

Yaoi and BL: The Japanese Female Obsession with Male Homosexuality and Its Effects  
on Pop Culture Media

SALAZAR, JOYCE

MAY 19, 2016

CARTHAGE COLLEGE  
JAPANESE DEPARTMENT  
WANG, YAN Ph.D

## Abstract

This undergraduate thesis explores why Japanese females are interested in depictions of male-male homosexuality in pop culture media, specifically *Boy's Love* (BL) manga and anime. I hypothesized that Japanese females were interested in this form of media as a form of self-preservation from Japanese cultural expectations as was indicated by previous research done nine years prior<sup>1</sup>. A survey was conducted using a sample of 17 Japanese people, 15 Japanese females and two Japanese males. The participants were asked for their intake of BL media per week and why they had an interest in the media. Contrary to previous expectations, the majority expressed their interest in BL stemming from their favorite voice actors or favorite characters being a part of a homosexual coupling in popular fandom, many also mentioned how the unrealistic tropes in BL media was entertaining. The findings prompt a rethinking of why BL media is growing in popularity with Japanese females.

---

<sup>1</sup> Vincent, Keith. "A Japanese Electra and Her Queer Progeny", 2007.

## Terms

**Bara (薔薇)** - Term used to describe the type of media depicting male-male homosexuality by men targeted towards a male audience. Can also be used to describe the male characters in said media, 'bara men'.

**Doujinshi (同人誌)** - Fan made comics by artists of both genders of their favorite media outlets in indulgent situations. Creators of these works are referred to as *doujinka* (同人家).

**Fujoshi (腐女子)** - Female otaku interested in boy's love media. The male equivalent is *fudanshi* (腐男子).

**Mangaka (漫画家)** – People who create manga.

**Otaku (オタク)** - A person who is invested in video games, anime, manga, trains, etc as a hobby. The otaku referenced here will be referencing anime and video game hobbyists.

**Seme (攻め)** - The 'male' role in a male homosexual relationship.

**Tankobon (単行本)** - An individual manga volume consisting of two to ten chapters, five chapters on average.

**Uke (受け)** - The 'female' role in a male homosexual relationship.

**Yaoi (やおい)** - An old term used in Japan to describe the merchandise and media depicting male-male homosexuality by women targeted towards women. The current term is *Boy's Love*.

## **Background Information**

With the expansion of female expression in Japan within the last century, women have been gearing towards hobbies that express their desires in ways that fulfill them but also keep them safe mentally and physically. This specific desire has led to the explosion in popularity of 'BL', Boy's Love, as it moved from novels to manga to animated television series within a short period of time. Boy's Love (BL) is the depiction of male homosexual romance and relationships, most often with the focus being to fulfill a latent desire by the writer and its audience more so than to depict an accurate homosexual relationship. The main focus of this study will be on three different mediums that the BL genre has gone through and how its depiction of a homosexual relationship has possibly changed females' views on homosexuality between the 1960s and 2010s. The term 'BL' will be used as an umbrella term to refer to shounen-ai, yaoi, slash, boys love, etc - all of which are terms used for varying degrees of expressed sexual intent between the males - works made by women for the enjoyment and consumption of women for the remainder of this research paper.

The first work to be mentioned is the novel *Koibitotachi no Mori* by Mari Mori and I have chosen this work because its many themes were considered controversial in the 60s, from the male relationship depicted to the actions and personalities of the characters. In the early 1960s, Mari Mori's homosexual-relationship-focused writing is considered as one of the popular works that led to the expansion of BL to mainstream media. The younger male of this work is selfish to a degree that is considered unbecoming of a young Japanese woman in that decade. This comparison of main character and the expectations of Japanese women of that time is made as the novel depicts its main character as pretty, timid, beautiful,

