

# **OTHERNESS AND IDENTITY IN SHONEN MANGA**

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explored how Otherness was identified and interpreted by adult readers within the United Kingdom, through their engagement with *shonen manga*. Using semi-structured interviews of 40 participants, 21 males and 19 females, this study investigated how UK *manga* readers contemplated Otherness, when the concept was broken down into overarching themes of exclusion, dehumanization and Othered identity. This study examined how questions of Otherness led readers to consider *manga* in relation to their identities. The findings indicate UK readers consider Otherness in relation to struggles of identity recognition and value. The Other is interpellated by UK *manga* readers as either a threat to power hierarchies between the Self and the Other, or a means for the Self to reinforce such hierarchies. The findings further suggest that UK *manga* readers commonly consider themselves to be the Other by way of social rejection, devaluation and systematic disregard; they often perceive themselves as underdogs; their identification of Otherness themes and their propensity to identify with Othered characters largely depends on their lived experiences of Otherness. Furthermore, UK *manga* readers widely report *manga* to be an inspirational medium, the reading of which is empowering, boosts self-esteem, encourages readers to embrace Otherness, to resist conformity to social norms, and inspires a never-give-up attitude in their pursuit of recognition. Lastly, their engagement with *manga* beyond the textual level provides UK *manga* readers with a sense of belonging within a community of other Others.

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## **AUTHOR'S DECLARATION**

I declare that this thesis is a presentation of original work and I am the sole author. This work has not previously been presented for an award at this, or any other, University. All sources are acknowledged as References.

## CHAPTER 01: INTRODUCTION

This thesis explores how Otherness is communicated to readers within the United Kingdom, through their engagement with *shonen manga*. I argue that Otherness is considered by UK *manga* readers in relation to notions of recognition and power, and that readers predominantly identify with Othered characters who match their lived experiences of Otherness. Furthermore, I argue that by engaging with *manga* texts, readers are influenced towards embracing Othered identities, both their own and those around them. As UK *manga* readers are the main source of data collection throughout this thesis, I will investigate how readers interpret and reflect upon the Otherness themes they identify, as well as how their engagement with *manga* impacts their identities. To this end, I have posed the following research questions, that I will answer in the data analysis component of this thesis:

- 1) To what extent is Otherness communicated to readers through *shonen manga*?
- 2) How do readers identify and interpret Otherness in *shonen manga*?
- 3) To what extent do readers reflect upon the identified Otherness themes?
- 4) Does reader engagement with *manga* influence their attitudes towards Otherness in broader, real-world, socio-cultural contexts?
- 5) Does reader engagement with *manga* influence their identities?

In this introductory chapter, I clarify the rationale behind this research; I provide a definition of *manga*, I provide contextual background and discuss the significance of the growth and popularity of *manga* outside of Japan. I then explain the connection between *manga* and Otherness, drawing particular attention to the *shonen* demographic and its longstanding link to Otherness themes that dates back to postwar Japan. I relate this to academia, specifically to the field of Sociology. I reveal a gap in *manga*-centric literature and note how this thesis fills that gap. Lastly,

I conclude this chapter by providing a thesis overview that reveals the overarching narrative of this research project, by summarizing the remaining chapters.

## **1.1: WHAT IS MANGA AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?**

Among English-language publications on *manga*, the most commonly agreed upon translations of the term *manga* include *improvised, irresponsible, or whimsical pictures* (Gravett, 2004: 8; Brienza, 2009: 102; Terpstra, 2012: 1; McCarthy, 2014: 6; Hernández-Pérez, 2019: 7); in practice, *manga* is the original Japanese term for comics book. Furthermore, the medium's history suggest that these comic books are far from improvised, irresponsible, or whimsical. Given the medium's use of visual and storytelling techniques that are not found in other forms of comic book (Ueno, 2019), there is a "style versus made in Japan" debate (Kacsuk, 2018: 1), about whether *manga* should refer just to comic books made in Japan and published by Japanese publishing houses, or whether it should include Japanese-influenced comic books, like the *Twilight* series adaptations (Kim, 2011). As *manga* has influenced the comic book scenes in both China and Korea, where the term was not adopted as a loanword (Kalen, 2012), but respectively called *manhua* and *manhwa*, in this thesis, I will refer to *manga* as comic books made in Japan.

Where the *manga* style mostly differs from other forms of comic book is its use of a sequential, narrative style of storytelling (Prough, 2011), as well as the fragmented, but ongoing manner of its publication (Gravett, 2004). A reader can therefore follow the same story over the course of years and in turn, the *manga* series is capable of having a continuous influence on the reader. Most *manga* series are released in low-cost anthology magazines that follow a consistent release schedule, at either weekly, or monthly intervals (Gravett, 2004). Every ten chapters of a series are compiled into book-format to create *manga* books. However, it is the range of genres and the variety of topics covered within each of the core *manga* demographics that makes it so appealing to all age-groups (Tsai, 2015).

Demographics are commonly determined by age and sex, and the major demographics include *shonen manga*, which targets young male readers; *shojo manga*, which targets young female readers; *seinen* and *gekiga manga*, both of which target adult male readers; as well as *josei* and *yaoi manga*, both of which target adult female readers (Brienza, 2011; Prough, 2011). As *manga* are marketed towards these demographics, genres often overlap, so there exist detective *manga*, horror *manga*, action *manga*, comedy *manga* and all of the above demographics. Among these, the *shonen* demographic is by far the highest-grossing and the most widely circulated, both in Japan and abroad (Loo, 2011; Hodgkins, 2019b).

At its peak, the *manga* industry represented over a third of literary market in Japan (Schodt, 2013), and surveys indicate that international readers tend to prefer *manga* to local variations of comic book (Hakuhodo, 2013). Reasons for this include the fact that *manga* characters are ethnically ambiguous enough that many non-Japanese readers are capable of identifying with them; that *manga* series tend to prioritise the personal growth of their characters (Hakuhodo, 2013); that *manga* series tend to reflect the idealisms of their readers, from when they are published, to when they conclude; that *manga* are willing to address profound themes that Western comic books especially, are unwilling to broach (Fuller, 2012). Chen (2011: 252) for example, argues that American readers are searching for “a moral flexibility in life” that extends beyond binaries of right and wrong, or good and evil. *Manga* provides this, but the more widely consumed ‘big two’ of Western superhero lines in DC and Marvel, whose stories traditionally follow the trope of destroying that which is evil and retaining that which is good, do not (Fuller, 2012).

Beyond its themes, Bouissou (2008) explains that the popularity of *manga* in the West largely depended on *anime* adaptations of *manga* series to act as a gateway for the *manga* market. In fact, Cooper-Chen (2011) outlines “10 themes” that “can elucidate the process whereby Japanese cartoon arts cross cultural boundaries” (2011: 86), in turn, she agrees with Bouissou that the success of *anime*

created a market for *manga*. Akira's (1988) success proved particularly significant in France, where it encouraged collaborative movements between French and Japanese animation studios in the 1980s. However, Bouissou (2008) criticises the pattern by Western scholars of presuming an inherent preference for -or superiority of- *anime* over *manga* in Japan, which is simply not the case, but does suggest that *manga* might simply be an accompaniment to economic globalization.

As such, before the English-language *manga* industry augmented, and the official licensing and translating of series was regularised, *manga* had already impacted English-language audiences (Terpstra, 2012). Through the Internet, *manga* gained a platform for widespread international distribution, by way of *scanlators*; in other words, fans would *scan* and *translate* their favourite *manga* series into English and publish them online for others to enjoy at no cost (Terpstra, 2012; Brienza, 2014b). According to Terpstra, American *manga* publishers had an exploitative relationship with *scanlators*, whose *scanlations* they would monitor for market trends; licensing and publishing the most popular (Terpstra, 2012).

These confounding factors undeniably played an imperative role in the growth of the *manga* market in the West, which boomed at the start of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, at which point the consumption and production of *manga* in English-speaking countries, particularly in the United States, tripled (2009: 101). Moreover, Brienza attributes the sudden growth in the medium's popularity to the marketing strategy employed by Tokyopop, which to summarize, predominantly consisted of publishing only *manga* books -compilations of ten chapters- as opposed to *manga* floppies -single chapters at a time. They also retained the right-to-left reading format, standardized price-points and targeted a female demographic, making *manga* a more family-friendly medium than graphic novels (Brienza, 2009).

Whether the growth of the *manga* market in English-speaking countries is down to the success of *anime*, the success of *scanlation*, or the success of the Tokyopop marketing strategy, it is undeniable that *manga* has become a medium

worthy of academic attention. There exist *manga* reading apps for mobile phones (Hung, 2019); there are mobile games based on *manga* series; *manga*-oriented emoji systems are in development (Itou, 2019); English-language blockbuster movies and Netflix series that have been based on, or adapted from, *manga* series; there are bookstores in the USA and the UK that are renowned as *manga* sellers; there is at least one *anime* and *manga* convention per month in the UK (Tsai, 2015), and *anime* and *manga* societies are commonplace at most UK universities. Given this background, it is clear that there exists a vast UK *manga* readership, as well as a UK *manga* community, but the medium's link to Otherness remains unclear.

## **1.2: MANGA AND OTHERNESS**

Otherness originates in phenomenological philosophy as a term that refers to the state of being 'the Other,' i.e. any being that exists outside of one's own subjective experience of Selfness (Smith, 2003). This was developed upon by Fichte (2000) and Hegel (1977), both of whom employed Otherness in relation to an individual's internal struggle for self-consciousness and self-awareness, but inadvertently applied the binary of the Self and the Other to social relations and interactions. Consequently, Fichte perceived the Other as a threat, who hindered the free agency of human beings (2000: 133), whereas Hegel perceived the Other as an oppositional entity, caught in a perpetual power struggle with the Self (1977: 155). Both interpretations of Otherness will prove to be useful in this thesis.

As conceptualizations of Otherness were more frequently applied to social dynamics, theories of Otherness were more often applied to notions of identity and difference (Conolly, 1999; Voicu, 2011), where the Other was no longer a being that existed outside of a single individual's perception of itself as Self, but instead became an entity that defined a social identity group on the basis that the Other embodied that which the given social identity group was not. In other words, the

Other represented vectors of difference, whether such difference was territorial (Staszak, 2008; Elden, 2013), national (Williams, 1983; Morley & Chen, 1996), cultural (Sysoyev, 2001; Voicu, 2011), or based on perceived authenticity (Bhabha, 1994; Gilroy, 2000; Pieterse, 2001). However, in each of these examples, there are power dynamics in play, wherein the Self is powerful and valued and uses that power to treat “difference” -imagined or not- “as inequality” (Morrissey, 2001: 340), thereby normalizing -or fixing- the Other as powerless and lacking in value.

As this thesis resides within the field of Sociology, I shall be employing Otherness in the sociological sense, whereby the concepts of Other and Self represent social identities, and Otherness is perceived as “the way of defining an ‘identity’ in relation to others” and as “a product of social, cultural, political and other ways of construction” (Dumitrescu, 2014: 141). The Self can be substituted for *the insider, the in-group, the dominant power, and the native*, whereas the Other can be substituted for entities that differ from such groups, including *the outsider, the out-group, the minority identity group*, as well as *the foreigner*, among others.

According to Whaley (2007), Prough (2011) and Fuller (2012), the connection between *manga* and Otherness dates back to its function during post-war Japan. Although it was once a medium used primarily for entertaining -and to an extent, educating- children (Prough, 2011: 28), *manga* became a means to communicate messages of hope and rebirth to a traumatized nation (Fuller, 2012: 2), as well as the notions of continuously bettering humanity, in order to avoid future catastrophe. According to Fuller, this was dependent upon humanity’s “ability to settle [its] differences” (2012: ii); in other words, its ability to overcome Otherness. Tezuka was perceived to have spearheaded this message, but Fuller and Whaley interpreted his works in completely different manners. For Fuller, Tezuka was realistic about the ongoing struggle that humanity would have to experience in order to get beyond Otherness (2012: 162). For Whaley, Tezuka lacked faith in humanity and his notion of rebirth was indicative of the cycle of Otherness repeating itself (2007: 91). Either

way, both scholars agree that Tezuka instilled within subsequent *mangaka* (*manga* authors) the underlying message of struggling to overcome Otherness.

The struggle to overcome Otherness is a theme that can be seen in many contemporary *manga* series, but as manifested in different ways. One of the most consistent representations of the idea of *settling differences* exists within the series *Naruto* (1999), wherein the protagonist is constantly engaged in conflict related to ideological differences, particularly with antagonists. However, instead of *settling* these *differences* by rejecting, or devaluing them, the protagonist and title-character, Naruto, attempts to communicate with his enemies in the hopes of understanding their perspectives, with the imminent aim of overcoming Otherness, but with the overarching purpose of avoiding a perpetuation of Otherness.

In most cases, though, the struggle to overcome Otherness is perceived by academics as manifesting itself in the form of resistance by the Other against the dominant power. Sasada (2011) perceives the *shonen manga* protagonist, Luffy, from *One Piece* (1997), as embodying the Other and as acting in a manner that actively rejects the dominance of the Self and its subjugation of the Other. The idea of *shonen manga* protagonists as an embodiment of the Other is also posited by Okabe (2019), but as reflections of national trauma. Moreover, this idea of *manga* protagonists embodying the Other is not limited to the *shonen* demographic, with Prough (2011) and Makita (2017) suggesting that *shojo manga* series are equally adept at addressing Otherness themes, particularly those revolving around notions of struggle. However, Makita notes that the struggles faced by *shojo* protagonists, of “being a woman” in “modern society,” of romance, of “promotion, marriage, childbirth,” are based on a desire for social recognition within a society where females are forced into the position of the Other (Stimson, 2017). Ultimately, *shojo manga* protagonists can be perceived as resisting the attempted normalization of the female as the Other and in turn, as resisting the perpetuation of patriarchal societies wherein only males are allowed to occupy the position of the Self.

Exploring the connection between Otherness and *manga* through the lens of English-language readers, Chen (2011) and Tsai (2015) both present arguments suggesting it exists as a product of the reader. Chen's research on adult US *manga* readers brought about the conclusion that readers are actively seeking to "resist mainstream values" and "social norms" (2011: 236 & 278), whereas Tsai's research on young UK *manga* readers contends that reader engagement with *manga* causes the medium to function as a site through which they "resist incorporation into the dominant power that attempts to discipline and control them" (2015: 72). Adding to this, Adamowicz (2014), who explores *manga* as a transcultural medium, posits that it offers readers ways of navigating Otherness, by addressing struggles related to difference that Makita believes "readers hope to solve" (Stimson, 2017).

Many academics contend that the multimodality of *manga*, its combination of visual, literary and imagined components, deepens reader engagement with its narratives and thereby actively facilitates narrative absorption (Schwartz and Rubenstein-Avila, 2006; Berndt, 2010; Bryce et al., 2010; Leung et al. 2014 & 2015). Narrative absorption, simply refers to the "subjective experience of being highly engaged with a narrative" (Hakemulder et al, 2017: 12), can lead to reader identification, the perception of experience and the extraction of meaning, all of which arguably ease the communication of concepts like Otherness.

When considering *manga* in a socio-cultural sphere, one must also consider its perception and in turn, how its consumers are perceived. Deman's thesis (2010) investigated how authors would self-reflectively address Otherness in American comics, how this influenced their perception, their cultural status as literary media and to an extent, how the comics community is perceived. Manga has suffered from stigma among western audiences since before the 1980s (Gravett, 2004: 9), when the *gekiga manga* scene was in its prime. The *Otaku Killer's* affiliation with violent *hentai* (pornographic) *manga* acted as a catalyst for widespread generalisations that cast the medium in a negative light (Chambers, 2012: 95), a reputation that *manga*

still holds among many today. Tsai notes that “criticisms” of *manga* were “principally directed towards its representations of violence and sex,” highlighting an article published by “*The Mail on Sunday*, entitled ‘Child murder, incest and rape... is this really how our schools should be encouraging boys to read?’” (2015: 4).

Tsai’s thesis concludes that the *manga* community is formed partially because the medium enables identity formation (2015: 19). This opens up an avenue to explore whether *manga* can also influence a reader’s sense of othered identity. The *manga* community, while growing, is as yet still niche enough and stigmatized enough to be considered an Othered identity in its own right. Like comics after all, *manga* has commonly been considered “non-serious literature with low literacy value” and thus, “an inferior type of reading” (2015: 3), hence the need for Tsai’s research. However, *manga* reaches out to all ages, dabbles in all genres, is primed for communication and is thematically profound, regardless of the demographic. The medium boasts “literary, literacy, aesthetic, and socio-cultural values” (2015: 4) and scholars such as Whaley (2007), Brienza (2009 & 2010 & 2011), Prough (2011), Fuller (2012), Terpstra (2012), Leung et al. (2014 & 2015) and Tsai (2015) among multiple others, have demonstrated this in abundance.

It has been shown that *manga* bears clear ties to the concept of Otherness, particularly within the *shonen* demographic. However, considering that series such as *Project ARMS* (1997) address objectification, *Naruto* (1999) is oriented around the practice of ostracism, *Bleach* (2001) explores the inhumanity, or monstrosity of Hollows, and *Fullmetal Alchemist* (2002) broaches the genocide of the Ishvalans, it is surprising that there exists only a handful of notable, in-depth examinations of Otherness in *shonen manga*; these being Sasada’s (2011) textual analysis of *One Piece* (1997), and Okabe’s (2019) comparative analysis of detective series.

### 1.3: THE FIELD AND THE GAP

Many English-language, *manga*-centric publications have functioned as an introduction to the medium, providing Western audiences with *manga*'s historical development and framing it within its social and cultural contexts (Schodt, 1983; Gravett, 2004; Koyama-Richard, 2007; McCarthy, 2014). *Manga*'s growth in the West proved a particularly noteworthy phenomenon and effectively kickstarted academic interest in the medium, causing many to investigate the reasons for its rise in popularity (Fusanosuke, 2003; Bouissou, 2008; Brienza, 2009 & 2010 & 2011 & 2014a; Cooper-Chen, 2011). An increasing proportion of academic works have come to acknowledge *manga*'s multimodal components that make it so adept enabling narrative absorption in readers and in turn, at communicating themes, messages, ideas and worldviews (Schodt, 1996; Schwartz & Rubenstein-Avila, 2006; Berndt, 2010; Bryce et al, 2010; Anan, 2014; Leung et al, 2014 & 2015). Participatory practices, such as *scanlation* (Douglass et al., 2011; Lee, 2012; Terpstra, 2012) and *Cosplay* (Winge, 2006; Gin 2011; Lunning, 2011) have also been analysed.

Otherness-centric literature in combination with *manga*, or *anime* for that matter, is lacking. The demographics with the most academic attention are *yaoi* and *shojo manga*, for providing female readers with a safe space by evading gendered power relations, as well as for their capacity to empower by contesting gender norms (Levi, 2010; Prough, 2011; Shamoon, 2012; Anan, 2014; Hemmann, 2014). *Yaoi manga* have also been used to explore reader responses -from female readers- to the presence of young effeminate males (Galbraith, 2011; Martin, 2012). Other recipient-focused works examine the UK comics youth culture (Gibson, 2007) and young UK readers' engagement with the medium (Tsai, 2015). Beyond this, Armour (2010) and Whaley (2012) have analysed dehumanising representations of race in *seinen manga* and Fuller (2012) reflects upon representations of the atomic bomb in post-war *manga* and with it, how Japan has managed to reinvent its national

identity from victim to superpower. Publications exploring Otherness in *shonen manga* are both textual analyses; to reiterate, Sasada (2011) focuses on *One Piece* and argues that its protagonist embodies the Other and altruistically resists the dominant power, whereas Okabe (2019) comparatively examines several detective *manga*, contending that boy detectives are defined by their “role as the other” and “[emerge] as a site of national trauma” (2019: ii). In terms of applying Otherness theory to reader engagement with *manga*, Chen (2011) stands out; using Lacan’s concept of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real to interpret how participatory practices influence the identity construction of United States *manga* fans.

While it is encouraging that reader-response based studies on *manga* have been published over the last decade, there is a clear lack of depth to this area, both within the field of Sociology, as well as in the interdisciplinary field of Manga Studies. This dearth of publications is especially noteworthy, given the growth of *manga* as a subcultural medium in the West, and its potential for the creation of an Othered identity group in transcultural *manga* fan; not to mention, the fact that *manga* have exposed Japan’s past struggles with Otherness and in turn, alluded to an intimate, ongoing bond between concept and medium. Furthermore, UK-based studies on *manga* appear limited to young readers and as such, there is nothing investigating the reader responses, or reflections of adult readers. This thesis will fill the gap, by adding a sociological perspective to the existing literature. In turn, this reveals an intimate link between Otherness and *shonen manga*, whereby UK *manga* readers are bound to *manga* characters through shared experiences of Otherness, which these readers consider in relation to struggles for recognition and power.

#### **1.4: A THESIS OUTLINE**

Having introduced the core concepts of *manga* and Otherness and having clarified my rationale for this thesis, I shall now outline its layout by providing a

sequential overview of the upcoming chapters. In Chapter 02, I will contextualize *manga* as cultural objects by exploring the medium's historical development, its 'cultural odour' (Iwabuchi, 2002), and perspectives on how cultural objects enable meaning-making. I will discuss Narrative Transportation Theory (NTT), Reader Response Theory (RRT) and Reader Identification Theory (RIT), to highlight how readers can extrapolate meaning from texts. I will explore the relationship between Otherness and identity, I will identify the overarching Otherness themes, namely *Exclusion*, *Dehumanisation* and *Othered Identity*, that will form my Data Analysis chapters. In doing so, I will review the reasons identities are Othered, the practices that are employed to facilitate the Othering process and lastly, the consequences of being the Other; I will also draw on various sociological theories to provide a framework.

Chapter 03 explicates my research methods and provides the rationale behind them. In order to answer the research questions introduced at the start of this chapter, I conducted semi-structured interviews of 40 *manga* readers -or in other words, insiders to the *manga* community- gathered from *anime* and *manga* conventions across the UK. An outline of the standardized and open-ended interview question-set has been provided within. I cover the interview process in more detail. I go over limitations to the data collection process and note alterations I had to make, such as reformatting questions due to gaps in participant knowledge. I discuss the data analysis process and conclude on ethical considerations.

As an insider to the *manga* community, I am aware of both the upsides and downsides that come with this position when conducting research. Dwyer and Buckle explain that occupying an "insider role status frequently allows researchers more rapid and more complete acceptance by their participants" (2009: 58). They add that what is most imperative, regardless of whether a researcher is an insider or an outsider to the community they are researching, is the researcher's authenticity, honesty, openness and genuine interest "in the experience of [their]...

participants,” as well as their commitment “to accurately and adequately representing their experience” (2009: 59). In the context of this thesis, both the interview and data analysis processes heavily relied on my pre-existing knowledge of *manga*. Throughout the interview phase, my status as a *manga* fan enabled me to form quick connections with participants, through dialogue about different *manga* series. I shared my personal experiences of *manga*, revealing my status as an insider to the *manga* community, but also showing authenticity in my personal connection to the research. As a result, participants were willing to share with me some extremely personal -and at times intimate- bonds they had to *manga*.

According to Dwyer and Buckle, a researcher’s “awareness of [their] own personal biases and perspectives, might well reduce the potential concerns associated with insider membership” (2009: 59). To this end, my awareness of my status as an insider with personal *manga*-related experiences, meant that I attempted to ensure that the data analysis phase was conducted from an objective standpoint, with as little researcher bias as possible. I wanted to represent the experiences of my participants as accurately as possible. Dwyer and Buckle refer to this simultaneous insider-outsider position as “the space between” (2009: 54); one that frames my insider status as constructive in carrying out this research.

Chapters 04, 05 and 06 form the Data Analysis component of this thesis. These chapters focus on the themes of *exclusion*, *dehumanization* and *Othered identity* respectively. Chapter 04 covers social rejection, the Other-as-threat and social disconnectedness; it explores the dynamics between Other and Self that lead to social rejection; the significance of a participant’s lived experiences of Otherness on their propensity to identify with Othered characters; and the *manga* encourage moral reflection and self-reflection in readers. Chapter 05 examines how *manga* contributes to the normalization of Otherness in discourse, through Othering processes including underrepresentation, stereotyping and objectification; it also explores the portrayal of the Other as a monster, both manmade and supernatural,

and how this leads readers to contemplate what it means to be the Other. Chapter 06 broaches Otherness through non-conformity, both in *manga* protagonists and *manga* readers, hypothesizing *manga* reader as an Othered identity group; how the Other as an underdog can be empowering and inspiring to readers; and how reader engagement with *manga* beyond the text can influence identity.

Chapter 07 will conclude the thesis; therein, I answer the main research aim and the five research questions posed in this introduction. I explain concisely the contributions this thesis has made. I present my findings, and any implications these findings might have. I explore possible avenues of future research and cover any final limitations that hindered this research, including any improvements.

## CHAPTER 02: LITERATURE REVIEW

In the previous chapter, I introduced *manga* and Otherness, discussing the link between them and in turn, rationalizing my research. I presented five research questions to investigate how UK readers are communicated Otherness through *manga*, particularly through *shonen manga*. In this chapter, I will review literature on *manga* and on Otherness, providing a detailed background on both. In 2.1, I will explore the definition of *manga*, the *shonen* demographic and the medium's relevance outside of Japan, particularly in English-speaking countries. In 2.2, I will question *manga* as cultural objects and broach the reader-oriented theories of NTT, RIT and RRT. In section 2.3, I will provide a background on Otherness, from its phenomenological origins to its contemporary meaning; drawing overarching Otherness themes from the literature. From this point onwards, I will evaluate literature according to these overarching themes. 2.4 will cover *Othered Identity*, 2.5 will cover *Dehumanization* and 2.6 will cover *Exclusion*.

### 2.1. A COMPREHENSIVE INTRODUCTION TO MANGA

In most English-language literature about *manga*, authors will explain that *manga* literally translates to *improvised, irresponsible, or whimsical pictures* (Gravett, 2004: 8; Brienza, 2009: 102; Terpstra, 2012: 1; McCarthy, 2014: 6; Hernández-Pérez, 2019: 7). However, the literal translation of the term and the contemporary reality of the medium could not be more different.

In simple terms, *manga* are comic books made and published in Japan, by Japanese publishing houses. However, the medium's style, cultural context, 'cultural odour' and content all contribute to how *manga* is defined and distinguish *manga* from other variations of comic book. First and foremost, "cultural odor" (Iwabuchi, 2002: 27) refers to the essence that ties any given object with its culture

of origin. This essence can include “features... images... ideas... ways of life,” in other words, anything that gives an object a positive “cultural association with the country of its invention” (2002: 27). *Manga’s* cultural odour can therefore be perceived as its “Japaneseness” (Tsai, 2015: 231).

Because *manga* employs unique visual and storytelling techniques that are unused elsewhere (Ueno, 2019), there is contention, especially outside of Japan, as to whether the term *manga* is defined by its style, or by its location (Kacsuk, 2018). According to Brienza, “in the English language *manga* has come to refer both to Japanese and Japanese-influenced comic books” (Brienza, 2010: 105), which suggests the term can be appropriated. In fact, English-language publishing companies have attempted to capitalize on *manga’s* ever-increasing popularity, through ‘*manga*’ adaptations of widely read works, such as the *Twilight* series (Kim, 2011) and the *Shakespeare* line.

