

Facing the Nuclear Issue in a “mangaesque” Way: The Barefoot Gen anime

In the aftermath of the earthquake on the 11th March, 2011, and especially the nuclear power plant accident, questions have rekindled about the critical role of popular media such as manga and anime in contemporary Japanese society. This current has manifested itself, among other things, in revisiting the A-bomb manga *Hadashi no Gen* (*Barefoot Gen*, Keiji Nakazawa, 1973-87; below: GEN). GEN was, arguably, the very first Japanese comic to cross language borders thanks to activists of the peace movement¹. In Japan, it saw an exceptional acknowledgement already in the 1980s, entering school libraries. However, responses within Japan towards the Fukushima meltdowns suggest that GEN did not contribute to raising a critical awareness about the dangers of nuclear power plants on that earthquake-ridden archipelago. The same applies to the two animated film adaptations, released in 1983 and 1986².

Since the 1980s, GEN has seen its canonization related to A-bomb literature. This facilitated a primary focus on representation and contents. In addition to peace messages critics have, for example, appreciated the visibility of the Korean minority, as epitomized by Gen's neighbour Mr. Pak³. Such emphasis on ideological readings by critical intellectuals may have contributed to diminishing GEN's initially subversive potential for younger consumers. As such, GEN can serve as

a good example of how popular media texts work, particularly in contemporary Japan, the (almost) uncontested “empire of manga”⁴. Artists have been offering stories which hold the potential for political readings, but consumers do not necessarily actualize this potential. Many fans exhibit an indifference towards representational contents in general and societal meanings in particular. Thus, popular media like manga and anime call for considering contexts, above all, the media environment which affects whom they get through to and how. In my discussion below, I shall intertwine the aspects of story content, style and publication history in regard to GEN, the manga, while comparing it to the animated versions. I suggest approaching the animated films from the manga angle because in Japan, anime is much more in rapport with comics than live-action film or literature. My own field of expertise is mainly Comics Studies, but I also find it vital to consider what passes as ‘typically manga’ (or typically anime) among regular media users in order to gauge GEN’s socio-critical potential. This focus I call “mangaesque”, in the sense of manga-like or typically manga, which is, of course, no established scholarly term, yet it allows to draw attention to practically relevant popular discourses on the one hand and on the other to critically informed, theoretical reflections on what may, or may not, be expected from manga (and anime).

In the case of GEN, the initial manga series deserves special attention, first of all, because the two animated films have not nearly generated the same amount of discourse despite their widespread dissemination⁵. In part, this has to do with their media-cultural position. Due to commemorative screenings at school on August 6 – and the more or less non-voluntary mode of viewing – audiences have received the films as “educational” rather than “anime proper”⁶. Although they were produced by the major animation studio Madhouse and created by artists crucial to the industry, not to forget the entertaining elements they provide; yet, both are self-contained feature films for theatrical release not a TV series, a fact which distinguishes them fundamentally from the manga.

The manga

GEN, the manga, was serialized with intervals from 1973 until 1987 in various magazines, taking its departure from *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, a latecomer among the boys'-manga magazines which was to become the flagship of the whole industry around 1990. In 1974, it had already a weekly circulation of 1.65 million copies, with each copy going through the hands of approximately three readers⁷. Due to the oil shock and the shortage of printing paper, GEN – not ranking among the top 10 series anyway – was discontinued after one year and three months. But its serialization went on in non-manga magazines⁸. Finally, the total number of pages ran up to about 2600, filling an unexpectedly successful 10-volume book edition⁹. Containing the initial *Jump* installments the first four volumes provided the material for the first animated film which was released shortly after the publication of vol. 8. The second film, released two years after vol. 9, is based loosely on volumes 5-7.

The non-manga publication sites were addressed to adult readers and were committed to political debate. They drew not only journalistic attention to GEN but also affected its storytelling. Typical “flaws” of a magazine series, such as verbal anticipation and reiteration of narrative events, had disappeared. Instead, the initially straightforward narration became increasingly interrupted by flashbacks, and speech balloons packed with long explanatory dialogue lines. Historical events not directly related to the characters' daily life were mentioned. For example the visit of the emperor to Hiroshima in 1947 (vol. 5), or the outbreak of the Korean War in 1950 (vol. 8). As of consequence, the interrelation between the three narrative perspectives – one of protagonist Gen, two of his relatives and friends, and three (more or less extra-diegetically presented) the macropolitical one – changed remarkably in the course of the serialization. It is noteworthy though, that these alterations in the latter half of the manga, starting from vol. 5, make themselves felt only in the first animated film which, as distinct from the second film, employs a masculine voice-over narration¹⁰.

