/post/171750618123/the-rose-bride-all-right-im-calling-it-done-very> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

bodies. Nanami, who caused the incident, is forced to travel to India where they can find more of the super rare ingredient to reverse its effect[70]. Whilst searching in India, they are repeatedly tormented by an elephant chasing them as they also deal with a number of misfortunes. At first this episode does not situate Anthy directly within the iconography of India (curry and elephants) used in this particular episode. At the end however, it is revealed that the rare spice from India had not been used after all and so it was Anthy's cooking that had caused the explosion and switching of personalities. At the end Anthy again (this time in Utena's body) makes curry for her friends and Utena (in Anthy's body), stating that it is her "special" dish. Other depictions of Indianness which employ stereotypes of food culture and curry have centred around biosemiotics and how the very bodies of Indian people are naturally gifted to be in tune with different spices and curry making, sometimes involving a supernatural element to these culturally specific culinary skills. In this episode, however, we never see the body of Anthy making or being directly involved with the making of the curry itself and so this reference can therefore be seen not as a direct, but rather indirect association of Anthy's South Asianness with curry.

The country of India is directly constructed and represented to audiences as a land of mysterious and rare spices, rampaging elephants and harsh terrains that seem underdeveloped and with no sign of civilisation in the vicinity. Anthy's ambiguous South Asian identity is hinted at through the depiction of India with curry and elephants acting as semiotic links between the two. A review of the *anime* series on the fan site *DeviantArt* lists the cultural markers and iconography they believe to be evidence of Anthy's Indianness[71]. Including the

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[70] Nanami's name also means seven spices, coming from the common Japanese spice mix. *Nanami Tougarashi*.
[71] StrongButGentle, 2021. *Utena review - Cultural connections by StrongButGentle on DeviantArt*. [online] Available at: <https://www.deviantart.com/strongbutgentle/art/Utena-review-Cultural-connections-746509404> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

tilak, the review also describes a scene from episode twenty-seven, where Anthy establishes her belief in reincarnation through the analogy of elephants. The belief in reincarnation, which is indeed a tenet of Hinduism, and also the use of elephants to explain this belief, are seen as indicative of Anthy being Hindu as elephants are sacred in India[72]. This review establishes the understanding of Hinduism within a background knowledge that associated it directly and homogeneously with India, sometimes using Hinduism and India as interchangeable terms. This also demonstrates the semiotic implications of elephants which are used as national cultural and religious markers. The landscapes of India therefore amplify the cultural markers that have been used and interpreted by fans to signal that Anthy is both Indian and Hindu.

5.3b Tsuritama

The next series to come under scrutiny is *Tsuritama*, a comedy science fiction series that aired in 2012 on *Fuji TV*. The *anime* is told from the perspective of high school student Yuki Sanada who is befriended one day at school by a self-proclaimed alien named Haru. Haru then proceeds to ask Yuki to help fish for an antagonistic alien which poses a threat to earth.

Being an alien, Haru is the subject of surveillance by a secret organisation called "Duck." Duck has sent its member Akira Agar Yamada, the show's main Indian character, to watch over Haru. Akira's Indianness is immediately visible in his character design through his skin tone and turban. The turban is part of the uniform for all Duck members, four of whom are shown kneeling beside him. Akira is also immediately seen with and carries around his pet

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[72] StrongButGentle, 2021. *Utena review - Cultural connections by StrongButGentle on DeviantArt*. [online] Available at: <https://www.deviantart.com/strongbutgentle/art/Utena-review-Cultural-connections-746509404> [Accessed 1 May 2021].

duck named Tapioca. In his very first appearance Akira is marked by his turban, Tapioca, and

other members of Duck kneeling before Akira with bejewelled turbans. Duck is not a

religious organisation and Akira himself is shown to not have any religious affiliation at all.

The turban therefore does not in this instance necessarily act as an intersecting marker of

religious culture and national identity, existing purely as a national marker of Akira's

Indianness.

Akira is spying on the alien Haru as he is making friends and bonding with students from the

local high school but is in turn being gawked and remarked at by members of the public

around him, including someone who takes a picture. This scene sets out that whilst Haru is an

alien on Earth, Akira is also a stranger to Enoshima and also subject to scrutiny as an

"outsider." Akira's second appearance further employs the use of brownvoice in the form of a

soundtrack which is distinctively used to "Other" and mark out Akira's Indianness. He

appears from underneath the sand, again whilst spying on Haru at the beach, as a non-diegetic

track plays which acts as a cultural racial and national marker. The previous chapter

examined how music and soundtracks, particularly instrumental pieces, are used as an

extension of brownvoice to accent and culturally situate South Asian characters to the

audience. Both of these introductory scenes are brief and do not yet bring Akira into the main

scope of the series but serve to affirm him as an Indian "Other."