However, Berndt calls to “reflect upon *manga* as Japanese comics” (Berndt, 2008: 299), because defining *manga* according to “a certain ‘*manga style*’ shows ignorance of its history and present variety. Furthermore, Ueno’s publication (2019) reveals that the *manga style* exists in other areas of Japanese media, the most notable of which are *anime* (Japanese animation) and film. Ueno points to aspect-to-aspect transition, limited animation and pillow shots as staple techniques and believes they provide audiences with a constant sense of anticipation.

In his article *Re-Examining the ‘What Is Manga’ Problematic* (2018), Kacsuk weighs this “style versus made in Japan” dichotomy (2018: 1). He concludes that while *manga* does indeed have a unique style, there appears to be an extremely deep, “fundamental interrelationship between manga and Japan” (2018: 14). What constitutes as *manga* is thus not a question of “either-or positions,” rather it is a matter of “and-and” (2018: 15). The formation of *manhua* and *manhwa* in China and Korea respectively lends weight to Kaczuk’s conclusion. The *manga* fandom in these countries is vast, but instead of appropriating the term, authors have adopted the

style and localized both content and production to form local variations of comic book (Kalen, 2012), suggesting that *manga* possesses something that cannot be replicated. This has caused scholars to ponder the significance of *manga*'s cultural background and cultural context towards its contemporary reality.

Several authors have attempted to trace the history of *manga* to its origins (Schodt, 1983; Gravett, 2004; Koyama-Richard, 2007; McCarthy, 2014). McCarthy (2014: 6) and Koyama-Richard reach as far back as 700CE, when "rude caricatures" were discovered scribbled on ceiling beams in the Horyu-ji temple in Nara. Even the more feasible origins in the *Toba-e*, "a series of cartoons on scrolls" drawn by a Buddhist priest sometime around 1100CE that were "sold to the public," (McCarthy, 2014: 6) are nothing like the *manga* of today. Allegedly, the term was first employed with its contemporary meaning in mind by Kitazawa Rakuten, a late 19<sup>th</sup> early 20<sup>th</sup> century political cartoonist (Koyama-Richard, 2007: 64), who introduced narratives to his six-panel caricatures. Rakuten is aptly known as the "father of modern *manga*" (McCarthy, 2014: 14), but *manga* have developed enormously since.

The journey of *manga* is by no means one of cultural isolation; rather it is transcultural. It is the culmination of centuries of artistic and narrative ingenuity brought together from across the globe. In 1861, Charles Wirgman, an expatriate from the UK, left London to establish Japan's first "satirical magazine... *Japan Punch*" (McCarthy, 2014: 8). McCarthy suggested that "Wirgman... pioneered the speech balloon" in 1907 (McCarthy, 2014: 16), but Koyama-Richard's contradicts this in her book, revealing that in 1895, an American comic strip known as *The Yellow Kid* was already employing them (Koyama-Richard, 2007: 126). Kitazawa Rakuten, who introduced narratives to Japanese caricatures in 1905, had previously worked on an American weekly magazine in the United States (Koyama-Richard, 2007: 115; McCarthy, 2014: 14). In 1928, Japanese *mangaka* (manga artist) Suiho Tagawa created a series called *Norakuro Nitou Sotsu* (McCarthy, 2014: 18), which was the first to run for over a decade and drew its inspiration from Walt Disney's

*Mickey Mouse* (McCarthy, 2014: 18). McCarthy and Koyama-Richard suggest American, British, French and German influences and Canivet-Fovez (2014) even alludes to Belgian contributions towards the evolution of *manga*.

What is known to readers today was brought together at the fingertips of Osamu Tezuka, the *God of Manga* (Koyama-Richard, 2007; McCarthy, 2014). Tezuka is widely known to have drawn heavily on “Western film and comics” for inspiration; Walt Disney productions in particular (McCarthy, 2014: 24). By “[introducing] cinematic techniques” and a sequential “narrative style” to a medium that was episodic (Prough, 2011: 34), he enabled stories to extend beyond panels, pages, or chapters and span multiple volumes. In doing so, he inadvertently pioneered *story-manga* and laid the foundations for contemporary *manga*.

Contemporary *manga* is released chapter by chapter on weekly, fortnightly, monthly, or bi-monthly schedules in anthology magazines alongside other series. Anthologies are cheap enough for consumers to buy and discard them on a daily basis (Gravett, 2004: 14). After a series has reached twenty chapters, the first ten are compiled into book-format, or *manga books*, which is where publishing companies make their money. The most popular series are often adapted to *anime*. Each anthology is different, but the content therein is intentional and they cover a host of topics that “appeal to a variety of readers” (Tsai, 2015), ranging from children to working adults. One might assume that series published within anthologies are determined based on genres like horror, comedy, drama, but *manga* are instead marketed according to demographic, meaning genres often overlap.

The four major demographics are determined by age and sex. These are; *shonen manga*, which targets young males; *shojo manga*, which targets young females; *seinen manga*, which targets adult males; and *josei manga*, which targets adult females (Brienza, 2011: 45). Other well-known demographics include *kodomo manga*, which targets children; *yaoi manga*, which are “homoerotic romances between... male characters, written by” female authors for female readers (Prough,

2011: 44); and *gekiga manga*, a form of punk *manga* that originated in the 1960s and 1970s and reflected the social unrest of the times (McCarthy, 2014: 32).

Immensely popular in Japan, the *manga* industry represented over 35% of all publications at its peak in 1996 (Schodt, 2013). Drummond-Mathews suggests that “at least three times as many people” consume *manga* as indicated by “circulation figures” and among all demographics, the largest and most widely consumed by a long way is *shonen manga* (2010: 62; ANN, 2011). *Shonen* is also the most popular demographic, boasting the largest crossover readership (Drummond-Mathews, 2010; Hodgkins, 2019). Nine of the twelve all-time best-selling *manga* (Watson, 2020) and seven of the ten high-grossing *manga* of 2019 are *shonen* (Loo, 2019), which raises questions as to what about them make them so appealing.

A global habit survey of consumer lifestyles and their media preferences was conducted by Hakuodo (2013) between 2010 and 2012. It covered 36 major cities across the globe, including New York, Sydney and London and revealed that *manga* were preferred to local alternatives in most of the surveyed locations, quite heavily in the cases of Hong Kong and Taipei. The report hypothesises that a major reason for this popularity is that “Japanese cartoon characters are not easily identified as belonging to particular races or ethnic groups” (2013: 2). I must add that no African or Latin American cities were included in the survey and as characters often possess lighter skin tones, this particular hypothesis is not entirely representative. The Hakuodo report also hypothesises that *manga*’s tendency to “focus on personal growth” is what universally appeals to readers (2013: 2). Fuller (2012), however, believes that personal growth is just the tip of the iceberg.

Fuller notes that *manga* reflect “a certain age group’s idealism all the way from childhood to adulthood” (2012: 22), implying longevity. The medium often introduces “complex issues that typical American fodder of the establishment may not cover” (Fuller, 2012: 22). Until the recent rise of Netflix cartoons like *Rick & Morty* (2013), *Bojack Horseman* (2014) and *Final Space* (2018), Fuller contends that the

vast majority of American comics and cartoons have been episodic, formulaic, “traditionally light, often shallow” (Fuller, 2012: 22). In a direct comparative using themes of good and evil, he further remarks that the “Western tradition [...] shows everything evil being destroyed, with all that is good being preserved” (Fuller, 2012: 4), essentially the subjugation of Otherness. Manga on the other hand, explores perspectives of the subjugated. Fuller points at themes covered by many postwar *manga* as evidence, such as “hope rising from endless devastation” (Fuller, 2012: 2), survival and rebirth (Fuller, 2012: ii), or most tellingly, that the use of “technology to conquer nature... leads to negative consequences” (Fuller, 2012: 2).

Initially, *manga* had been geared towards educating and entertaining children (Prough, 2011: 28), but after WWII, Japanese publishers found themselves asking “how to raise a new generation of children” in a traumatized nation (Prough, 2011: 45). Along with the landscape of Japan, the atomic bomb significantly altered the psyche of its people, particularly by way of “lasting grief” (Fuller, 2012: 17). Publishers wanted *manga* to teach readers positive moral values and positive ways of life and Tezuka, who gave *manga* “the speed and flow of film” (Prough, 2011: 34) and pioneered *story-manga*, also managed to achieve this thematically. Tezuka instilled an underlying message in postwar *mangaka* (*manga* authors) that advocated for “bettering humanity to avoid a dark future,” which he believed would depend “on [humankind’s] ability to settle [its] differences” (Fuller, 2012: ii).

Postwar *manga* focused on overcoming the atomic bomb, wherein a new world would often emerge from the old one. Along with it, however, came renewed good and bad (Fuller, 2012: 4). From Fuller’s perspective, this message encourages humankind to never cease in its effort to improve (2012: 162). Humankind will always face struggle, it will always be engaged in conflict, but it must persevere indefinitely to overcome difference, to overcome itself. Whaley, who researched racial difference in several of Tezuka’s works (2007), provides an alternate perspective. He suggests Tezuka actually had “a deeply pessimistic view” of

humankind and believed it “unwilling or unready to accept... difference” (Whaley, 2007: 91). When portraying this renewal of good and bad, Whaley suggests Tezuka was not encouraging humankind’s continued betterment, rather he was alluding to the inevitability of continued struggle and conflict, on the basis of its inability to overcome Otherness. Regardless, Tezuka is widely perceived as “[trumpeting] humanism” and bearing “love for all living things” (Whaley, 2007: 90).

According to Fuller, Tezuka’s influence on postwar *mangaka* can be best seen in *Barefoot Gen* (Nakazawa, 1973). A brutally honest retelling of the *mangaka*’s life, the protagonist survives an atomic bomb, but loses most of his family. Nevertheless, he helps other surviving victims where and when he can. Such *manga* series are not merely descriptive, but they share their protagonists’ experiences of struggle and suffering with readers (Fuller, 2012: 18). While contemporary *manga* have certainly diversified from this postwar narrative, the message of *overcoming* that Tezuka left behind remains steadfast, as does *manga*’s propensity for exhibiting the struggles that their characters experience. It can therefore be concluded that *manga*’s international popularity derives not solely from the personal growth achieved by characters, but that readers bear witness to characters who struggle and who persevere to overcome these struggles, just as they would.

Prough (2011) explains that there exist thematic differences among demographics, most notably between *shonen* and *shojo*. For Prough, *shojo* series, often romances, enable ‘young females’ to explore and understand “a range of human relationships and emotions” (Prough, 2011: 2). Midori Makita, a *shojo manga* expert who has analysed over 350 volumes, argues that *shojo manga* are far more profound. *Shojo* series also address struggle and those faced by protagonists, such as being a female in modern society, are struggles their readers hope to solve (Stimson, 2017; Oyashima, 2019). Makita’s research suggests that *shojo* protagonists are almost exclusively females, who tend to be romantically passive. Their love interests are generally male, of high social status, handsome and

romantically proactive (Stimson, 2017). These protagonists “get close to the source of stress in a patriarchal society – a man of high social status” (Stimson, 2017). Love interests are representative of society and when protagonists are recognized by them, Makita believes female readers equate this to “being recognized by society” (Stimson, 2017).

The wealth of English-language research that has been conducted on *shojo manga* suggests that academics also see its value. Most publications are textual analyses of specific *manga* series, either revering *shojo*’s capacity for female empowerment through their representations of strong female characters (Anan, 2014; Hemmann, 2014); shedding light on the struggles of womanhood, both psychologically and socially (Oyashima, 2019; Tamura, 2019); or praising *shojo*’s frequent contesting of gender norms (Hurtford, 2009; Sasaki, 2013; Anan, 2019; Cockerill, 2019). Other works shed light on aspects of its content and cultural context that have facilitated towards its repute (Prough, 2011; Shamoan, 2012). As academic interest in *manga* is young, most scholars tend to argue in its favour and therefore, they are almost unanimous in their belief that *shojo manga* has proved emancipatory for female readers, both in Japan and internationally.

Research on *shonen manga* is far less common. Having searched through over a thousand texts, *shonen manga* are often discussed, but this is mainly when providing descriptions of the Japanese publishing structure, or to provide stylistic and thematic contrast to the *shojo* demographic. Few publications actually centre themselves around the *shonen* demographic and from the body of literature that was available to me, I found merely four to be noteworthy.

Two were textual analyses of various *shonen* series, both of which concluded that the respective *shonen* protagonists were embodiments of the Other, either within the narrative, or when placed in a wider socio-cultural context (Sasada, 2011; Okabe, 2019). Bautista (2019) explored *shonen manga*’s capacity for influencing fan practices, noting a trend among young Filipino Kendo practitioners, wherein the

*manga Rurouni Kenshin* (1999) appeared a common motivator towards picking up the martial art. Lastly, Drummond-Mathews (2010) provides an overview of *shonen manga*, its history, its genres and its narrative structure.

On its narrative structure in particular, Drummond-Mathews explains stories are often about coming of age and tend to follow a “separation, initiation and return” pattern, where the protagonist is asked to go on a quest. They will initially refuse, but reluctantly change their mind later on. They will then begin their journey into the unknown, face the threat of death, attempt to overcome the final struggle and ultimately, return to their regular lives as more mature individuals (2010: 70-71). However, Drummond-Mathews also states that among the many genres prevalent in *shonen manga*, the favourites are sports series and action-adventures (2010: 64-65). While this structure certainly applies to some action-adventure series, it is undeniably outdated. Most contemporary protagonists are introduced with goals in mind and they relentlessly pursue these goals.

Tsai’s account of *shonen’s* narrative structure is more representative (2015). She applies Ruth Benedict’s observations of the behavior of Japanese soldiers during WWII to the mentality of *shonen* protagonists (2012). Benedict noted that the Japanese mentality viewed the social scorn from surrendering as a fate worse than death and as such, soldiers would continue to battle even when there was no hope of survival. Tsai notes that “this extreme nature is reflected in manga heroes who never surrender” to anything, no matter the struggles they must undergo. Therefore, while protagonists might appear to be “defeated physically... their spirit has to win” (2015: 19). *Shonen* characters have even been shown to pass out in the heat of battle, standing proud and unwavering. What amounts from this is a “circular structure of challenge (or failure), training and victory” (2015: 19).

In summary, *shonen manga* are a culmination of transcultural artistic techniques spanning centuries; a unique publishing context that does not enforce genre restrictions; an underlying message to overcome difference that derives from

Tezuka's disillusionment with humanity; remnants of a national mentality that feared social ostracism more than death. I have provided a definition of and a background to *manga*. I have contextualised it within its socio-cultural environment and I have explored its cultural odour, primarily through content. I alluded to ties to Otherness and noted structural and thematic differences between *shonen* and *shojo manga*, the most widely read and the most commonly studied demographics respectively. Next, I will rationalise *manga* as the medium of choice for this thesis. I will shed light on its increasing presence in English-speaking countries, which will indicate its relevance as a form of popular culture among English-language audiences.

At the turn of the millennium, the demand for, production and consumption of *manga* in English-language countries, in particular the USA, grew at an unprecedented rate. Brienza reveals that sales figures in the USA shot "from \$60 million in 2002 to \$210 million in 2007" (Brienza: 2009: 101). This sudden 'boom' in popularity among English-speaking audiences proved a particularly noteworthy phenomenon, effectively kickstarting academic interest in the medium. Many subsequently gone on to investigate the underlying reasons for its success, or alternatively, for its failure to succeed in their own cultural contexts (Fusanosuke, 2003; Bouissou, 2008; Cooper-Chen, 2011; Drazen, 2011; Freedman, 2016; Johansson 2017; Miyata and Kondo and Sakamoto, 2019; Pashchenko and Kyrlyova, 2019). None of these works are more extensive, or more detailed than Casey Brienza's (2009 & 2010 & 2011 & 2014a & 2016a & 2016b).

Brienza, who investigated the phenomenon from a production of culture perspective, attributes *manga's* success predominantly to Tokyopop's marketing strategy (2009). This consisted of compiling *manga* into books as opposed to classic floppies, standardizing the trim-size at 5 by 7.5 inches at a \$9.99 price point per volume, retaining the right-to-left reading orientation, increasing the speed of translation and publication and among various other tweaks, promoting them as "100% Authentic Manga" (Brienza, 2009: 111). In doing so, *manga* were shifted from

the comics field, which consists of a predominantly male readership and was noted as closed-off from 'outsiders', to the book field (Brienza, 2009: 105), which consists of a predominantly female readership and was noted as more inviting and welcoming to new consumers (Brienza, 2009: 106).

Publications by Johansson (2017) and Pashchenko and Kyrylova (2019) only support Brienza's conclusion. Their works explore why *manga* failed to find success in Sweden and Ukraine respectively. Johansson notes that while Swedish publishers began releasing more content, they were doing so in the form of floppies, rather than the book Brienza noted as imperative. The Swedish publishing system was unused to long-running series in this format (2017: 77). Furthermore, Johansson adds that there exists an inherent disapproval of *manga* in Sweden, with the medium being deemed harmful to children (2017: 80). Alternatively, Pashchenko and Kyrylova reveal that while there exists definite potential for a *manga* industry in Ukraine, there are no "official media channels promoting" it (2019: 59).

Miyata et al. (2019), Freedman (2016) and Terpstra (2012), suggest there are other powers at play. Miyata et al. in particular believe that Japanese publishing giants Shogakukan should be credited, for while Brienza lauds Tokyopop's marketing strategy, Miyata et al. suggest Shogakukan's need to expand caused them to franchise their "comics into other media," (2019: 1). They established subsidiaries abroad, the most notable being Viz Media in the USA and marketed *manga* as part of a media mix, consisting of *manga*, *anime* and video games (MAG). This perspective is echoed in recent works by Hernández-Pérez (2019) and Oishi et al. (2019), both of whom acknowledge *manga* as components of a cross-media franchise comprising of the three aforementioned media. While Brienza cannot be faulted for concluding that Tokyopop's marketing strategy provided significant input towards the success of *manga*, this did not occur in a vacuum.

Terpstra (2012) and Freedman (2016) highlight possibly the most significant factor of all - the fans. According to Terpstra, *manga* had impacted English-

speaking audiences well before the official licensing and translating of series was regularized. The Internet provided *manga* with a platform for its widespread distribution and fans began scanning and translating *manga* texts from Japanese into English themselves, before publishing them on the internet for others to access and read free of charge. These individuals are called *scanlators*, which is a merging of the words *scan* and *translators* (Leonard, 2005; Napier, 2007; Douglass et al., 2011; Lee, 2012; Terpstra, 2012; Brienza, 2014a; Lampinen, 2020). Scholars like Leonard (2005) and Napier (2007) credit these *scanlators* with establishing the “foundation for a thriving market” (Terpstra, 2012: 1).

Terpstra reveals that American *manga* publishers had a peculiar relationship with *scanlators*. They would “[monitor] their activities for signs of market trends, while maintaining an official stance against them” (2012: 2). Publishers would scapegoat *scanlators* for illegally distributing English-language translations of *manga*, whilst simultaneously exploiting their labour for profit, licensing many popular *scanlated* series, leading Terpstra to conclude that “the manga industry is an example of an industry built on foundations of piracy” (Terpstra, 2012: 3). Freedman (2016) echoes this sentiment, but her focus is aimed at students. She states that students have not only “engaged with manga and anime more intimately than with other cultural forms,” but have traditionally promoted the medium far more than publishers – Pashchenko and Kyrylova’s (2019) publication about Ukraine being case and point. Freedman (2016) also reminds us that it was a fan-movement that brought back the English-language dub of *Sailor Moon* (1992).

From these various angles, both local and international, both in production and consumption, *manga* has risen in relevance. *Manga* reading apps are now so commonplace that scholars are looking into creating frameworks to optimize panel extraction for smartphones (Hung, 2019). Others argue on the back of successful experiments, that its expressive system could be employed as a replacement for chat emojis (Itou, 2019). Hollywood has adapted *Dragon Ball* (*Dragonball*:

*Evolution*, 2009), *Ghost in the Shell* (2017), *GUNNM (Alita: Battle Angel)*, 2018) and Netflix licensed and adapted *Death Note* (2017), to mixed success. In the USA, Borders has become a renowned *manga* seller. In the UK, *Waterstones* and cult entertainment stores like *Forbidden Planet* have dedicated sections to *manga*. *Manga* is becoming increasingly featured at UK conventions, such as the MCM Comic Cons (Tsai, 2015: 14). Others like Alcon and Tokonatsu are almost exclusively dedicated to the MAG media-mix, welcoming fan engagement through Cosplay, Fanfic, Fanart and more. Beyond this, *anime & manga* societies have been established at schools, colleges and universities across the country.

The above trends indicate *manga's* relevance among contemporary adult audiences internationally and in the UK. However, as I have discussed, the medium is embedded with Japanese culture and *manga* texts are forged within a Japanese socio-cultural context, meaning that they bear a Japanese cultural odour, an essence that intimately and unmistakably ties them to Japan. This odour perseveres in translated texts at the level of content and at the level of production, despite the translation and marketing processes. Even its style, which is transcultural in nature, is commonly identified as *the manga style*. With the indubitability of its cultural odour in mind, the question arises as to whether this will influence the capacity for UK readers to extract meaning from these 'foreign' texts.

## **2.2. READER INTERACTION WITH MANGA**

In the coming sections, I will contemplate *manga* texts as cultural objects and explain why the presence of Japanese cultural odour should not hinder non-Japanese readers in their capacity to extrapolate meaning. Thereafter, I will reveal how readers go about making meaning by exploring Reader Response Theory (RRT), Narrative Transportation Theory (NTT) and variations of Identification Theory (IT). These audience-oriented theories will feature frequently throughout this thesis

and will prove pivotal to understanding how readers engage with texts, identify and respond to themes within, or framing, the narratives of *shonen manga*.

Daniel Miller introduces the field of material culture in his book *Stuff* (2010). Before he attempts to unravel the ambiguity and simultaneous complexity of 'stuff', he says to the reader "just don't ask for a clear definition" (2010: 1). In doing so, he prepares the reader for the reality that there are no parameters that determine the kinds of objects that are worth studying. At the start of his academic career, Miller was taught that the best way to "appreciate the role of objects was to consider them as signs and symbols that represent us" (2010: 12). Miller comes to the conclusion that while this may indeed be the case on occasion, sometimes it is not. The example he provides to support this is from his own personal experience.

During his PhD, Miller spent a year living in the northwest of India looking at a range of pots crafted in a local village, because they had been the source of much archaeological interest and interpretation. It was expected that they were going to be representative of the people who made them (Miller, 2010: 44), but the villagers kept trying to explain to him that "the pots [were] not the point, they [were] the frame" (Miller, 2010: 50). They neither represented who these villagers were, nor how they lived and acted, only as background decorations on special occasions. Miller learned that these pots would only become cultural objects if they bore value and meaning to those who used them; otherwise they were just pots.

If no one ever consumes an object, there will never be any value ascribed to it and therefore, no meaning will ever be extracted from it. Miller applies this idea to objects that are generally considered culturally odourless, on the basis that they are commonplace among consumers around the world: clothes and phones. On the one hand, Miller notes the varying significance of clothing on the construction of identity in Trinidad, India and England (2010: 13 & 23 & 31). On the other hand, he learns how mobile phones facilitate the day to day survival of many communities in Jamaica, whereas in the UK, they are luxury goods (Miller, 2010: 126). While

clothing and phones are universal objects, they can still be considered cultural objects based on the value administered to them by their consumers.

Iwabuchi coined the term *mukokuseki* to signify “the unembedded expression of race, ethnicity, and culture” (2002: 33). *Mukokuseki* is used in reference to cultural objects whose cultural odour has been stripped away, leaving them “culturally odorless” (Adamowicz, 2014: 39). When cultural objects achieve widespread popularity, they become universal, like clothes and phones and thus, lose the essence that makes them unique to a certain place, or community. As such, they become culturally odourless, *mukokuseki*. This term is applicable to anything, from fashion, to games, to music and more recently, to *manga*, because it has achieved international recognition (Iwabuchi 2002; Brienza, 2009 & 2016a).

Brienza is an expert on the American *manga* publishing industry, whose research has helped push the study of *manga* towards adopting methodological approaches that focus more on ethnographic research. However, I believe that Brienza’s perspective on the *mukokuseki* of *manga* is quite extreme (2016). She posits that the strategies employed by American publishing companies to facilitate its success in the West have served to erase its cultural odour (2016). In fact, in an earlier publication, Brienza wrote that the medium was doomed to become “just another category of books, like cookbooks, science fiction” and that “actors throughout the field [would] slowly lose their ability to detect that odor at all” (Brienza, 2009: 115). Recently, she has attempted to support this by concluding that *manga* have been domesticated and Americanized in the West (2016).

Contrary to her opinion, recent publications textually analysing the use of Japanese folklore in series (Quintairos-Soliño, 2019), publications uncovering *manga* as a motivation for learning Japanese (Iida & Armour, 2019), publications looking at the rise in content tourism, particularly to Japan, the home of *manga* (Hu et al., 2020; Yamamura & Seaton, 2020), suggest that translated texts bear plenty of cultural odour. Not to mention, Brienza herself noted that *manga* were marketed in

the West as “100% Authentic Manga” (2009: 111), on the basis that their right-to-left reading format in both page and panel had been retained. Readers are clearly perceptive of Japanese cultural odour in *manga* and Tsai’s thesis, wherein young British readers are interviewed, reveals that the presence of “‘Japaneseness’... contributed to their engagement with manga” (2015: 231).

Tsai’s participants, however, like many English-speaking readers who share neither their national history, their collective experiences, nor their language with Japanese readers, will never perceive the same relevance in these texts as their Japanese counterparts, but they do not need to. They are reading translated texts and any meaning they draw from *manga* comes from these translations, which they are capable of engaging with all the same. Tsai very clearly states that “stories have the power to draw our attention and engage our cognitive and emotional faculties” (2015: 36), which disregards cultural odour. It then becomes apparent that while non-Japanese readers have perceived Japanese cultural odour in *manga*, *manga* texts are not dependent upon pre-existing cultural odour to become cultural objects for non-Japanese readers. After all, cultural objects are determined based on what they mean to those who consume them (Miller, 2010).

I turn to Adamowicz for an alternate interpretation of *mukokuseki*, where the lack of cultural odour refers instead to transcultural properties, which, when applied to *manga*, turns *manga* texts into sites where “new meanings and values” are created (Adamowicz, 2014: 38). Original *manga* texts and their translations alike become equal in their capacity to communicate meaning. In turn, this validates my focus on English-language translations of *manga* texts, it validates my focus on readers from within the UK and it forces me to consider exactly how readers might go about making meaning, for which I will examine RRT, NTT and IT.

Reader Response Theory (RRT) is a branch of literary thought that places its emphasis on readers and their role in making meaning from texts. It completely opposes Formalist thought, which disregards the reader. It also opposes New

Criticism, which values only what exists within the text. Within RRT, there are multiple approaches. Tyson (2006) attempts to define them, but notes that they tend to have overlapping beliefs. The Transactional approach, led by Rosenblatt (1938), argues that a text bears an inferred meaning. A reader's interpretation of that meaning is influenced by their emotions and knowledge at the time of reading. Later, Iser (1972) adds to this approach, stating that every text has an implied reader. In contrast, the Affective Stylistics approach perceives a text to bear no meaning whatsoever beyond that extracted by the reader. A pioneer of this theory is Fish (1970), who believes meaning is an active process that *does* something to readers. Fish later contributed the Social approach, wherein he noted that a reader's social context and environment were equally impactful to how they interpret texts (1980). The Psychological approach, conceived by Holland (1975), identified how much one reader's interpretation could vary from the next and concluded that a reader's motives influenced this. Lastly, the Subjective approach attempts to identify real meaning by looking for trends among various reader interpretations.