and various other adjectives that until that moment had been reserved for describing women while the seme - the male role in the relationship - leans more towards the handsome category and holds characteristics of what a woman in the 1960s would see as desirable. In Mari Mori's work, the two men have a fantasy-like romance with no strings attached as there is no monogamous love restriction nor are there any restrictions of freedom for the uke - a term used to describe the male who takes up the female role in the sexual role of the relationship. At the end of the novel, the seme reaches his untimely end yet the younger man lives frugally and is not affected by the death of his lover's death, in the end deciding to reach out to another man for pleasure. This is an example of women not wanting to be restricted and yearning for something beyond the expected tying down to their household once they are married. The depiction of the 1960s woman's desire in novel form is an argued reason for the acceptance of such a different relationship. Even today, BL novels are popular and sold side by side with BL manga works at chain stores. Many BL manga come accompanied by novels which are free from censorship laws, thus allowing them to be more liberal in their details of male homoerotic relationships that manga and anime are not allowed to delve into.

### **Doujinshi**

This early work is then one of the sparks needed to create the large boom known as doujinshi. Doujinshi are fanworks created by amateur and professionals alike of their favorite shows. They are different from regular manga in that sometimes doujinshi have unique plots that would never work in the setting of the original work (ie - a shounen manga about cooking could have doujinshi of its characters fighting in space) and even if the setting is the same as the original, many of these works created by female doujinka,

doujinshi creators, tend to focus on romance between characters that are not recognized as a couple in the original work. Women of all ages and backgrounds are pulled into the BL genre with these fanworks of their favorite characters and personalities. By explaining the process of how doujinshi came to be and its growth in popularity is essential as I believe it will be easier to understand how women of the late 1980s have easily come to accept and even desire BL relationship depictions in their pleasure mediums of books and television today.

Gaining notice in the 1980s, doujinshi started off as underground works created by groups of women to cut their costs down and were only shared within their circle of friends and acquaintances as the most reliable way to spread the word about their works was the old fashioned 'word of mouth'. The doujinka are focused on releasing their desires through their own means. The doujinka draw up what they want to see and in doing so, they find like-minded individuals who appreciate and expand on these desires through chatting and sharing, and thus indulging in their desires in a sort of enclosed haven where they are neither judged nor scorned for their thoughts. It can be assumed that the desires drawn up by women in this period in time lead to the homosexual romance looking like a clichéd heterosexual romance with the sex of the passive individual being male instead of female.

Currently, with the cost of printing going down, certain doujinka opt to work alone to fully realize their personal desires. The doujinshi market itself has expanded to include foreign fans as the internet introduces many females worldwide to this practice, resulting in thousands of people coming to Japan to visit the famous bi-yearly Comic Market, Comiket, the largest doujinshi selling event in Japan, and arguably – the whole world. Many shounen series in the 1990s held strong instances of homosocial relationships

that only fueled women's fantasies and thus the expansion and popularity of doujinshi to what it is in current time. There have been 89 Comiket events, with the first meet up being in winter 1975. Since then, Comiket has expanded to include sellers of official merchandise and cosplay areas but doujinshi sellers are still the main showcase in this event. While in the beginning doujinshi were considered underground and hard to share outside of one's circle of friends and acquaintances, the market has grown so much in the last forty-odd years that overseas fans travel thousands of miles to enjoy this work of fiction. Many anime and video game companies are alright with these fan made works as the sale of doujinshi in large chains like Animate and Mandarake are not odd sights, the free exposure and spreading of an official series is welcomed by the big businesses in this day and age.

With the expansion of the female desire, it becomes apparent that BL sells. Women are then treated to officially serialized works, original stories with plots that were only talked about animatedly between friends. The interest in BL novels and doujinshi leads to the publication of BL manga magazines, these magazines were released monthly on the average and contained anywhere from five to eight different original stories. Although manga magazines never exploded in popularity like doujinshi did, it became a stepping stone for BL series to join the ranks of officially published manga genres. Nowadays, you can look at a list of best-selling manga in Japan and see BL titles right alongside famous works like the classic shounen series, *One Piece* and the highly popular shoujo, *Blue Spring Ride*. This can be in part to the fact that females are a large percentage of the otaku population who dedicate their money and time to expressing their love for their favorite series and character.

