天主教輔仁大學英國語文學系學士班畢業成果
ENGLISH DEPARTMENT, FU JEN CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY
GRADUATION PROJECT 2020

指導教授：陳逸軒老師
Prof. Yi-Hsuan Chen

Through the Lens of Manga and Anime: Southeast Asia and South Asia

學 生 ： 謝 建 慧 撰
Elena, Jian Hui Chia

Elena Chia
405110026
Composition & Conversation III
Research Paper Final Draft
14 June 2019

Through the Lens of Manga and Anime: Southeast Asia and South Asia

Introduction

With increasing foreign fans as well as 2016's highest-grossing anime film *"Your Name"* that filled cinemas worldwide, it is not surprising to say that Japanese animes and mangas are moving towards becoming a mainstream medium for storytelling. Despite having fans worldwide, Japanese animes and mangas tend to retain their own cultural perspective as they are mainly produced in Japan. This however, does not put limitations on authors who shift their stories to international backgrounds and settings. In this research, I would like to explore how South Asian and Southeast Asian countries like India, Thailand, Singapore, and Vietnam are depicted in Japanese animes and mangas published throughout the Heisei period by examining works such as "Jojo's Bizarre Adventure: Stardust Crusaders," "Black Lagoon," " Blood Plus," and "A Place Further Than The Universe ."

Beginning from January 8, 1989, the Heisei era that spanned for 31 years marked its end on April 30, 2019. Within this 31 year span, Japan's manga and anime industries have published countless works that have been consumed by an increasing amount of global consumers. Among the countless amount of well-received manga and anime published throughout 1989 to 2019, this research will be focusing on works from the early 90's, mid 2000s, and the current decade 2010s, all of which signify the beginning, the middle, and the end of the Heisei era. The mangas animes

chosen are works that feature or take place in Southeast Asian and South Asian regions such as

Singapore, Thailand, Vietnam, and India.

Methodology

In order to complete this research, the selected anime and manga series will be analyzed to determine the common features they share and how these features changed overtime. These patterns include the location settings of the selected material, the physical portrayal and characteristics of Southeast Asian and South Asian characters. To understand how the portrayals came to be, the creative motivation of authors and the collection method of information regarding foreign materials have to be explored. Before determining whether or not the portrayals of Southeast Asians within Japanese manga and anime are stereotypical, the nature of stereotypes and how stereotypes are formed as well as how internationalization occurs within this medium has to be defined.

Research Questions

1. What is the nature of stereotypes

2. How does internationationalization occur in Japanese manga and anime.

3. What is the nature of internationalization in Japanese manga and anime.

4. What inspired the authors to include internationalized settings ?

5. How did the authors collect information about foreign countries ?

6. Are the representations stereotypical, how?

Literature Review

I.   Formation of Stereotypes

Defined as "stored beliefs about the characteristics of a group of people," by Daniel Bar-Tal, stereotypes serve an important role in shedding light on intergroup processes as well as analyzing the nature of intergroup relations. In his paper, Bar-Tal states that the nature of intergroup relations which include the contents of stereotypes are affected by the cumulative impact of negative history and emotions such as past wars, animosity, hostility or in contrast, positive emotions such as help, cooperation and friendship between intergroups over time.

Additionally, transmitting mechanisms also play an important role in the basis of stereotype formation along with change of stereotypic contents as these transmitting mechanisms provide information which allows characterization of outgroups. The types of transmitting mechanisms are defined and categorized by Bar-Tal as societal channels that range from political (leaders' speeches), social (films, newspapers, television programs), cultural (theatrical plays, literature), educational(school books), and familial in contrast to direct contact where individuals collect information about outgroup members via an "impression-formation process."

In his paper, the process of stereotype formation is mostly mediated by the comparison between the characteristics of an outgroup and one's own. These comparisons then lead to stereotyping based on affective and cognitive reactions that either produce negative stereotypes based on feelings of threat, despise, disgust, or envy; positive stereotypes based on feelings of commonality, closeness, empathy, or pity. Bar-Tal also suggested that an ethnocentric model of stereotype formation has a tendency to perceive the other group by virtue of its mere otherness as different and devalued which are the underlying basis of negative stereotypic contents. However, satisfactory political, economical, social, and cultural cooperation have also been proven to help transform the perception of stereotypic contents from negative to positive.