Rosenblatt's Transactional approach accounts for differing interpretations among readers, as both the emotions and knowledge of each reader will vary. Iser's contribution recognises that readers will identify with different texts based on how similar to, or removed they are from, the implied reader. Fish's initial approach of Affective Stylistics suggests cognitive and affective responses by the reader. His later Social approach acknowledges the role played by the reader's social context and social environment, because these factors will sculpt a reader's awareness -or lack thereof- towards certain themes. Given how recently *manga* has appeared in the West, it comes as no surprise that the examples used by these Western reader-response theorists were largely based on reader interpretations of novels or poems.

Recently, Hakemulder et al. have compiled a handbook called *Narrative Absorption* (2017), which brings together works from a wide range of academic fields to understand and dissect narrative absorption, in other words, a reader's

immersive engagement with a narrative world. While Hakemulder et al. contend that this can be achieved through all sorts of cultural objects, even those extending beyond the realm of narrative media, the book does draw on many RRT elements. This is clearest in Narrative Transportation Theory (NTT), a sub-theory of narrative absorption that refers to the cognitive, affective and imaginative engagement of a recipient during immersion within a narrative. NTT is central to a narrative's persuasion, or "influence on recipients' attitudes and beliefs" (2017: 49)

An important part of engaging with a narrative is identification. Hakemulder et al. describe identification as a process whereby recipients "identify with story characters by taking the characters' perspectives and understanding their emotions, goals, and actions" (2017: 260). Consequently, I shall refer to this as Narrative Identification (NI) to distinguish it from Rosenblatt's theory of *compensatory mechanism of identification* (1970), which I will refer to as Reader Identification (RI), because it is embedded in RRT and is exclusive to readers.

RI combines ideas from the various approaches to RRT and when compared to NI, there are clear differences, mainly that RI appears far more personal to the reader, whereas NI appears more character-oriented. Rosenblatt contends that readers are guided "by their preoccupations at the time they read. Their real-life problems and needs make them focus on particular characters and situations" (Tsai, 2015: 51). Readers will compensate for their own "lacks or failures through identification with a character... who makes fuller use of capacities similar to [their] own" (Rosenblatt, 1970: 41). In doing so, readers are enabled to "reflect on their real-life issues from a detached position" (Tsai, 2015: 51). RI emphasises a reader's capacity to identify and differentiate simultaneously and suggests that because readers are provided with externalised perspectives on situations that pertain to them, they can contemplate their own circumstances in a different way.

Having applied RRT and NTT to the study of young *manga* readers in the UK, Tsai (2015) demonstrated the applicability of both. Her participants felt they were

“taught... things about their own world” by *manga* texts (2015: 229), which revealed a transactional nature between medium and reader and led Tsai to focus on Rosenblatt. Although Tsai expounds RI and NI, incorporating elements of both, neither appeared to be central components to her thesis. However, based on Tsai’s findings, I hypothesize that RI and NI will prove of extreme significance throughout this thesis in understanding how and why readers are drawn to certain *manga* narratives, *manga* characters and Otherness themes. Tsai notes that her participants “showed a tendency to look for familiar elements to make sense of unfamiliar ones” (2015: 228). Their “engagement with manga [was] also tied to the personal relevance that they found within the story” (2015: 229), in that they drew on personal experience to rationalize character “judgements... actions and motivations” (2015: 229). Here, Tsai alludes RI. Tsai then discusses her participants’ forgiveness of “villains” on the basis of empathy (2015: 243), which alludes to NI. The contrast supports the notion that RI and NI function independently of each other.

In fact, Tsai’s findings allude to the notion that RI and NI can be used to understand how and why readers engage with texts at a sociological level. RI, for example, refers to the reader’s identification with characters and collectives on the basis of shared personal experiences of Otherness, whether shared feelings of being the Other, shared differences that are normalized as Otherness, shared circumstances of being Othered, and so on. These experiences of Otherness are drawn from the readers’ personal lives and are embedded with the readers’ social contexts. It is highly likely that these experiences will influence readers in their identification of Otherness and their interpretation of *manga* texts and Otherness themes therein. Similarly, NI refers to the reader’s capacity to be absorbed by a text’s narrative and through exposure to certain characters, to experience these characters’ experiences vicariously. Consequently, while the reader may not identify with a character based on shared personal experience, the reader’s social context will influence their interpretation of the Otherness identified within the narrative.

Furthermore, both RI and NI bear the capacity to bring about reader empathy for characters; Tsai's findings suggest that empathy is not limited to either one.

An increasing number of academics believe that narrative transportation through *manga* is actively facilitated by the medium's multimodality, or in other words, its combination of visual, literary and imagined components. They argue that this makes *manga* better at communicating ideas, messages, themes and worldviews than other forms of text might (Schodt, 1996; Schwartz and Rubenstein-Avila, 2006; Berndt, 2010; Bryce et al., 2010). Recent publications, most of which are content analyses, have become more specific, with scholars looking at individual facets of its multimodality. Delgado-Algarre analysed content (2017), asserting that *manga* can influence moral values in readers. Rohan et al. (2018) looked at the impact of onomatopoeia in *manga*, concluding that it enhances the medium's communicative power. However, the most significant facet is fragmentation, which Tsai argues as "key to the engaging power of manga" (2015: 54). The fragmentation of image and narrative not only leaves the reader in a state of anticipation (Ueno, 2019), but it creates gaps that force the reader to engage on an imaginative level. Barthold (2018) contends that when these fragmented components come together, the result is an experience that extends beyond that of a mere story.

Most of these works are textual analyses, but Brown (2012) argues that this alone is insufficient. I therefore turn to a series of case studies conducted by Leung et al. (2014 & 2015 & 2016), exploring whether the exposure to *manga* with messages promoting intake of fruit and later, vegetables, might influence the food consumption choices of young American readers. These experiments proved promising, but in isolation no conclusion could be drawn. Shimazaki et al. (2018) later conducted a similar case study that maintained the focus on food. Their case study targeted Japanese patients with metabolic syndrome and investigates how food *manga* influences their attitudes towards healthy eating. Again, the outcome is promising. While both research collectives noted the need to identify whether

any “psychological mediators” contribute to *manga*’s effect (2018: 7), their studies echo the notion that narrative transportation is highly potent through *manga*. They also achieve this using culturally, ethnically and linguistically distinct focus groups. What can be drawn from this is that a *manga* text is capable of influencing someone, even if the individual in question is not the text’s intended reader. Simultaneously, scholars are noticing the value of *manga* as an educational tool, through its capacity to engage (Tsai, 2015; Delgado-Algarra, 2017; McGrath, 2019).

Reader engagement with *manga* often extends beyond the realm of the textual and into the realm of the social. Tsai (2015), who’s thesis looks at young UK reader engagement with *manga* is particularly significant. Her participants engaged in “fan talk, drawing manga, gaming and Cosplay” (2015: 231). Literature on participatory practices has tended to explore Cosplay (Winge, 2006; Gin, 2011; Lunning, 2011) and *scanlation* (Douglass et al., 2011; Lee, 2012; Terpstra, 2012), the latter of which was not featured in Tsai’s conclusion as this is more common in adults (Freedman, 2016). Scholars have said of Cosplay that it facilitates social interaction (Winge, 2006); it provides readers with a way to express their affections for *manga*; it enables them to seek collective identity (Lunning, 2011); and it allows them to “enunciate their real-life identities and their ideal identities” (Tsai, 2015: 79). On *scanlation*, scholars have been far more interested in investigating its legality and its market impact than *scanlation* as a participatory practice.

Participatory practices provided Tsai’s participants with the opportunity to establish “social [networks] where members support each other’s interest in manga” (2015: 230). They “gained a sense of recognition... acceptance” and “positive identity” from interacting and bonding with other like-minded individuals (2015: 230). It is evident that a reader’s commitment to *manga* extends beyond the personal and comes with “social benefits” in the “pursuit of identity and friendship” (Tsai, 2015: 81). Participatory practices can thus be viewed as forms of social engagement by readers that facilitate their construction of personal and social

identities, both as *manga* fans and members of a *manga* fandom.

Adding to this, Schwarz & Rubenstein-Ávila (2011) mainly speak of *manga*'s multimodality, but also explain that *manga* function as sites for the negotiation and creation of identity. Chen (2011) applies this notion of *manga* as a site for identity construction and explores the participatory practices of five young American adults. In doing so, Chen concludes that readers construct their identity through *manga* on the basis of what they lack and therefore, what they desire (2011: 277). Readers want to "change [their] unsatisfactory [identities]" and they want "more flexibility in living their lives" (2011: 278). Most significantly, Chen discovered that while his participants could identify the Japanese cultural odour of the medium, they were not simply engaging with *manga* to distinguish themselves from their American identities, or "to help them define their American identities" (2011: 278). From this it is suggested once more that the presence of cultural odour within a *manga* text should not influence a reader's capacity to draw meaning therefrom.

Perhaps Chen's most significant conclusion is one that suggests an inherent link between *manga* and Otherness at the level of the reader, that derives from the reader's non-conformity with mainstream notions of social identity, as well as the reader's "resistance to social norms" (2011: 278). Both of these points are alluded to by Tsai (2015: 270) on the basis that *manga* is a form of popular culture and popular culture speaks to the social Other. Tsai notes that popular culture texts "fulfil [readers'] desires to be who they want to be, rather than what the dominant power expects them to be" (2015: 71). Media like *manga* allow the Other to "resist incorporation into the dominant power that attempts to discipline and control them" (Tsai, 2015: 72). This final point leads to provocative questions regarding the Otherness of non-Japanese *manga* readers. It also harkens back to Adamowicz and her interpretation of *mukokuseki*, which embraces *manga*'s transcultural properties and views *manga* texts as sites where "new meanings and values" are created (Adamowicz, 2014: 38). Either *manga* draws the Other to it, offering it ways of

navigating its Otherness, or *manga* is a site that creates a new form of Otherness in the transcultural *manga* fan. Perhaps both.

Throughout this section, I have explained that as consumers of translated *manga* texts, UK readers should not be hindered in their capacity to make meaning by the inherent presence of Japanese cultural odour in *manga*. I have delved into Reader Response Theory and Narrative Transportation Theory, identifying two similar, yet distinct types of Identification, in order to understand how readers are likely to engage with *manga*. I discussed why narrative absorption, a fundamental component to reader engagement, is so potent in *manga*. I then revealed additional layers of engagement beyond those expected within the narrative, that in turn established a link between the medium and Otherness at the level of the reader. In the next half of this chapter, I will explore the concept of Otherness.

### **2.3. A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW OF OTHERNESS**

Throughout this section, I will track the development of Otherness from its phenomenological conception to its current sociological meaning. I will introduce the binary of Self and Other, exploring how this binary becomes a dichotomy; how this dichotomy is hierarchized and characterized; and what this dichotomy comes to represent in various academic fields. I will then discuss the processes by which one is made the Other, through which, I will identify the core Otherness themes according to which the data analysis component of this thesis is structured.

In the branch of Philosophy known as Phenomenology, Descartes posited the Self, the *I*, the *ego* as the source of conscious experience. Although not credited with the conception of Otherness, Descartes' *Meditations of First Philosophy* (1641) distinguishes the Self from all other entities. Descartes does so by employing reason to affirm existence and placing an emphasis on knowledge only being knowledge if it is "apodictic" (Smith, 2003: 11). This way of thinking spawned his *Regress*,

whereby he casts doubt upon every conceivable thing or concept in pursuit of that which absolutely cannot be doubted. Descartes eventually concludes that “I am, I exist is necessarily true whenever it is put forward by me or conceived in my mind” (Smith, 2003: 17). As such, “thought... alone” is apodictic, “thought... alone” affirms his existence and therefore, constitutes the Self (Smith, 2003: 18).

Descartes’ work redirected the focus of philosophy “towards the subject of consciousness” (Smith, 2003: 17), drawing a distinction between the indubitable subject -the Self- and the dubitable non-subject. Anything existing beyond the subject’s conscious experience of thought is not part of the subject and thus *other* to it. Every other thinking being with the capacity to *Regress* becomes another subject and therefore, another Self. As no thinking being can ever posit the thought of another as apodictic, every other thinking being beyond the Self becomes the Other. As every thinking being can conclude that their own thought cannot be posited as apodictic by another Self, they too, become the Other.

Descartes establishes a binary between the Self and the Other, but not one of opposition, as every thinking being is equally Self and equally Other. For Descartes, the Other is purely another Self from the perspective of the Self performing the *Regress*; the Other exists in the eyes of the Self. While he never officially employed the term *the Other*, Descartes (1641) laid significant groundwork for future academics to expand on this binary between Self and Other.

Otherness in phenomenology was continued by Fichte (1796) and Hegel (1807), both of whom explore self-consciousness and self-awareness. Fichte assesses the conditions that must be met for any subject to be considered a *human being*, exclaiming that one “becomes a human being only among other human beings” (2000: XV). A subject requires membership of a human community before it can be recognized as a human being and in turn, obtain its human identity (2000: 11-12). Membership of such a community requires free agency, which a subject can only learn from another subject with prior knowledge of free agency (2000: 42).

With this free agency, the subject must choose to limit its free agency to a "sphere of... possible activity" (2000: 40), wherein which "only the subject could have chosen [the activity] ... not the other" (2000: 40). Limiting one's free agency to a sphere prevents the subject from impeding on the spheres of others and prevents others from impeding on the subject's own sphere. Any subject to not limit its free agency is stripped of its human identity and must "remove itself from all human community" (2000: 12), becoming an outsider. Fichte thus posits the Other as a subject that threatens to impede on another subject's sphere (2000: 133).

Fichte contributes several ideas to Otherness. Firstly, there no longer exists equality between every Self and every Other, because Fichte identifies the Other as that which opposes, or threatens, the ideologies of the Self. Furthermore, by lacking membership to human communities and in turn, by lacking human identity, Fichte establishes the Other as relative to the Self. The Self possesses a shared human identity, but the Other does not. Where humanness is the identity of the Self, the lack of humanness is the Otherness of the Other. Fichte turns the binary into a dichotomy and his conceptualization has led scholars to develop on ideas of Otherness as lack (Lacan, 2015), Otherness as alterity (Sartre, 1956; Levinas, 2001) and Otherness as relative to identity (Howard, 2000; Voicu, 2011).

Hegel's *Lordship and Bondage* in *Phenomenology of Spirit* (1807) outlines the processes a self-conscious being must undergo in order to obtain "self-will" (Hegel, 1977: 119). In doing so, Hegel applies a power hierarchy to the relationship between the Self and the Other, represented by Lord and Bondsman respectively. Contemporary analyses into Hegel's work refer to this as the Master/Slave Dialectic and suggest it details an oscillating balance of power that eventually reaches equilibrium. The Self is initially "lord," purely for-self and driven by desire, whereas the Other is initially "bondsman," purely for-another, existing to serve the lord (Hegel, 1977: 115). Hegel's Self and Other are destined to encounter one another, which leads to confrontation and an eventual struggle to the death.

Over the course of this struggle, the balance of power between Self and Other oscillates. At first, the Self subjugates the Other, then the Self becomes dependent on the subjugated Other, which in turn, places power into the hands of the Other. Through power, the Other becomes the Self and the Self becomes the Other. The Self-as-Other and Other-as-Self are equal in their capacity to occupy each position, but unequal in terms of where the power lies. Due to the convoluted nature of his writing, any understanding of what he truly 'means' is impossible (Cole, 2004), but this lack of clarity leaves his work open to interpretation.

The main interpretations are of the Other as existing within the individual, or the Other as a separate thinking entity. On the one hand, this dialectic can explain an individual's internal struggle between its sense of Self and its sense of Otherness. Here, Hegel's arbitrary struggle to the death refers to the death of the dichotomy, where the Other-as-Self and the Self-as-Other unite within the individual. On the other hand, the dialectic has been applied to real-world social dynamics most notably by De Beauvoir (1949), in relation to the power-based relationship between men and women. De Beauvoir discusses the female struggle for social equality, concluding that the dynamic has yet to reach equilibrium. Similarly, Cole (2004) applies the dialectic to feudalism, suggesting it represents late 18<sup>th</sup> early 19<sup>th</sup> century Germany and the relationship between feudal lords and peasants.

Hegel's Other can be both internal and external, both imagined and real, both equal and unequal. Hegel applies a relationship of power to the binary of Self and Other, where the Self is initially denoted by the possession of power and the Other is initially denoted by the lack of power. Hegel's Other is also embroiled in a struggle for recognition with the Self, both internally as a part of the individual's identity and externally as an equal. Furthermore, if the roles of Self and Other can be reversed depending on where the power lies, this means that Otherness is established in direct opposition to the powerful (Staszak, 2008).

From here, the study of Otherness branches out. Husserl (1931) expands on phenomenology, applying Otherness to conceptualizations of self-consciousness and intersubjectivity, in order to oppose Descartes' ideas of solipsism. In other areas, Fichte's and Hegel's works lead to conceptualizations of the Other within the individual, which is prominent in Philosophy and Psychoanalysis; and the Other as the individual, which is prominent in Anthropology, Cultural Studies, Human Geography and Sociology. Many philosophers to have added to contemporary understandings of Otherness are also cultural and social theorists. Both approaches have drawn from one another to develop and as such, both are relevant.

In Philosophy and Psychoanalysis, Otherness was considered to be a purely psychological phenomenon for some time. Sartre (1956) and Levinas (2001) believed the Other to embody radical opposition from -or absolute alterity to- the Self, but conversely, Derrida (1985) argued that this was impossible, because the Other was *other than* the Self; there must be some pre-existing similarity that the Self could *differentiate from*. Otherwise, the Other would simply be any object. The Other became a subject within reality and questions of Otherness then began to orient themselves around which comes first - the Self or the Other.

Sartre, Lacan and Levinas echo Fichtean and Hegelian notions that the Other precedes the Self, on the basis that the Self must encounter the Other to obtain self-awareness and introspection. While some cultural and social theorists do believe "the identity of the individual [to be] constituted by being borrowed from the Other" (Voicu, 2011: 337), most argue the opposite is true and that the Other is created in contrast to the Self (Conolly, 1991). Tajfel's social identity theory (1979) argues that an individual's sense of identity derives from membership to identity groups, with Mineva adding that "man is self-identifying and is able to be so not by being isolated from others, but by communicating with them" (2007: 37). One's sense of identity and one's sense of Self thus appear to be defined in relation to others (Simmel, 1972; Mengstie, 2011; Dumitrescu. 2014), rather than *the Other*. Through Tajfel, the

binary of Self and Other is applied to social collectives. Furthermore, discourse now emphasises the roles of the Self and identity in constructing the Other.

Voicu (2011: 326) explicates Winterstein's "four primary axes that allow [identity groups] to form". The first axis is "inclusion" and refers to the attributes that enable an individual to "communicate with a group". The second axis is "exclusion" and refers to the "means by which the group differentiates itself from others". The third axis is a "point of identification" and outlines the paradigms, the values, the traits that enable inclusion and exclusion. The fourth is "space" and essentially provides the given group with territorial identification (Voicu, 2011: 326).

Winterstein's *point of identification* refers to the similarities between members of an identity group. According to Noonan and Curtis (2017), identity quite literally means 'sameness,' for "to say that things are identical is to say they are the same" (2017: 2). Identity can also mean distinctness; the fact of being; a sense of self (Howard, 2000: 367); or "permanence through time" (Voicu, 2011: 322), but in context, an identity is formed based on a sameness throughout members. Identity as *sameness as*, contrasts Derrida's Otherness as *difference from*, in the same way that the Self contrasts the Other. Furthermore, Derrida's argued that the Other was *other than*, or *different from* and this requires a pre-existing *sameness as*. One can conclude that the Other is constructed in contrast -or relation- to the Self.

According to Mouffe, "every identity is relational" (1993: 2); the requirement for the existence of any "identity is the affirmation of difference, the determiners of an 'other' that is going to play the... 'constitutive outside'" (1993: 2). Whenever "an in-group is defined, an out-group is automatically created" (Voicu, 2011: 336); this can be seen in Winterstein's axes, particularly the opposing vectors of inclusion and exclusion; this is also seen in academia, where the dichotomy of Self and Other is represented by *Us* and *Them*, or *In-Group* and *Out-Group* respectively.

According to Voicu, dichotomies of *Us* and *Them*, *In* and *Out* can become possessive and form *my* and *not my*, or *ours* and *not ours* (2011: 327). Tajfel adds

that membership provides members a sense of belonging (1979), which when coupled with possessives, sees value placed onto the *Us*, whereas none is extended to the *Them*. Value is then placed upon the features that characterize the *Us*, whereas none is placed upon those that differentiate the *Them* from the *Us*.

Kristeva (1991) explores this dichotomy of *Us* and *Them*, of *In* and *Out*, Self and Other, in social dynamics throughout history. Kristeva refers to the Other as *the Foreigner*, which generally exists in opposition to the native. The Foreigner is always negatively characterized, mostly as inferior, as uncivilized, or as barbaric. However, Kristeva asks very aptly: “[negative] with respect to what?” and “[the] other of what group?” (1991: 95); redirecting attention to how an identity group assumes the role of the Self and in turn, becomes that which the Other is *different from*.

In creating a disparity of value, hierarchies are formed (Kastoryano, 2010: 79); these hierarchies are dependent on power (Hegel, 1807). Levi-Strauss claims that this process of valuation derives from a long-standing attitude in human beings “to reject... the cultural institutions – ethical, religious, social or aesthetic – which are furthest removed from those with which we identify ourselves” (1968: 12). As such, when encountered by deviance, or by difference, human beings have the option to either “try to understand and accommodate... or to repudiate,” but “all too often... have chosen the latter option (Kearney, 2003: 4). Such hierarchies therefore inevitably lead to discrimination of the Other by the Self, for the sole purpose of strengthening and protecting its sense of identity (Connolly, 1991: 329).

According to Hall, there “is always a relation of power between the poles” of a dichotomy (1997: 235). While power is often understood “in terms of economic exploitation and physical coercion,” Hall explains that power should also be understood in the form of dominating discourse, or as the ability to “represent someone or something in a certain way” (1997: 259). Staszak concurs, stating that “Otherness is due less to the difference of the Other than to the point of view and the discourse of the person who perceives the Other as such” (2008: 1).

Discourse “is structured by a set of binary oppositions” or in other words, dichotomies, “between civilization... and savagery... between biological or bodily characteristics.” For Hall, each dichotomy signifies “an absolute difference between human ‘types’” (1997: 243). When these binaries are constant for long enough, they become fixed, normalized in discourse at which point, terms like ‘Otherness’ become interchangeable with ‘savageness,’ or in racial discourse, terms like ‘blackness’ become interchangeable with ‘primitive’ (Hall, 1997: 243-245).

Those dominating discourse deploy “a strategy of ‘splitting’... the normal and acceptable from the abnormal and unacceptable,” before “[excluding] or [expelling] everything which does not fit, which is different” (Hall, 1997: 258). Ultimately, by “radiating power *downwards* on a subordinate group... from above” (Hall, 1997: 261), the newly constructed, ‘fixed’ Self becomes dominant, whereas the negatively represented, ‘fixed’ Other becomes dominated.

Otherness must be constructed as Otherness first. Hall remarks that this comes about via the ‘negative’ representation of *difference from* the Self, through discourse as hegemonized by the Self (1997: 225). Discourse can take the form academic work (Said, 1978), or media (Hall, 1997). Respective examples of each are orientalism and colonialism and both are the product of ethnocentrism; the dehumanizing phenomenon, whereby an identity group makes the mistake of treating “equality” as “similarity” and “difference” -imagined or not- “as inequality” (Morrissey, 2001: 340). Such collectives “consider [their] members and values as superior to the members and values of other groups...” (Staszak, 2008: 1).

Said (1978) reveals how the binary of Self and Other were fixed for years in the academic field of Orientalism, criticizing the perspectives Orientalist scholars adopted. They claimed to study the Orient, but simply recycled the ethnocentric attitudes and beliefs held by their predecessors, who represented *the Orient* as a place of deviance and savagery. Colonialism also flourished due to this ability to regulate discourse. Hall explains that the ethnocentric “white ‘Other’” refused “to

give recognition 'from the place of the other', to the black person" (1997:238), in turn constructing the colonial subject as Other from their perspective (Said, 1978; Bhabha, 1994; Priyadharshani, 1999). European "anthropologists and other agents within the colonial apparatus... set about measuring, describing and classifying other peoples... cultures, histories, geographies, lifestyles, and bodies" in a manner that represented colonial subjects and their ways of life as inferior to colonialists (Priyadharshani, 1999: 2). Levels of superiority and inferiority were fixed by way of falsely assumed hereditary characteristics. Socio-cultural differences were made to be perceived as biological, making the exclusion of the Other possible through a recognition of difference within the body itself (Hall, 1997: 244).

Chakrabarty explains that colonialist representation was a manipulation of knowledge and perspective, whereby colonial subjects were encouraged to "know themselves" through these European "categories of knowledge" (1992: 94), as "inferior to the European race" (Priyadharshani, 1999: 2). Their non-Europeanness became a mark of their Otherness, which in turn denied them their identities. By dominating discourse, the colonialist forced the colonial subject to perceive itself from the perspective of the colonialist; as inferior; as savage; as Other.

Certain forms of representation would even deny the Other its humanity. Using a soap advertisement, Hall reveals the extent to which the Other could be devalued. The advertisement campaign claimed that the soap had the "capacity to cleanse and purify... had the power to wash black skin white" (Hall, 1997: 241). Therein, blackness is represented as the dirt that covers the clean, whiteness beneath. Similarly, Priyadharshani discusses a strategy by Western MEDCs (more economically developed countries) of representing Eastern LEDCs (less economically developed countries) using "animal metaphors" (1999: 8). India is represented as the economic 'tiger of the East,' but tigers are wild and dangerous, thereby suggesting that the Indian economy is "volatile, unsafe, etc." and India as a

country is “uncivilised, less than human, threatening, uncontrollable” and so on (1999: 9). Both of these examples negate the humanity of the Other.

Clearly defined boundaries, like territorial separation, made Otherness easier to maintain. However, migration, the expansion of I.T. and globalizing markets “have destroyed relatively stable and territorialized figures of the Other and created new, transient, ever changing and space-independent figures” (Praxmarer, 2016). Simmel, the father of Sociology, presents a variation of the Other that can be both member and Other simultaneously (1908). Simmel refers to this as *the Stranger*, an inherent yet distant member of any social group; “an element of the group... whose membership within the group involves both being outside it and confronting it” (Simmel, 1971: 144). Simmel’s Stranger, commonly applied to human migration (Park, 1928), can refer to “the refugee, the immigrant, the migrant labourer... the ubiquitous (inner) enemy or terrorist” (Praxmarer, 2016).