## The Yaoi Debate

The yaoi debate is a BL discourse that took place through a series of letters published in the feminist journal *Choisir* that spanned from 1992 to 1997. The journal's editor asked its readers how they felt about BL manga, sparking the gay activist Sato Masaki's accusation of BL being an inaccurate portrayal of homosexual relationships that sent the wrong message to people outside of the gay community and "the character's overall perfection made it hard for real homosexual men to identify with."<sup>2</sup> This response sparked the first time women publicly shared why they enjoy taking in BL media. As men from the gay community shared their disappointment for the media, women spoke out against these accusations and defended BL media as a safe haven and an empowering movement for Japanese women. The self-proclaimed feminists then went on to explain how BL was never meant to depict real gay men, but instead was an outlet for women to project their sexual fantasies without the need of a woman character. Researching this debate and the points brought up by both groups, I began my research to see if Japanese women today still felt the same way as the Japanese BL fans of the 90s felt.

With the addition of BL manga magazines to the market comes the addition of tankobon volumes on the shelves. While these volumes are not found at every Seven Eleven, BL manga can still be bought at any store that sells manga like Book Off and K-Books Manga. Highly popular and well recommended series like the late 1990s BL classic *Gravitation*, the booming 2002 series *Junjou Romantica*, the currently hot 2009 *Super Lovers*, and the more recent 2013 series *Umibe no Étranger*, of which the earlier two are

---

<sup>2</sup> Vincent, Keith. "A Japanese Electra and Her Queer Progeny", pp. 69-72. 2007.



known to fuel the fujoshi, rotten girl's, fantasy of sexual and romantic escapades with dreamboats and no worries to tie them behind and the latter two are seen more as a slice of life series with less fantasy romance and with more coming of age themes.

## Fujoshi



As BL media began to take off in Japan more women became interested, of which the more involved fans began to call themselves *fujoshi*

and *fudanshi*. The BL fans began to jokingly refer to themselves as rotten people for having an interest in perverted media, but feeling no shame in being enraptured by their own sexual fantasies. The term is widely used in Japan to the point of having *fujoshi* appear in different media, most commonly as a comedic side character. In 2013 a popular BL *mangaka*, a person who creates manga, by who goes by the penname JUNKO serialized a comedic *shoujo*, female-targeted, manga in which the main character is a diehard *fujoshi* who is favored by various male classmates. Unfortunately for them she is only interested in imagining her good looking classmates kissing each other. This high school aged otaku spends her free time watching anime, imagining cute boys kissing other cute boys, and constantly shrugs off her school mate's apparent interest in her with comments so as distance herself from entering a romantic scene with any of them.

“In homosocial and imaginary relationships, *yaoi* fans do not have to face reality and grow up (they are ‘girls’) and fail to achieve reproductive maturity (they are ‘rotten’).”<sup>3</sup>

Recently, it is unclear if the Western fans who adopted the term *fujoshi* feel the same freedom and pleasure that self-identified Japanese *fujoshi* receive when using the term or if it is only a convenient word to identify themselves as people who read or watch BL media.

### Manga

Of the many popular BL manga looked into for the purpose of the study, common tropes and motifs that stood out were dubious consent, age differences, and rape. The four popular manga that I picked, of which two are also widely known by the Western BL community, to expand on for possible reasons for Japanese female interest will also serve as a comparison of the Japanese female’s interest in tropes changing throughout a twenty year span.

In Murakami Maki’s 1996 *Gravitation*, the uke is an up and coming musician who is stuck in a rut while trying to write a love song as he is not well-versed in romance. Then comes the seme, a romance novelist whose list of sexual partners expands for miles and doesn’t discriminate between male or female. The manga only included the bare minimum of female characters,



---

<sup>3</sup> Galbraith, Patrick. “*Moe Talk: Affective Communication among Female Fans of Yaoi in Japan*”, 2015.