II. Brief Introduction of Manga and Its Influence on Contemporary Japanese Society

In her book "Adult Manga Culture and Power in Contemporary Japanese society," Sharon Kinsella she describes manga as one of the most extensive forms of cultural representation until the mid-1990s in addition to being a contemporary medium and pop culture. The term *manga* is given to comics that are created in Japan or by creators in the Japanese language which conforms to a style unique to Japan. Kinsella also stated that manga became the perfect representation of Japanese culture abroad during the 1990s as it is a more vital and contemporary form of early modern woodblock prints while simultaneously being clearly distinguishable from any other national culture.

According to Kinsella, the domestic manga market had amassed three times the revenue of the domestic film industry by the 1990s, during which the best-selling weekly manga magazine, Jump had sold an average of 6.53 million copies a week at its peak in 1995. Despite Jump reaching its peak in weekly sales, the manga industry as a whole since 1995 had actually started to experience a slowdown in growth to which the author attributes is due to the rise of interest in computer games amongst children and the rapid spread of internet and personal computers amongst adults.

Cultural wise, in the late 1990s, not only had manga became the resident and guest of local and national museums, it had also penetrated Japan's educational aspects as universities and colleges began offering some form of teaching in manga studies which, combined with a new wave of books and magazines on manga criticism, created an emergent school of manga studies. In 1994, the Japanese Ministry of Finance made an unexpected move in publishing *Environment White Paper in Manga Form* under the guidance of the Japanese Environment Agency which delivered an extraordinary message to both the Japanese and foreigners in Japan, producing official documents in manga is normal. This step taken by official Japanese government officials suggested that manga could be considered a special and official aspect of Japanese culture and chosen as a cultural envoy that may improve Japan's image abroad.

III. Brief Introduction of Anime and The Process of Internationalization Within The Medium

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, anime refers to a style of animation that originates from Japan which features "stark colorful graphics" that depict vibrant characters in action-filled plots featuring fantastic or futuristic themes. Citing from Amy S. Lu's article on the internationalization in Japanese Anime, Lu notes that even though anime's export began simultaneously with its creation, it only became an important cultural export beginning from the 1990s. By 2003, this particular medium and its related products had become responsible in generating almost one-third of revenue in the global media market.

In her article, Lu suggests that there are at least three kinds of cultural politics involved in the internationalization, de-politicized internationalization, occidentalized internationalization, and self-orientalized internationalization. The author also notes that since the 1960's, internationalization can be seen in the background and context of the narratives and plots, character design, and narrative organization of animes. Quoting from Sato Kenji's "*More Animated than Life,*" there has been a clear trend of incorporating non-Japanese cultural elements into anime over the past few decades.

Lu suggests that animes which features racial mixing and cultural blurring neutralizes itself which also reflects a broader national desire to enter an extraterritorial stage of development, such dynamic is referred to as 'de-politicized internationalization' by Lu. "Occidentalized internationalization" on the other hand, refers to animes that work to maintain Japanese authority by occidentalizing the West while eulogizing the East. The last form of cultural politics involved in the internationalization of animes is 'self-orientalized internationalization.' The animes that feature this particular form of cultural politics provide a stage for Japan to stand out from the "Oriental" side of other Asian countries while coming across as both a stranger and a leader in Asia as Japan considers itself a Western country in Asia to a certain extent.

Jojo's Bizarre Adventure: Stardust Crusaders

The manga,"*Jojo's Bizarre Adventure: Stardust Crusaders*" by Hirohiko Araki was serialized in Japan's Weekly Shonen Jump from 1989 to 1992. What makes this particular manga stand out besides being a shonen manga (manga marketed towards teen males) that contains adult themes, is the fact that it features a genre known as "road movie" which, in the author's own words, was inspired by Jules Verne's "*Around the World in Eighty Days,*" as the manga scene back then was saturated with tournament arcs such as "Dragon Ball," "Hajime no Ippo," or "Dear Boys." The series finally received an anime television adaptation by David Production in 2014 and aired between April that year and June 2015.