Akira becomes more integrated with the group after he is enrolled as a student at the same

high school as the main characters, despite being in his mid-twenties. He is even able to

befriend Haru who is initially scared and suspicious of Akira. As in his first introduction,

Akira is met with fascination and gawking from his fellow classmates, contrasted with Haru's

introduction to the class where he proudly proclaimed that he was an alien which was met

with surprised laughter. From this point on, Akira is largely referred to by the main cast of characters, including Haru, as *Indojin* – or "Indian." He goes from being "Othered" through cultural markers that draw on audiences' background knowledge to make an association with his turban and Indianness, to a direct label denoting his nationality and defining him solely by it. He is, from the start, an outsider to Enoshima whereas Haru, the blonde-haired and blue-eyed alien, fits more comfortably within this cultural landscape as a cultural and even racial "Other." The director likens Haru's adaptation to life in Enoshima as seeing Japan through the eyes of a foreigner and being able to appreciate certain aspects of Japanese culture through their experiences. The director also states that whilst the main motif of the series was firmly established as fishing, the centrality of the series' narrative was to be around high school friendships and that these noticeably shift and change throughout the series[73]. The importance of high school memories and friendship is particularly salient when we consider how Akira is immersed into this friend group of high school students and goes on to create memories with them. Whilst initially an older outsider, the uniqueness of high school friendships and the setting of high school facilitates his integration into this group of friends. Akira's presence within the series is therefore significant, with character development taking place over the course of the entire 12-episode series. This is in contrast to most series in this research where South Asians have been constructed as a racial and cultural "Other" and their story arcs may be limited to a few episodes per season (if there is more than one season of the *anime*).

Food culture certainly plays a role in Akira's characterisation. The organisation Duck's base in Enoshima uses a curry shop as a cover for their operations which was then used to promote

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[73] '中村健治監督インタビュー' 2021. *Tsuritama*. [online] TVアニメ「つり球」. Available at: <https://www.tsuritama.com/special/interview_nakamura.html> [Accessed 6 May 2021].

the show in real life. The Noitamina Shop & Café Theatre in Tokyo is a shop which centres it

products and themes around series featured on *Fuji TV Network*'s animation airing block

named *Noitamina*. As *Tsuritama* was also aired on this block, the Noitamina café shop and

café theatre transformed into the Duck Curry shop from the series as a means of transmedia

promotion [74]. The voice actor of Akira's character narrated the advertisement which was also

accompanied by clips from the series mainly featuring Akira and one particular song from the

anime series' soundtrack [75]. This piece was the same that had been used as an audio cultural

marker during Akira's appearances. Character platforms have long been identified as a useful

method of successfully navigating and profiting from transmedia franchises (Condry 2013:

55), however with the use of Akira to promote the curry shop, the focus in this promotion is

his Indianness rather than any of his personal characteristics. The rhythm and tone of the song

used in this promotion, along with its use during Akira's appearances clearly show that it is

an "accent" or audio cultural and racial marker, one which may be categorised as a form of

musical brownvoice. Whilst this is certainly appealing to and drawing on their target

audiences' knowledge of the show and Akira's character in particular, they wish for the

audiences to associate the curry shop with his Indianness as a means of promoting the food.

The advertisement and the series demonstrate a range of cultural racial and national markers

which intersect and are used to "Other" Akira through his Indianness. This construction again

falls into various tropes and stereotypes, including the continuing and homogenising trend of

Indianness being centred in the representation of South Asians. The construction of South

Asianness in the series and franchise *Shokugeki No Sōma* sits largely in contrast to this

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[74] Loo, E., 2021. 'Tsuritama's Akira Pitches Real-Life Duck Curry Shop in Video.' *Anime News Network.* [online] Available at: <https://www. *anime*newsnetwork.com/interest/2012-05-15/tsuritama-akira-pitches-real-life-duck-curry-shop> [Accessed 6 May 2021].

[75] つり球カレー屋DUCKオープン告知. 2012. *YouTube.* [online] Available at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fvub_eBhNNQ> [Accessed 6 May 2021].

aggressive identification and marking out of the South Asian "Other" especially through definitive national identities (particularly Indianness).

The animated series *Shokugeki no Sōma* was adapted from the *manga* series and released in 2015, going on to run for five seasons and ending in 2020. The series, whilst overlapping with various different genres, can certainly be considered a culinary *manga* and *anime*. The previous chapter thoroughly examined the use of food culture in the characterisation of Akira Hayama, the only South-Asian character in the series. Whilst the use of food is also considered in this chapter, there is greater consideration given to how food is woven into other aspects of Akira's representation and to what extent the high school setting impacts these constructions.

The school setting is central to this series when exploring how South Asianness is constructed both inside and outside the world of Totsuki Academy. The previous chapter contrasted the representation of Akira with that of an Indian restaurant owner in the second series. Akira though certainly constructed as racial "Other," is also shown to be mostly culturally assimilated to the Japanese "Self" due to his education and growing up in Japan half of his life. As with Akio and Anthy from *Shōjo Kakumei Utena*, cultural assimilation does not mean that Akira is completely culturally and racially unmarked. His specialism of curry, the title *Prince of Fragrance* referring to his talent with spices which also becomes the title of his character theme song (acting as a form of brownvoice) and the cinnamon stick he is frequently shown using are all cultural markers used in the character's construction. Nevertheless, Akira's cultural identity is complex and not fixed to any particular South Asian national identity whilst also having roots of Japanese cultural identity, most obviously in the

form of his name. This nuanced representation is not necessarily afforded to other representations of South Asianness. The owner of the Indian restaurant owner is racially and culturally marked as an Indian migrant. The nameless restaurant owner is firstly clearly marked with an Indian flag outside of his restaurant, as is common with Indian restaurants in Japan. The owner also appears more culturally marked with a *tilak* and heavy accented Japanese. In the third and fourth series, another South Asian character appears as a judge of the WGO or World Gourmet Organisation. This character is very much like Akira with no definitive national or cultural South Asian identity. It is worth noting, however, that a lack of definitive South Asian identity is also closely tied to these characters' membership and association with elite organisations. Totsuki academy is the most prestigious culinary school in Japan whilst the WGO is a world-renowned institution that is able to make or break a restaurant and/or chef's reputation with a single review. Their association with these organisations affords these characters a large degree of cultural assimilation with the Japanese "Self" whereas the Indian restaurant owner is heavily "Othered" in a short space of time using national, cultural, and racial markers.