“[Discriminatory] policies... are more difficult to implement if... populations are intermixed” (Staszak, 2008: 5) and as a result, the negative representation of the Other has become more intricate. Consequently, territorial Otherness is now instead determined by local marginality. Individuals who have migrated, who are refugees, who have moved away from their traditional ‘homes’ are now classed as belonging to “on the margin... cultures” (Voicu, 2011: 332). Fassin (2001) provides an example of Simmel’s Stranger through ethnic origin, in a publication discussing racial discrimination in France. Therein, Fassin reveals how immigration policies can construct and represent Otherness, leading to a marginalized Other.

In the late 1990s, “undocumented foreigners” were the subjects of discriminatory practices by French natives (2001: 3). Those with “assumed racial differences”, those of “African origin”, of darker “skin colour”, or with “foreign-sounding names” were most commonly targeted (2001: 3). Despite the discrimination, immigrants would migrate to countries where their lives would not be endangered, where their quality of life would be improved, or where they could

find work to feed their families. Fassin explains that between the years 1980 and 2000, there was an exponential decline in rate of immigration to France on claims of asylum, which coincided with an increase in the number of foreigners permitted entry to France on account of life-threatening pathologies (2001: 4). Immigrants would be forced to identify or fabricate sicknesses that were untreatable in their home countries, as this became the most reliable means of ensuring migration. However, they needed to be ill to be in France, which resulted in their association with sickness, with pathological illness and with defect.

These migrants were excluded from work on account of illness; they were characterized as lazy for not working; they were marginalized from the centre of both cities and social groups on account of the negative perception the native French had of them (Fassin, 2001). Representation is a cycle perpetuated and maintained by the Self. It is always the Other who is represented, who is the focus of literature, who is the subject of research, whilst the narrative of the Self is avoided. Friedman states that in "the works of the post-colonial border-crossers, it is always the poet, the artist, the intellectual, who sustains this displacement and objectifies it in the printed word," before ultimately asking: "who reads the poetry...?" (1997: 79). Friedman's question directly echoes Said's in *Orientalism* (1978), where the Other has no voice in discourse, it has no perspective, nor may it represent itself.

The contemporary Other is not limited to the racial, or the territorial, with literature also placing an interest in investigating gender and sexuality. De Beauvoir (1949), Lacan (1975) and Chiwengo (2003) apply the dichotomy of Self and Other to the relationship between males and females in society, each at a different point in time. In every instance, society has been identified as patriarchal, where the male has been fixed into the role of the Self, with power over discourse. The non-male, the female, is therefore placed into the position of the Other. Pryor (2017), Aroush (2018) and Oren & Ben-Ari (2019) examine LGBTQ lives and their struggles as Others in heteronormative social environments. These scholars have looked into

the experiences of marginalization among LGBTQ students, or have broached challenges faced by many LGBTQ families, coming to learn about the permanent sense of Otherness that derives from constantly having to come out.

Tajfel (1979) reveals that an individual can have simultaneous membership to multiple identity groups, from something as broad as an ethnicity, or culture, to something as specific as a sports team. If there exist multiplicities within identities, there must also exist multiplicities within Otherness, meaning that identity groups and therefore, identities that are Othered, can intersect. This is evidenced by bell hooks (1992), who does not just explore racial difference, but the black female as the Other; by Hall (1997), who studies Otherness through the hybrid identities of black British subjects; and of the previous examples, by Oren & Ben-Arti (2019), who do not just interview LGBTQ families, but specifically interview Armenian LGBTQ families and examine how ethnicity and sexuality conflict with one another.

While this intersectionality reveals multiple dynamics deriving from a single individual's sense of identity, it also calls into question the notion of identity in opposition to Otherness, because there can clearly be tension between two or more aspects of the Other's identity. This suggests that while Otherness might be the denial of an identity shared with the Self, it is not the denial of identity entirely. The Other's identities do not disappear; instead, these identities become symbolic or representative of its Otherness; in other words, Othered identities.

I have established that the Other exists in a dichotomy with the Self. The Social Other is the product of *difference from* identity, which results in the Other's exclusion from membership to a given social collective. This dichotomy of Other and Self is hierarchized, which creates a power disparity, where the Self bears power, but the Other does not. In order to strengthen its identity, the Self places value upon the paradigms that define its identity, without extending any to the Other. To maintain this sense of value, the Self then uses its domination over discourse to represent the Other as inferior, as less than the Self, which at its very

broadest, is human. The more these negative representations are circulated, the more likely they are to be normalized and fixed as social norms, which subsequently serves to make the Other perceive itself as the Other.

While Otherness is characteristic of the Other, it is also a position occupied by the Other, created from the perspective of the Self, where one's identity is made symbolic of its exclusion, of its lesserhood and of its subjugation. When occupying the position of Otherness within a given social environment, the Other lacks a shared identity; the Other's individuality is left unacknowledged, or unrecognized; and the Other is treated as though it does not belong anywhere.

Throughout this section, several overarching themes stood out; these were *Othered Identities*, *Dehumanization* and *Exclusion*. There are many identity groups through which the Other is formed that have not yet been discussed, nor have the implications of their Otherness -both within and in social contexts- been explored. *Othered Identities* looks into the various social dynamics to which the dichotomy of Self and Other can be applied. *Dehumanization* is a significant component in establishing and highlighting the Other's Otherness, resulting primarily from hierarchical valuation. Therein, I will examine the various processes whereby the Other is dehumanized, as well as the identity groups to which these processes might commonly apply. Lastly, *Exclusion* is the main by-product of the Other's *difference from* the Self during the Self's identity construction. As such, this section will look into the different types of exclusion the Other is faced with. As such, the next section will begin my investigation into these overarching themes.

## **2.4. TYPES OF OTHERED IDENTITY**

In 2.3. I discussed Winterstein's collective identity construction, as explicated by Voicu (2011), based on the axes of *inclusion*, *exclusion*, *points of identification* and *space*. Voicu notes the major collective identity types, namely; territorial

identity, national identity, cultural identity, hybrid identity and minority identity groups, all of which are formed according to these axes. In the coming section, I will broach in order how each identity type is formed and characterized.

According to Elden (2013) territory is that which “can only be grasped with historical, geographical and conceptual specificity” (2013: 328). Membership to a territorial identity is not merely a matter of existing within a specific territory, but being able to understand its historical and geographical context. For Fanon (1896), however, territory is the main form of spatial and social organization of Earth.

Territorial identity, which is dependent on geographical origin, sees *Here* and *There* strongly represent *Us* and *Them* respectively. Territorial Otherness, therefore, “has notably been based on... supposed spatial marginality” between these poles (Staszak, 2008: 1). In the past, the Other had been located in faraway countries (Said, 1978; Hall, 1997), where little effect was had on the Self and where little effort was required to *understand* or *assimilate* the Other (Staszak, 2008: 5).

European colonialists travelling to Africa, for example, whose *place of the Other* was synonymous with their presence in Africa as foreigners, refused to give recognition to the natives as-Self (Hall, 1997). This refusal meant that Europeans rejected their own Otherness, making them incapable of recognizing themselves as *different from*. Instead, they forced African natives to perceive themselves as *different from* and in doing so, as Other. By ignoring territorial foreignness, the *Self-as-Us* synonymizes itself with *Here* and fixes the *Other-as-Them* as *There*.

With the disappearance of clearly defined territorial boundaries, due to globalization and increasing flows of human migration, the territorial Other is increasingly replaced by the Stranger (Simmel, 1908). A new relationship of *Centre* and *Margin* represents *Here* and *There*, characterizing the Self-as-native, or as-majority and the Other-as-Stranger, or as-minority (Voicu, 2011: 332). Any “penetration of the centre by the marginalized undermines the dominant position

of the centre" (Voicu, 2011: 332), so the new territorial Other, the marginalized, is forced out towards the extremities of society, the outskirts, the suburbs.

Anderson (1991) proposes a definition for the concept *nation*, which he duly describes as "an imagined political community - and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (1991: 5-6). Nations are imagined, because humans are "born into relationships... but the jump... to anything like the modern nation-state is entirely artificial" (Williams, 1983: 180); it is based around a "social philosophy" that is conceived of and implemented by individuals (Voicu, 2011: 328).

Smith contends that there are in fact "five essential characteristics" that merge to form a nation and thereby, determine an individual's membership to it. These include an "historic territory", "common myths and historical memories", "common, mass public culture", "common legal rights" and "common economy with territorial mobility for members" (Smith, 1991: 14). As such, any nation must be partly defined by *Here* and *There* categorizations of *Us* and *Them* respectively.

National identity is therefore based around an individual's conformity to a social philosophy, as well as an individual's shared territorial background. However, Smith explains that national identity can intersect with "class, gender, race, religion," but while these characteristics "rarely succeed in undermining" the stronghold of national identity within a nation-state, "they may influence its direction" (1991: 143). Morley and Chen (1996) present an example of such directional influence through Thatcherism of the 1970s, whereby ethnicity was used to reconstruct British national identity (1996: 12). Those who were deemed ethnically non-British, in other words, immigrants, were scapegoated as the reason for social "[divisions] and... discord" at the time (1996: 68). The national Other, is thus one whose national origin does not reside in the territory and whose characteristics do not conform.

According to Ennaji (2005), the concept of 'culture' is closely linked to the concept of civilization. When one is cultured, one is civilized and this culture can be acquired "through education, exposure and training" (2005: 21). Voicu, however,

highlights cultural features that include disability, ethnicity, gender, geopolitics, language, profession, race and religion among others (2011: 337). Several of these are not taught, but inherent, revealing an ambiguity to culture. Sysoyev argues that such features are paradigms for the formation of cultural identities (Sysoyev, 2001: 38), more so than they are for the formation of national identities.

For Sysoyev (2001), an individual obtains a cultural identity upon realizing “his or her place in the spectrum of cultures,” which requires the individual to engage in “purposeful behaviour” to ensure their “acceptance into a particular group” (2001: 37). Voicu adds that “historical experiences... cultural traditions... marginal languages...” as well as “marginalized experiences,” can combine in the formation of a cultural identity (2011: 337). The paradox here is that a cultural identity can be defined according to shared experiences of marginalization – an attribute of the Other. However, the idea of culture, which is supposed to be synonymous with civility, is considered a central attribute of the Self. Cultural Otherness is therefore oxymoronic, for it is the representation of a cultural identity group’s culture as lacking in culture and as lacking in civility.

Collective identities of any variety cause “oppositional and exclusive modes of thought about people” and often these “rest on the basis of purity” (Voicu, 2011: 325). Foregrounded as the solution to ideas of identity purity, are hybrid identities. Gilroy contends that hybrid identities offer “an alternative to the metaphysics of race, nation and bounded culture” (2000: 123). Commonly, hybrid identities are an intersection of territorial, national and cultural identities -the most notable of which are the Creole and Négritude diasporas- but as bell hooks (1992) and Loya (2016) point out, they can also include sex and sexuality – social identities.

Bhabha believes that the space “between fixed identifications opens up the possibility of a cultural hybridity that entertains difference without an assumed or impaired hierarchy” (1994: 5). By applying Hall’s vectors that frame hybrid identities, vectors that are “simultaneously operative: the vector of similarity or continuity...

and the vector of difference and rupture" (1996: 395), hybrid identities should enable the perception of similarity where there exists difference, as well as the integration of difference where identities are constant. However, hybridity is often perceived as only making sense on the basis of an assumed pre-existing purity, or authenticity (Pieterse, 2001: 221). As such, any hybrid is considered a coming together of two or more original non-hybrid forms of identity - a mixing of authentic identities, to create an inauthentic one (Wickramasinghe, 2011: 21).

Bhabha argues that hybridity should not be seen as a combination of authentic identities, rather as an entirely new identity, a "Third Space" (Rutherford, 1990: 211). Consequently, authenticity and hybridity should not be considered opposites as much as "natural extensions of each other" that construct entirely "new forms of authenticity" (Voicu, 2011: 333). Sayegh reveals that all cultures are the result of a process of hybridisation; "cultures mix, and eventually reach a certain maturity which finally equals a form of purity" (2008: 10). However, as authenticity is synonymous with purity, hybridity in opposition to authenticity becomes associated with impurity, leading to the Othering of individuals with hybrid identities.

The Othering of hybrid identities leads to a lack of belonging and emotional suffering that can be particularly isolating and lonely. DuBois discusses the "double consciousness" lived by himself and by many black subjects who are forced to struggle between the "two-ness" of being both American and Negro (DuBois, 1996: 2), or for Hall, British and Caribbean (Hall, 1996). They dwell "in a nation-state in a physical sense, but [travel] in an astral or spiritual sense that [falls] outside the nation-state's space/time zone" (Cohen, 1997: 95). Another example is the bisexual, whose sexual fluidity leaves them "isolated by both the heterosexual and homosexual community" (Loya, 2016). Ultimately, the hybrid Other is one who is Othered by both sides of a dichotomy and belongs nowhere.

The last commonly discussed Othered identity is the minority identity. Minority identities are collectives, whose central feature is their relative power

deficiency within “economic, political, and social domains of life” (Viladrich & Loue, 2009: 1). Minority identities often display traits of social marginalization -not to be confused with territorial marginality through *Here* and *There*, or *Centre* and *Margin* - in that that the socially marginalized are generally denied opportunities, resources and rights that are available to the socially conforming (Peace, 2001).

A social identity is one, the membership to which is “a real, true and vital part of the person” (McLeod, 2019). This does not differ for minority identity groups, as theirs are also social identities, except they are stigmatized, oppressed and marginalized. If a social identity can be constructed through characteristics such as class status, disability, employment, gender, language, nationality, race, sexuality and wellbeing, a minority identity can be constructed through identical characteristics (Viladrich & Loue, 2009: 2). During the 1960s and 1970s, Foucault campaigned for the rights of prisoners, as socially marginalized collectives (Demers, 2015), recognizing them as a minority group within society.

Minority identities have included the unemployed, due to their lack of access to jobs, income and housing (Furlong, 2012: 31); the disabled, due to the reluctance by employers to hire individuals they deem might hinder productivity, or put fellow employees at risk (Leslie & Leslie & Murphy, 2003); females (Moosa-Mitha, 2005), due to the glass ceiling (Davidson & Cooper, 1992), as well as the gender pay gap (Blau & Kahn, 2006); homosexual men, on the basis of health, specifically the uncertainty and resulting stigmatism of AIDS (Crossley, 2004); and members of the LGBTQ community, particularly in relation to right for homosexuals to marry (Wolfson, 2007), as well as their representation in media, both in the form of queer-coding and queer-baiting (Kim, 2017; Sheehan, 2015).

A danger for minority identities are identity multiplicities (Tajfel, 1979). As minority identities can intersect with territorial, national and cultural identities; even with hybrid identities, an individual who is a member of “more than one defined minority group may be multiply stigmatized” (Viladrich & Loue, 2009: 2). Ultimately,

all Othered identities, especially in individuals where there is intersection between multiple Othered identities, suffer from some form of subjugation that serves to cement the Other's inferiority in relation to the Self. In fact, Lammers, Diederik and Stapels (2010) found that the more power an individual or collective possessed, the more likely they would be to dehumanize their counterpart. As such, I will now explore Dehumanization and the processes that serve to reduce the Other.

## **2.5. A MODEL OF DEHUMANIZATION**

Dehumanization is the "denial of full humanness to others" (Haslam, 2006: 252). Haslam's article provides the concept of dehumanization with a systematic theoretical basis that was previously lacking, by first exploring what is meant by humanness, before providing a model demonstrating how humanness is denied. There are conflicting ideas of humanness. On the one hand, Kelman (1976: 301) proposes that humanness constitutes of two features: identity, one's individuality and self-consciousness; and community, one's membership to identity groups. However, Othered identities are identity groups wherein their own communities are formed. An individual, even an entire collective, can be dehumanized despite membership to such a community. I will interpret Kelman to mean that humanness requires an individual's membership to a non-Othered community.

On the other hand, Haslam (2006) believes one's humanness is comprised of two different components: Uniquely Human (UH) characteristics that serve to distinguish human beings "from the related category of animals" (2006: 256); and Human Nature (HN), their "inborn biological dispositions" that distinguish them from objects (2006: 256). Haslam's model posits dehumanization in two forms: *Animalistic* and *Mechanistic*; rejecting or denying an individual's UH characteristics, or their HN respectively (2006: 262). Haslam does acknowledge that his model is based on Western cultural perceptions of humanness. As such, the emphasis lies

on animals and objects, where another culture might contrast humanness with “supernatural entities” (2006: 263). Kelman’s (1976) article addresses how dehumanization can bring about extreme violence -particularly genocide- and focuses on dehumanization through moral exclusion. Although this does broach the animalistic form of Haslam’s model, it misses out the mechanistic form.

While animalistic and mechanistic dehumanization can take place at intergroup levels, it appears far less likely for animalistic dehumanization to take place at an interpersonal level than its mechanistic counterpart (Haslam, 2006: 257). I believe Haslam’s model to be more representative of the various dehumanizing processes and will therefore explore this theme according to said model.

According to Haslam, UH characteristics “primarily reflect socialization and culture” and are “cross-culturally variable” (2006: 256). They include civility, refinement, moral sensibility, rationality and maturity. When dehumanized, the Other is characterized as lacking culture, or uncivilized, coarse, amoral, irrational and childlike respectively (2006: 257). Processes that Haslam considers animalistic include delegitimization, infrahumanization, moral exclusion and social exclusion. Discursive forms of representation that classify as animalistic dehumanization include animalization, infantilization, and symbolic characterizations that depict the Other as “subhuman,” as opposed to “nonhuman” (Haslam, 2006: 259).

Infrahumanization is the process whereby an identity group perceives itself as more human than another identity group (Leyens et al. 2003). In-groups will attribute the experience of secondary emotions to themselves, but will reject the idea that Out-group members can experience them as well (Gaunt et al. 2004). While this process is associated with violence and many forms of ethnic conflict, it is not exclusive to these. Delegitimization on the other hand, is primarily used to justify interethnic conflict (Haslam, 2006: 254); it is the negative characterization of a collective with the “purpose of excluding it from acceptable human groups and denying it humanity” (Bar-Tal, 2000: 121-122). This process is likely to invoke

contempt and fear among In-group members towards the delegitimized, re-establishing the superiority of the In-group (Haslam, 2006: 254). It is also heavily associated with extreme forms of aggression and violent conflict.

Opatow (1990) explains that moral exclusion is the process through which individuals and collectives are placed "outside the boundary in which moral values, rules, and considerations of fairness apply" (1990: 1). Moral exclusion impedes any kind of moral relationship from being established with the victims, which makes hostility and violence easier to carry out. Kelman (1976) explains that violence is the result of hostility plus dehumanization. The lack of moral connectedness between an In-group and a morally excluded Other, means the Other will struggle, or lose entirely, the capacity to evoke compassion, or empathy. Moral exclusion is central to extreme forms of discrimination, like genocide and eugenics. While it is a process in itself, it can be caused by inhumanization and delegitimization.

I have already touched on social exclusion, or social marginalization, as the denial of opportunities, resources and rights that are available to the socially conforming (Peace, 2001). Haslam notes that animalistic dehumanization invokes feelings of disgust and contempt in the dehumanizer (2006: 260). Fassin's article (2001) reveals how biopolitics can lead to the physical and social marginalization of an Othered identity, through their representation as pathologically ill. Disgust is a primary emotion invoked in French natives towards this particular Other. Sayegh's (2008) article on marginalized minorities in French suburbs supports this notion of dehumanization through social exclusion. Sayegh conducted a case study on the French suburban riots of 2005, wherein it is revealed that the media facilitated the marginalization of minority groups, by scapegoating them as the cause of the riots (2008: 8). This representation depicted 'savage' minorities as causing problems for the civilized French natives, evoking contempt towards the Other.

Based on the literature, animalistic dehumanization is most common among territorial, national, or cultural identity groups; particularly when ethnicities between

*Us* and *Them* differ. Haslam present examples of “Jews in the Holocaust, Bosnians in the Balkan wars, and Tutsis in Rwanda” as being “likened... to vermin” (2006: 253), to provoke contempt and moral exclusion. Goff et al. (2008) examines the historical representation of blacks as apes. However, animalistic dehumanization has also been seen in representations of females and the disabled. Ortnor notes that females have historically been infantilized, treated as a “lower order of being” (1974: 73) and the disabled have been likened to parasites (O’Brien, 1999); parasites that “infect the social body” (Haslam, 2006: 253).

Having explored animalistic dehumanization, I now move onto mechanistic dehumanization. HN traits are those that which biologically define human beings; these traits should be “species typical,” unchanging and inherent (Haslam, 2006: 256). HN traits include emotional responsiveness, interpersonal warmth, cognitive openness, individuality, agency and depth. When dehumanized, the Other is characterized as inert, cold, rigid, passive and superficial respectively (Haslam, 2006: 257). Processes that Haslam considers mechanistic include devaluation, denaturalization, forms of objectification. Discursive forms of representation that classify as mechanistic dehumanization include underrepresentation, various forms of objectification, generalization and stereotyping; essentially characterizations of the Other as “nonhuman,” instead of “subhuman” (Haslam, 2006: 259).

Mechanistic dehumanization is based around the Self’s disregard of, or indifference to, the Other. Haslam (2006) notes that this form takes place at both interpersonal and intergroup levels. The main process is the devaluation of values. Schwartz and Struch (1989) note that the values held by individuals and collectives “express their distinctive humanity” (1989: 155). When the values of the Other differ from the values of the Self, the Other is perceived as differing from humanity, or as “[lacking] shared humanity,” becoming a nonhuman existence whose “interests can be disregarded” (Haslam, 2006: 255). Schwartz and Struch have also characterized the dichotomy of Self and Other according to prosocial values and hedonistic

values respectively. As hedonistic values are considered to be “selfish interests” and thus unbecoming of human beings, they argue that the Other can be “dehumanized by the perception that they lack prosocial values” (1989: 155).

At an intergroup level, denaturalization is the process whereby naturalized immigrants are stripped of their rights to citizenship of a certain nation, generally as a result of their initial illegal naturalization; alternatively, it is the revoking of pre-existing national affiliations in nation-states where only one is permitted. In the past, denaturalization was a product of extreme nationalism, with Weil (2013) revealing its heavy association “with twentieth-century authoritarian regimes” (2013: 2). He makes a particular note of the USA, the UK, France and Nazi Germany as countries to employ it. Weil offers an example of how the USA would denaturalize American women for “marrying foreign husbands” (2013: 1). If a nation were considered an environment within which a human community existed, marrying, or even living outside of that environment (2013:1), would mean discarding humanity.

Similar to denaturalization is forced assimilation, where individuals are forced to discard pre-existing identities, languages, norms, religions and ways of life, in exchange for those of the country in which they now live (Heberer, 1989). Forced assimilation is particularly relevant to minority identity groups. Denaturalization and forced assimilation are the result of xenophobic attitudes and they also both display a complete disregard of the identities of the Other by the Self.

Objectification can be directed at any identity group and is not confined to notions of nation or territory. Nussbaum (1999) argues that objectification is “a cluster term” and argues that there are seven forms of objectification (1999: 219). These types are: “instrumentality” (1999: 220), treating someone as an instrument, or a tool; “inertness” (1999: 220), denying an individual the possibility to act, react, resist, or respond; “fungibility” (1999: 218), treating another as interchangeable – generalization and stereotyping are variations of this process; “violability” (1999, 218), treating another as lacking integrity, or boundary integrity; “ownership” (1999:

221), commodifying another individual; “denial of autonomy” (1999: 224), dictating the behaviour of another; “denial of subjectivity (1999: 224), disregarding another individual’s experience, particularly of their thought and feelings.

Based on the literature, mechanistic dehumanization is particularly common in gender identity. For example, hooks (1992) discusses the commodification of the female body. De Beauvoir (1949) and Lacan (1975) discusses the female as *the Second Sex* and *the Other Sex* respectively, criticising their historical domestication, as well as their lack of voice in discourse. Ethnic identities are also subjected to objectification, with Hall (1997) pointing out the stereotyping of black identities and contemporary works focusing on the stereotyping of Muslims as terrorists (Hayes et al., 2002; Welch, 2004; Schøneman, 2007; Sides & Gross, 2013). Lastly, the disabled, particularly Paralympians, are referred to as supercripples. Van der Veere (2020), believes that this use of language disregards the social issues they face.

Over the last decade, several articles have been published, revealing an inherent link between dehumanization and exclusion. Waytz and Epley (2011) conducted experiments hypothesising that dehumanization was directly linked to social connectedness. Their findings indicated that individuals and collectives were more likely to dehumanize those socially more distant from them, particularly when compared to those socially closer to them. Park and Park (2015) on the other hand, found that social ostracism more likely resulted in the dehumanization of the ostracised by peers. Both studies validate Levi-Strauss’ inherent belief that that identities further removed from the Self, physically, as well as linguistically, or ideologically, are more likely to invoke “instinctive antipathy” from the *Us* (Levi-Strauss, 1968: 12). In light of this link, I shall begin analysing literature on exclusion, with a particular focus on the paradigms for and types of exclusion.

## 2.6. PARADIGMS OF EXCLUSION

In the previous section, I identified identity formation and processes of dehumanization as the main causes of exclusion. Firstly, the more inclusive a collective is, the more exclusive it becomes. Those “who do not fit in, who are not really included, are considered as forming the Other” and the Other is always excluded (Voicu, 2011: 336). For territorial identities, exclusion is based on location (Said, 1978; Staszak, 2008). For national identity, exclusion is partly based on location, but primarily on a social philosophy (Anderson, 1991; Smith, 1991). For cultural identities, exclusion is dependent on shared history, experience and can overlap with the two previous identity types (Sysoyev, 2001; Voicu, 2011). For hybrid identity, exclusion is the result of non-belonging, a lost-ness between two vectors (DuBois, 1996 & Hall, 1996). For minority identity, exclusion is a direct consequence of being powerless (Viladrich & Loue, 2009). Secondly, dehumanization excludes the Other from the boundaries of society and morality (Haslam, 2006).

Research on exclusion as a social phenomenon started with Lenoir (1974), who perceived the Otherness theme as an issue in French society (Silver, 1994: 532). Lenoir believed a tenth of the French population comprised of excluded identity groups, highlighting the disabled, domestic-abuse victims, drug addicts, the elderly, single parents and the suicidal among others. Silver builds on Lenoir’s work, as well as much literature throughout the early 1990s to establish “three major paradigms of exclusion” (1994: 569). These are: the solidarity paradigm, which refers to the “breakdown of a social bond between the individual and society” on “cultural and moral” levels (1994: 570); the specialisation paradigm, where exclusion reflects discrimination and stigmatism between identity groups (1994: 555); and the monopoly paradigm, which exists primarily at an economic level and wherein which an identity group with power will monopolise resources and limit opportunities for Others (1994: 569).

As Silver's model of exclusion accounts for the five Othered identities, as well as both of Haslam's forms of dehumanization, I will be using it as a point of reference when reviewing the different types of exclusion, starting with those that fit within the solidarity paradigm. As this paradigm primarily emphasises the breakdown of social bonds, or social connectedness (Silver, 1994: 570), there is a distance, or a disconnect between the *Us* and the *Them*, which is more likely to invoke mechanistic feelings of disregard and disinterest towards the Other. The solidarity paradigm encompasses both structural and interpersonal types of exclusion, such as social alienation, social invisibility and self-exclusion through self-estrangement.