Set in the year 1987, the main plot of *Stardust Crusaders* revolves around Kujo Jotaro, who in an attempt to rescue his mother, has to travel to Egypt with his grandfather Joseph Joestar and friends Mohammed Avdol, Noriaki Kakyoin, Jean Pierre Polnareff to defeat Dio Brando, the long-time enemy of the Joestar family within 50 days. As the crew embarks on their journey to defeat Dio, their means of traveling by plane and ship is abruptly foiled as they encounter enemies sent by the main antagonist. With original plans to travel by air from Japan to Egypt with layovers at Taiwan, Thailand, Abu Dhabi, and Kuwait, the crew is forced to change their route and travel on land to Egypt via trains and cars across Singapore, Calcutta, and Varanasi.

Before analysing the crew's interactions with the locals as well as the portrayal of Singapore and Calcutta within the manga, it is important to note that in another one of Hirohiko Araki's books, "*Manga in Theory and Practice: The Craft of Creating Manga,*" the author stated that during the serialization of *Stardust Crusaders*, he himself had tried his best to physically explore all the routes that the characters will go on. Besides areas that were classified as

dangerous, the author had been to every location leading up to and including Egypt. In this situation, the author may have formed stereotypical impressions through Bar-Tal's suggested transmitting mechanism of direct contact, of which encountered out-group members are perceived as true representatives of the entire group and large individual differences are ignored by generalizing the formed impression to other group members.

Within the manga, as the crew arrives in Singapore, readers are treated to a tidbit of information on Singapore.

A long time ago, the prince of Sumatra set sail to find new territories to rule on his voyage, he found an island where a white lion lived. the prince named the island "Singapora." A country where all the ships of the world come and go. A country created by free trade. a multicultural country mixing Eastern and Western culture together… Singapore ! [1]

These panels of information combined with the view of the Merlion park and the Fullerton Hotel in the background shows how the author only knew Singapore from a tourist's point of view. Even though the appearance of Singapore has been captured in detail, some of the cultural nuances are still portrayed in a slightly stereotypical light. For example, as soon as the crew set foot on Singapore, they are immediately called out by a local policeman who accuses Polnareff for littering and insists on making him pay a fine of 500 Singapore Dollar . The situation is immediately resolved as Polnareff claims the items on the ground as his luggage and the policeman apologizes awkwardly [2]. Even as a comic relief, this particular scene may portray Singapore's policemen as quick to judge and petty. The next interaction between the characters and the locals come when one of them stops by a roadside stall to purchase some ice-cream[3]. Instead of just handing over some ice-cream, the local vendor is shown promoting his coconuts and even cutting it open before any of the characters displayed any intention of buying the

coconut. Non-Southeast Asian readers may find this kind of character as a pushy salesman and assume that is how all Southeast Asian vendors are. Another stereotypical portrayal is how a local thief was visually depicted in order to highlight one of the character's unusual reaction and behavior. After getting some coconuts, a local thief sees Kakyoin's wallet and dashes to steal it. The thief in the manga,is presented as a local man with unkempt hair, narrow eyes, a wide nose, thick lips and buck teeth[4] all of which is similar to how the ethnic Malays are depicted in Malaysian comic artist Lat's exaggerated portrayal[5]. Although this serves as a visual differentiation between the "good locals," this visual portrayal is still arguably racist as it may suggest that individuals from a certain ethnic group in Singapore are more likely to commit petty crimes. In the anime adaptation, however, the appearance of the thief has been modified so that he appears racially ambiguous .

After defeating another one of Dio's lackeys in Singapore, the crew finally travel onwards to India by train. Right before the readers are given a glimpse of Calcutta, one of the characters, Joseph Joestar, remarks how when one thinks of India, "*The only thing that comes to mind is beggars, thieves, and curry-eating, disease-ridden people* " to which Avdol replies with "*Those rumors are all false! You don't have to worry. This is a fine country, full of nice people* [6]*.*" Upon the next page, the crew is immediately surrounded by Indian locals from various walks of life asking for money either directly or by providing certain "services." In the background there are bustling cars and more locals carrying on with their daily activities[7]. The crew is taken aback and slightly disgusted by both their surroundings and the locals who crowd in on them asking for money[8]. Following pages show more disorderly locals of Calcutta which is understandable as according to Swati Chattopadhyay "*Representing Calcutta,*" the raw abject

poverty "revealed in the disintegrating brickwork of stained walls, in the exposed life of street and slum dwellers, in the stench of rotting garbage on the sidewalks," is what makes the country shocking to visitors. Whenever the crew interacts with the locals, the locals are always depicted in an exaggerated manner as money-grubbing beggars.