The timeline of the manga stretches from April 1945 to spring 1953. At the beginning, the daily life of elementary schoolboy Gen and his family are depicted. Since Gen's father is against the war, the family is persecuted by police and neighbours. When the atomic bomb is dropped on Hiroshima – against the end of vol. 1, but already after the first thirty minutes of the animated *Hadashi no Gen* (1983) – the fire kills Gen's father, his sister and his younger brother. Over the course of time, Gen meets many other A-bomb victims (*hibakusha*) and he experiences numerous sad partings. His mother dies of radiation sickness in spring 1950, i.e. at the end of vol. 7 of the manga, which corresponds to the end of the second animated film (1986). The latter omits not only her final trip to Kyoto but also the previous recollection of her life during which she tells her sons, among other things, about war-time torture by the Japanese Secret Service against critical minds. Similar to the latter half of the manga series, the second animated film focuses on Gen's friendship with orphaned children who try to survive as street urchins, escape detention camps and work for the Black Market and are being used by gangsters (*yakuza*).

Related to the lack of food and money continuing to be the central issues, Thomas LaMarre has suggested “to look at the effects of the atomic bomb [as represented in the manga *GEN nda*] in a framework other than that of trauma and national sovereignty”:

It is a struggle to survive that is highlighted, a struggle for life, for food and shelter, in which money has immediate physical consequences. In addition, the general emphasis on torture and medical experimentation confirms the general gravitation toward scenes of *biopolitical* struggle¹¹.

Fukuma finds it symptomatic that upon its release in 1986, critics related the second animated film to the then-pressing issue of bullying (*ijime*) among school children, rather than to the wartime past and nuclear weapons¹². Some historians have proposed to regard *GEN* as a story about *postwar* Japan, told from below and revealing among other things, the *hibakusha*'s discrimination including

Koreans¹³. This, however, applies more to the manga than the animated films, which downplay the physical, political and social violence characteristic of GEN, the manga.

Acclaimed American comics artist Art Spiegelman noted in his introduction to the first volume of the new English edition:

The degree of casual violence in Japanese comics is typically far greater than in our homegrown products. Gen's pacifist father freely wallops his kids with a frequency and force that we might easily perceive as criminal child abuse [...] Yet these casual small-scale brutalities pale to naturalistic proportions when compared to the enormity of dropping a nuclear weapon on a civilian population¹⁴.

Leaning on Tessa Morris-Suzuki's assumption that an unexpected counter-image helps to make unimaginable traumata visible, Tomoko Ichitani points out that "attempts to reenact the tragedy of wars and atomic bombs often result in recalling different images associated with the provocative and brutal visuals of horror manga".¹⁵

With their images of people melting, of eyeballs falling out and clothes burning, the animated films, however, evoke also responses like "grotesque" and even "disgusting"¹⁶. This may be partially traced back to the fact that they refrain from contextualizing the preceding "small-scale brutalities" and thus obscure their interconnectedness with the violence of war and post-war survival. To name just a few examples: the first film only alludes to the pre-bomb conflicts between Gen's family and their neighbourhood, but the "bad guys" which are not given their own voice in the manga anyway, do not appear as characters in the films and thus they cannot be bitten by Gen, whose father is, of course, not shown walloping his sons. (Just to mention in passing, experienced manga readers would not take the father's alleged "domestic violence" at face value, but rather as a way of visually suggesting the intensity of his emotions, or more precisely, as a device characteristic of the genre of boys', or *shōnen*, manga.) The second film casts the blame for chasing homeless

children from the Japanese police to the American Military Police, replaces the frightening yakuza Masa by a sympathetic orphaned teenager (vol. 5), and turns a blind eye on the Hiroshima Peace Memorial City Construction Law (1948) that leads to the demolition of the children's self-built shack (vol. 8-9)¹⁷. Furthermore, the film shows the boys' discovery of skulls in the river, but not how they are sold as souvenirs to American soldiers (vol. 5).