family members of the main cast and a female reporter with thousands of faceless female fans only kept in the background, leaving this a mostly closed off world where men were free to pursue homosocial and homosexual relationships without the interference of females. The twelve volume manga hints at a rape scene very early on with the main musician character being violated by a rival band's members to humiliate and push the up-and-coming artists down a peg. While there were never any charges pressed, unfortunately for the rival band the musician is helped emotionally and physical, making a comeback by rising in the music charts and still feeling wanted by his novelist partner. A molestation scene is also talked about near the end of the series, a flashback of the novelist's childhood unearthing the fact that he was touched inappropriately by his much revered tutor. The two males then share a sweet moment where they accept that they are both still valid people who are loved regardless of being 'dirtied' by others. The acceptance of each other can be seen as an appeal to women who have been sexually harassed and assaulted who stayed silent about their experience. Although it is a famous BL series, *Gravitation* still has the tendency of giving the uke very feminine features and make him passive for many scenes, leading to situations where the main couple's seme discussing having intercourse with the uke character dressing in drag. A common line in this series is the uke's "Would it have been easier if I were born a girl!?" and a popular gag is the wedding plot storyline which has the main uke character wear wedding dresses and pretend to go through hardships to get married with the seme character of the series, but then plays it off as a joke due to their being a same sex couple.

*Junjou Romantica* (2002) by Nakamura Shungiku is a series written in the new millennium that holds many similar tropes as *Gravitation* but also introduces fresh new interactions to the BL genre. The series is split off into three storylines, with the main story depicting the everyday happenings of a college



student and his 8-years-older novelist lover. The two males lead a domestic life with the uke doing housework in exchange for a place to stay and the seme gropes and prods at the uke for sex at every chapter. The series is more smut than anything but the world expands to include more women in roles that are of substance. From past marriages to co-workers, the male-dominated 'world' of BL series is just a bit closer to depicting reality by adding interaction with women. *Junjou Romantica* challenges the ideals that only females should do housework and describes how men are fully capable of cooking and cleaning when they put their mind to it; the uke is not feminine in looks, nor is he a passive character as is shown in one of the themes in the story where the uke is trying to 'jump' the seme and have him at his sexual mercy. This shows that an effort to depict homosexual relationships as human and normal was made and that female interest is expanding past the stage of fantasy romance. While the couple appears to have no obvious conflict between them, the beginning of the series inferred a different outcome for the couple. The main uke visits the penthouse of the seme to ask for help in studying for his college entrance exams, the seme then begins to complain which leads to the younger character being pushed down on the seme's bed and given a handjob against his will,

leaving him humiliated and confused. The series then continues to be a repeated cycle of the uke 'not wanting sex, being restricted or denied a desire, having sex with the seme even when the uke says no'. The appeal of this series is the fantasy romance element added to an otherwise 'normal' setting as the seme takes the uke away to different places around Japan to experience various things, his wealth and success overwhelming the uke and leading the younger male to bouts of low confidence in himself and his future during the majority of his university career. It isn't until the more recent chapters that the younger male takes the initiative to make his desires a reality instead of waiting for the seme to take notice of them and then granting or denying them himself.<sup>4</sup> *Junjou Romantica*'s draw is the shutting out of women in any of the three romantic relationships depicted, focusing instead on domestic living and career advancement, with the couples going on a few impromptu dates that would lead to passionate nights of strenuous physical activity.

The third manga series to be touched upon in this paper is *Super Lovers* by Abe Miyuki, an early 2010s BL series that has its own problematic tropes. Once again, the younger and older males are eight years apart but the taboo aspect is not only the couple's gender, but the fact that the younger one is underage and the two are adopted brothers. The couple meet in Canada while the older male is visiting his estranged novelist mother for the summer. He is a half Japanese half Canadian high schooler who lives with his father and stepmother in Tokyo during the school year. He is introduced to the then seven year old boy very early into the series as his mother had adopted him and the two go from strangers to close friends in that one summer. After returning to Japan, the older character comes into despair after a terrible car crash takes his father, stepmother, and his memories

---

<sup>4</sup> Nakamura, Shungiku. "*Junjou Romantica*", vol. 15, chapter 4. 2012.