From how locals are either visually portrayed as certain ethnic groups or with generalized traits , Hirohiko Araki has proven Bar-Tal's theory on stereotype formation through direct contact true by portraying generalized traits of the locals as how he perceived from his trip.

<div align="center">Black Lagoon</div>

Created by Rei Hiroe, "*Black Lagoon*" is a monthly seinen manga (manga that is marketed towards adult young men) that was published since 2002 and is still in publications in present day. This manga series received its anime television adaptation by Madhouse studio four years after it's manga publications. This series has received positive reviews both in Japan and internationally as the first nine volumes of the manga have sold over nine million copies in Japan while the anime adaptation has received an eight out of ten rating on IMDB for its stylized action scenes.

Both the manga and anime adaptation share the same main plot that centers around a group of pirate mercenaries known as Lagoon Company that operates around the seas of Southeast Asia in the early to mid 1990s. In an interview with Ani-Gamers, author of *Black Lagoon* Rei Hiroe mentioned how he was inspired by a lot of news that came out in the news regarding pirate operations in Southeast Asia. Based on this information, it is possible that stereotypes have been formed based on Bar-Tal's suggested model of stereotype formation

through transmitting mechanisms. In this case, the main transmitting mechanism would be the news source which inspired Rei Hiroe to produce this manga series.

Set in the fictional city of Roanapur in southeast Thailand, it is a place where mafias of different nationalities gather and with it, an assortment of criminals ranging from thieves, thugs, prostitutes, assassins, and mercenaries. Besides housing a large range of criminals and outlaws, the fictional city is also a refuge for large populations of Vietnamese refugees that have escaped the Communist takeover in Vietnam.

Although the setting is in a fictional city, interactions with local Thais or even the so-called Vietnamese refugees are limited but still unavoidable within the main plot. Some may argue that since the setting is in a fictional city, any representation should be fictional. However, the author has specifically stated the ethnicities of several minor characters and portrayed them in a somewhat stereotypical way. Besides the female lead who is an Asian American and the Japanese , other Southeast Asian minor characters featured throughout the series are often represented as square-faced with narrow, downward-slanting eyes, wide nose physically and characteristically obsessed with money [9]. Throughout the series, a combination of occidentalized internationalization and self-orientalized internationalization can be seen based on how the main protagonist who is a Japanese, acts in a way that puts him on top in situations where he either has to deal with the shenanigans of his partners who are Americans or the locals.

Blood Plus

An original anime series produced by Production I.G and Aniplex, *Blood Plus* premiered

in Japan on Sony's anime satellite channel Animax on October 8, 2005 and aired its final episode

on September 23, 2006. Before premiering, the series was adapted into manga format and

published in three different manga magazines in order to lead up to the anime. Among the three

different versions, this paper will focus on Asuka Katsura's five volume version that first

premiered in *Monthly Shonen Ace* in July 2005 and covers the same events as the anime series.

As there are no clear explanations regarding the production process and motivation,

determining the reasonings behind how and why the production team portray certain aspects of

another country and its culture would be difficult.

Following the protagonist, Saya Otonashi, a seemingly "normal" high school girl living

peacefully with her adoptive family, her peaceful life is disrupted once she is attacked by

hematophagous monster. Learning that she is the only one who can defeat these monsters, Saya

embarks on a journey with her family and allies to exterminate these monsters and recover her

past. Over the course of her journey, the reasons as to why she would travel to Vietnam differ as

in the manga, she leaves for Vietnam in order to rescue her adoptive brother who was kidnapped

by the antagonist within the first story arc while in the anime, she is sent on a mission to infiltrate

an all girls boarding school in Vietnam to investigate the origins of the monsters.

During the protagonist's mission in Vietnam, the locals are generally presented in the

same art style as the main characters in the manga version[10] which is an improvement compared

to the two previous works that have been examined. However, in the anime series, the

stereotypical "Southeast Asian look" where locals have narrow eyes and a wide nose[11] is still

present. Cultural blurring is also present within both anime and manga as Saya blends in with the locals. Overall the depiction of Vietnamese minor characters are less stereotypical and suggests racial mixing as characters interact in a more friendly and empathetic manner[12].

A Place Further Than the Universe.