Animations

Comics in general and manga in particular have been subjected to prejudices, denouncing them as infantile, simplifying, overly spectacular and unrealistic. From such a perspective, the animated films of GEN may appear “mangaesque” in a negative sense, as here exaggeration and stylization serve a belittled narrative cause here.

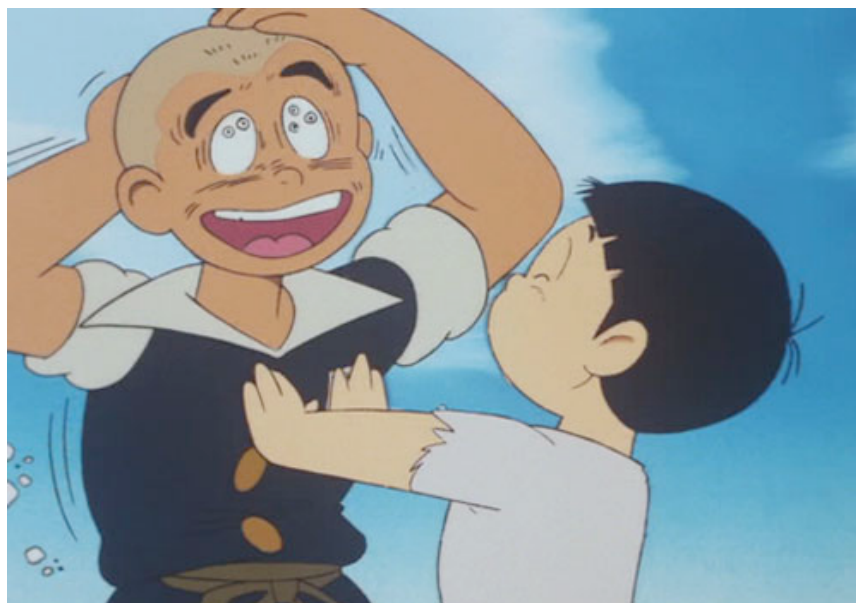


Fig.1

The first film in particular gives a mangaesque impression, literally, as it employs a whole range of comics-specific stylistic elements: pictograms appear whenever the boys fight or show emotions (Fig. 1), and impact lines accompany kicks; teeth are pictorially rendered as a long horizontal stroke divided by short vertical lines when the (lipless) mouth is opened in moments of joy, surprise or

fear. In especially happy moments, the boys while walking sprawl out their legs unnaturally to the side at right angles.

The clear narrative divide not only between good guys and bad guys but also between children and adults is facilitated by (the latter being characteristic of the films, not necessarily the manga), the stylistic borrowings from the initially child-oriented medium of manga¹⁸. This helps to re-tell the story in a hazard-free way, content-wise rather reminiscent of valuable picture books than trashy entertaining manga magazines. This does not come as a surprise, as many adaptations of manga series into animated feature films exhibit a similar thematic downplaying, due to production costs as well as reception sites¹⁹. Yet, the two GEN adaptations line up with another strong current. Many Japanese animated feature films about World War II focus on victimized children and thereby avoid addressing adult responsibility. The TV film *Anne no nikki (Anne's Diary, 1979)*²⁰, for example, could have served as a model to GEN; *Hotaru no haka (Grave of the Fireflies, 1988)*²¹ followed shortly after. But while those two resemble GEN in regard to the central role of child protagonists, they barely pass as “mangaesque”. The latter has been especially appreciated for its avoidance of “stereotyping”; after all, it was based on a completed novel (by Akiyuki Nosaka) not an ongoing manga series.