Social alienation is the product of low levels of integration, the lack of shared values, or worldviews, or a high degree of distance between individuals and wider social environments (Ankony, 1999). Powerlessness and meaninglessness are two of the main causes of social alienation. Seeman (1959) explains that alienation through powerlessness is the feeling that one's "own behaviour cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes, or reinforcements" that are sought (1959: 784). In other words, such social alienation derives from a lack of control over the outcomes in an individual's life, or a lack of power to achieve those outcomes.

Closely tied to powerlessness, alienation through meaninglessness refers to the capacity of the Other to understand and thus make meaning of the social context "in which [it] is engaged" (Seeman, 1959: 786). If powerlessness is the capacity to directly influence an outcome, meaninglessness is the capacity to foresee the realization of that outcome (Seeman, 1959). Take the voting system, for example. If an individual does not have the right to vote in a general election, this individual will feel powerlessness in their efforts to advocate for political change. Alternatively, an individual might have the right to vote, but none of the proposed policies represent them or their interests and as such, the voting process will lose its meaning, leading to alienation through meaninglessness.

Social invisibility is the physical separation, or the systematic disregard of an identity group within a given social environment. According to Scotland-Stewart (2007), who adopts a phenomenological perspective, social invisibility results when social distance manifests in the Other through feelings of being disconnected, unseen, ignored, or forgotten about. Dilhara (2019) adopts a social approach, discussing social invisibility in Sri Lanka as a process whereby certain identity groups lose access to social networks, noting the disabled, the elderly, the homeless, the orphaned, the poor and uneducated as particularly susceptible.

Lastly, self-exclusion is driven more by an individual's internal sense of Otherness, or at least their awareness of being perceived as the Other. This awareness of one's Otherness is known as self-estrangement (Marx, 1977). For Seeman (1959), self-estrangement is a contributing factor to social alienation, but also refers to one's disillusionment as the Other, in relation to their surrounding social context. Self-estrangement leads to a loss of pride and self-confidence that in turn causes feelings of social alienation. To Çeçen (2006), self-estrangement and self-exclusion appear interchangeable, given that both derive from feelings of purposelessness and being misunderstood - feelings that result in an individual's withdrawal from social interaction and engagement. Consequently, self-exclusion can be one's exclusion from cultural integration (Skrobanek & Jobst, 2010), one's withdrawal from certain fields of employment, or from institutions such as religious communities, political parties and so on (Mascareno & Carvajal, 2015).

The specialization paradigm emphasises discrimination and stigmatization between identity groups. Where the solidarity paradigm is more mechanistic in how the Other is dehumanized -through disregard, through being rendered socially irrelevant- the specialization paradigm is more animalistic in nature, invoking hostility, disgust and contempt. The types of exclusion that fit into this paradigm include In-group favouritism -which can also be categorized within the monopoly paradigm- social rejection and its derivative, familial estrangement.

In-group favouritism is the most basic type of exclusion, but is strictly applicable to social collectives. In-group favouritism is closely tied to Tajfel's (1979) social identity theory, where membership to an identity group provides a sense of belonging. Tajfel posits that individuals pursue a positive self-concept (1979), therefore, members of the given collective are favoured over non-members; features shared among members are valued more than those that differentiate non-members; they are characterized using positive terminology, contrasting the Out-group with negative terminology (Tajfel, 1979; Staszak, 2008; Voicu, 2011). In-group favouritism is a significant cause for intergroup conflict, particularly when it applied to Silver's monopoly paradigm, due to the finiteness of resources.

Social rejection is the deliberate exclusion of an individual from a social relationship, or social interaction. This form of exclusion is largely interpersonal and can be both active and passive. Active social rejection comes in the form of bullying, verbal or physical, whereas passive social rejection comes in the form of negation, or in other words, by ignoring, by refusing to interact with, or by refusing to acknowledge the victim (Williams & Forgas & von Hippel, 2005). When a social collective socially rejects an individual or an Othered identity group, this can lead to their social ostracism, which is particularly detrimental, as it deprives, or excludes, human beings of what Williams (2002) refers to as the four fundamental human needs; belonging, control, self-esteem and existential meaning. According to McDougall et al. (2001), being subjected to social rejection can cause the Othered individual, or collective, an inordinate amount of emotional pain, partly due to loneliness, depression and self-loathing. It can also lead to insecurity, as well as extreme feelings of aggression, particularly towards the rejecting party.

Similar to social rejection, familial estrangement refers to the breakdown of a previously existing relationship among members of a family. Relationship dynamics can include parent-parent, parent-child, sibling-sibling and at least one member of this dynamic does not want the estrangement (Agllias, 2017). Carr et al.

(2015) look into familial estrangement, particularly within the parent-child dynamic, hoping to identify possible causes. They note sexuality, gender identity, disability, religion and even choice of partner as reasons. The estranged party is left feeling judged and unaccepted, lacking in recognition. While the scope is far narrower than social rejection, the causes, exacerbated by poor communication between the two parties, tend to be the same (Agllias, 2013 & 2017).

Within the monopoly paradigm, "exclusion arises from the interplay of class, status and political power" (Silver, 1994: 543). It is arguably more closely associated with minority identity than with any other identity type, sharing extensive traits with Simmel's *the Stranger*, who is outside and inside simultaneously. Silver discusses social closure as a central type of exclusion within this paradigm (1994: 543), but other notable types include disenfranchisement, displacement and again, In-group favouritism. Monopoly exclusion is oriented around the denial of resources to Out-groups, which by definition favours In-groups. Resources can be interpreted as rights, opportunities and access to goods and services. Examples include suffrage, healthcare, private education, representation, land ownership and so on.

Collective identities have always constructed themselves "by denying the other, [demarcated] inside from outside, [stretched] a distance between 'us' and 'them'" (Voicu, 2011: 328). They also have the propensity to use possessive terminology, characterizing features, territory and even resources as *my* versus *not my* (2011: 328). In order to identify the *Us*, "real, or symbolic boundaries" must be drawn, but these boundaries also identify "the excluded... and the deviants" (Kastoryano, 2010: 79). When these "boundaries... keep others out against their will" and are simultaneously "used to perpetuate inequality," the process is referred to as social closure (Silver, 1994: 253). According to Mackert (2012), social closure is ubiquitous at all levels of society and among all nation-states.

The poor are unable to access private education. In the USA the poor are unable to access healthcare. The homeless are unable to find employment and

unemployed are unable to afford accommodation. All of these resources are available only to those with money. Alternatively, homosexuals have historically been denied the right to marry (Wolfson, 2007); and immigrants must undergo a period of residency prior to citizenship, during which time they do not have the right to vote. Social closure breeds inequality above all and it is especially detrimental to the lower classes and to “outsiders” (Silver, 1994: 253).

Disenfranchisement is the epitome of national exclusion and refers to the revocation, or prevention of suffrage. Research on disenfranchisement has largely centred on the USA, particularly in relation to Puerto Ricans (Torruela, 1985), transgenders (Lombardi et al. 2002) and felons (Manza & Uggen, 2002 & 2008; Miles, 2004; Bowers & Preuhs, 2009). In the UK, disenfranchisement is an issue for expatriates, as well as the disabled. In 2005, UK disability charity Scope noted the inaccessibility of postal voting, ballot voting and polling stations to those with visual, neurological, or physical impairments (BBC, 2005). Other research explores language disenfranchisement in the EU, where some citizens are denied the use of their own languages in the workplace (Ginsburgh & Weber, 2005).

The last type of exclusion under the monopoly paradigm is displacement, either through gentrification, where the economic value of an area is increased at the expense of low-income inhabitants (Martin & Beck, 218); through development, where an area is modernized, but can strip inhabitants of their livelihoods and force into poverty (Drydyk, 2007); through serial displacement, where housing costs are increased and the low-income population is outpriced (Fullilove, 2011); or through forced migration, resulting from natural disasters, or violence, persecution, or ethnic cleansing – commonly these are refugees. In most of these cases, the low-income population is at risk, whereas for those displaced due to forced migration, the main cause is intergroup conflict and animalistic dehumanization.

## **2.7. STRUGGLE AND CONFLICT**

Exclusion within the solidarity and specialization paradigms appear to leave the Other with a lack of recognition, either as relevant, or as equal. Within the solidarity paradigm, exclusion through powerlessness, meaninglessness and social disconnect represent the struggle the Other faces to be recognized. Within the specialization paradigm, favouritism and rejection are the causes of the Other's lack of recognition, particularly in relation to the value of their identities. The monopoly paradigm, however, presents a systemic picture of exclusion, wherein the Other struggles on a daily basis with an evident, inequal distribution of resources. Herein a lack of recognition can exist, but in many cases, these inequalities are intentional, meaning the Other must be recognized in order to be excluded.

There are two major perspectives towards the concept of struggle; these are the struggle for recognition (Fichte, 1796; Hegel, 1807; Heidegren, 2004), coined by Honneth (1995), which was meant to be a counterargument against the struggle for resources (Marx, 1977). On the one hand, Marx divided society into two groups; Capital and Labour, or capitalists and workers. By applying the Hegelian dialectic to this, Capital would represent Lord, or Master, whereas Labour would represent Slave, or Bondsman. Capital profits by exploiting Labour. Marx argued that these two poles would struggle over resources, which Capital had in abundance, but Labour did not, such as wealth, power, status, health, security. This is referred to as Realistic Group Conflict Theory (RGCT), which explains intergroup hostility and conflict on competition for limited resources (Jackson, 1993).

On the other hand, Heidegren explains that recognition is a "basic medium of social integration" and that it is crucial to both "socialization and identity formation" (2004: 365). Those who are unrecognized are unable to integrate, socialize, or form non-Othered identities. As such, Honneth (1995) argues that recognition is the core motivator behind many social movements, as well as being

a core individual pursuit, with emancipation and belonging the respectively desired outcomes. Emancipation, of course, is the liberation from legal, social, or political restrictions, the strive towards equal opportunities, rights and resources.

A constant across these overarching Otherness themes is the propensity for Otherness to result in conflict. Eidelson and Eidelson (2003) reveal five senses at both individual and collective levels that can trigger conflict. These are: a sense of superiority, i.e. ethnocentrism; a sense of injustice, i.e. extreme forms of social closure; a sense of vulnerability, i.e. the perception of threat; a sense of distrust, i.e. presumed hostility; and a sense of helplessness, i.e. lack of power and meaning. Where superiority manifests within the Self and helplessness is common among the Other, injustice, vulnerability and distrust manifest in both Self and Other. Conflict is therefore not solely a form of aggression against the Other, but it also appears to be a form of resistance by the Other against subjugation by the Self.

Throughout this section, I have unpacked the different types of identity, different approaches to dehumanization and different paradigms for exclusion. I have demonstrated that Othered identities are intimately bound to exclusion by way of identity formation. I have shown that dehumanizing processes are considered inherent in the estimation of value of an identity group, whilst exclusion and dehumanization as processes tend to show some overlap. While arguments can be made against Otherness entirely, as the postmodernist way is to accept as many ways of life as possible, arguments have been made criticizing postmodernism. According to some, postmodernism's "insistence on categorically rejecting the idea that some ways of life can be superior to others" has led to counter-critique on the notion that "if every life model is equally important, then all are equally worthless" (Mineva, 2007: 2). Ultimately, the Other, as concept and entity, is intimately bound to struggle. It will be denied, it will be dehumanized and it will be excluded.

## CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 02

In this chapter, I provided a background on both *manga* and Otherness, limiting the scope for the former, but conclusively defining each term. I rationalized my decision to focus on *shonen manga*, as well as my decision to focus on UK readers, through examinations of cultural objects and cultural odour. I introduced several core reader-oriented theories, with a particular emphasis on identification theories. I also explored reader engagement beyond the textual level. I revealed the Other as both phenomenological and sociological concepts, with the former being perceived as a psychological concept, where the latter is a social subject. I revealed the prominence of three overarching Otherness themes, namely *Othered Identity*, *Dehumanization* and *Exclusion*, going into extensive detail on each, particularly with regards to the different models and paradigms. As this thesis explores Otherness as perceived and interpreted by the reader, it was imperative to unearth as many approaches to and types of Otherness as possible. In the next chapter, I will introduce, explicate and rationalize my methodology.

## CHAPTER 03: METHODOLOGY

On methodologies, Ellen states that each is "an articulated, theoretically informed approach to the production of data" (1984: 9). Each approach considers the research paradigm, which encompasses a researcher's worldview; and the research design, which encompasses the researcher's strategy and method.

In this chapter, I will rationalise and explain the chosen methodology. I will first provide a research paradigm encompassing the worldviews through which I have conducted this thesis. I will then discuss the research design, before outlining the data collection, interview and data analysis phases. Thereafter, I will evaluate and note any limitations. Lastly, I will reflect upon any ethical considerations.

To understand how Otherness is communicated to UK *manga* readers, I posed several questions in Chapter 01. They are as follows:

- 1) To what extent is Otherness communicated to readers through *shonen manga*?
- 2) How do readers identify and interpret Otherness in *shonen manga*?
- 3) To what extent do readers reflect upon the identified Otherness themes?
- 4) Does reader engagement with *manga* influence their attitudes towards Otherness in broader, real-world, socio-cultural contexts?
- 5) Does reader engagement with *manga* influence their identities?

To answer these questions, I chose an inductive strategy, using a qualitative method that employed semi-structured interviews as the primary form of data collection. As the purpose of this study is to explore how *manga* readers identify, interpret and respond to Otherness, simultaneously gauging the impact that *manga* as a medium has on their capacities to do so, it was necessary to pose the same questions to every participant, without limiting their freedom of expression, or restricting their recollection of experiences. This was done to produce less inhibited

answers, as well as a wider range of data. As this thesis intended to identify trends and plot variables between participants, I provided a theoretical framework in Chapter 02 to place them in a sociological context. This framework covered *manga* as cultural objects, identification theory, reader response theory and models for the overarching Otherness themes of *Dehumanization* and *Exclusion*.

### **3.1: RESEARCH PARADIGM**

According to Guba, philosophical worldviews are “a basic set of beliefs that guide action” (1990: 17). Worldviews are the culmination of personal, social, educational and academic experiences and relationships. In research, worldviews are both ontological and epistemological in nature. Ontological worldviews are concerned with whether social reality exists independently of an individual’s subjective understanding and interpretation, whereas epistemological worldviews are concerned with whether objective facts, or subjective experiences constitute as knowledge (Guba 1990; Crotty, 2005; Taber, 2007; Creswell, 2014).

Different worldviews are commonly associated with unique approaches to research and tend to be broken down into three or four categories. Depending on the academic, these categories may differ. Snape and Spencer (2003) present ontological worldviews of realism, idealism and materialism, whereas Dudovskiy (2018) presents positivism, interpretivism and critical realism respectively, adding a fourth worldview called pragmatism. Realism/positivism maintains that there exists an external reality independent of human understanding and social actors. Alternatively, idealism/interpretivism suggests that reality can only be understood by the human mind. Materialism/critical realism contends that there is an external world independent of the human mind, but this world is interpreted by social actors and social conditioning. Lastly, pragmatism opts for the worldview that will most efficiently and effectively answer the research questions. Concerning matters of an

ontological nature, I have adopted a materialist worldview.

The decision to use *shonen manga* throughout this thesis rests on the belief that the demographic presents a broader range of Otherness themes within its narratives; and is more closely bound to the overarching themes of *Othered Identities*, *Dehumanization* and *Exclusion* and their outcomes of *Struggle* and *Conflict*. This thesis poses questions with the intent to plot trends between participants, which is materialist in nature, as trends imply an objective truth to the content of *manga* and their capacity to communicate Otherness themes.

Guba (1990) and Creswell (2014) present epistemological worldviews of post-positivism, constructivism, pragmatism, whilst Dudovskiy (2018) presents positivism, interpretivism and pragmatism respectively. Both presented an additional fourth worldview, but they were neither similar to each other, nor relevant to this thesis. Post-positivists, like positivists, place an emphasis on observable data, but unlike positivists, they argue that the knowledge and experiences of the researcher can influence that which is observed. They both favour quantitative research designs. Constructivists/interpretivists prioritize subjective meaning as forms of data and maintain that all meaning is dependent on the social and historical context of the individual interpreting it. They both favour broad, open-ended, qualitative research designs. Pragmatists “emphasize the research problem” over the research method (Guba, 1990: 10 & 11), they are “real-world practice oriented” (Creswell, 2008: 6), they will incorporate various perspectives in order to better interpret the data (Dudovskiy, 2018) and they will employ the research design that most efficiently and effectively answers their research questions.

There is a definite argument for adopting a constructivist worldview. When studying the “reception and appropriation” of any cultural object (Brienza, 2010: 107), which in the context of *manga* refers to the consumers, the fans, their interpretations of themes and how engaging with *manga* has influenced their identities and attitudes, ethnographic research designs are recommended (Brienza,

2010) and quite common (Lee, 2009; Chen, 2011; Douglass et al. 2011; Lee, 2012; Terpstra, 2012; Leung et al., 2014 & 2015 & 2016; Tsai, 2015 & 2016; Shamoon, 2017; Yamamura & Seaton, 2020). However, the line of questioning needs to be rigid enough so that it can be replicated among multiple interview participants, otherwise there will not be enough diversity to induce and theorise. As such, I have adopted a pragmatist worldview concerning matters of an empirical nature, preferring a research design that best answers the research questions.

### **3.2. RESEARCH DESIGN**

There are two overarching research designs: quantitative and qualitative. According to Creswell, they “should not be viewed as rigid, distinct categories, polar opposites, or dichotomies. Instead, they represent different ends on a continuum” (2014: 4). There also exist mixed methods research designs, which combine research techniques from both ends of the spectrum, to form layered research strategies. Although quantitative research designs rely on the collection and analysis of measurable data that can be compared and generalized to reflect the “real [...] attitudes and opinions” of the wider population” (Creswell, 2014: 13), they are generally uninterested in subjective experience. Common techniques include close-ended, structured interviews, surveys and questionnaires. While such research designs allow for the simple replication of experiments and data, their rigidity would prove a hindrance to answering the research questions.

Tsai notes that qualitative studies are “intrinsically exploratory and explanatory” (2015: 87). The main purpose of a qualitative study is to learn of and an individual’s attitudes, beliefs, motivations and values with regards to a given subject. Rather than generalizing, qualitative research aims to understand and induce how meaning is made by an individual with regards to a given subject (Guba, 1990; Creswell, 2014). Wilson notes that the more qualitative a research design

becomes, the more “in-depth and rich [the] account” will be (2010: 14), as participants would be more likely to elaborate on answers and raise new issues. In turn, this could lead to longer interviews and a more time-consuming transcription phase, or it could necessitate the conducting of fewer interviews.

I have noted that this thesis is inductive in nature, meaning the data collection process precedes the identification of trends and the development -or application- of theory (Dudovskiy, 2018). I aim to discover emerging patterns from within the data and then generate theories therefrom (Glaser, 2015). As I needed to retain the capacity to plot trends and did not want to sacrifice interview depth, I needed a repeatable question that would allow participant answers to be compared -taking their social and historical contexts into consideration- but I also needed a sample size that was large enough to facilitate this.

Uncommon in the study of *manga*, but common in social work (Gilgun, 2001), management (Randall & Mello, 2012; Woo et al., 2017; Jebb et al., 2017) and health services research (DeJonckheere & Vaughn, 2019), semi-structured interviews see the researcher “[prepare] a list of pre-determined questions” that can be used across all participants, yet allows “interviews to unfold in a conversational manner, offering participants the chance to explore issues they feel are important” with relation to the subject in question (Longhurst, 2010). Semi-structured interviews are a qualitative research method, that allow for inductive research, adopt a level of rigidity in terms of question consistency, but leave questions open-ended, enabling participants to share their subjective experiences with few restrictions. As this was what I hoped to achieve, I settled on semi-structured interviews as the sole data collection technique. This allowed for a larger sample size than purely unstructured interviews, shortening their length without sacrificing quality.

### 3.3. SAMPLING PROCESS

Becker states that researchers “can’t study every case of whatever [they are] interested in, nor should [they] want to” (1998: 67). Both the financial and temporal burdens on the researcher and their research project would be enormous. The solution to this is sampling, which is conducted so that a researcher can study “a small collection of units from a much larger collection” (Neuman, 2006: 219). The small collection is a *sample* and the large collection is a *population*.

Sampling methods exist to aid researchers during the sampling stage. According to Neuman, these sampling methods fall under two overarching categories: nonprobability sampling and probability sampling (2006: 219). Given that the exact size of a population is virtually impossible to measure, almost any population is considered an abstract concept (2006: 225), which makes it more difficult to choose a representative sample. Probability sampling methods often employ the use of a sampling frame, in other words, a means to “closely [approximate] all the elements in a population” (2006: 225). As no such frame exists for *manga* readers within the United Kingdom, I have employed non-probability sampling, which is appropriate for specialized populations (2006: 222).

Consumers of *manga* in the United Kingdom fall under what Tsai refers to as a “difficult-to-access or hidden population” (Tsai, 2015: 91); they are a specialized population. Purposive sampling allows the researcher to use subjective information to locate this sample, which in this instance is where they congregate (Neuman, 2006: 222). For this reason, the scope of the population has been limited to *manga* community insiders, within the United Kingdom, who are over the age of eighteen. Insiders are easier to locate, particularly at conventions, where *manga* consumers often come together. Their insiderism also facilitates a line of questioning that can explore how reading *manga* links to their sense of Otherness. Further restrictions to the population, such as class, ethnicity and gender were kept to a minimum, but an

equal divide between male and female participants was ensured.

Having decided upon a sample size of minimum forty participants, I conducted the data collection phase in 2018, at which time most *manga* and *anime* conventions took place in England, specifically in larger cities like Liverpool and London. While I had initially considered attending a convention in each of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, none were due to take place in Northern Ireland or Wales for the foreseeable future. As such, the idea proved impossible and was duly abandoned. As *manga* and *anime* conventions were few and far between, I attended every convention I could between July and November of 2018, taking into account the fact that this may lead to an uneven distribution of participants, i.e. 39 from England and 1 from Scotland. I attended the Tokonatsu convention in Henlow, followed by Alcon in Leicester, Glasgow MCM in Glasgow and London MCM in London. Here, I approached people, handed out information sheets about the research project to a mixed degree of interest.

Of the hundreds of candidates to have provided their e-mail addresses at these conventions, the distribution of participants ended up being 5, 5, 5 and 18 respectively, leaving me 7 below target. Having anticipated the likelihood that those to sign up might withdraw, I had set up several contingencies. I had contacted the York University *manga* and *anime* society, requesting participants for the project. From this, I received interest from 2 individuals. I had also set up snowball sampling, which is a method that sees the researcher ask “the participant(s) to suggest a colleague, a friend, or a family member that is suitable to join the study” (Tsai, 2015: 91). This method provided access to “an interconnected network of people” within the *manga* community (Neuman, 2006: 223) and ensured 5 additional participants, 3 of whom were students at York University, securing the target of 40. Not all of the participants had grown up in the UK. Three participants had moved there to study several years prior. One participant, who had an impeccable grasp of the English language, visited the UK intermittently; purely for conventions.

### 3.4. INTERVIEW PROCESS

In this section, I will explain how the interview phase was conducted, as well as provide an outline of the questions that were asked. Neuman (2006) explains that the more qualitative the interview, the more common it is to view participants in their natural setting, as the researcher will need the interviewee to be in a more relaxed, open and sharing frame of mind. The initial intention was to conduct face-to-face interviews in person; quiet spots at the convention sites themselves, in halls of residence, at nearby cafés and so on were considered. This worked at Tokonatsu and Alcon, smaller, more personable conventions, but at the MCMs, the time constraints were too severe, there were too many people and there was too much noise, meaning that an alternative strategy had to be employed.

Travelling across the country to speak to each interviewee also proved too costly and therefore, to maintain the face-to-face nature, Skype interviews and FaceBook video calls were the next most effective means. However, several candidates did not own video cameras, or were too shy to go on camera and as a result, Discord voice calls were also used in limited circumstances. Neuman (2006: 407) notes that “the social context in which [each] interview occurs” should always be taken into account. For 11 candidates, interviews were conducted face-to-face and in person. For the remainder, interviews were conducted via video, or voice call participants were at home, free to alter the interview dates and times. Neuman also explains that, as long as participants are comfortable, location is “assumed to make little difference” (2006: 407). Based on the responses, I found that the amount revealed by interviewees tended to be related to the extent with which they identified with a given *manga* series, rather than their location.

Each interview had a clear beginning and end (Neuman, 2006). The intended timeframe was 40-60 minutes, but the actual timeframe stretched from 30-75

minutes. A set of standardized questions were asked at the start of each interview, the purpose of which was to open up a dialogue about *manga* with the participant and reassure the participant that there were no right or wrong answers; it was just a conversation between two people who share a love of *manga*. I had participants sign ethics forms before the interview began. I then introduced the thesis and answered any additional questions they had regarding topics. I made sure not to specify the focus on *shonen manga*. It was noted in the information sheet given to participants prior to the interviews, but I wanted to ensure participants discussed the *manga* series most relevant to them. I expected the majority to discuss *shonen manga*, but anticipated a level of variation among participants.

Interviews always carry the potential for power inequalities to occur between interviewer and participant, with Denzin (2003) pointing out four common formats whereby the power between the two actors is distributed differently. Firstly, there is the "*entertainment and investigative format*," whereby the interviewer "acts as a partisan" and often asks "leading, aggressive questions" (2003: 66). Secondly, there is the "*collaborative or active format*," whereby the "interviewer and respondent tell a story together" (2003: 66). As noted in section 1.4, this thesis aims to champion the accounts of the participants as much as possible. Consequently, I have adopted "*objectively neutral format*," which sees semi-structured interviews adopted, with the aim of refraining from "influencing the story that is being told" (2003: 66). However, it was also noted in section 1.4 that without my insider knowledge of *manga*, it would have been impossible to conduct these interviews in this way. I drew on elements of Denzin's "*reflexive interview format*" and entered into "a dialogic relationship" with participants (2003: 67). However, where such a format would normally see the interviewer and respondent "[struggle] to understand the [thoughts] of the other" (2003: 67), I never came across such problems.

Consequently, interviews began with a series of standardized questions about the participant's enjoyment of *manga*. This was to reiterate the informal

nature of the interview. I intended for participants to dominate the dialogue, but at times this proved difficult, particularly with those whose lives were less obviously impacted by *manga*. There were also situations where participants appeared nervous and in response, I shared my personal experiences with *manga* to establish rapport and generate a more relaxed, forthcoming environment.

After the opening questions, I moved on to questions about Otherness. Early on in the data collection phase, I noticed that participants would ask what Otherness meant, despite having explained it on the information sheet. As the concept is quite multiplicitous and complicated, it was understandable that a short summary might not be adequate. Furthermore, asking about a broad concept such as this lacked clear focus, so I adapted the interview questions to focus on the overarching themes that were identified in the Literature Review. To reiterate, these themes are *Othered Identity*, *Dehumanization* and *Exclusion*. As *Othered Identity* also led to questions about its meaning, I simplified this to *Identity and Difference*.

Neuman explains that “a higher proportion of questions come from” the interviewer (2006: 408), but the interviewer alone “controls the pace and direction of each interview” (2006: 407), which was indeed the case. The aim of these interviews was for participants to answer the key research questions according to their subjective experiences. Showing interest is a strategy that I used to “encourage elaboration” (2006; 407). Probing was common, especially in situations where open-ended questions were answered abruptly, or where the responses given were unexpected. Some diversions were interspersed throughout each interview, which kept the dialogue flowing and maintained the relaxed atmosphere.