Another notable element to consider is the construction of South Asian masculinity. We must remember that *Shokugeki No Sōma* is an *ecchi* genre series [76] and so sexuality is a frequent and explicit feature in the visuals and narrative. Much of the focus tends to be on the overly sexualised responses of characters to the food itself, particularly women characters who are also frequently objectified during these scenes. Akira, like the character of Akio before him, is depicted as handsome and highly alluring to female characters. This is most notable in three scenes; the first being when Akira presents his curry dish at the Autumn election

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[76] Series labelled and categorised under *ecchi* typically feature frequent objectification of female characters as well as overtly sexual themes and scenes.

tournament. One of the female judges tasting his curry "climaxes" as a result and tries to "seduce" him into becoming her employee. Where he could have been simply asked to join her business, the judge phrases it and acts as if it is a seduction, objectifying Akira and commodifying him rather than viewing him as a whole person. The second scene of significance is again, during the Autumn elections as the protagonist, Sōma Yukihira, goes to a fish market to source the best ingredient. Here he is told by some market holders that another Totsuki student has previously visited, an elderly woman remarks that it was a "tanned, good-looking young man," or rather an *ikemen*, a term deriving from the Japanese *iketeru* (cool/exciting) and a nipponizing of the English word "men" to refer to good looking men. As the scene then cuts to a flashback of Akira browsing the fish market earlier, his character song *The Prince of Fragrance* also immediately begins playing. This song is used in various key points where Akira is present, but not always. Here, a connection is made between his "tanned" skin colour and the music that is played. The third is during Sōma's *shokugeki* or food battle against Akira where two young girl judges declare Akira to be handsome and Sōma to be plain looking or "ordinary." Sōma is clearly constructed as an average Japanese person, unlike many of his fellow students he does not come from an elite culinary background and instead runs a "regular" but extremely popular, Japanese eatery with his father. It is against his ordinary appearance and character that Akira is highlighted as being handsome. In the previous chapter's analysis of *Shokugeki no Sōma* I discussed the description of Akira in his official online character biography as *ekizochikku* ("exotic"). Although Akira is to a degree culturally assimilated as a part of a Japanese "Self," his "Otherness" is constructed here through an exoticism surrounding South Asian masculinity and sexuality.

5.4 Conclusion

The use of school settings in Japanese animation serves to act as an institution through which the "real world", or the society and life outside of the classroom can be reflected and re-imagined. The series that have been examined in this chapter demonstrate the varying degrees to which South Asianness is situated and marked in Japanese animation set in schools. It is clear that certain stereotypes and conventions typically used in the construction of and associated with South Asianness have persisted in animations from the 1990s until the present day. Some of these conventions are not typically used to racially and culturally "Other" South Asians, but rather bring them into the fold of Japanese society and assert them as a part of the Japanese "Self." The practice of cultural assimilation is most notable in *Shōjo Kakumei Utena*, where little to no mention is made of the two South Asian characters' "Otherness." Both characters are integral to the narrative of the series as well as the wider franchise. The entire *Shōjo Kakumei Utena* universe itself is one that has been celebrated and heralded as a definitive challenge to gender norms and sexuality, whilst the depiction of race and interracial relationships are also aspects that may be considered revolutionary. These representations can, in part, be credited to the genre of *shōjo* itself which has often utilised the setting of schools to navigate social issues.

Shōjo Kakumei Utena does employ some forms of "Othering," most notably the *tilak* and the curry episode, but also through the exoticisation of Akio. Exoticisation is certainly a trend as it extends into the more recent *Shokugeki no Sōma* and builds on a fetishization of "Other" masculinity which is not limited to the construction of South Asian masculinity. Exoticisation and fetishization are prominent forms of "Othering" employed in medias all over the world, ranging from India to the United Kingdom. Exoticisation is a practice which is reductive in nature and objectifies the "Other," ultimately dehumanising them as simply an object of desire; fetishization is the reduction of a person down to their racial and cultural identity and

drawing pleasure from "Othering" them.

Both *Shōjo Kakumei Utena* and *Shokugeki* also share the element of ambiguous South Asianness – South Asian characters who are not defined by nationalities. Fan observations and theorisations have situated Anthy and Akio as having Indian Hindu backgrounds based on their skin tone and *tilaks*. Coupled with the curry episode it is clear how these associations have been made, however, they are associations based on previous representations of Indian Hindus which have made use of *tilaks* and food culture. The director himself, however, argues that Anthy is a unique character and there is no mention in the narrative of her and Akio's background in terms of nationality or ethnicity and so these associations and theories are purely fan made and derived. Similarly, whilst we as an audience, are privy to Akira Hayama's background, it is a slum in an unnamed South Asian location that the audience sees as his background. As in *Shōjo Kakumei Utena,* Akira is "Othered" through the use of some cultural markers, including a form of brownvoice, which may allow audiences to attribute Indianness to his character based on their own background knowledge of previous media representations. Nevertheless, he is never outwardly named as being defined by national identity. Whilst many websites or feature articles listing "top Indian characters" attribute Indianness to Akira, some fans have speculated and discussed that the spices he uses are more indicative of him being of Sri Lankan heritage.