GEN, the manga, itself has not easily been acknowledged outside Japan, due to its vacillating between “objective” accounts on the one hand, and “mangaesque” playfulness on the other²². Indeed, GEN invites realistic readings with respect to tortured bodies as well as Japan’s modern history, but at the same time, it distracts from realism. In the animated films, this manifests itself, for example, in the choice of the protagonist’s voice actor. Since *Astro Boy (Tetsuwan Atomu, 1963-1966)*, it had become customary to lend stylized female voices to boy characters, but for Gen, an extra audition was held in Hiroshima to find a boy of the same age. Issei Miyazaki who later became a professional was selected for Gen’s voice also in the second animated film. His puberty vocal change then adding another layer to the desired authenticity of a media-wise non-authentic

character. The impression of “inconsistency” is further supported – in the first animated film more than in the second – by the visual gap between the Ghibli-like upscale watercolors used for the background art, and the plain looking comics characters. The manga itself relies on strong G-pen based line work and refrains largely from employing screen tones needed for gradation. Literally as well as figuratively, it appears “graphic”, more drawing than painting – with its firm outlines, conventionalized symbols, renderings in black and white – on the one hand, and drastic, almost too explicit visualizations of violence on the other hand.

The immediate aftermath of the launch of the A-bomb in the manga is conveyed in silent monochrome images, whereas the animated film, naturally, employs colour and sound. The sequence begins with a parallel montage, juxtaposing daily life on ground with the aerial perspective of the pilots of the Enola Gay, to whom Hiroshima appears merely as an abstract map. As distinct from the manga, they are depicted in American-comics style (war comics, to be precise [Fig.2]), and they are even given dialogue lines, which help to personalize them as the “bad guys” in contrast to the “good guys” rendered in manga style.

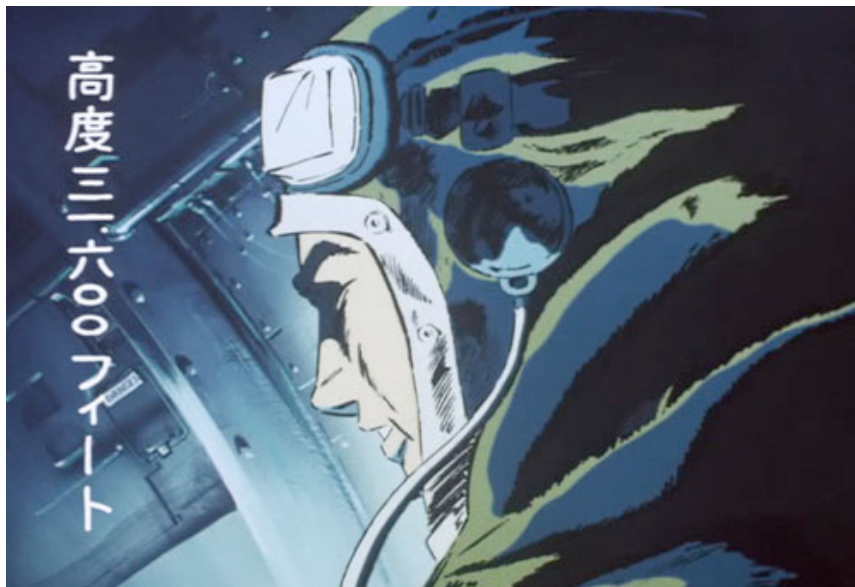


Fig.2

Immediately after the dropping of the bomb, there is a moment of silence and colorlessness, before the blast sets in. Rendered in spectacular red, green and orange, it disintegrates flesh and bones, not of already familiar characters but types of people – a mother with a baby (Fig. 3), school children, an old man and so forth.



Fig.3

A highly stylized visual language, reminiscent of both late, or “bloody” *ukiyo*e artists such as Yoshitoshi Tsukioka (1839-1892; *muzan’*e) and horror manga, for example, by Kazuo Umezu, facilitates this generalization. After stills of the mushroom cloud, a shockingly gray, ruined cityscape emerges, with *hibakusha* trudging across. The manga removes the pupils from these people’s eyes to denote them as already lost and to reduce the fear for its young readers²³, whereas the animated film opts for a change of style. Both the dying and the dead are *painterly* depicted, not graphically, and thus removed from the otherwise manga-like mode.