Beneath is the standardized interview structure that I adopted.

1. How long have you been reading *manga*?
2. How did you start?

3. What was your first series?
4. Are you still reading *manga*?
  - a. No: How come?
  - b. Yes: What has kept you hooked?
5. Which series are you currently reading?
  - a. What do you think of it?
  - a. Are you enjoying it?
6. Do you have any favourite series?
  - a. No: How come?
  - b. Yes: Which ones?
7. Are there any characters you resonate with?
  - a. No: How come?
  - b. Yes: Who? / What is it you like about them?
8. Do you have a favourite author?
  - a. No: How do you pick up series?
  - b. Yes: Who? / What sets them apart?
9. Have you ever considered Identity and Difference in *manga*?
  - a. No: Have you ever considered Dehumanization in *manga*?
  - b. Yes: In what way and in which series?
10. Have you ever considered Dehumanization in *manga*?
  - a. No: Have you ever considered Exclusion in *manga*?
  - b. Yes: In what way and in which series?
11. Have you ever considered Exclusion in *manga*?
  - a. No: Do you feel as though reading *manga* has influenced your attitudes towards Otherness and the themes we've discussed?
  - b. Yes: In what way and in which series?
12. Do you feel as though reading *manga* has influenced your attitudes towards Otherness and the themes we've discussed?
  - a. No: Do you feel as though reading *manga* has influenced your identity in any way?
  - b. Yes: How so? In what way?

13. Do you feel as though reading *manga* has influenced your identity?
  - a. No: Do you feel as though reading *manga* has impacted your life?
  - b. Yes: How so? In what way?
14. Do you feel as though reading *manga* has impacted your life?
  - a. No: *end interview*
  - b. Yes: How so? In what way?

With my extensive knowledge of *shonen* and *manga*, I was able to maintain prolonged conversation with almost every participant, regardless of the series they had brought up. I could also identify the characters they discussed. This meant that I could work with participants and the *manga* series that were important to them, rather than recommending series for discussion myself. This kept the interviews more honest and personal to the participants, as they will have become more invested and more involved in most of these series than I.

After the interview phase for all forty candidates was completed, I accumulated approximately 45 hours' worth of audio. I then transcribed these interviews, performing an in-depth analysis of all the data I had gathered. Several unexpected themes proved highly prominent and consistent among the majority of candidates, whereas others simply needed clarification. Two themes in particular that stood out were the struggle for recognition and self-acceptance. These findings will be discussed throughout the data analysis component of this thesis. In the next section, I will outline the methods I employed to analyze the data.

### **3.5. DATA ANALYSIS**

Among qualitative data analysis techniques are content analysis, discourse analysis, grounded theory, narrative analysis (Dudovskiy, 2018) and thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Of these, thematic analysis "can offer a more accessible form of analysis, particularly for those early in a qualitative research

career" (2006: 9). Thematic analysis does not rely on any pre-existing theoretical framework and can be adopted by a variety of worldviews, including ontological materialism -or critical realism- and epistemological pragmatism. Thematic analysis has come under criticism for being poorly distinguished from other forms of analysis and is thus rarely acknowledged (2006: 4), as it does "not require the detailed theoretical and technological knowledge" that grounded theory and discourse analysis do (2006: 9). However, Braun and Clarke (2006) provide a detailed account of thematic analysis, including its advantages, disadvantages, its location within qualitative analysis; and a guideline for inexperienced researchers.

In summary, thematic analysis is "a method for identifying, analysing, and reporting patterns (themes) within data" (2006: 6). It is a more flexible qualitative analytic method and is neither "tied to" nor does it "[stem] from a particular theory or epistemological position" (2006: 4). What must be noted is the steps that must be taken to properly set up thematic analysis, including identifying what constitutes as a theme and determining the type of thematic analysis that is to be conducted. Themes can capture that which is "important about the data in relation to the research question," or represent a patterned response (2006: 10). I will consider a theme as something that has been identified by a minimum of 10% of the total sample. When data proves imperative, but is discussed by fewer participants to extensive detail, I will also consider it a theme, but regard it an anomaly.

There are two types of thematic analysis that can be conducted: semantic, or latent. Semantic thematic analysis does not look beyond what participants have said, whereas latent thematic analysis examines "underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations" (2006: 13). For an under-researched area such as Otherness in *manga*, Braun and Clarke (2016: 11) recommend a rich overall description of the data, using a semantic approach. However, they suggest this primarily for shorter research papers and given the length of a PhD, I shall adopt a latent approach. Themes and patterns can also be identified in two ways; these are

inductively and theoretically. As I have a pre-existing “theoretical or analytic interest in the area” (2006: 12), I should perform a theoretical thematic analysis. However, this interest is extremely broad and explorative and the pre-established research questions are also broad and explorative, with no pre-existing conclusions on the basis of the theory that had been reviewed in Chapter 02.

As such, I chose to conduct a latent inductive thematic analysis of the primary data, both out of significance to the thematic nature of this thesis and out of accessibility to myself as a researcher. In accordance with Braun and Clarke’s guidelines (2006), I first familiarised myself with the data. The primary data is comprised of semi-structured interviews, whereas the secondary data consist of the *manga* books themselves. I transcribed the interviews, further familiarising myself with the data. I took note of and marked any ideas and potential patterns along the way. I re-read the transcriptions and coded them according to topic, i.e. struggle, superiority, conflict, monsters, etc. (2006: 18). Boyatzis calls codes “the most basic segment, or element, of the raw data or information that can be assessed in a meaningful way regarding the phenomenon” (1998: 63). After generating codes, I explored them for themes and patterns. Once I identified them, I named them, I noted why they were interesting, how they were interesting, how they fit into the broader context of the research project and only once I had accomplished this, did contextualise them within pre-existing sociological theory.

Patterns were identified among participants, in regards to their personal experiences, their identities, the highlighted *manga* titles, overarching Otherness themes, detailed sub-themes and even types of identification. I had then intended to perform qualitative content analysis on the *manga* texts that were highlighted in the interviews by participants. This is a form of analysis that considers “documents and statistical reports to be cultural objects, or media that communicate social meaning” (Neuman, 2006: 323), which is highly appropriate given that it mirrors how this thesis has approached *manga* texts. However, this thesis is about the

participants themselves, so instead of analysing the texts and inferring my own meaning as a subjective being, I decided to use *manga* texts only in reference to the Otherness themes that were identified therein, by the participants.

Given the varying degree of detail to which each highlighted *manga* text was analysed, it must also be noted that some required narrative context. This context allowed for a more accurate understanding as to how and why the reader identified Otherness within a given series, and subsequently made meaning of it. When this context is provided, the interpretations of the narrative are largely drawn from the participant accounts. As noted, this thesis is about the participants themselves; their experiences and their interpretations. While latent thematic analysis allows me to examine “underlying ideas, assumptions, and conceptualizations” (Neuman, 2006: 13), these originate from the participants themselves. In summary, I performed latent inductive thematic analysis to analyse the semi-structured interview data, using the *manga* texts only as points of reference for the interpretations of Otherness conceived of by my interview participants in relation to the three overarching themes of Exclusion, Dehumanization and Othered Identities.

### **3.6. LIMITATIONS**

Common issues in qualitative research are bias. Human beings are inherently subjective. Biases can exist in the researcher and in the participant. Researcher bias can feature in the sampling and interview processes, skewing the sample, or making the interview less objective. Participant bias can cause the interviewee to answer, or act in a way they perceive the researcher to desire (Robson, 2002; Creswell, 2014). Throughout the sampling phase, I tried to avoid this by approaching as many potential participants as I could, collecting nearly two hundred e-mail addresses by the final day. At the start of the interview process, some participants asked if they should focus only on *shonen manga* series, but I assured them that I was there to

listen to their experiences regardless of what demographic of *manga* they were related to. Interviews would at times go off-topic, which helped participants realise they had the freedom to discuss what was important to them. I reiterated that I was not there to judge, but to learn, reminding them I was a *manga* fan.

Semi-structured interviews provided me the question structure I needed and allowed for follow-up questions on specific points that proved interesting at the time. However, Adams (2015: 493) explains that the main disadvantages of semi-structured interviews are how “time-consuming” and “labor intensive” they can be. Interviews require preparation, conduction, transcription and analysis among other aspects; the “time and effort required to do all of it right is considerable” (2015: 493). I also found that the main setback was time. Conventions provided time constraints to sampling, as they tended to last three days. Given the expense of these events, participants were more reluctant to part with their time to talk to a researcher, instead preferring to enjoy the conventions themselves. It was more difficult to find suitable interview locations on-site. As over half of the participants sourced from conventions were met at the MCMs, this meant that travel was necessary for in-person interviews, but this posed financial constraints, which meant I was forced to settle for video calls, using Skype and FaceBook.

In the data analysis phase, Tsai notes that there are limitations to coding (2015: 118), for “[every] way of seeing is also a way of not seeing” (Robson, 2000: 825). The coding process can limit what the researcher sees, but at the same time, the interview process can limit what the researcher picks up on. I limited the sample size to 40 so that there would be enough data to work with to plot trends and identify common themes, but also so that there would be a variety of perspectives on Otherness to explore. Although a sample size of 40 is not large enough to be representative of the entire population of UK-based *manga* readers, it was small enough to allow for the posing of follow-questions regarding points of interest during the interviews. As a result, I was able to identify themes and patterns

throughout the data analysis phase that not only benefitted from further investigation within the context of this thesis, but that in certain cases merited future research in their own right. These points have been included in section 7.3.

### **3.7. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

As any research project, particularly qualitative research designs, “impinge upon the rights of individuals” (Marczyk & DeMatteo & Festinger, 2005), ethical considerations are necessary (Neuman, 2006). Marczyk et al. explain that there are conditions that absolutely must be met: participants must be able to give consent; they must be free from coercion; they must be able to understand the risks and benefits involved (2005: 235). No participants under the age of eighteen, no participants who were severely ill, who were in emergency situations, who were terminally ill, who have mental illnesses, or who have dementia were recruited. No prisoners or young offenders, nor those living in care homes, who were vulnerable, or who were unable to provide consent themselves, were recruited either.

During the sampling phase, participants were handed an Invitation Letter disclosing the purpose of the research project, the purpose and length of the interviews. Consent must be voluntary (Marczyk et al., 2005: 251) and participants were made aware that they would be actively participating in a research project if they did consent. Those who were interested in the project were asked for contact details, but were reminded that they were under no obligation to provide those details, or to participate. Once participation had been confirmed, a date and time was set. Interviews that took place on-site, were conducted in quiet rooms within the buildings where the conventions took place. The participant and I would meet elsewhere and walk over together. For most, interviews were conducted via video or voice call and as such, they were at home. A record of the exact date, time and location at which the interview was conducted was kept for those that took place in

person. Only the dates and times were recorded for online interviews. Friends of the researcher and of the participants were informed of the interviews.

After the sampling phase, participants were provided with Informed Consent forms to read through and sign. Before the interviews were conducted, participants were presented with a second identical Informed Consent form to read through and sign. One of these copies was for the participant to keep; the other was for the researcher. Participants were reminded they were not under any obligation to sign and if at any point in time, at any stage of the interview they felt uncomfortable about their participation in the research project, they were welcome to drop out.

Voice recording software on a MacBook was used to make recordings of the interviews. A separate voice recorder had been purchased, but broke before the second interview. Recordings were kept on the password encrypted MacBook, which could only be accessed by the researcher and thus functioned as the primary storage location for all primary data. This MacBook is the personal property of the researcher and was kept secured in a locked drawer when not in use. Each recording was stored in its own folder. Each folder was encrypted, password protected and remained separate from other recordings. Folders were stored in an overarching folder, which, too, was encrypted and password protected.

During the transcription phase, the names of the participants were made anonymous. Any personal information that would enable the identification of a participant was erased from text. Transcriptions were stored in an identical manner to the recordings and were named so that only the researcher could identify which transcription adheres to which recording. All information alluding to the identities of the participants was erased at all stages of the research project.

During the data analysis section, no allusions to the identities of the participants was made. Only the pseudonyms were used. Any and all personal details irrelevant to the research project were excluded to ensure that the identities of the participants remain protected. Creswell (2014) raises concerns that a

researcher may attempt *going native*, which is the process where the researcher ignores personal hypotheses in favour of a participant's, to cast said participant favourably. Nevertheless, a full range of results and findings has been reported. I have not overlooked my own hypotheses for any reason.

No data was duplicated onto an external computer. No data was fabricated, falsified or plagiarized. No participants requested any data and as such, none was shared. Raw data was stored only on personal MacBook of the researcher and will remain there for up to a maximum of ten years in accordance with regulations (Marczyk & DeMatteo & Festinger, 2005; Creswell, 2014), after which the data will be discarded so that no one can misappropriate it.

In summary, all research has been presented wholly and honestly. This thesis has been conducted from an ontological materialist and an epistemological pragmatic worldview. Manga readers are the primary data source and as such, a qualitative research design was adopted. The chosen research method was semi-structured interviews and latent inductive thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. Throughout this chapter, I have rationalised and described in great detail, the methodology that was used to conduct this research project. The next chapter commences the data analysis phase, which takes place in three stages, in line with the overarching themes that were identified in the Literature Review and later incorporated into the question format for the interview process.

## CHAPTER 04: EXCLUSION

The data analysis component of this thesis has been divided into three chapters, adopting a similar three-part structure as in the literature review and the interview questions. The overarching themes of *exclusion*, *dehumanization*, and *Othered identity* have been dedicated respective chapters, due to the role they play in answering the research questions. This particular chapter explores how engaging with *manga* leads participants to identify, interpret and respond to themes of exclusion. When asked whether reading or reflecting upon *manga* had ever led participants to consider *exclusion*, 33 out of 40 answered that it had. Among these 33 participants, most discussed forms of social rejection, notably ostracism, familial estrangement, bullying and the Other-as-threat; having said that, participants also identified Otherness as a form of social disconnectedness, either resulting from the Other's self-exclusion, or social invisibility, leading to systematic disregard.

This chapter thus presents three overarching arguments: that UK *manga* readers commonly identify -and identify with- characters who are socially rejected, because they themselves have lived experiences of social rejection, and perceive themselves as socially rejected Others. As such, Narrative Transportation Theory (NTT) and Reader Identification Theory (RIT), both of which were introduced and explicated in the literature review, will be employed. Delving into Integrated Threat Theory (ITT), this chapter also contends that by socially rejecting the Other-as-threat, the Self normalizes perceptions of the Other in society. Lastly, this chapter posits that by being placed at social distance from the Self, the Other is denied recognition and its needs and struggles are more easily disregarded.

As a result, this chapter will comprise of three sections. *4.1 the Rejected Other* will address social rejection at an interpersonal level through ostracism, familial estrangement and bullying, both within *manga* and as experienced by participants

themselves. Therein, the Other is shown to be rejected so as to maintain existing social norms and power hierarchies. 4.2 *the Threatening Other* will explore social rejection at an intergroup level by way of the Other-as-threat. By presenting readers with contrasting perspectives regarding intergroup conflict, *manga* encourage readers to reflect upon their own sense of morality, as well as on their attitudes towards Otherness. 4.3 *the Disconnected Other* will broach the Other as socially distant from the Self, through self-exclusion and social invisibility. Within, the Other is shown to lack self-esteem and to exist at the bottom of a power-hierarchy with the Self, where it is subjected to social closure. This section also introduces the idea that Otherness is an ongoing struggle for *manga* characters and readers alike.

#### **4.1. THE REJECTED OTHER**

In the literature review, it was explained that social rejection is the deliberate exclusion of an individual from a social relationship, or from social interaction (Williams & Forgas & von Hippel, 2005); within this dynamic, the rejected assumes the role of the Other. Social rejection is largely interpersonal and can be both passive and active in form. Passive social rejection refers to the refusal to interact with, or acknowledge the Other, and participants commonly highlighted ostracism and to a lesser extent, familial estrangement. Active social rejection generally refers to the physical, or verbal rejection of the Other, with bullying being the most extensively featured form among the participants, given that 13 explicitly recalled experiences of being bullied and 5 others implied that they had had experiences of bullying.

This section will expand upon *the rejected Other*, by critically analysing the interpersonal forms of social rejection that were pointed out by participants; namely ostracism, familial estrangement, and bullying. I must add that I have omitted any examples of social rejection that are a direct result of the participant's engagement

with *manga*, as these will be addressed in Chapter 06. Furthermore, as social rejection at the intergroup level -through the perception of the Other as a threat towards the Self- was such a significant and detailed topic of discussion for several participants, it will be analysed separately in the 4.2 *the Threatening Other*.

Throughout this section, Williams (2002) and McDougall et al. (2001) will prove to be of some importance. According to Williams, social rejection strips individuals of what he refers to as the four fundamental human needs; belonging, control, self-esteem and existential meaning. Similarly, McDougall et al. explain that being subjected to any kind of social rejection can result in inordinate amounts of emotional pain in the Other, as well as feelings of loneliness, depression, self-loathing and insecurity; it can also result in aggression being directed by the Other towards the rejecting party. Many of these are highlighted by participants.

#### **4.1.1: THE REJECTED OTHER - OSTRACISM**

Ostracism is considered a form of social aversion, or shunning (Williams, 1997), and the most commonly featured *manga* in relation to this topic is *Naruto* (1999), with 5 participants highlighting the series. *My Hero Academia* (2014) and *Tokyo Ghoul* (2011) are also brought up by multiple participants, whereas *Blue Exorcist* (2009) and *One Piece* (1997) were considered only once each. It must be noted that *Tokyo Ghoul* is *seinen manga*, but due to its mainstream status in the West, it is commonly mistaken for a *shonen* series despite its darker storyline.

This section will not conduct a case study of any particular *manga*, but summaries of storylines will be necessary for context and to reiterate section 3.5, the interpretations of these storylines are largely drawn from the accounts provided by the participants themselves. *Naruto* is set in a world where *Shinobi* (Ninjas) function as a nation's military power. Ninjas are born, raised and trained in Hidden Villages within their respective nations. Each Hidden Village is run by a military

leader called the *Kage* (Shadow). Ninjas have an additional circulatory system known as the *Chakra* (Spirit Energy) system. Ninja Abilities require Spirit Energy in order to be performed. In this world, there exist nine enormous beasts called *Bijuu* (Tailed Beasts), each possessing unfathomable amounts of Spirit Energy. Nations have traditionally stopped these Tailed Beasts from rampaging by sealing their Spirit Energy into the bodies of compatible Ninjas, turning them into military weapons known as *Jinchuuriki* (Vessels). The reader follows Uzumaki Naruto, a Vessel whose Hidden Village has ostracised him his entire life.

Jacqueline describes the series as being *"about a boy who's isolated by a whole community"* (Jacqueline), whilst Oxson believes the entire purpose of Naruto as a character *"is that no one in his village likes him"* (Oxson). The Tailed Beasts have historically rampaged through Hidden Villages, killing many in their wake. Vessels, who each have a single Tailed Beast sealed within them through no choice of their own, are often perceived as the living embodiments of these creatures, rather than as unique individuals and Ninjas in their own right; Naruto was *"cursed"* (Bethany) to be ostracised from the very start of the series. Participants unanimously identify ostracism in *Naruto* through characters who are Vessels like Naruto.

Participants note that Vessels, including Naruto, as well as two major allies, popular side-characters and fellow Vessels in Gaara and Killer Bee, are *"shunned by society"* (Bethany), *"isolated"* (Imogen & Jacqueline), or *"excluded... from... the whole of the world"* (Isakson), stripping them of any belonging. Participants also picked up on the fact that these characters have no control over who they are, or what they are. Bethany and Isakson both exclaim that Naruto's ostracism is *"because of what he has inside of him... something that wasn't his fault"* (Isakson), or *"things that weren't his fault, they were out of his control"* (Bethany). In this way, it is implied that Naruto, Gaara and Killer Bee are victims of their identities as Vessels; their social rejection is thus inevitable, making them powerless in their capacity avoid it.

Hereby, participants have already shown that ostracism in *manga* depicts how Othered characters are stripped of social belonging and a sense of control, two of the four basic human needs (Williams, 2002). Williams, Forgas and von Hippel (2005) wrote that “[acts] of exclusion have been linked to depression, alienation, suicide, and mass killings” (APA, 2020); although most participants were aware of Naruto’s loneliness that resulted from his social rejection, none commented on Gaara’s attempted self-harm, or propensity for mass-murder when he was first introduced to the series.

However, Bethany revealed that *“when [Gaara] was upset and sad [she] kind of knew how he felt, more so than with Naruto”* (Bethany), implying identification on the basis of Gaara’s depression, which was far more severe than Naruto’s ever was. Alternatively, Jacqueline noted that she *“really felt relatable to this person”* -in relation to Naruto- on the basis of ostracism that was beyond his control, but largely because she recalls spending *“a good time of [her] life alone”* (Jacqueline). In other words, participants appear to identify with ostracised characters on the basis of how they have experienced ostracism and how ostracism has influenced them.

To further support this, Clarise, who did not reveal any personal experiences of ostracism, praises the *manga* for how it addresses ostracism, using Killer Bee as an example. Despite being rejected and no matter how nasty people are to him, *“he’s never nasty himself”* (Clarise). In fact, Killer Bee *“never lets it get him down”* (Clarise), instead, befriending the Tailed Beast within. However, it also could be argued that Killer Bee is only able to maintain optimism *because* he befriends the Tailed Beast. While Killer Bee is ostracised from his surrounding social environment, he is never truly alone, suggesting that Clarise is unable to identify with Naruto and Gaara, because while they are ostracised and lonely, she never has been.

According to Imogen, *manga* commonly presents *“the story line where some character is different and they get pushed away from other groups”* (Imogen). This is not just the case in *Naruto*, but is a constant in the four other *manga* brought up by

participants. *Tokyo Ghoul* in particular present ostracism similarly to *Naruto*. *Tokyo Ghoul* is set in a world where there are two conflicting species, Humans and Ghouls. Ghouls can only survive by consuming humans and “are pretty much shunned everywhere” (Bethany); they are forced to hide for fear of extermination. Bethany again notes that their ostracism is “not through their own choice, but through literally who they are” (Bethany). In the cases of both *Naruto* and *Tokyo Ghoul*, the ostracised, the Vessels and Ghouls respectively, are entities whose power far exceeds that of human beings. In other words, they pose a threat and they are ostracised by the dominant majority – the less powerful – as a way of socially placing social distance between the Self and the Other, and as a way of ensuring that power hierarchies between the Self and the Other are not overturned.

Many Vessels within the narrative of *Naruto* are killed and the dominant majority does not care. Similarly, there is an ongoing conflict between Ghouls and Humans in *Tokyo Ghoul*, one that will be further discussed in section 4.2, that sees Ghouls hunted and exterminated as a general practice. This supports findings by Waytz and Epley (2011), that human beings are more likely to dehumanize those more socially distant from themselves. By socially rejecting those with the potential to harness power, the Self not only protects itself, but facilitates the eradication of threat to the pre-established power-based hierarchy between Self and Other. This way, ostracism can be seen as a tool to facilitate dehumanizing processes.

Like with *Naruto*, Bethany was able to identify with characters in *Tokyo Ghoul*, turning her attention to the *manga*’s protagonist, Kaneki Ken. When asked of Kaneki Ken’s significance, Bethany revealed that “it was quite nice to read about normal quiet people who were ostracised for just kinda being themselves” (Bethany), referring to the character as “quiet and nerdy,” which she explained she was like when she was younger. It must be noted that her identification with Kaneki Ken is limited to before he was turned into a Ghoul, when he was ostracised purely for being a “quiet and nerdy” character (Bethany), rather than a cannibal. This manner

of identification further supports the notion that lived experiences are significant in the UK *manga* readers propensity in identifying with Othered characters.

Jacqueline highlights *Blue Exorcist*, a story set in a world where there exist Demons and humans called Exorcists who stop them from causing carnage. The protagonist, Rin, is the son of Satan and is "*half and half*" (Jacqueline); in other words, possesses a hybrid identity, which shall be discussed further in Chapter 06. Unlike the protagonists of *Naruto* and *Tokyo Ghoul*, Rin is not an ostracised character from the beginning. However, his ostracism further points to the fact that *manga* protagonists are ostracised due to the power they possess, power that bears the potential to overturn existing power dynamics between the Self and the Other. Thus far, cases of ostracism reveal the Self to embody the human majority, whereas the Other embodies the ostensibly inhuman minority. Jacqueline highlights a point in the *Blue Exorcist* story, when a battle occurs and Rin uses his demonic powers to protect his friends, all of whom have suffered at the hands of Demons. Instead of thanking him for saving their lives, "*they just distanced themselves from him fully*" and "*started avoiding him*" (Jacqueline). Once again, power that surpasses human understanding, possessed by the Other, leads to the Other's ostracism.

For Jacqueline, *Blue Exorcist* had personal significance, revealing that as one of the only "*black people in [a] school*" where the "*majority of kids were white,*" she felt as though people did not "*know how to say anything*" and simply opted to "*avoid [her]*" (Jacqueline). Rin is a character she relates to on the basis of lived experiences of ostracism, noting that witnessing how his friends acted toward him "*really upset [her], because it's like 'how do you think he's feeling'*" (Jacqueline). Once again, participants demonstrate the propensity towards identifying with characters on the basis of lived experiences that resemble the character's own. Jacqueline considers Rin's feelings, presumably whilst imagining, or remembering, her own feelings.

According to Imogen, *manga* commonly presents "*the story line where some character is different and they get pushed away from other groups*" (Imogen). This is

not just the case in *manga* series where character possess inordinate amounts of power, but also in *manga* series where characters are ostracised because they lack power, such as the protagonist of *My Hero Academia*, and a deuteragonists of *One Piece*. Similar causes for identification can be found between the participants to highlight these *manga*, and the characters they have identified therein.

In *My Hero Academia*, which set in a world where eighty percent of the global population has manifested Super Powers (Quirks), the protagonist does not possess one and is ostracised by his classmates at school. The ostracism of Deku, *My Hero Academia*'s protagonist, is "a case of 'you haven't got a quirk, you're not one of us, we don't like you'" (Imogen). Isakson adds that Deku "isn't included, because he's Quirkless" (Isakson); his ostracism is the product of his failure to conform to the norms of his social environment, wherein owning a Quirk was the norm.

Although protagonist of *One Piece* was never ostracised, his major ally and best friend, Usopp, was. *One Piece* is set in a world where Pirates reign supreme. Before Usopp meets the protagonist and "goes off on this journey," Oxson describes Usopp's life as "quite a sad existence" (Oxson). His father was a Pirate and was never around, whereas his mother had passed away. Usopp lived in a small town, but "nobody in his town likes him" (Oxson), which is due to the fact that he cries wolf for attention. Ostracism is an "aversive interpersonal behaviour" much like the acts of betraying, lying, criticizing and embarrassing (Kowalski et al., 2003). Williams (1997) suggests that ostracism can also be a response to aversive interpersonal behavior. Individuals can thus be ostracised for the aforementioned actions, like Usopp was. However, in defence of Usopp, Oxson describes Usopp as "this massive coward and the only way he can fight is to lie" (Oxson); demonstrating Usopp's lack of power. In the literature review, it was explained that powerlessness is characteristic of the Other. Similarly, Viladrich and Loue found that a central feature of certain Othered identity groups is their relative power deficiency within

"economic, political, and social domains of life" (2009:1). Characters like Deku and Usopp can thus be seen to represent members of Othered identity groups.