of the past summer from him. With a series of events spanning seven years leading him to a change in lifestyle, the older one is reunited with the ambitious younger male who spent that amount of time prepping to live with his first real friend. The romance aspect does not show up until the younger character is graduating from a Japanese middle school, with small domestic kisses that are explained by friends as “a foreigner’s greeting” as the two males are considered foreign for being raised abroad. The pace is much slower as kissing and hugging are the majority of their displays of physical affection, with the appeal of the series being ‘a domestic romance that could happen to anyone’, no fancy vacations to anywhere in the world like in *Junjou Romantica* nor the shining luxuries of the entertainment world like in *Gravitation*. There is much online discourse on the series being done by the Western fans, sparked by the recent anime coming out in Japan on April 6th of this year, while the Japanese fans of the series accept the age difference and ‘step brothers’ aspect of the relationship without complaint. This Boy’s Love series focuses on slow paced feelings and interactions with hurdles like college, societal expectations, and family values that boggle down the handsome main couple in which neither are feminine nor is either tied to one role as uke or seme, a new phenomenon of reversible roles that is slowly being explored by more and more doujinka in their recent works. The appeal here is the taboo aspect of the main pairing’s romance, which is brought up multiple times within

the series. The two characters are not only male, the younger male is under the age of legal consent, and they are adopted brothers. [image<sup>5</sup>]



---

<sup>5</sup> Abe, Miyuki. "Super Lovers", vol. 3, chapter 7. 2011.

The last, and most recent, 2013 *Umibe no Étranger* by Kii Kanna is a slow paced romance whose focus is on the individual demons of the two main characters living in an unnamed Okinawan



island. The older of the two characters is a novelist who has been living with his grandmother three years before the manga's first chapter, helping her around the house and with her seaside bakery. His character is built up as a worrying young adult who stopped living with his now estranged parents due to the reason that his homosexuality is not accepted by his father. The younger male is 17 years old, a silent teen recently orphaned and in the process of being sent to an orphanage. The recurring age difference in BL manga is repeated here once again as Shun is 24 years old. It is possible that the age difference between the uke and seme characters appeals to women yearning for the security and guidance that is expected of an older partner. The main difference with this manga in comparison to the late 2000s *Super Lovers* is that the author Kii Kanna's *Umibe no Étranger* is an important stepping stone for BL nearing the realistic realm with its subject matter that brings up real life situations of being displaced from home due to one's sexual orientation, grieving the loss of immediate family, and coming to accept other's sexual orientation, of which *Super Lover's* rendition of accepting others is seen more as a comedic device and not taken seriously.

### **Other Media**

One of the latest expansions for the BL genre in Japan is the creation of drama CDs, drama adaptations, dating games, and anime series. They are being included together as



each category is still fairly small and has not expanded to the same extent as manga or doujinshi have. Most BL manga do not receive an anime adaptation as Japanese censorship laws are very strict in not allowing depictions of genitalia. The more recent bill passed in 2011 restricted the sale of manga and anime which depicted illegal sexual acts such as voyeurism, groping, BDSM, etc; acts that are quite commonplace BL manga tropes. As the bill does not include a ban of novels or CDs with sexually explicit content, this leads to drama CDs being the next best thing for popular series to expand their audience. Dating simulations, on the other hand, have always been popular for female otakus to indulge in their desires as they are romanced by multiple guys and allowed their pick from the batch. With this popularity, it is easy for companies to include BL dating simulation to their stock of merchandise, for the female otaku who doesn't really get the appeal of herself being in love but doesn't mind two attractive men getting it on. A dating game company that specializes in BL games known as Nitro+Chiral has been releasing BL dating games with fantasy and crime elements that are all very popular with fujoshi, the heavily censored anime adaptations have even garnered male fans for the depiction of the more shounen aspects. Recently, an interest in dramas has accumulated as many BL series with no anime series, regardless of a drama cd release, have been receiving live action adaptations. These are live action adaptations with heavy censorship but still hold the appeal of two pretty young men romantically together, which can be argued to be one of the main concerns of a fujoshi.