This ambiguity could represent a positive step in the depiction of South Asians, not just in animation, but across mediascapes. As has been evidenced through the use of cultural markers, the presence of nationality in South Asian representation typically predetermines tight boundaries in the form of cultural and racial homogenisation. *Tsuritama* similarly encapsulates Indianness through turbans and curry. The turban, like the *tilak*, indicates but

does not naturally mean that the character has a religious affiliation. It is a mere suggestion which conveys the association of religion with national identity and culture. In the case of *Tsuritama*, the use of the turban similarly acts as a signifier of Indianness rather than of any defined religious belief.

School settings, coupled with medium of animation, have allowed a great deal of freedom for artists and directors to push the boundaries of what may be deemed socially acceptable or to tackle complex and difficult issues. The use of these settings, however, does not evidently equate to a direct and immediate challenge or resolution to many of these issues. What is clear through this measuring of South Asian traits in Japanese schools, is that there has been and remains a large degree of fluctuation and variance in the construction and representation of South Asianness. To a large degree, the settings of schools do facilitate these depictions as they immerse the South Asian "Other" into an environment and medium that allows experimentation – as in the case of *Shōjo Kakumei Utena* and *Shokugeki no Sōma*. In these series, and to a degree in *Tsuritama*, the setting of school actively facilitates the subversion of fixed boundaries of "Self" and "Other" in both racial and cultural terms. Representations of the "Self" under a *Nihonjinron* framework whereby Japaneseness is a construct designed according to racial and cultural exclusivity are also interrogated and critiqued.

The *shōjo* genre cannot alone be credited for these representations, as *Shōjo Kakumei Utena* can be considered to have elements of both the *shōnen* and *shōjo* genres and *Shokugeki* is associated with the *shōnen* genre. The setting of school, however, does certainly present a space for cultural, national, racial, gender and sexual orientations to be explored and celebrated, sometimes as a rebuke to societal norms and expectations. Although the representations examined in this chapter do not fully break away from particular tropes and

stereotypes, ambiguous South Asianness and blurred cultural identities disrupt constructions of the Japanese "Self" and South Asian "Other." Overall, the use of school settings can certainly be seen as a backdrop which provides room for navigating and subverting social conventions. Through the course of this chapter, we have seen how constructions of racial, cultural, gender and sexual norms have been undermined through the representation of characters and relationships which actively blur the boundaries and limitations imposed by these constructions. These representations sit within the wider discussion of this thesis and its identification of signifiers and markers of South Asianness. School settings clearly mitigate some of these markers but this chapter also notes the continuation and further use of stereotypes rooted in a system of assumed background knowledge which often conflates South Asian identities through racial, cultural, and national terms. The findings of this chapter are also partially a continuation of those from preceding chapters which determine the patterns which have emerged from the representations of South Asians but have a finer media contextualisation of other Japanese animation. The overall determinations made here therefore point to how school settings, although still need to evolve their constructions and depictions of South Asian identities, have provided room for positive developments.

6. Conclusion

The depiction of South Asians in Japanese animation can be traced back to as early as the 1970s, with a notable increase of South Asian characters in the 1990s and 2000s. This topic, however, remains a relatively new subject in the field of academic discussion. I have examined the construction of South Asian characters and identities in the context of increased visibility of South Asians in the Japanese public sphere and ethnoscapes, as well as mediascapes. I also consider the socio-political background of this increase in media portrayals of South Asians, and the degree to which they may be rooted in a system of background knowledge which in turn is formed and influenced by an ideological perspective. These systems of knowledge construct South Asians as "Other" but are sometimes also based on self-representations of particular South Asian identities. The medium of these depictions (animation) has also been scrutinised, especially with regard to the role they play in the construction of racial and cultural politics. Here, I will summarise the findings of each key question and element of this research, starting with the medium of animation.

The aesthetics of character designs in Japanese animation have offered up a crucial element to the discussion of race representation, particularly in considering constructions of the Japanese "Self" and how they sit in opposition to constructions of the "Other." Whilst the Caucasianisation of Japanese characters prompts the marking of South Asian characters, we have also seen the racial delineation of "Other" Asian as well as Caucasian White characters. Though the global hybrid look of Japanese characters sits in a tradition of visual culture whereby Caucasian Whiteness is racially unmarked, the inclusion of "Other" Asian characters in these character designs undermines the strict limitations imposed on

Japaneseness by means of racial and cultural exclusivity through *Nihonjinron*. In series such as *Burakku Ragūn* and *Kōdo Giasu*, "Other" Asianness is marked culturally and Whitened as Japaneseness is, a conflation which chips away at the idea of racial homogeneity and a Japaneseness which sits exclusively in proximity to Caucasian Whiteness and at times to "Other" Asianness. There has similarly been the emergence, in some *anime* series, of characters whose Japaneseness sits comfortably with what are deemed "Other" racial and cultural identities (mainly "Other" Asia), expanding, and blurring the boundaries of the Japanese "Self." These trends are indicative of a constructed Japaneseness which is not as strongly tied to the notion of racial exclusivity. The racial unmarking of the "Other," however, is only afforded to lighter skinned characters. The darker-skinned "Other" is typically constructed through a higher visibility which contributes to their construction in tandem with the main tenets of *Njhonjinron*. In the case of South Asian representation, "Otherness" is achieved through a myriad of racial and cultural markers.