Again, participants identify with characters on the basis of shared lived experiences. For Imogen, Deku's situation resonated, because "*for some reason [her] entire school decided they didn't like [her]*" (Imogen). When Oxson was asked why Usopp was so significant, he explained that he also suffered from ostracism in his youth. When Oxson was in Primary School, he was harassed for having Jewish blood. He recalls getting "*a lot of antisemitism*" from children older than him, who kept "*beating [him] up and saying they wish [he] get gassed*" (Oxson). Around the time he started watching *anime* and reading *manga*, Oxson became aware of his homosexuality and where he was brought up, "*that wasn't really a good thing to do*" (Oxson). When he came out to his close friend, that friend felt that his being gay was unacceptable. That friend did not "*like the idea of a guy feeling that way around [him]*" (Oxson). That friend forced Oxson out of their friendship group, spreading rumours behind his back until he was completely ostracised. About Usopp, Oxson noted that despite being a coward, when he is forced to, "*he'll... fight all of his fears... and do what needs to be done for his friends*" (Oxson). Oxson admires Usopp's loyalty above all, believing the character to "*[embody] real friendship*" (Oxson); this is presumably because he was denied such loyalty himself.

While Oxson identified ostracism in *Naruto*, he went into more detail on *One Piece*, because it bore more personal relevance. This again supports my argument that lived personal experiences of social rejection are likely to influence the reader's identification of -and with- Otherness and Othered characters in *manga*.

A trend among participants was their emphasis on the injustice of ostracism. They often noted that the reasons characters and participants alike were ostracized was beyond their control, rather than something they themselves caused. Even Usopp, who would lie for attention and could be considered to have caused his own ostracism through aversive interpersonal behaviour, did so because those around

him failed to recognise the struggle he had gone through, with an absent father and a deceased mother. The outcomes of ostracism, in *depression*, *alienation*, suicide and *mass killings* were identified inconsistently (Williams & Forgas & von Hippel, 2005). Participants identified alienation and depression, but discussed none of the others. Participants tended to focus on the theme and how it related to them, rather than on the consequences ostracism had on characters. As ostracism became more personal for participants, their examples in *manga* became more detailed.

In Chapter 02, I discussed Reader Identification (RI). It was explained that this form of identification is personal to the reader. They tend to be guided “by their preoccupations at the time they read. Their real-life problems and needs make them focus on particular characters and situations” (Tsai, 2015: 51). To varying degrees, nearly half of those to bring up ostracism in *manga* identified with at least one character on the basis of similar lived experiences of ostracism. A further facet of Reader Identification is that by compensating for their own “lacks or failures through identification with a character... who makes fuller use of capacities similar to [their] own” (Rosenblatt, 1970: 41), readers are enabled to “reflect on their real-life issues from a detached position” (Tsai, 2015: 51). In relation to ostracism, Imogen was not influenced by her awareness of the theme in *manga*. However, Bethany and Jacqueline both noted that by witnessing ostracised characters struggle in pursuit of *recognition* and acknowledgement, they were instilled with the *determination* and *perseverance* to do the same. Jacqueline actually refers to the *Naruto manga* series as a story about “*human perseverance*” (Jacqueline).

Characters like Naruto, Gaara, Killer Bee from *Naruto*, Kaneki Ken from *Tokyo Ghoul*, and Rin from *Blue Exorcist* all share experiences of ostracism, including their ostracism based on reasons completely beyond their control and they all pursue some form of recognition for who they are without sacrificing their identities. Naruto in particular, as Jacqueline noted, embodies this ideal. His goal is to become the Shadow of his Hidden Village, which means gaining power and status and thereby

forcing those who ostracised him to not only recognise his existence, but his value as well. Turning to the participants themselves, Jacqueline was ostracised for being black Oxson was ostracised for being gay and Jewish and Imogen and Bethany were both ostracised for being quiet and shy. For UK readers, ostracism appears to be a process of exclusion that the Other is subjected to for reasons beyond the Other's control, which in turn suggests that one's Otherness is often beyond one's control.

In *Naruto*, *Tokyo Ghoul*, and *Blue Exorcist*, ostracism is used to mark those with power that exceeds that of the dominant majority as a threat, and as unbelonging to human communities. Fichte explains that those who overstep the boundaries of their "sphere of... possible activity" (2000: 40) and threaten to impede on another subject's sphere become Other (2000: 133), and must "remove [themselves] from all human community" (2000: 12). In doing so, this leaves the Other susceptible to moral exclusion, which refers to the boundaries in which morals apply, making the Other easier to dehumanize, which supports findings by Waytz and Epley (2011), who state that those who are more socially distant are more likely to be dehumanized. Ostracism, a process whereby social interaction is denied the Other and the Other's membership to any human community is presumably withheld, certainly places a social distance between the Self and the Other.

It can be surmised that the ostracism of characters in *manga*, many of whom possess power that exceeds that of the dominant majority, is in effort to maintain existing social hierarchies between Self and Other, to maintain the power disparity between Self and Other, and to prevent these from being overturned. This is supported by accounts of the rejected Other in *My Hero Academia* and *One Piece*, who lack any kind of power. In these examples, ostracism is used to maintain those hierarchies; the powerless are shunned and thus power is reaffirmed as a measure of social status, which only serves to benefit those already possessing power. This further emphasizes the value of power and thus, the value of those with power.

Ostracism is shown to strip from readers a sense of belonging, as well as a sense of control over their identities and how those identities are perceived by their surrounding social environments. However, participants have noted that "*One Piece and shonens like Naruto*" can be "*motivational*" (Oxson) and can provide readers who identify with ostracised characters, the "*determination*" (Bethany) to persevere in pursuit of acknowledgement for their Othered identities. While the identification of ostracised characters does not appear to give readers a sense of belonging, it does appear to return to readers some semblance of control, mainly over how they will go about gaining the recognition that was denied them.

#### **4.1.2: THE REJECTED OTHER - BULLYING**

By looking at participant accounts of bullying, the significance of establishing and maintaining power hierarchies becomes even more evident. A form of active social rejection, Volk, Dane and Marini describe the act of bullying as an "aggressive goal-directed behaviour that harms another individual within the context of a power imbalance" (2014: 327). An experiment was conducted by Hamarus and Kaikkonen, who found one of their core findings was that "[bullying] behaviour is a way of gaining power and status in a group, or school class" (2008: 333). They further explain that the victim is powerless and that their treatment creates fear within others, who as a result, "do not dare to fight bullying" (2008: 333), at times even joining in; this can cause victims to be ostracized and perpetuate the bullying process. Ultimately, bullying is used to establish power as a measure of value and those who lack power therefore lack value, becoming the Other.

As mentioned at the start of this section, 13 participants explicitly recalled experiences of being bullied and for 5 others bullying was inferred based on their statements. This section will explore the accounts of those for whom bullying was not directly caused by their consumption of *manga*, as that will be addressed in

Chapter 06. Among the bullied, over half identified with characters on the basis of shared experiences of bullying, and the most commonly featured *manga* in relation to this topic was once again, *Naruto* (1999). Other *manga* to be highlighted given their significance to participants included *Tokyo Ghoul* (2011), *One Piece* (1997), *Yugioh* (1996), and *Fruits Basket* (1998). It must be noted, however, that *Fruits Basket* unmistakably adheres to the *shojo* demographic. I mentioned in Chapter 03 that the emphasis of this thesis was on the readers themselves. As such, they were given the freedom to discuss *manga* beyond the realm of *shonen*; these accounts would be included in the analysis if they were relevant to the overarching themes.

In the 4.1.1 it was suggested that through ostracism, the Other was socially distanced from the Self, making it easier to subject the Other to processes of dehumanization. It was also argued that ostracism was used to maintain social hierarchies -largely revolving around power- between Self and Other. Furthermore, *Naruto* was identified as an ostracised character, mainly for the power of the Tailed Beast that had been sealed within him. Ursula notes that while she enjoyed the series *Naruto* when she began reading it, she felt that the title character was “so nice, that [she] didn’t like it anymore” (Ursula). She explains that “everyone... just bullied him, but he’d forgive them and he tried to rescue them... so many times... but... nobody really apologised to him” (Ursula). In other words, *Naruto*’s ostracism facilitated an environment in which his peers would relentlessly bully him.

*Naruto*’s peers did not reflect upon the morality of their actions, suggesting that social rejection, through the creation of social distance between Self and Other, facilitates the moral exclusion of the Other (Waytz & Epley, 2011). Moreover, it also demonstrates that the dominant majority will band together to subjugate any potential threat to the pre-existing power hierarchy between itself-as-Self and the minority-as-Other, within a given social environment. It must be noted that *Naruto*’s bullying and his ostracism, despite being two different types of social rejection - active and passive respectively- did function together. *Naruto* was ostracised and

denied participation in social interactions and relationships, but he was bullied in that his peers would talk about him without acknowledging his presence. In this way, Jacqueline came to discuss bullying as a by-product of being ostracised.

Jacqueline, who identified with Naruto and Rin for their shared experiences of ostracism, mentioned that she had grown wary of interacting with new people, "because of the people who bullied [her] before" (Jacqueline). Similarly, Bethany who was "past that point in [her] life" when she started reading *manga* and previously identified with Kaneki Ken from *Tokyo Ghoul* as a result of their shared experiences of ostracism, also identified with him because she was "bullied quite a lot, but for being smart" (Bethany), like Kaneki, but went into no further detail.

However, Oxson, who again turned to *One Piece* in relation to bullying, did not identify with Usopp; instead, he identified with Sanji, another major ally of the *manga's* protagonist. In doing so, Oxson revealed that readers are capable of identifying with multiple characters within the same series for a variety of reasons. Oxson recalls being bullied for his Jewish heritage, explaining that he was at an age where he "barely understood what [his bullies] meant at the time" (Oxson). However, Oxson did not identify any instances of bullying in *manga*, because Sanji was never bullied. Instead, Oxson referred to Sanji's backstory of being stranded on an island for months with his adopted father, Zeff. They ran out of food and began to starve. One day, Zeff suddenly found meat and cooked it. Shortly thereafter, Sanji noticed that Zeff's leg was missing. Sanji, horrified, understood the implications, but given the circumstances, the only way to survive was by eating Zeff's leg. Oxson identified with Sanji on vastly different, but shared experiences of struggle; both the reader and the character were completely powerless in their situations. Sanji was powerless to prevent his starvation, whereas Oxson was powerless to prevent bullying.

In Chapter 02, it was explained that *shojo manga* address struggle, just as *shonen manga* do, but in different ways. *Shojo manga* series are said to be romance focused and place an emphasis on the struggles of being female in contemporary

society (Prough, 2011; Stimson, 2017; Oyashima, 2019). However, social rejection is a phenomenon experienced by many individuals, male and female alike. The series Dorothy highlights in relation to bullying, is one of personal significance, on the basis of her shared experience of bullying with the *manga's* protagonist, Tohru. Dorothy explains that Tohru "*was just the different kid*" (Dorothy), which makes her Other through non-conformity. However, Tohru was also "*friends with the school prince and [her peers] were jealous of her,*" so her bullies targeted her for "*how she looked*" (Dorothy). As the Other, Tohru upset the pre-established social hierarchy within her school, by obtaining what the other girls presumably wanted, which was a rapport with *the school prince*; this rapport could be considered a form of social power. As such, Tohru was subjected to bullying based on how she looked, as a way for the bully to "[gain] power and status in a group, or school class" (Hamarus & Kaikkonen, 2008: 333). This, in turn would establish a power hierarchy between those who bully Tohru and Tohru -as Self and Other respectively- which could force Tohru to abandon her existing relationship with *the school prince*, thereby releasing her grasp on social power and normalising herself as the powerless Other.

Pascale's account of bullying in *Yugioh* further supports findings by Volk, Dane and Marini (2014) and Hamarus and Kaikkonen (2008), that is oriented around power hierarchies. *Yugioh* revolves around a boy, Yugi, with a passion for all sorts of games, who is often bullied by two side-characters that "*eventually become his closest friends*" (Pascale). Yugi is bullied by Joey, but a larger, older boy interferes, beating up Joey. Rather than the situation ending there, it takes a dark turn, when this character "*turns out to be a bigger bully by demanding money, or he'll knife them*" (Pascale). Pascale then explores the perspective of the initial bully, whose decision to bully Yugi happen to be caused by Joey's familial estrangement.

Joey comes from "*a rather fractured background*" (Pascale). Joey's parents are divorced and they have split custody over Joey and his sister. Joey lives with his father, who is "*an alcoholic and basically never goes home*" (Pascale) and rarely sees

his mother. The implications here are that Joey, who feels powerless at home as the Other, regains power and temporarily discards his Otherness, by bullying Yugi at school. Pascale's account suggests that Otherness is cyclical, whereby Otherness breeds Otherness through the Othering of another, making the initial Other less Other in the grand scheme. From both Dorothy's and Pascale's accounts, it can again be inferred that social rejection is used as a means to establish, or maintain social hierarchies oriented around power, further supporting my argument.

Many of the above examples are cases whereby participants have identified bullying on the basis of reader identification; in other words, identifying with characters on the basis of similar experiences to their own. For example, Dorothy reveals that she was "*bullied quite a lot for [her] weight... and the things [she] was into*" when she was at school (Dorothy), placing an emphasis on her appearance. The character she identified with, Tohru, was also bullied for her appearance. While Pascale claims he "*was never expressly bullied,*" commented that did "*sort of [see himself] in Yugi*" because he too was a "*rather nerdy kid*" (Pascale). Consequently, Pascale identified with Yugi through shared personality traits and interests. For Oxson, reader identification resulted from a shared experience of struggle.

Less common, but equally significant was narrative identification, which to reiterate, is the process whereby recipients "identify with story characters by taking the characters' perspectives and understanding their emotions, goals, and actions" (Hakemulder et al., 2017: 260). Despite sharing striking similarities with Naruto in his experience of being bullied, Isakson did not highlight the title-character in relation to bullying; instead, he was drawn to Naruto's mentor, Kakashi, whose attitude he envied. Isakson recalls having not had "*a very good school life,*" having been perpetually "*bullied for... eight, nine years severely, by people [he] called [his] friends*" (Isakson). Despite them being his bullies, Isakson "*tried [his] hardest to stay friends with them*" (Isakson), in the same way that Naruto constantly forgave and rescued his own bullies. Isakson explains Kakashi's attitude as "*not [caring] about*

*much... [keeping] yourself to yourself... [doing] what needs to be done,*" but nothing more (Isakson). Isakson wanted to be comfortable in his own company, like Kakashi, and *"not have to try and socialise with people"* (Isakson). Over time, he distanced himself from the group that bullied him for years. Kakashi could be seen to function as a role model for Isakson, providing him with some semblance of control over his life, whereby he no longer needed to struggle for the recognition of those who did not deserve it, instead recognising himself.

Bullying was communicated to readers to similar extents. Hamarus and Kaikkonen state the process consists of "short communicative exchanges" (2008: 333), name-calling, or the construction of a fear-driven culture that stops others from standing up to bullying and can often lead to their participation. When participants went into detail on bullying, both in relation to characters and in relation to their own experiences, they were never targeted by one specific person; it was either an ambiguous amount, or a multiple that could be identified using language like *bullies, people, group, or kids*. Participants also mentioned spending, or wanting to spend time by themselves as an outcome of bullying.

Responses were also similar to those identified when analysing ostracism, in that readers gained motivation and they were encouraged to persevere through their struggles. Dorothy notes how characters tend to be able to *"break out and be themselves,"* further adding that messages to readers are to *"persevere, be yourself and you'll find. People like you... that are nice"* (Dorothy). Oxson credits *"fighting manga like One Piece"* for getting him through his struggles with bullying by *"fighting back,"* noting that *"struggles of identity are something that [he connects] a lot with"* (Oxson). Isakson's has already been discussed; he was encouraged to enjoy his own company, which enabled him to disassociate from his bullies, with whom he had spent so much time attempting to maintain relationships.

Wentworth, someone who never recalled being bullied, described himself as misunderstood. He never identified specific examples of bullying in *manga*, but he

did comment on how *manga* in general addresses the issue, stating: “they highlight how bullying is not cool. I love that; it’s anti-bullying. All *manga* made me anti-bullying” (Wentworth). Readers appear to reflect upon bullying to varying degrees. Attitudes towards bullying appear to be influenced to different extents, but there is an underlying message that being bullied is a struggle and that those to experience it should never give up, should persevere and stand up to bullying. Bethany refers to bullying as an ongoing struggle for “acceptance” (Bethany), but equally appropriate would be to refer to it as an ongoing struggle for recognition.

Hegel’s Lordship/Bondsman dialectic that represents Self and Other can be applied to bullying. By applying the literature to the dynamic of bullying (Hegel, 1977), some parallels can be drawn. Over the course of the struggle, the balance of power between Self and Other oscillates. First, the bully-as-Self subjugates the victim-as-Other. Then, the bully-as-Self becomes dependent on the subjugated victim-as-Other for its power. By standing up to the bully-as-Self, the victim-as-Other strips the bully-as-Self of its power. Hegel discusses the arbitrary *death* of the Other that results from the struggle, which can also be interpreted as the death of the Other’s Otherness. In the context of bullying, by confronting the bully-as-Self, the victim-as-Other discards its status as victim and escapes the power inequality within their dynamic, establishing itself as a Self. The message readers draw from *manga* is to stand up to bullying, to persevere, or in a Hegelian sense, to struggle, because that may be the only way to completely escape it and achieve equality.

Participant accounts of bullying, based on their engagement with *manga*, support the argument that the Other is rejected so as to perpetuate or maintain existing power-based hierarchies between Self and Other, where the Self is powerful, but the Other is powerless. Furthermore, these accounts also imply that a UK reader’s lived experiences of Otherness will directly influence the themes they identify, as well as the Othered characters they identify with. However, there are those, like Clarise and Pascale, who will identify certain Otherness themes in *manga*,

without having explicitly, or implicitly experienced such processes themselves; such individuals will identify themes, but will not identify with specific characters.

Participants' emphasis on how *manga* characters -mostly protagonists- struggle to overcome bullying; how they persevere, offers illuminative insight into how UK readers might react to bullying in their own lives. For many, manga characters appear to offer a source of inspiration in readers, to emulate the struggle and perseverance displayed by characters within *manga* narratives. If readers cannot obtain recognition or acceptance from their surrounding social environments, they can at the very least accept themselves for who they are, as seen with Isakson. For others, bullying becomes something that causes the rejected Other emotional pain, which is consistent with McDougall et al's findings on social rejection (2001), and becomes something that must never be emulated.

#### **4.1.3: THE REJECTED OTHER - FAMILIAL ESTRANGEMENT**

As explicated by Pascale in his account of *Yugioh*, bullying can be the result of social rejection in the familial sphere. Familial estrangement is the breakdown of a previously existing relationship between two or more members of a family. While the phenomenon can refer to various dynamics, the majority are between parent and child. A study investigating the reasons for familial estrangement explored the perspectives of both parents and children (Carr et al., 2015). The findings revealed that estrangement from the perspectives of parents "stemmed from their children's objectionable relationships or sense of entitlement," whilst from the perspectives of the children, their parents displayed "toxic behaviour" and left them "feeling unsupported and unaccepted" (Carr et al., 2015: 1). Violence, abuse, neglect, and inter-marital problems, are also causes for familial estrangement, which overall, "can be devastating to those who experience it" (Carr et al., 2015: 1), bearing the potential to impact future social and romantic relationships (Agllias, 2017).

Of the 4 participants to discuss familial estrangement, only 1 identified the theme within *manga*, but for the remaining 3, *manga* played the pivotal role of support system for them as estranged individuals. As mentioned, Pascale was able to identify familial estrangement in *Yugioh* (1996), although never experienced it himself. The remaining *manga* to be highlighted, were *Fist of the North Star* (1983), *Dragon Ball* (1984) and *Card Captor Sakura* (1996), the latter again being a *shojo* series. All four *manga* were significant to only a single participant each.

Having noted through Joey from *Yugioh*, how social relationships can be affected by familial estrangement, I will now turn to the three participants to have experienced this form of rejection, each of whom was supported in a different way. When Mikelson's brother started buying the *Dragon Ball Z* *manga* books, Mikelson "would read them over his shoulder" (Mikelson). He recalls having "a troublesome relationship with [his] parents" and his brother was "the only good family member [he] had" (Mikelson). The time they spent together watching and reading *Dragon Ball Z* was not just "a good respite from... quite a shitty childhood," but it also functioned as a "bonding experience" between brothers" (Mikelson). While he was estranged from his parents, *manga* provided him an avenue for the development of an emotional bond with his brother. It also functioned as an escape.

For Timson, the character he pointed out, Kenshiro, the protagonist of *Fist of the North Star*, was "more of a father figure" to him than his own father, "influencing [him] more" as well (Timson). The reason for this stretches back to his youth, when his father had a work-place accident. The factory he worked at was set on fire and in the years thereafter, he has needed cosmetic treatment for the burns and is still seeing a psychologist for the post-traumatic episodes he still experiences. Since the accident, Timson feels his father has become a "xenophobic, homophobic, all-round fascist" and frequently loses his temper (Timson). He further explains that he knows "a lot of the things [his father] did were wrong" and understands that they appear to be the result of his harrowing and "unfortunate accident" (Timson). Conversely, he

sees Kenshiro's ideals and actions as being "*the right way for most people*" (Timson); the character thus functions as both support and role model.

The final participant to discuss familial estrangement is Fiora, for whom *Card Captor Sakura* served to acknowledge and normalize her sexuality. Fiora is bisexual and was raised in a religious household, near a church that she would often attend when younger. Fiora was aware of her sexuality "*since [she] was like six years old or something*" (Fiora), but the issue lay in the heteronormative worldview possessed by her parents. They would commonly remark that "*it wasn't something to tell people about or feel proud of or anything like that*" (Fiora), which was why she refrained from revealing this until she was a teenager. Fiora goes into more depth on the dynamic between her and her parents, revealing how they devalued her sexual identity and stripped it of its normality. They would also infantilize her, by telling her that "*when [she's] older, [she'll] realise this isn't who [she is],*" because she was simply going through "*a phase*" that would eventually pass (Fiora).

According to Fiora, *manga* "*was the first form of media... where same sex relationships... were not judged*" (Fiora), specifically praising *Card Captor Sakura* and to a lesser extent, *Fruits Basket*, which was previously mentioned by Dorothy. However, she also mentions *Naruto* on the basis that it deals with "*how your family ties into you*" and "*how you get away from what you've inherited*" (Fiora), but she does not delve any deeper into the series in relation to her own experiences.

Based on the accounts provided by participants, familial estrangement is certainly identified, but not guaranteed to be reflected upon by participants. Given the small sample size, it is impossible to generalize. Only the participant to provide -and go into detail on- an example of familial estrangement in *manga*, considered how this form of rejection might impact the estranged. This led to the participant's reflection upon the consequence it might have on the capacity of the estranged to negotiate future social relationships. On the whole, the data is extremely consistent with the literature. From the perspective of participants, familial estrangement

tended to be the result of the parent displaying “toxic behaviour” and leaving them “feeling unsupported and unaccepted” (Carr et al., 2015: 1). Among participants, this form of social rejection appears very personal in the circumstances that lead to it, but provides readers with -or facilitates the creation of- a support system.

Unlike ostracism and bullying, power is shown to be less significant among participants with lived experiences of familial estrangement. As Pascale identified familial estrangement in the *Yugioh manga* series, due to one of the character’s practice of bullying, it could be argued that the only reason power dynamics feature in that example, is because power dynamics are inherent in bullying. In participant accounts of ostracism and bullying, both characters and participants alike, tended to be met with hostility, disgust, or contempt, which is indicative of animalistic dehumanization (Haslam, 2006), and will be further discussed next chapter. Those who were subjected to familial estrangement, including Pascale’s example of Joey, tended to be neglected, or their identities were denied recognition. It is my contention, therefore, that Otherness through familial estrangement is indicative of a lack of recognition granted to the Other, which resembles Haslam’s mechanistic dehumanization (2006), which is symbolic of devaluation and disregard.

Through these findings on social rejection, a clear link is established between exclusion and dehumanization as inherent and intertwined features of Otherness, as identified by UK readers, by way of their engagement with *manga*. These findings also support the argument presented at the start of this chapter, that UK readers tend to identify with socially rejected characters, because they perceive themselves as socially rejected Others, based on their lived experiences of Otherness. I argued that the Other is shown to be rejected so as to maintain existing social norms and power hierarchies. For the most part, participant accounts of ostracism, bullying and even to some degree, familial estrangement support this. Further findings indicate that Otherness is a process that denies recognition to the value of Other. As discussed previously, value is often measured by power, and by denying the value

of the Other, the power possessed by the Other that poses a threat to those existing hierarchies is thereby rejected, which in turn normalises the Other as Other.

In the literature review, this process of normalisation was explored through Hall (1997) and Morrissey (2001), as indicative of ethnocentrism, symptoms of which included the treatment of "equality" as "similarity" and "difference" -imagined or not- "as inequality" (Morrissey, 2001: 340). If Otherness revolves around power and the Other possesses the power to overturn existing power hierarchies, then Othered *manga* characters should no longer be considered Other. However, Hall notes that ethnocentrism is a refusal of one Other to give recognition from the place of the Other to the other Other (1997:238). Such a refusal was shown by the Ninja collective in *Naruto*, and the humans in *Tokyo Ghoul* and *Blue Exorcist*. The refusal to grant recognition to participants, however, appears to be driven by the value of pre-existing worldviews by the Self, and the threat that non-conforming identities like Oxson's homosexuality and Evangeline's bisexuality pose to heteronormative worldviews, which is why Fichtean Otherness was relevant and applicable.

## **4.2. THE THREATENING OTHER**

This section focuses on the Other-as-threat, which was largely identified by participants at an intergroup level, but as explained above, was experienced by participants at a personal level. It explores the ways readers perceive threats in *manga* and how they respond to the social rejection of these threats. Participants brought up the Other-as-threat in two stages; through the threat that was posed by the Other as perceived by the narrative Self; as well as through the impact the consequences of being perceived as a threat had on the propensity for participants to engage in moral reflection. Lastly, participants almost unanimously identified the Other-as-threat as characters who played the role of antagonists to the collective Self within *manga* narratives. I have employed Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) to

better understand the different ways in which the Other-as-threat can come to be, as well as the consequences of being perceived as such, including conflict.

Integrated Threat Theory (ITT) details the possible elements of threat posed by the Other that might invoke prejudice towards it. When the theory was first introduced by Stephan and Stephan (2000), it was composed of four elements - *realistic threats*, *symbolic threats*, *intergroup anxiety* and *negative stereotypes*. This was later updated by Stephan and Rentro (2002) to comprise only *realistic threats* and *symbolic threats*, on the basis that *intergroup anxiety* and *negative stereotypes* functioned better as sub-elements that could cause either. Throughout this section, I shall be specifically referring to the updated, two-component theory.