### **Methods:**

*Survey*

Females, ages 10-49; the wide age range is to figure out if there is a correlation to why females are interested in BL. Younger survey takers have access to BL at stores and online while older survey takers will be looked at to see why this 'phenomena' has prevailed through marriage, childbirth, and overall adulthood in general.

Males, ages 10-49; BL is easily accessed by the younger crowd if they look for it while the older males will be from the era when BL was emerging with negative views from the Male community, if they are from this era then why are they interested in a medium that damages their community? For heterosexuals, their view on homosexual relationships is important to try to understand how this is changing the future of male homosexual depictions in Japanese pop culture media.

#### [アンケートの情報]

I am a current Carthage College undergraduate student working on my thesis, "Yaoi and BL: The Japanese Female Obsession with Male Homosexuality". This survey was made to collect information from individuals not raised in an exclusively 'Japanese' environment to see if there is a significant cultural difference as to why Japanese fans enjoy BL material versus why non-Japanese fans enjoy BL. The survey is anonymous, the only way I am able to contact any individual is if you share your email with me in the last question. \*\*If you were born in Japan, are a native Japanese speaker, AND have Japanese ancestry then please do not take this survey as the focus is on cultural differences brought on by different environments.

私は現在カーセージ大学日本語学科 4 年在学中です。卒業論文のテーマとして「なぜ日本人の女性は BL に興味がある」を研究しています。この研究調査用データとして日本語母国語者の方を対象にアンケートを実施させていただきます。アンケート結果はすべて 個人のお名前が出るようなことは一切ございません。お忙しいところ恐れ入りますが、回答にご協力いただけますよう、よろしくお願い申し上げます。

1) Gender // 性別

- a) Female // 女性
- b) Male // 男性

2) Age // 年齢

- a) 10-19 // 10代
- b) 20-29 // 20代
- c) 30-39 // 30代
- d) 40-49 // 40代

3) Sexual Orientation // 性的指向

- a) Heterosexual // 異性愛
- b) Homosexual // 同性愛
- c) Bisexual // 両性的な

- 4) If you are heterosexual, are you comfortable with having homosexual friends or coworkers? // あなたは異性愛であれば、同性愛の友達や同僚がいるのは平気ですか。
- a) Yes // 大丈夫です
  - b) No // 嫌です
  - c) N/A // 異性愛じゃないです
- 5) What media? // どんなメディアを見ますか。
- a) Anime // アニメ
  - b) Manga // 漫画
  - c) Novel // ノベル
  - d) Drama CD // ドラマシーディ
  - e) Doujinshi // 同人誌
  - f) Live Action Play/Musical // ミュジカル
- 6) On average, how many hours do you intake BL media in a week? // 普通に、一週間に何時間 BL のメディアを見ますか。
- a) >1 hour // 一時間以下
  - b) 1 - 5 hours // 一時間から五時間まで
  - c) 5- 10 hours // 五時間から十時まで
  - d) <10 hours // 十時間以上
- 7) Reason for interest in BL/Yaoi? // なぜ BL の作品を読んだり、見たり、聞いたり、調べたりしますか？