Cultural markers used to illustrate an opposition to the identity of the "Self" are not unique to Japanese animation, and neither are those specifically used in the depiction of South Asians. The fact that many of these markers are rooted in a global system of background knowledge, sometimes perpetuated by self-representation of South Asianness, illuminates the existence of "Othering" practices and discourses in most countries and societies which feed into their media. *Nihonjinron* is therefore not a solitary concept of constructing national identity around fixed parameters which is situated in racial and/or cultural uniqueness. Throughout this research I have highlighted how markers such as religious and food cultures have been rehashed and re-used from global stereotypes in the development of South Asian representation. These threads are consistent through global and Japanese medias, also eventually filtering into Japanese animation. All of the depictions discussed have been

created by *mangakas*/writers/directors/voice actors etc. who are not South Asian and are therefore constructions. I have used the word "construction" to acknowledge the work of Gayatri Spivak on how the subaltern is typically spoken for and represented through an interlocuter rather than through their own platform. Representations which have not been created by the group being depicted are therefore constructions of the "Self's" imagined perspective and reality of South Asianness. These perspectives, however, can sometimes also be rooted in an ideological foundation stemming from South Asian self-representations which equally "Other" South Asian groups and identities. Formations of a South Asian "Self" therefore also seek to homogenise national and cultural identities according to an ideological basis which typically favours a dominant or majority group.

One of the main threads that has emerged from this thesis is the homogenising of South Asianness through the blurring of racial, cultural, and national identities. This has not only impacted the representation of South Asianness as a whole due to the dominance of Indianness (which is clearly, partly due to the special relationship between India and Japan), but also representation of different South Asian identities such as Hindu South Asians who are essentialised through India, Pakistani South Asians who are reduced down to religious cultural markers of Islam, the perpetuation of casteist and colourist tropes in depictions of the caste system and so on. The most persistent and obvious form of homogenisation and dominance noted throughout this thesis has been the consistent use of Indianness in depictions of South Asianness. Of all the animations examined the following feature Indian characters or use Indianness as a means of homogenising South Asian culture:

- *Burakku Ragūn*
- *Kuroshitsuji*,

- *Kōdo Giasu*

- *Tsuritama*

- *Senkō no Night raid*

- *Shokugeki no Sōma* (restaurant owner)

- *Gokujō Seitokai*

The following are series which featured South Asian identities which are definitely not Indian:

- *Yuugo: Kōshōnin* (Pakistan)

- *Wārudo Apātomento Horā* (Pakistan, Bangladesh)

And the following are series with constructions of South Asianness not tied to any specific nationality:

- *Shokugeki No Sōma*

- *Shōjo Kakumei Utena*

Buddha is not included in any of these animations due to the confusion between the original historical setting of Nepal and the discrepancies between the *manga* and *anime* versions which situate this as India. Partly due to the special relationship between Japan and India, India and Indianness have a higher level of visibility in terms of South Asian representation. This is not specific to the Japanese media but is certainly perpetuated by the Japanese mediascape. Given the context of war and colonialism we can conclude that the higher visibility of Indianness is often part of a deliberate ploy to embellish current Indo-Japanese relations through a selective retelling of historical ties between the two countries. These practices of homogenisation are certainly rooted in an ideological perspective of a constructed Japanese, but also South Asian "Self."

The influence of dominant South Asian groups on global systems of background knowledge and representations regarding South Asians has largely been discussed in relation to India and "upper-caste" Hindu perspectives. This thesis has also considered the rarer representation of Pakistaniness and Bangladeshiness in *manga* and animation. In the few examples we have seen, there is a similar trend of feeding into ideological systems of background knowledge which make reductive over-simplifications such as Pakistaniness equates Islamic religious culture and characterising Kashmir as "Pakistan's little sister." Once again religious culture is shoehorned into depictions as a form of cultural "Othering" and in the case of *Yuugo: Kōshōnin*, uses Islam to do so, ignoring the religious diversity that exists in India and Pakistan, respectively. The absence of South Asian countries and communities other than Indian Hindu in the discussion of caste unintentionally absolves communities and identities that are not Hindu and Indian of any participation or involvement with the caste system. The perpetuation of these ideologically charged assumptions and associations not only result in misrepresentations but actively feed and uphold them as facts.

Religious culture intersects with food culture as a marker of South Asianness and doubles up as a space to further hegemonic discourse regarding South Asian identities as seen in the *manga Karē Naru Shokutaku*. Here, "upper-caste" Hindu food culture is Indian food culture. Whilst at once seeming like a harmless oversimplification, the notion that "Indians do not eat beef" has had real-life consequences regarding attacks on minority groups in India accused of doing so. Both food and religious culture are used as a cultural, national, and racial marker to perpetuate tropes of South Asian "Otherness" and self-representation which are rooted in an essentialist (and often exclusionary) system of background knowledge and ideology. Indian

food, largely reduced to the umbrella term "curry," is depicted through the realm of biosemiotics as a racialised accent of South Asianness, as it is deeply ingrained within the very bodies of South Asian characters, conveyed through their (curry) cooking abilities including their exceptional handling of spices. South Asians' (or rather Indians') "natural" abilities with spices and cooking curries are often exaggerated through the compound use of religious culture, with spirituality often playing a key role in the production and consumption of South Asian food cultures. Food culture therefore intersects with religious culture as a form of "Othering," although this is not a new system of knowledge that is unique to Japanese mediascape and can be evidenced in media representations of South Asianness all over the world.