With regards to both the stylized, yet “graphic” representation of the blast’s impact on human bodies and the distance towards manga style, the first animated GEN movie resembles an animated short-film of 8 minutes length, created five years earlier by Renzo Kinoshita (1936-1997) and his wife Sayoko, the later initiators of the Hiroshima International Animation Festival. Titled *Pikadon*,

that is, with the onomatopoeic word used for the blast by the Hiroshima survivors, it was the first attempt at confronting the A-bomb within the medium of animation. As such, it seems more than likely that it affected the visual language of the first animated GEN movie, although this has not been verified yet. However, *Pikadon* goes much further in its distance towards the “mangaesque” (and thereby allows to confirm the respective characteristic of the GEN movie): the American pilots do not appear in person; no clinking sound accompanies the *hibakusha* and there are no characters for the viewer to identify with (last but not least) due to the complete absence of dialogue. The style suggests children’s drawings, and it was indeed modeled after drawings by survivors. Based on the film’s cels, the Kinoshita’s published a picture book in 1979²⁴.

“Mangaesque” Aspects

As indicated by the above discussion of the manga and the animated films, the “mangaesque” can be taken in a twofold way. On the one hand negatively, in line with long-time biases related to simplification instead of complexity, conventionalization instead of realism and authenticity, empathy instead of critical distance and so forth. On the other hand, perceived “inconsistencies” may also be treated as a chance to undermine ideological claims and representational messages in favor of a different kind of complexity.

Against the background of Japan’s extraordinarily mature domestic market, Japanese-language Manga Studies show a strong penchant for supposedly “typical manga”. Such manga lean on their readers’ command of a certain visual grammar, which provides them with an allegedly direct emotional access to characters and narrative, unclouded by formal or material considerations. In other words, attention to unconventional form as a gateway to unconventional meaning –one of the markers of modern art – is not regarded relevant for quality here. If readers pay attention to form at all, then related to specific genre conventions, comparing, for example, GEN to their experiences

with other works of *shonen manga*²⁵. The more mature the manga industry and its genres, the less connotative the readings of single works have become. Regular readers concentrate rather on characters' tangible emotional states and relations rather than on allegorical interpretations referring to society at large or even mankind. This has contributed to the de-politicization of manga culture, the "political" here relating not to specific ideologies or parties but, above all, to an interest in societal matters beyond privacy or fan communities.

Contemporary manga (and anime) fans privilege a kind of media consumption that is less about deep meaning which may be unpacked by intellectuals, than about economic, sensory (or even sensual) and cultural impacts. In this connection, manga and anime series are appreciated for the relationalities they trigger. As distinct from the majority of manga critics and researchers, younger fans tie "mangaesque" particularities less to panel layouts, line work and genre conventions than to the invitation to create fan art and fan fiction, to form affective communities online, and also to engage in cosplay. Here, commonalities among kindred spirits tend to outweigh critical and political considerations of society at large. The fictive setting (*sekai*) and characters, as its inhabitants, are given more relational importance than representation by single, self-contained works. On the Internet, even Gen has become subject to *moe*, that virtual love for characters usually attached to cute girls or beautiful boys. The person who runs the website "1995 Gen Production", initially intended to counter-attack the popularity of "Akira"²⁶. In other words, he regarded Gen, the manga protagonist, as representative of a "hot Japan" in danger to becoming lost, due to canonization on the one hand and the increasing prevalence of "cool" subcultural media content on the other. At any rate, his website provides a platform to celebrate the "mangaesque" neither in the sense of simplification nor ambiguity but affective dedication to characters which fans feel the need to protect.

It goes without saying that the word "mangaesque" evokes a range of different meanings and that it means different things to different people. It points to collaborative creativity, codification and

mediation, an aesthetic emphasis on fantasy rather than realism and impacts rather than messages, further, an astonishingly precise depiction of emotions and intimate relationships, often at the expense of allegorical and metaphorical thinking. At any rate, it is worthy being put into consideration when discussing Japanese comics and animated films, namely as a horizon of expectations shaped by media formats, publication sites, intertextuality and fan activities, in addition to the educational system, public cultural institutions and political discourse. Regarding to Japan's recent nuclear issue, the angle of the "mangaesque" may help to refrain from short-circuiting single manga texts with social issues, which usually overrates either the potential of such texts or denies them that very potential. Recently, there are Japanese voices, which claim that the Fukushima accident needs to be exhaustively understood before it can be represented in manga – just like GEN became possible only decades after the atomic bomb had been dropped on Hiroshima. However, as the discussion above hopefully suggests, manga goes beyond "understanding"; rather, it is a media which can give rise to solidarity by sharing emotions and by communicating things suppressed by the centralized Japanese media. The challenge now is to unfold this "mangaesque" potential in a social manner, without being constrained by anachronistic models of reading manga and anime.