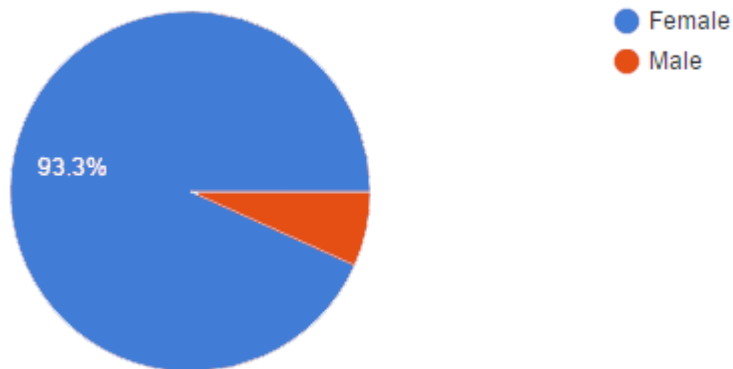
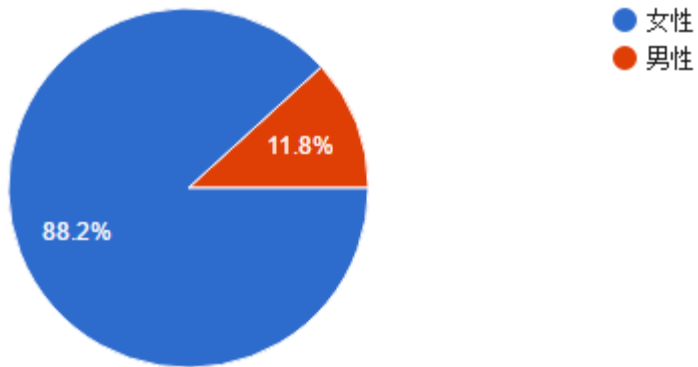
[They will write their answer here // ここで理由を書きます]

- 8) Comments. (Would you be interested in being contacted further about this topic? If so, please write your email here). // コメント。BLについてさらに検討することに興味があれば、ここでメールとか LINE とかを書いてください。

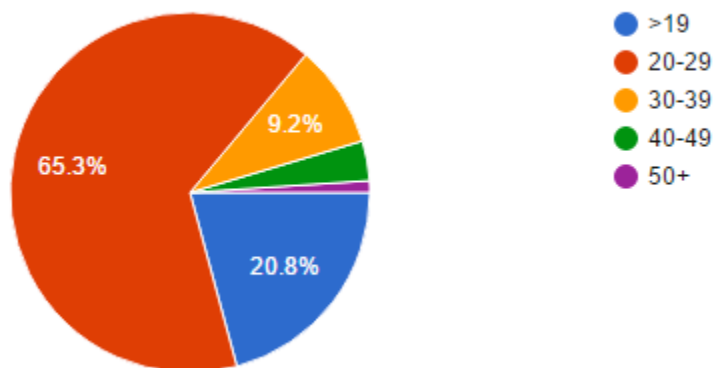
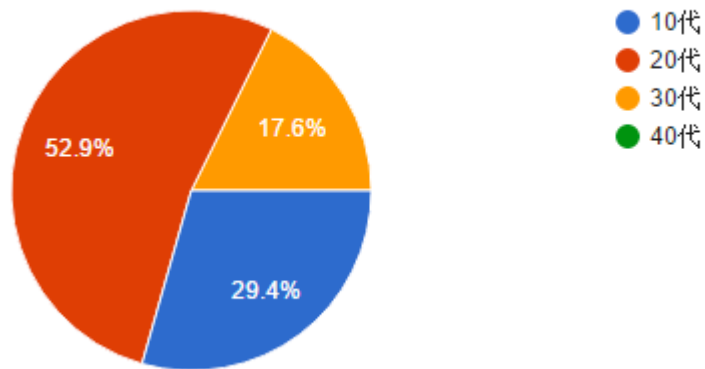
[They will write their answer here // ここで理由を書きます]

## アンケート

17日本人と476外国人はアンケートをするのである。日本人参加者は日本で住んでいると外国人参加者は世界中の色な国に住んでいるのである。日本人参加者は15女性と2男子と外国人参加者は444女性と32男性である。



特に、大数の参加者は20代でも日本人参加者も外国人参加者は30代はBLメディアの興味もある。外国人参加者の方が自分の考えを共有するであったけど私はそう考えたのであった。



## 面接

一人日本人の女性と一人アメリカ人の女性を面接するである。二人は「一番 BLメディアが好きな理由は何ですか」と聞くであった。日本人の女性の参加者は20代の同人家である。