A lot of the tropes and markers of South Asianness, or often Indianness, are constructed visually such as the *bindi* or depictions of food. I have also determined the use of audio markers as an extension of brownvoice and therefore a racialised "accent" of South Asianness. These are not performative attempts at Indian accents by voice actors but the audio tracks which accompany the appearance of South Asian characters in various different series. The use of non-diegetic music as an audio marker of cultural racial and even national identity, serves the same purpose as the normalisation of brownvoice in depictions of South Asians – to racially and culturally "Other" their presence. Instead of voice actors performing brownvoice, it is the music composers and directors as well as marketing teams which construct, produce, and sell Indianness according to their perspective and understanding of South Asianness

The discussion of tropes and stereotypes surrounding the aesthetics and narratives of South Asian characters, are mostly drawn from a global system of background knowledge evidenced in media representations from different countries. It is in the context of war and colonialism, however, where we see a more localised representation of Indianness which has evolved out of Japan and India's special relationship. A link is made in both media representations and political discourse between Indo-Japanese relations during the period of Japanese military expansionism and in the present geopolitical climate where India is situated as a close ally. India is used as a blanket term for South Asia concerning Indo-Japanese relations in the past, erasing the South Asian identities which were essentialised under the British colonial term of British India. These include Bangladeshi and Pakistani identities that are dismissed and erased in favour of a narrative which situates Indianness and Indianness alone as a natural ally and friend to Japan in the present day. The militaristic and economic nature of this special relationship can also be seen reflected in the depictions of Indians in Japanese animation. India is not exempt from "Othering" in this context, Indianness is still "Othered," but done so in a manner which firmly situates its constructions outside of the realm of Japan's "Other" Asia.

Gender and sexuality are also crucial factors which have emerged out of these representations and the tropes used in constructions of South Asianness. Certain depictions of Indian femininity are not particularly pigeonholed or stereotyped and are shown through a diverse range of characterisations. Indian women characters range from non-speaking background characters to an emerging trope of educated and skilled professionals as evidenced in the context of war and colonialism. This trope is not true for all constructions of South Asian femininity, however; South Asian women who are "lower-caste," *Dalit*, Muslim and/or labelled through a national identity that is not Indian are constructed within a cycle of

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representation centred around victimisation and violence. There is also a frequent trope among all depictions of South Asianness which exists regardless of gender: exoticisation of the racial "Other." This trope is reflected from the character of Jane from *Burakku Ragūn* to Akira in *Shokugeki* and Akio in *Shōjo Kakumei Utena*. Although the representations of these characters are not all monoliths, they do exist as a trope which fits into a general trend of constructing racial "Otherness" in the Japanese media. *Shōjo Kakumei Utena*, however demonstrates a breakout representation of South Asianness which defies gender norms and expectations through the character of Anthy Himemiya and her relationship with the eponymous character Utena.

Many of these cultural markers, tropes and stereotypes which blur racial, cultural, and national identity, frequently exist to act in opposition to the Japanese "Self" that can at times be similarly determined through national, ethnic, and racial terms. The effect of these cultural markers may frequently be exaggerated to generate a comical effect that highlights the "Otherness" of the South Asian characters. What has become apparent over the course of this research, however, is that depictions of South Asians in Japanese animation are not necessarily uniform. This research has also seen the emergence of South Asian constructions which blur the cultural boundaries and limitations of the South Asian "Other" as well as the discursive construction of the Japanese "Self" through *Nihonjinron* ideology. This new mode of representation involves ambiguous South Asian identities which are not explicitly tied to any particular nation state, racial, cultural, or religious identity. Their South Asianness is the only information we can glean from their character and is complicated further by the use of Japanese names. These representations exist largely against the backdrop of schools, which can be considered a fertile context for exploring, challenging, and even subverting social norms and expectations. Through the assimilation of South Asian characters with the

Japanese cultural "Self," Japaneseness is also opened up to a new mode of representation which is not defined by racial and cultural exclusivity as prescribed by *Nihonjinron*. In these representations, Japanese culture and national identity are not exclusive to one particular racial group who singularly define Japaneseness. The opening up of identities beyond these rigid boundaries is certainly a positive example and step in the right direction of undermining a binary which normalises a particular construction of "Self" resulting in a marginalised "Other" based on a racial ideology.

The answers provided to the main questions in this thesis determine the patterns that exist in representations of South Asians in Japanese animation. I have concluded my research by identifying the many systems of background knowledge are often at work in these constructions and are built from a perspective which often does not fully appreciate and understand the actual diversity of South Asian identities. Some of these systems are (sometimes unintentionally) formed from an ideological base which deliberately erases these identities. These representations vary, however, and fit into these patterns of representation in a diverse number of ways involving genre, character development, settings, and so on. There are still other constructions of South Asianness in the Japanese mediascape which require academic attention and I hope this thesis will be able to provide a starting point for these discussions.

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9. Appendices

Plot Summaries

a. *Kuroshitsuji* (Shinohara, 2008-2009)

Kuroshitsuji is set in Victorian England, the male protagonist is 12-year-old Ciel Phantomhive also known as the Earl of Phantomhive. His role is to overlook the criminal underworld on behalf of Queen Victoria. He inherited this title from his father after the Phantomhive family was killed with Ciel subsequently kidnapped and tortured by a cult. This forces him to make a Faustian pact with a demon. The deal is for the demon to help Ciel enact revenge against those who had wronged him and his family, and for the demon to eat Ciel's soul in exchange. After the deal is made, the demon transforms into a human butler named Sebastian Michaelis, serving Ciel and taking charge of the Phantomhive affairs. Sebastian is able to efficiently run the Phantomhive household and often responds to Ciel's demands with his catchphrase "Yes, My lord." There are many recurring characters who are acquaintances and even friends of Ciel's, including Ran Mao, a Chinese character who runs an opium den in London. In episode thirteen, Ciel and Sebastian investigate a string of assaults against rich Englishmen which is initially suggested to be the work of Indian migrant workers.