Jaqueline Berndt

¹ Small-press distribution of the first English translation since 1978. See Roger Sabin, “*Barefoot Gen* in the US and UK: Activist Comic, Graphic Novel, Manga”, in Jaqueline Berndt, Steffi Richter (eds.), *Reading Manga: Local and Global Perceptions of Japanese Comics*, Leipzig, Leipzig University Press, 2006, pp. 39-58. Bill Randall introduced GEN as “one of the first manga translated, perhaps the most important, and certainly one of the best handled.” See Bill Randall, “Manga in English: For Better or Worse”, *The Comics Journal*, vol. 5, March 2005, p. 3.

² *Hadashi no Gen* (1983, ca. 83 min.), directed by Masaki Mori; *Hadashi no Gen 2* (1986, ca. 83 min.), directed by Toshio Hirata.

³ Takayuki Kawaguchi, “*Barefoot Gen* and ‘A-bomb Literature’: Re-recollecting the Nuclear Experience”, in Jaqueline Berndt (ed.), *Comics Worlds and the World of Comics*, Kyoto, 2010, pp. 233-44 (<http://imrc.jp/lecture/2009/12/comics-in-the-world.html>).

⁴ Roland Barthes (*L’empire des signes*, 1970), during his three visits to Japan 1966-1968, missed out on manga as a particular “empire of signs”, although weeklies such as *Shōnen Magazine* had already a print-run of 1 million copies back then.

⁵ The animated films have been screened at schools and on TV more frequently than the live-action adaptation which preceded them in 1976. The first animated GEN film is supposed to have influenced the representation of the A-bomb drop in Shōhei Imamura’s film *Black Rain* (1989).

⁶ Brophy includes the first animated GEN film in his guide on “anime”, but Japanese Animation Studies does not necessarily regard all animation made in Japan as “anime”, even if the word is in wide use now, for the sake of convenience. By tendency, “anime” refers to TV series, rendered in the limited (or selective mode) of cel animation, leaning heavily on specialized voice actors and their stylization, addressing non-infant viewers with fantastic narrative settings, inviting empathy or even affective participation on several levels (including mecha designs and erotic “fan service”). See Philip Brophy, “*Barefoot Gen* (*Hadashi no Gen*)”, in AA.VV., *100 Anime* (BFI Screen Guides), London, BFI, 2005, pp. 40-42.

⁷ See Yoshiaki Fukuma, “‘Genbaku manga’ no mediashi” (“A media history of A-bomb manga”), in Kazuma Yoshimura, Yoshiaki Fukuma (eds.), “*Hadashi no Gen*” *ga ita fūkei* (“The Landscape of *Barefoot Gen*: War, Manga, and Memory”), Matsudo, Azusa, 2006, p. 24.

⁸ Subsequently in *Shimin*, *Bunka hyōron* and *Kyōiku hyōron*. For details see Yū Itō, Tomoyuki Omote, “*Barefoot Gen* in Japan: An Attempt at Media History”, in J. Berndt, S. Richter (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 22-23; K. Yoshimura, Y. Fukuma (eds.) *op. cit.*

⁹ Available in Japanese today are the book edition by Chōbunsha (10 vols.), a partially revised one by Chūō kōronsha (10 vols.), and the “Jump Comics” edition by Shūeisha

for convenience stores (2005, 4 vols.) limited to the installments of the first 15 months which were published in *Jump* magazine. Last Gasp published the complete 10-volume English translation 2004-2009. Fukuma points out that the live-action film (1976) paved the way for recognition by adults, and that the medium of the book was vital as well (as distinct from the medium of the magazine). The first 5 volumes had sold a total of one million copies by 1980. See Yoshiaki Fukuma, *op. cit.*, pp. 29-30.

¹⁰ This voice-over narrates first, the “pre-history” (before the opening titles), second, the morning of August 6, 1945 focused on the Enola Gay, third, the post-bomb radioactive fall-out due to the “black rain”, and fourth, the events which led to the Nagasaki dropping on August 9, 1945.