## **Results - Survey**

From the sample of 15 Japanese women surveyed, answers for the question “Reason for interest in BL/Yaoi?” cited enjoying BL media not due to the characters being male specifically, but because it is a nice change from the everyday depictions of romance in regular Japanese television. Another participant answered that she greatly enjoyed the moe characters that tugged at her heartstrings, enjoying the characterization and not caring so much for the male-male aspect. On the other hand, non-Japanese participants had ranged responses from “It's really cute [...] I like the aesthetic and... it's hot” to “it's non-threatening, it doesn't contain sexual violence towards women, and it's media that shows two characters that are inherently equal (strictly in terms of gender and not race) in society. [It is] also easier to get lost in the story and not compare myself to characters in a negative light.” with many of the responses leaning either towards the aesthetic appeal or to the separation of a female being from the audience’s gaze.

## **Results – Interview**

The BL doujinka in her 20s admitted to not having a specific interest in BL, only that the anime and manga characters that she enjoyed drawing were most popular in male-male settings inside of the Japanese fandom. As she earns her income from selling doujinshi, she decided to make a name for herself drawing BL doujinshi of her beloved characters. The Japanese interviewee prefers to draw male characters and finds enjoyment in creating romantically sweet situations for said characters.

The Western interviewee is a 22 year old BL enthusiast who translates manga as a hobby. Her interest in BL comes from wanting to see the different ways the relationships



between two males are portrayed and seeing how the fictional interaction differs from reality. She does not discriminate between BL and non BL media, instead focusing on the refreshing aspect of a plot and how well it is being implemented. The interviewee then explained that she focused more on character development for non BL media and relationship development for BL media.

### **Conclusion**

Contrary to my initial hypothesis, the female Japanese participants were not focusing on how BL media was male characters that would take females out of the equation, but instead Japanese women's growing interest in BL cannot be pinpointed to one or two specific reasons, as most female participants are only casual readers and see BL as something cute or sexy that is being sold and marketed in their country. By having BL be a normal part of the Japanese market, Japanese people may be showing their slow acceptance of non-heteronormative relationships which can lead to Gay marriage being made legal in parts all around Japan.

## Bibliography

Danly, Robert Lyons, Ihara Saikaku, and Paul Gordon Schalow. "The Great Mirror of Male Love." *The Journal of Asian Studies* 49.4 (1990): 940. Web.

Frennea, Melissa. *The Prevalence of Rape and Child Pornography in Yaoi*. Thesis. University of Montevallo, 2011. N.p.: n.p., n.d. Print.

Galbraith, Patrick W. "Moe Talk." *History, Culture, and Community in Japan Boys Love Manga and Beyond* (2015): 153-68. Web.

Ishida, Hitoshi, Mark McLelland, and Takanori Murakami. "The Origins of "queer Studies" in Postwar Japan." *Genders, Transgenders and Sexualities in Japan* (2005): 33-48. Web.

Lamarre, Thomas, Azuma Hiroki, Yuriko Furuhashi, and Marc Steinberg. "The Animalization of Otaku Culture." *Mechademia* 2.1 (2007): 175-87. Web.

Mizoguchi, Akiko. "Reading and Living Yaoi: Male-Male Fantasy Narratives as Women's Sexual Subculture in Japan." Thesis. University of Rochester, 2008. *Reading and Living Yaoi: Male-Male Fantasy Narratives as Women's Sexual Subculture in Japan*. University of Rochester, 01 Oct. 2010. Web.

Saito, Kumiko. "Desire in Subtext: Gender, Fandom, and Women's Male-Male Homoerotic Parodies in Contemporary Japan." *Mechademia* 6.1 (2011): 171-91. Web.

Vincent, Keith. "A Japanese Electra and Her Queer Progeny." *Mechademia* 2.1 (2007): 64-79. Web.

Welker, James. "Flower Tribes and Female Desire: Complicating Early Female Consumption of Male Homosexuality in Shōjo Manga." *Mechademia* 6.1 (2011): 211-28. Web.

Wood, Andrea. "'Straight' Women, Queer Texts: Boy-Love Manga and the Rise of a Global Counterpublic." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 34.1/2, The Global & the Intimate (2006): 394-414. *JSTOR*. Web.