Moving on to the next anime, *A Place Further Than The Universe* is an original anime series produced by Madhouse Studio that consists of 13 episodes which aired between January to March 2018. As a coming of age anime, this series has been ranked number 8 International show of the year by the New York Times. In the official website of this particular anime series, the production team has also received help from Japan's Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology (MEXT), the National Institute of Polar Research as well as the Japan Maritime Self-Defense Force.

In this charming little series, the main plot follows 4 high school girls who each have their own purposes of venturing towards the Antarctic with the Civilian Antarctic observation team. While heading towards the departure point of the Civilian Antarctic expedition, the group arrives in Singapore for a two-day layover before boarding the connected flight towards Fremantle, Australia. Upon arriving, two of the girls who are not used to travelling outside of Japan immediately make remarks about the environment and buildings of Singapore. Heading towards their hotel, the depiction of Singapore's landscape is spot on as scenes depicting tourist landmarks such as Orchard Road, Marina Bay area and Merlion Park are realistically presented in regards to their geographical location and architectural details[13]. The remarks made by the

girls regarding the size of the Merlion statue are also realistically true to what is expected of real tourists. This goes to show just how much research has been placed in depicting Singapore's tourist locations.

After doing what real tourists would do, the girls then went on to grab dinner only to be intimidated by the serving size and the generous smile of a local who was serving up their meals[14]. Although interactions between the locals were limited, the general portrayal of the Singaporean locals are depicted in a more positive light contrast to those in *Jojo's Bizarre Adventure*. The physical appearance of the locals in this particular anime are also generally warm and friendly equipped with welcoming smiles even though all of them are tanned.

<h2 style="text-align:center">Conclusion</h2>

Upon reviewing animes and mangas from the early 90's to the current decade, the portrayal of Southeast Asia had shifted from stereotypical to less stereotypical as seen from the portrayal of Southeast Asian local behaviour, mannerism, and physical appearance throughout animes and mangas from the mid 2000s and the current decade. It is also evident that individual works tend to be more stereotypical as resources and information about foreign countries and cultures tend to be more limited to certain transmitting mechanisms suggested by Bar-Tal. On the other hand, original anime series produced by animation studios tend to be less stereotypical due to having more resources. As the anime industry tries to appeal to the Southeast Asian market, the portrayal of Southeast Asia and South Asia may also be affected, especially in the case of Animax Asia being launched in multimedia service providers across Southeast Asian regions during the mid 2000's.

Works Cited

Araki, Hirohiko. Manga in Theory and Practice : the Craft of Creating Manga.

      CA : VIZ Media LLC, 2017.

"A Place Further Than The Universe (Yorimoi))." AnimateTimes,

      www.animatetimes.com/tag/details.php?id=6765.

Bar-Tal, Daniel. Formation and Change of Ethnic and National Stereotypes: An Integrative

      Model. International Journal of Intercultural Relations. 21. 491-523, 1997,

      10.1016/S0147-1767(97)00022-9

Chattopadhyay, Swati. Representing Calcutta: Modernity, Nationalism, and the Colonial

      Uncanny. Routledge, 2006.

Kinsella, Sharon. Adult Manga : Culture and Power in Contemporary Japanese Society.

      Curzon Press, 2000.

Lu, Amy & Shirong, Amy. (2008). The Many Faces of Internationalization in Japanese Anime.

      Animation: An Interdisciplinary

Masuda, Hiromichi, et al. Anime Industry Report 2018. Edited by Hiromichi Masuda, The

      Association of Japanese Animations, 2018, Anime Industry Report 2018,

      www.spi-information.com/report/22240.html.

Poniewozik, James, et al. "Best TV Shows of 2018." The New York Times, The New York

      Times, 3 Dec. 2018, ww.nytimes.com/2018/12/03/arts/television/the-best-tv-shows.html.