¹¹ Thomas LaMarre, “Manga Bomb: Between the lines of Barefoot Gen”, in Jaqueline Berndt (ed.), *op. cit.*, pp. 302-03, reprinted as “Believe in Comics: Forms of Expression in *Barefoot Gen*”, in Timothy Perper, Martha Cornog (eds.), *Mangatopia: Essays on Manga and Anime in the Modern World*, Englewood, Libraries Unlimited, 2011, pp. 191-207.

¹² Yoshiaki Fukuma, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

¹³ See Takuya Kimura, “Kioku no fūka to sōsō ni kōshite: Nakazawa Keiji ‘Hadashi no Gen’ o yominaosu” (“Resisting the efflorescence and burial of memory: Re-reading Nakazawa Keiji’s *Barefoot Gen*”), *Image&Gender*, vol. 8, 2008, pp. 86-100.

¹⁴ See Art Spiegelman, “Barefoot Gen: Comics After the Bomb”, in Keiji Nakazawa, *Barefoot Gen: Out of the Ashes*, vol. 1, San Francisco, Last Gasp, 2004 (first published in 1990).

¹⁵ See Tessa Morris-Suzuki, *Kako wa shinanai* (“The past within us”), Tokyo, Iwanami, 2004, pp. 241-42; Tomoko Ichitani, “*Town of Evening Calm, Country of Cherry Blossoms*. The Renarratation of Hiroshima Memories”, *Journal of Narrative Theory*, n. 40, 2010, p. 368.

¹⁶ Toshiaki Shikata, “‘Kyōkai’ de deatta ‘tasha’: gakkō nitotte no ‘Hadashi no Gen’” (“‘Strangers’ meeting at the ‘border’: What *Barefoot Gen* means for the school”), in K. Yoshimura, Y. Fukuma (eds.), *op. cit.*, p.199.

¹⁷ Ichitani discusses this law in relation to another “A-bomb manga”, Fumiyo Kōno’s *Town of the Evening Calm, Country of Cherry Blossoms* (2003). See Ichitani, *op. cit.* pp. 364–90.

¹⁸ Exactly during the time of GEN’s serialization, Japan’s manga culture makes the crucial transition: magazine-based serialized comics narratives (story-manga) initially featuring minors and addressed to readers of the same age, achieved an increasingly mature readership, including criticism.

¹⁹ Although not related to the nuclear issue but to sexual abuse, *Piano no mori* (“The perfect world of KAI”) is a representative example in that regard. Manga by Makoto

Isshiki, since 1998 in *Young Magazine*, later *Weekly Morning* (21 volumes so far); animated feature film directed by Masayuki Kojima, 2007, produced by NAS.

²⁰ Directed by Eiji Okabe, produced by Nippon Animation, aired by TV Asahi.

²¹ Directed by Isao Takahata, produced by Studio Ghibli for Shinchōsha.

²² See Dale Luciano, “Gen of Hiroshima: Two-Fisted Pacifism (Review)”, *The Comics Journal*, n. 69, December 1981, pp. 40-43. See also the overtones in Art Spiegelman, “Barefoot Gen: Comics After the Bomb”, *op. cit.*

²³ Kazuma Yoshimura, “‘Hadashi no GEN’ no inpakuto: manga no zankoku byōsha o meguru hyōgenteki ichikōsatsu” (“The impact of *Barefoot Gen*: A stylistic consideration of cruel depictions in manga”), in K. Yoshimura, Y. Fukuma (eds.), *op. cit.*, pp. 267-75.

²⁴ Kinoshita Renzō (text) and Sayoko (art), Tokyo: Dynamic Sellers.

²⁵ As distinct from traditions of European literature or Hollywood cinema, in Japan, manga genres have developed primarily according to age and gender, the major ones being *shōnen* (boys’) *manga*, *shōjo* (girls’) *manga*, and *seinen* (youth) *manga*. On a side note, to regard manga in its entirety as a genre (be it as a subcategory or an equivalent to comics) does not find approval among those who are familiar with *manga* culture in and outside Japan. In a similar way, this applies to *anime* as well.

²⁶ By Katsuhiro Ōtomo, *manga* serialized in *Weekly Young Magazine* 1982-90, and feature-length animated movie (1988).