Prince Soma arrives in episode thirteen with his "butler" named Agni. He is an Indian prince who has come in search of his former caretaker Mina and asks for Ciel and Sebastian's help in doing so. Growing up his parents did not pay attention to him and so he grew attached to Mina and believes she was kidnapped and forced to marry an Englishman. Before the truth about Mina's disappearance and character is revealed to him, he views Mina comparingly with the Goddess Kali.

Agni is Soma's butler who arrives with him and is shown to be as adept and good at fighting as Sebastian. Initially this prompts Ciel and Sebastian to speculate that he, too, is a demon, although it is simply revealed that his faith and spirituality give him power. His faith was renewed after he was saved from the death penalty by prince Soma who he sees as a deity. Whilst staying with the Phantomhive estate it is revealed that he is working for an Englishman who owns a curry company and is married to Mina. Agni carries out orders in exchange for Mina hiding that she left Soma and married multiple Englishman willingly by murdering rival curry shop owners (which Ciel and Sebastian are investigating at the beginning of this arc) and entering a curry competition on behalf of Mina's husband and his curry restaurant company. Agni's right hand is known as "The Right Hand of God" which is the source of his "supernatural" abilities, including making perfect curries.

Mina is Soma's former caretaker and maid of the palace where he grew up. Life was hard for Mina as she was from a low-caste background and she married an Englishman to escape the caste-system of India. She is calculating and will stop at nothing to achiever her goals. She reveals the truth to Soma, stating that she never cared for him despite Agni's efforts to stop her from doing so.

b. *Buddha* (Morishita 2011)

Buddha is based on the life of Prince Siddhartha and his journey as Gautama Buddha. Prince Siddhartha himself is born into royalty and shown to live the privileged life as an "upper-caste" Kshatriya. He is, however, appalled by the inequalities and suffering caused by the

cate system. After his romance with the "lower-caste" Migaila is tragically ended by his father and he is forced to marry Yashodhara, with whom he has a son, he leaves the palace and goes on a journey of spiritual fulfilment. He reaches enlightenment and becomes Gautama Buddha, the founder and spiritual leader of Buddhism.

Migaila is the female bandit that Prince Siddhartha falls in love with during his excursions outside of the palace. Their romance is met with violent rejection from Siddhartha's father due to Migaila's caste and she is blinded as punishment so as to never lay eyes on Siddhartha again. He is subsequently forced to marry Yashodhara, with whom he fathers a child. Growing tired of palace life, Siddhartha leaves to find spiritual fulfilment, eventually reaching enlightenment and becoming Gautama Buddha.

Chapra is a character who was born *Shudra* but was able to hide his caste and become a high-ranking General after rescuing an "upper-caste" soldier who goes on to adopt him. He is reunited with his mum and forced to reconcile with his "lower-caste" status as an adult, which results in a tragic ending for both him and his mother.

c. *Yuugo: Kōshōnin* (Kishi, 2004)

Yugo tells the story of title character, Yugo, a detective based in Tokyo, Japan but who constantly travels for his investigative work. An attempted negotiation in Pakistan by another Japanese negotiator has gone wrong, resulting in his kidnapping by a group of dacoits. The negotiator's daughter comes to Yugo in the first episode, who also works as a negotiator, to

help bring her father home. After gaining some information from his friend Rashid who works for an international newspaper in Japan, Yugo goes to Pakistan to successfully negotiate the return of his predecessor. On his journeys he encounters Laila, a mute dancing girl who is rescued by Yugo from her pimp. She helps him successfully complete his negotiation and also demonstrates a great deal of affection and attachment to Yugo.

d. *Kōdo Giasu* (Taniguchi, 2006-2008)

Kōdo Giasu is set in the future against the backdrop of an alternative universe where most of the world is split into three main empires: The European and African Union, The Chinese federation – and the largest which has annexed most of the world's sovereign nations – The Britannian Empire. Japan was among the last countries to be annexed after surrendering to a peace deal and is renamed area seventeen in accordance with Britannian Policy which reconstructs its colonies identities with a numbering system. Japanese people are known as seventeens. The protagonist of the story is high school student Lelouch vi Britannia who, along with sister Nunally, is the son of the Britannian Emperor and his Japanese wife, who is one of many wives. Lelouch and Nunally were driven out of the palace and force forced to live undercover in Japan or "Seventeen" after their mother was assassinated, presumably by the Emperor himself. Lelouch's main goal is to build a world where his sister, who was severely injured in the assassination of their mother, does not have to live in fear and secrecy. One day he discovers a power known as Giasu. Using the Giasu he forms a persona known as Zero, who leads a Japanese anti-Britannian group, the Black Knights in a fight for self-determination and independence.

Suzaku is Lelouch's best friend since childhood and the son of Japan's former prime minister. As a child he killed his father who was refusing to surrender to the Britannian Empire in an effort to bring peace to Japan and now works for the Britannian Empire as a soldier. Despite being frequently discriminated against as a "seventeen," he is the major pilot for the Britannian empire's main weapon. He is unaware for most of the first season that Zero is in fact Lelouch.