"Rei Hiroe Talks Film Inspiration and Black Lagoon's Birth – One on One with the Creator of

Two Hand at AnimeNEXT 2016." Ani, anigamers.com/interviews/black-lagoon-rei-hiroe

-interview-animenext-2016?fbclid=IwAR3tR5tnK0Jv0lOmZh9iIPL8WR1CPvfa0MHSz

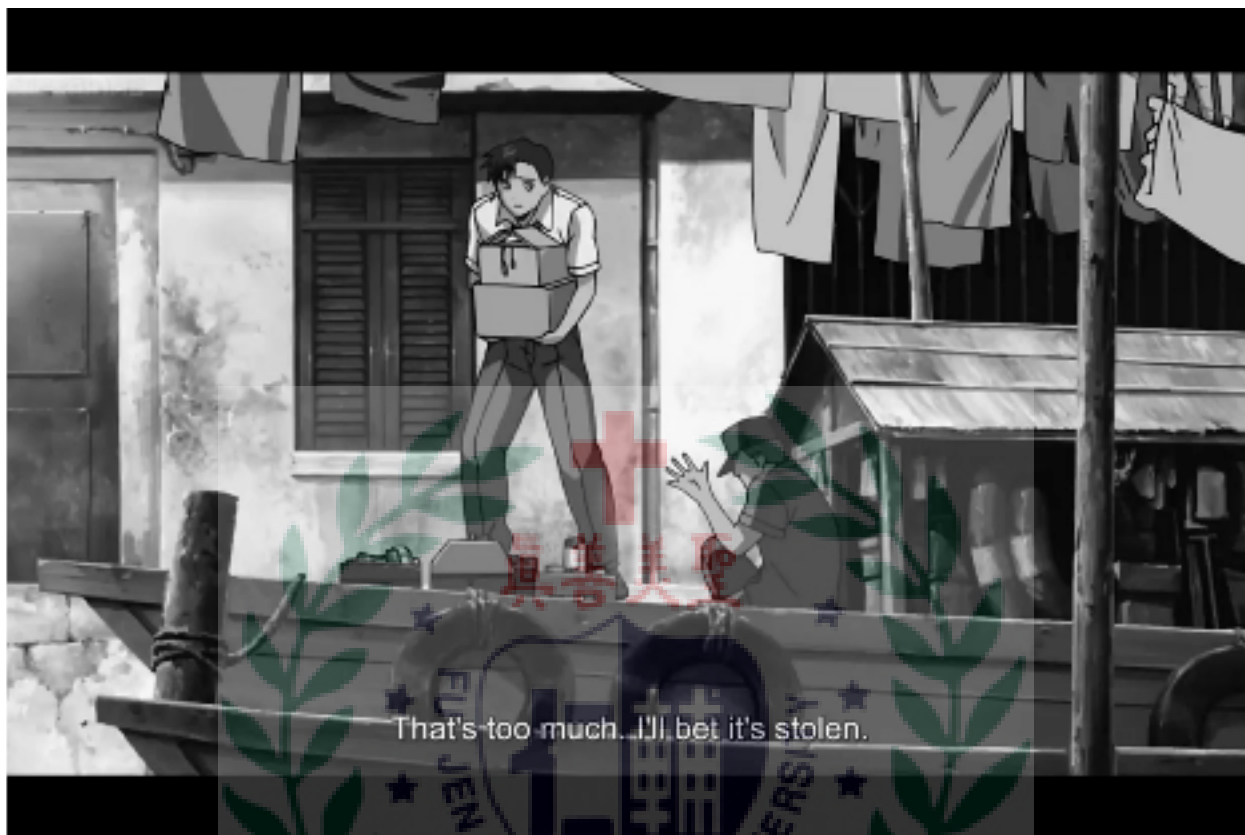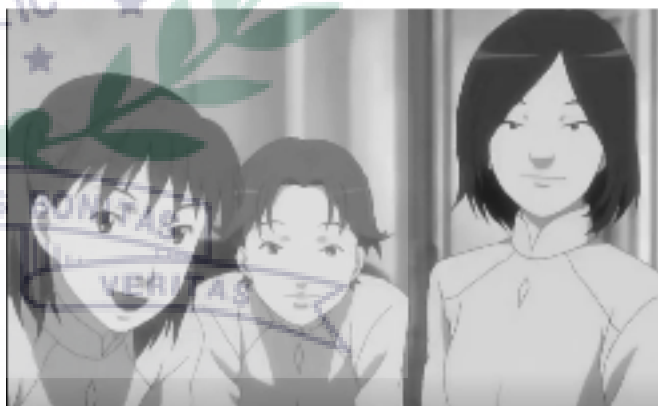qMbabKXb2w9vjPdopL7-hY.

Appendix 1

[1]

[2]

[3], [4]

[5]

[6]

[7],[8]

[9]

[10]

[11]

[12]

[13]

[14]