Rakshata become weapons inspector for the Black Knights, she is from India which has been annexed and become part of the Chinese Federation. She is highly skilled and is also shown to be resentful towards the Chinese Federation, under which she is marginalised through a racial hierarchy.

e. *Burakku Ragūn* (Katabuchi, 2006-2011)

Burakku Ragūn is set in the 1990s and is told from the perspective of Salaryman Rokuro Okajima. In the first episode he is kidnapped by pirates known as the Black Lagoon crew whilst carrying out some work for his company. After his company abandons him, he joins the Black Lagoon crew as their latest recruit and is rechristened "Rock." He forms a close but tumultuous friendship/love interest with Revy. The Black Lagoon crew is captained by Dutch, a former American ex-soldier who is also a former Vietnam war navy captain. Benny is the crew's tech support and IT expert who was rescued by Revy from the mafia.

"Two-hand" Revy is the main gunwoman of the Black Lagoon Crew and a loose cannon whose behaviour sometimes disturbs and troubles Rock. It is later revealed that she

experienced an abusive and neglectful experience growing up Chinese American in the USA and was also sexually assaulted by a police officer which is implied in season one during her conversation with Rock in a sunken Nazi submarine. The full truth is shown in episode three through Revy's own flashbacks.

Jane is introduced in the second season as a new resident of Roanapur, working for a gang by making high quality counterfeit money. After going over her deadline she is threatened by the gang and promptly runs away to be found by Revy and Eda. She eventually comes under the protection of the Black Lagoon crew and quickly forms a sexual relationship with Benny.

f. *Shokugeki no Sōma* (Yonetani, 2015-2020)

Shokugeki tells the story of 15-year-old protagonist Sōma Yukihira who runs a Japanese eatery with his father. At the end of the first episode, he is forced to enter into Totsuki academy, an elite culinary school with only a 10% graduation rate. The series follows Sōma's efforts to prove his talent within this elite establishment. Halfway through series one, the Autumn elections are announced – a special tournament which determines who is the most talented chef among the first years.

Akira Hayama is the only South Asian student in the school. He is originally from an unnamed South Asian background as was rescued from his life trying to find food and shelter in a sum. The person who rescued him was Professor Jun Shiomi who recognised his talent with fragrance and apices and brought him back to Japan where he spends the rest of his childhood. Akira enters the autumn election and wins.

The Nakiri cousins, Alice and Erina are the granddaughters of Totsuki Academy's principal. Alice's mother is Danish and inspired her daughter's love for molecular gastronomy whilst Nakiri is known as "The God Tongue" for her perfect sense of taste. Erina is also Sōma's main love interest and adversary at the beginning of the series before warming to him.

g. *Tsuritama* (Nakamura, 2012)

Tsuritama is set in a Japanese high school in Enoshima and tells the story of protagonist Yuki Sanada who is befriended by Haru, new transfer student and self-proclaimed alien. Haru wishes to save the local town from a predatory alien, which has a history of showing up in Enoshima and causing problems. Haru and Yuki join forces to develop their fishing skills so that they can catch the predatory alien which threatens Enoshima.

Akira Yamada is an Indian prince working for the organisation *Duck* and has been sent to Enoshima to spy on Haru's activities. He therefore joins the high school where the other protagonists are enrolled and joins the group, eventually becoming their friends and standing up to his organisation to help them fight the predatory alien.

h. *Shōjo Kakumei Utena* (Ikuhara, 1997)

Shōjo Kakumei Utena takes place against the backdrop of Ohtouri academy. main character, Utena Tenjou, is an orphan girl who was consoled by a prince at her parents' graveyard when she was a child and has therefore resolved to one day become a prince. To do so, she acts in a "princely" manner at her high school, wearing the boys school uniform and defending her

friends' honour. One day she is challenged to a duel by Kyouichi Saionji, a male student and in defeating him – gains ownership of the mysterious Rose Bride. She subsequently engages in numerous duels against various members of the school's elite student council. Anthy Himemiya is the Rose Bride, she is first seen by Utena being hit by Kyouichi Saionji who "owns" her at the time. The Rose Bride has a great deal of power and whoever she is engaged to or owns her, has access to and control over her power.

Akio is Anthy's playboy older brother who is secretly plotting against Utena and revealed to be the main antagonist of the series. He has been abusing and manipulating his little sister Anthy, controlling her and her powers whilst also seducing Utena. When Akio seemingly convinces Anthy to betray and kill Utena, he is surprised when Akio mocks him and says that Utena has merely disappeared from his world before leaving to find Utena.

i. *Karē naru Shokutaku* (Funatsu 2001-2012)

Yui Sonezaki's father runs Curry Shop Ganesha, a failing curry house in Japan. In order to learn how to better cook curry, Yui's father abandons the shop and Yui. An acquaintance of his, Makito Koenji, turns up as a replacement chef. He quickly demonstrates his strong skills and ability in curry making which he has learned from cooking for and with Indians in Singapore. He is often forced to take part in curry competitions for the sake of Curry Shop Ganesha and develops a romantic relationship with Yui.

Makito is also frequently called on to defend the curry shop through a number of challenges and competitions. Tow in these challenges, he often draws on his own learnings of Indian-style curry making.

j. *Senkō No Night Raid* (Matsumoto, 2010)

This series is set in Shanghai in 2931, taking place directly against the backdrop of Japanese military and political activities in the area. A group called *Sakurai* operate here as a special military spy organisation, consisting of members with various supernatural abilities. Their missions coincide with critical moments during the history of both Shanghai and Japan including the Mukden incident and development of Pan-Asian ideology.