Stephan, Ibarra and Morrison refer to realistic threats as “concerns about physical harm or a loss of power and/or resources” (2015: 5). Realistic threats are, in other words, those that pose some form of danger to one’s health, safety, to the economic or political stability of a nation-state and so on. Symbolic threats refer to those that lead to “concerns about the integrity or validity of the ingroup’s meaning system” (2015: 4). Symbolic threats present alternative morals, ideologies and worldviews, that bear the capacity to “challenge, change, supplant, or destroy” another collective’s sense of identity (2015: 4); they can lead to devaluation.

Being subjected to any kind of social rejection can lead to aggression by the victim towards the rejecting party (McDougall et al., 2001), which breeds conflict. Eidelson and Eidelson (2003) write that conflict between groups can be triggered by any of the following five senses: *superiority*, *injustice*, *vulnerability*, *distrust* and *helplessness*. Vulnerability and distrust are the two most likely senses that would lead the Self to perceive the Other as a threat. If the Self feels vulnerable, it would perceive the Other as a genuine threat. If the Self is distrustful, it would perceive the Other as a potential threat. Both senses simultaneously are also possible.

#### 4.2.1: THE THREATENING OTHER - A THREAT TO POWER

Participants identified the Other-as-threat in five different *manga* series, with only *Tokyo Ghoul* (2011) featuring more than once. To reiterate, *Tokyo Ghoul* is a *seinen manga* series, but as it was of extreme personal significance to both Bethany and Lawson, who provided extensive in-depth accounts on the *manga*, it has been included within this section. Scarlet pointed out *Vampire Knight* (2005), a *manga* that adheres to the *shojo* demographic, but while there were clear connections to the concept of the Other-as-threat, the participant did not go into detail on this, instead placing a focus on mechanistic forms of dehumanization. As such, Scarlet and her example of *Vampire Knight* will be discussed in Chapter 05 instead. Other notable series mentioned included *My Hero Academia* (2014), *Naruto* (1999).

*Tokyo Ghoul* is set in a world where there exist Ghouls, who look just like normal human beings, but possess special powers and are portrayed as having an insatiable thirst for human flesh and blood. *Tokyo Ghoul* approaches the Other-as-threat through its initial portrayal of Ghouls as gluttonous cannibals. Ghouls pose a realistic threat to the survival of humanity, as human beings no longer sit at the top of the food chain. The story follows Kaneki Ken, who is brought up his entire life believing that “*Ghouls are bad, we can’t trust them, they’re all as bad as each other, they’re all evil*” (Bethany). This is reflected early in the *manga*, when Kaneki is lured out on a date by a female Ghoul pretending to be a human, with a shared interest in books. Later that night, she asks Kaneki to walk her back in the dark, because there have been recent Ghoul attacks and she does not feel safe alone.

Kaneki is guided into a dark alley, at which point the Ghoul abruptly bites into his neck. As she does this, she recalls a scene she loves from the book they are both reading, where a man is disembowelled, exclaiming “no matter how many times I read that part, it gets me so excited” (TG, ch1: 32). She then mutates into her Ghoul Form, waits for Kaneki to start running away, before chasing him down kicking and screaming. She toys with him and pierces his body until he bleeds to death.

Based on Kaneki's experience, Ghouls can be perceived as posing a realistic threat to human beings; they are also physically and supernaturally more powerful. However, their existence also poses a symbolic threat, because it challenges the worldview that human beings are apex predators. As such, Ghouls are subjected to extreme forms of social rejection; they are universally "*shunned*" and persecuted (Bethany). Lawson notes that "*there's no... middle ground with it,*" every Ghoul is "*equally prejudiced against*" (Lawson), even children. By socially rejecting Ghouls, Ghouls are socially distanced from human beings; they are then subjected to moral exclusion, in other words, Ghouls are placed "outside the boundary in which moral values, rules, and considerations of fairness apply" (Opotow, 1990: 1).

To that end, an organization called CCG is founded, who are "*licenced by the government to go out and kill the Ghouls*" (Bethany). Ghouls are thus forced to "*[live] in constant fear for [their lives]*" and once a Ghoul is discovered, "*they're captured straight away. There's no trial, they're just killed because they eat humans*" (Bethany). According to Lawson, younger Ghouls "*aren't... allowed to go to school properly, because if they're exposed... they'll be taken away*" (Lawson). Because of the realistic threat Ghouls pose, whereby Ghouls need to eat human beings to live, and because of the symbolic threat Ghouls pose, whereby the worldview that human beings are the pinnacle of power is overturned, humans hunt Ghouls.

However, because Ghouls are persecuted, Ghouls come to despise human beings and some intentionally go out of their way to kill them, in the same way the CCG persecutes Ghouls. *Tokyo Ghoul* covers conflict between Ghouls and human beings that derives from a mutual contempt for each other. In section 4.1.3, it was explained that contempt is often associated with ostracism, and above, Bethany was noted as saying that the Ghouls are shunned by the wider human community. This mutual contempt that derives from the threat posed by Ghouls to human beings is exacerbated by the threat posed by human beings to Ghouls, and perpetuates the

Otherness of the Ghouls, because factions of the Ghouls then actively go out of their way to attempt to exterminate the threat posed to them by human beings.

Fichte can again be applied here. In the literature review, it was explained that for Fichte, any subject requires membership to a human community before it can be recognized as a human being (2000: 11-12). Membership to this community requires free agency, with which the subject must choose to limit its free agency to a "sphere of... possible activity" (2000: 40), wherein "only the subject could have chosen [the activity] ... not the other" (2000: 40). Limiting one's free agency to a sphere prevents the subject from impeding on the spheres of others and prevents others from impeding on the subject's own sphere. In other words, the subject chooses to refrain from posing a threat to others within the community. Inherently then, Ghouls, who are forced to consume human beings, otherwise they will "*starve to death*" (Lawson), are bound to pose a threat to human beings. Both Bethany and Lawson note that most Ghouls "*just want to live*" (Bethany & Lawson), and in order to do so, are forced to disassociate themselves from human beings, so that they are able to see human beings as food. Essentially, being a Ghoul is involuntary. Being socially rejected for their inherent Otherness, Ghouls are led to develop extreme feelings of aggression towards the rejecting party (McDougall et al., 2001), which as noted, perpetuates their Otherness as threat to the human community.

Participant accounts of the Other-as-threat almost unanimously demonstrate how social rejection is used to perpetuate the Other's existence as Other. Anderson brings up the character Stain from the series *My Hero Academia*, one of the *manga's* most iconic Villains as a way to demonstrate the perpetuation of Otherness. As noted earlier, *My Hero Academia* is set in a world where eighty percent of the global population has manifested Super Powers (Quirks), and the world faces heightened crime rates as people exploit their Quirks for personal gain. Those who commit crimes using Quirks are categorized as Villains, whereas those who fight crimes using Quirks are categorized as Heroes, dividing humanity into Villains, Heroes and

Civilians. Ursula explains that the structure of society in *My Hero Academia* effectively “[forces] people with superpowers to be Heroes,” as though they are “obliged” to “fight for peace” (Ursula). Consequently, the “Hero-market” has become oversaturated “with people fighting over who would be the most popular,” turning Heroes into “more of a celebrity thing than... about actually doing heroic actions” (Anderson).

Anderson reveals “Stain was originally hero-trained,” but grew disillusioned with the emphasis by Heroes on their status, rather than on being Heroic. This is visible from the very first chapter, where a Hero known as Mount Lady “comes in out of nowhere and... immediately start showing... off” (Anderson). Stain wanted to give Villains harsher punishments, but the Hero Association did not agree on the matter and “instead of trying to change his viewpoint, they just excluded... and expelled him” from the organization (Anderson). Stain’s ideology challenged that of the Hero Association, and as noted previously, when one’s morals, ideologies, or worldviews bear the capacity to “challenge, change, supplant, or destroy” another’s (Stephan & Ibarra & Morrison, 2015: 4), they become symbolic threats.

Stain, as a rejected Other, took matters into his own hands and directed his aggression towards the organization that rejected him (McDougall et al., 2001). Stain becomes known as the *Hero Killer*, based on his incredibly strong convictions towards what he calls *False Heroes*, or in other words, Heroes that act for personal gain instead of to protect others. Stain perceives all Heroes bar one, as frauds and according to Anderson, it was Stain’s rejection that led him to be “more and more radicalized,” because no one took the time to consider his perspective, or talk him down (Anderson). Eventually, Stain began purging the world of “all the unjust Heroes who... taint the name” and fail to match his definition of what heroism embodies (Anderson). In doing so, Stain became a realistic threat to Heroes. Stain’s ideology of harsher punishments to Heroes could have deterred crime from taking place, which would have made Heroes obsolete in society. Rejecting Stain from the

Hero Association meant rejecting this ideology. To recall, one of the senses that can lead to conflict between Self and Other is the sense of *injustice* (Eidelson & Eidelson, 2003). By rejecting Stain, the sense of injustice led Stain to seek out conflict against those who rejected him, which in turn perpetuated his Otherness-as-threat.

While Stain and the Ghouls reacted to their social rejection in a manner predicted by McDougall et al. (2001), Gretchen brings up Naruto, as a character who breaks that pattern and perseveres through the struggle of Otherness. As discussed in 4.1.1, Naruto was ostracised because of the Tailed Beast sealed within him. Although the Tailed Beast is symbolic of immense latent power, Naruto is completely unaware he possesses this at the start of the *manga*, and seeks to gain recognition through his own efforts. At first, Naruto is “*a trouble-maker*” for attention (Gretchen), but over time and through hard work, Naruto gains power as a Ninja in his own right, and begins shedding his status as the Other. His best friend, Sasuke, who for the longest time was perceived by their peers as inherently talented, started to feel “*threatened by that, so then he wanted more power*” (Gretchen).

Sasuke rejects Naruto’s friendship and seeks power in dark places. The threat Naruto posed the Hidden Village was realistic, as there was a possibility that the Tailed Beast could take over his body from within. Conversely, the threat he posed to Sasuke was symbolic; Sasuke was always the more talented Ninja, so when his worldview was challenged, he sought power to kill Naruto. In Gretchen’s example, the significance of power in establishing Otherness is clear. When Naruto gains power, he sheds his Otherness; the balance of power between him and Sasuke oscillates in a very Hegelian way (1977), whereby Sasuke starts off as the Self and Naruto starts off as the Other. When Naruto gains power, Sasuke becomes Self-as-Other and Naruto becomes Other-as-Self. Unable to give recognition from the place of the Other (Hall, 1997) to Naruto-as-Self, Sasuke pursues more power to re-establish the pre-existing hierarchy of himself-as-Self and Naruto-as-Other.

Thus far, participant accounts of the Other-as-threat have shown that the process of social rejection tends to perpetuate Otherness, normalising the rejected Other as the Other within a given social environment. There is a tendency for the Other to react with aggression towards the Self, when subjected to social rejection on the basis of its perception as threat. Any ensuing conflict between Self and Other gives the Self a valid reason to eradicate the Other and in turn, rid itself of the threat -both realistic and symbolic- the Other poses to the Self. Where Gretchen's account of *Naruto* differs from this finding, rests within his refusal turn to aggression, to violent conflict as a way of resisting, or attempting to overturn the existing power hierarchies between Self and Other. At the end of *Naruto*, it is Sasuke who chooses conflict, and by refusing to kill Sasuke after a long, drawn-out battle, by embracing Sasuke as a friend and forcing him to accept his friendship, the Hegelian dialectic between the characters reaches an equilibrium; both surviving as equals.

#### **4.2.2: THE THREATENING OTHER - MORAL AMBIGUITY**

At the start of this section, I mentioned that the representation of the Other-as-threat in *manga* had an impact on the propensity for participants to engage in moral reflection. This is largely down to the way *manga* employ perspective, particularly in examples where there is violent conflict, to demonstrate exactly just how morally ambiguous the actions of both parties can be. Among the participants to discuss moral ambiguity in *manga*, *Tokyo Ghoul* (2011) was talked about by the most participants. Other series included *My Hero Academia* (2014), *Naruto* (1999) and *Mobile Suit Gundam* (2001). As these were all covered in varying degrees of detail, with *Tokyo Ghoul* being by far the most in-depth, I will use *Tokyo Ghoul* as a case study and the three remaining *manga* series to provide comparison.

According to Tsai (2015), who explicates Hogan, there is a connection between an individual's emotional response and their ethical judgement. Hogan

(2011) contends that when a character possesses a personality with multiple dimensions, this connection can become ambiguous, complicated. If characters are difficult to categorise according to good and evil labels, identification by -in this case- readers, can “elicit different emotional responses... depending on their own beliefs and moral codes” (Tsai, 2015: 66). A character can be empathised with, despite simultaneously being condemned by the reader (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2012). Tsai further argues, that these characters are capable of challenging readers to reflect in various ways, highlighting the villain Itachi, from *Naruto*.

This paradox shall be explored primarily through *Tokyo Ghoul* and its protagonist Kaneki Ken, whose psyche is caught between two sides -human and Ghoul- of an ongoing violent conflict that has seen countless perish. As mentioned previously, the story follows Kaneki Ken, who is attacked and mutilated by a Ghoul in the very first chapter. As this female Ghoul is feasting on Kaneki, an unknown entity kills her and in doing so, gives Kaneki a chance at survival. He is rushed to hospital, where the organs that were destroyed by the Ghoul are transplanted from said Ghoul's dead body into Kaneki's own. This medical procedure saves his life, but the price of survival is turning into a Ghoul himself. For his entire life, Kaneki has been brought up believing that Ghouls are bad (Imogen). However, once he becomes a Ghoul, he becomes aware of others “*interspersed in society around him*” (Bethany), including people he knows, who have never posed him any kind of threat.

Significantly, *Tokyo Ghoul* does not “*paint either side as bad guys*” (Bethany). To that end, Lawson acknowledges that “*no one in Tokyo Ghoul is a good guy, but they're not bad guys either*” (Lawson). The CCG in *Tokyo Ghoul* believe that hunting Ghouls is the right thing to do, because “*Ghouls are monsters, they've killed [their] family*” (Bethany), or as Lawson phrases it “*murderous cannibal people who want to kill [them]*” (Lawson). However, most Ghouls “*just want to live*” (Bethany & Lawson)

although they have to consume human beings or they will “starve to death” (Lawson).

Marge notes that *manga* tends to show readers alternative perspectives, that provide an insight as to “*why the bad guy’s a bad guy*” (Marge), or “*how the best heroes can end up being the worst villains*” (Dolton). Marge argues that *manga* narratives “*always give you a backstory and there’s always a reason*” (Marge). This does not just apply to *Tokyo Ghoul*, either. Anderson explains that he is able to understand how the antagonist, Stain, from *My Hero Academia* turned out, because he was given insight into Stain’s background from his narrative perspective.

Among *manga* like *Tokyo Ghoul* where intergroup conflict is a central theme, such as *Mobile Suit Gundam*, both sides are shown to believe they are doing “*the right thing*” (Bethany & Frankson), which is exactly the point. Conflicting parties are simply presented as “*people who do horrible things to each other*” (Lawson), nothing more, which means it is left to the reader to determine which side they agree with, if either, based on where their morality lies. Anderson contends, using the roles of Hero and Villain in *My Hero Academia* as an example, that there is “*a lot of grey of whether or not people are actually always acting out in their designated categories*” (Anderson). Similarly, Gustafson comments how “*the opposition gets blurred*” in *Seraph of the End* and Frankson explains that “*there’s no good side, or bad side*” in *Mobile Suit Gundam* (Frankson). Anderson reveals that there are times in *My Hero Academia*, where Heroes do not always act as Heroes should.

Anderson refers to one of the protagonist’s major allies, Iida, whose brother was attacked by Stain, the Hero-Killer, and was left “*badly injured and unable to continue as a Hero*” (Anderson). Iida took it upon himself to “*track down Stain*” and “*avenge his brother*” (Anderson). Iida does not consider his own safety, or the safety of those who will eventually have to rescue him; it’s purely “*for his personal gain*” (Anderson). On the other hand, Stain saves the protagonist, Deku, during their

attempt to rescue Iida from Stain. A third party attacks and instead of leaving the protagonist to die, Stain, the Hero-Killer, acts like a Hero and saves a Hero.

Through the use of perspective, *manga* reveal characters to be far more complex than their categorizations of Self-as-threatened and Other-as-threat would suggest them to be. The humans in *Tokyo Ghoul* are threatened by the Ghouls, but then go out of their way to pose a threat to Ghouls, embodying the Otherness they themselves have condemned. Iida in *My Hero Academia* acts recklessly in pursuit of vengeance for his brother, contradicting the ideals his categorization as a Hero demand he upholds. Similarly, Stain displays the altruism of a Hero by risking his life to save a Hero and in turn, symbolizes a Hero more so than Iida the Hero. However, as entities normalised as Other, the actions that contradict their Otherness-as-threat are disregarded by the Self-as-threatened, because the Self is powerful and thus, it is through perspective of the Self that Otherness is *fixed* and perpetuated.

Because *manga* provides readers with insight into the complexities of characters, they cannot be categorized according to simple labels of good and evil and thus can be simultaneously empathised with and condemned (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2012). To reiterate Tsai, such characters can “elicit different emotional responses” in readers that are dependent on “their beliefs and moral codes” (2015: 66). Such characters are also capable of eliciting moral reflection in readers.

As the main character, Kaneki is the embodiment of how the reader initially contemplates the world within *Tokyo Ghoul*, acting as “*the connection between his old life and his new life*” (Lawson), between Humans and Ghouls. Lawson refers to this as Kaneki’s “*duality*,” or his hybridity; his internal Other. Kaneki is the link that could one day successfully negotiate these two conflicting perspectives, in the exact way that Naruto does within his own narrative. To reiterate, Naruto started off “*quite selfish*” as a character, but in time, he “*grew to consider others*” and “*tried his best to understand everyone before jumping*” into battle (Gustafson). In doing so, Naruto

resisted the dominant power and struggled against becoming the perpetual Other; in *Tokyo Ghoul*, there is a point where Kaneki almost adopts this role.

The reader is introduced to a character called Amon; a human investigator, who specialises in hunting Ghouls, but often questions whether his actions are right, or wrong. According to Lawson, Amon is vital to Kaneki's development in the story, as well as to the reader's sense of morality. He notes that "[Amon] and Kaneki are... from a moral standpoint so grounded and so the same, but because they've just got that different point of view they just clash" (Lawson). When Kaneki and Amon finally come face to face, they battle and Amon is killed. During their fight, however, both run the same internal monologue, which Lawson paraphrases as: "there's something wrong with this world. Is it us, or is it you?" (Lawson). Before Amon dies, he wonders what a conversation with Kaneki would have been like. Kaneki contemplates the same; whether anything could have developed from it; whether anything could have been changed; or whether they could have understood one another.

The difference between Kaneki and Naruto is Kaneki responded to Amon's rejection of him-as-Ghoul with a rejection of Amon-as-human. However, Naruto responded to Sasuke's rejection of him-as-Other, by constantly attempting to engage in dialogue with not just Sasuke, but every major antagonist Naruto is forced to confront. Naruto embodies the altruism of *shonen manga* protagonists as highlighted by Sasada (2011) in relation to Luffy from *One Piece* (1997). Perhaps because *Tokyo Ghoul* is a *seinen manga*, Kaneki does not bear that altruism.

The battle between Kaneki and Amon emphasises why perspective is so significant to readers; if Kaneki and Amon could have seen the world through each other's eyes, perhaps their conflict could have differed. As noted, Naruto often engages in dialogue with antagonists, so that he may learn their point-of-view, to "[understand] each other, even through conflict" (Gustafson). In *Tokyo Ghoul* this does not happen and conflict continues, perpetuating the Otherness of the Ghouls. However, Kaneki's failure is a major reason why participants value perspective, as

they bear witness to what can happen when outright rejecting the Other. Similarly, by witnessing Naruto's behaviour, they bear witness to what can happen when the Other's perspective is given recognition, or alternatively, when the Other refuses to give in to social rejection, and perseveres in pursuit of recognition as the Other. UK readers are also made aware of the significance of communication in overcoming Otherness. When Kaneki and Amon fought to the death, Lawson screamed out in exasperation for the two characters to "*just speak to each other*" (Lawson).

Bethany claimed that reading *Tokyo Ghoul* "*gave [her] a new perspective on... arguments*" to "*take a step back and look from both sides,*" also noting that "*you can't change mindset overnight*" (Bethany). Bethany applied this to her own life and her debates with her father with regards to her vegan lifestyle, versus his traditional "*meat-two-veg*" one (Bethany). She also commented that *Tokyo Ghoul* revealed how struggle was necessary, in order for "*whoever is excluded*" to "*get recognition*" (Bethany), which aligns with Fichtean (2000) and Hegelian (1997) conceptualizations of the Self and Other dynamic, whereby both posit that the Other must struggle to gain recognition as human beings. Lawson, who describes his former self as not "*really the nicest person,*" believes that *Tokyo Ghoul* "*helped expand [his] mind to how other people think,*" making him "*think more,*" particularly about exploring "*different avenues of self-improvement*" (Lawson).

Chen noted that American readers tended to engage with *manga*, because they were "looking for a moral flexibility in life" that extended beyond dichotomies such as good and evil (2011: 252). However, accounts by my participants suggest the opposite to be true for UK readers, in the sense that they come with no prior expectations of moral flexibility. Gustafson, who always perceived the world as "*right is right and wrong is wrong,*" for example, stated that engaging with *manga* is what led him to perceive "*grey areas*" where he normally never would have (Gustafson). Gustafson praised Naruto in particular for "*[helping him] understand the world*" and enabling him "*socially... [to] be more empathetic*" (Gustafson).

Throughout this section, I have presented examples of exclusion through Other-as-threat, using *Tokyo Ghoul* as a case study. Accounts of Othered collectives show that the Other commonly poses both realistic and symbolic threats to the Self, which leads to their social rejection. Aggression directed by the Other-as-threat towards the rejecting party causes the Other adopt an antagonistic role within the narrative, which perpetuates their Otherness. However, by providing readers with the perspectives of both Self and Other within a given dynamic in *manga* narratives, *manga* allow readers to consider the morality of the Other's initial Othering, the Other's rejection and the Other's retaliation. Commonly, readers find the actions of both Self and Other to be morally ambiguous and through this ambiguity, and by gaining insider access to the thoughts of both sides of a given intergroup conflict, readers are led to reflect upon their own sense of morality. Based on participant responses, UK readers tend to become more considerate of the worldviews of others, and empathetic to their struggles. Unlike social rejection through ostracism, bullying, or familial estrangement, readers did not identify with characters.

While the Other may start off as threat to the Self, *manga* reveal how the Self can come to embody the same kind of threat and in turn, persecute the Other. *Manga* reveal to readers that characters both as-Self and as-Other can act in ways do not conform to the way their roles are characterized, as is demonstrated by Anderson in relation to Iida and Stain in *My Hero Academia*. Readers hereby come to understand that neither Self, nor Other is inherently good or evil, right or wrong, just or unjust. Both display positive traits normally associated with the Self, and negative traits normally associated with the Other. However, participants also appear to understand that the Self has the power to normalise the Other as Other in society, perpetuating its Otherness. Participants note that the rejected Other will struggle for recognition, namely for the recognition of its worldview, which in being the Other-as-threat, inherently challenges that of the Self-as-threatened.

### 4.3. THE DISCONNECTED OTHER

In the previous sections, the Other's exclusion has been shown to largely be the product of the Self's sense of vulnerability to -and distrust of- the Other (Eidelson & Eidelson, 2003). Examples of interpersonal rejection either oriented themselves around the Other as possessing power that exceeded that of the Self, notably in the cases of *Naruto* and *Tokyo Ghoul*, or as distrust of the Other, as seen in Oxson's example of Usopp from *One Piece*. Examples of intergroup rejection again oriented themselves around vulnerability, exclusively through the perception of the Other as a realistic and a symbolic threat. The Self commonly held feelings of hostility, disgust or contempt towards the Other, which is representative of Haslam's (2006) animalistic dehumanization. However, this section will focus on the Other as socially disconnected from its surrounding social environment, which manifests itself in the breakdown of social bonds (Silver, 1994). The Self will display a total disregard, or disinterest towards the Other, which is representative of Haslam's mechanistic dehumanization (2006). To this end, 17 participants broached the Other as socially disconnected, referring to themes of self-exclusion and social invisibility.

As noted in the literature review, self-exclusion can result from an individual's internal sense of Otherness, or from their awareness of being perceived as the Other by their respective social environment. It can refer to one's withdrawal from social interaction, from cultural integration (Skrobanek & Jobst, 2010), from fields of employment, or from institutions (Mascareno & Carvajal, 2015). It can derive from and lead to feelings of purposelessness, or of being misunderstood (Çeçen, 2006) and it can lead to a loss of pride and self-esteem (Seeman, 1959). Social invisibility can be a physical separation, or a systematic disregard of an identity group; it can lead to feelings of being forgotten, ignored, or unseen (Scotland-Stewart, 2007).

This section argues that self-exclusion and social invisibility lead to a social distancing of the Other from the Self, which in turn makes it easier for the Self to

disregard the Other's needs and struggles. In the literature review, it was explained that there exist four fundamental human needs; belonging, control, self-esteem and existential meaning (Williams, 2002). The systematic disregard of the Other leaves the Other susceptible to social closure, which is the establishment of "real, or symbolic boundaries" (Kastoryano, 2010: 79), whose function is to "keep [non-members] out against their will" and are often "used to perpetuate inequality" (Silver, 1994: 253). In this way, the Self can monopolise resources, which can be interpreted as rights, opportunities and as access to goods and services, at the expense of the Other. According to Silver, social closure "arises from the interplay of class, status and political power" (1994: 543). In relation to Otherness resulting from social disconnectedness, participants highlighted examples of class division in *manga*, which led them to consider real-world, class-based hierarchies.

#### **4.3.1: THE DISCONNECTED OTHER - SELF-EXCLUSION**

Among participants, the identification of self-exclusion oriented itself around the Other's negative self-perception that is based on their lack of self-esteem, as well as the Other's awareness of normalized expectations -and the Other's failure to meet those expectations- as to what a normal individual should be like. Both cause the Other to withdraw from social interactions, in turn affirming their own Otherness. Ophelia brings the significance of self-perception to attention through *Mob Psycho 100* (2012). Other relevant *manga* include *Watamote* (2011), *Oreigairu* (2011) and to a much lesser extent, *Death Note* (2006) and *Seven Deadly Sins* (2012).

*Mob Psycho 100* follows Mob, a boy with psychic powers, who "wants to be normal and he's not" (Ophelia). Mob has a perception of himself "as really awkward," possessing these "powers that are kind of a burden to him" (Ophelia). What really strikes Ophelia is the juxtaposition between Mob's self-perception and how those around him perceive him, particularly his brother Ritsu and his mentor Reigen. On

the one hand, Mob rejects the powers he has been blessed with and *"wants to be like everybody else"* (Ophelia). On the other hand, Ritsu is envious of Mob, because he has no powers despite being Mob's sibling, whereas Reigen not only values Mob's powers, but also values Mob as an individual, constantly assuring him *"it's okay to just kind of be who [he is]"* (Ophelia). From Ophelia's perspective, the series places a large emphasis on the different perceptions of an individual, particularly *"of yourself and the way you feel you should be"* (Ophelia). In Mob's case, his negative self-perception leads him to reject an inherent part of his identity.

Towards the start of the series, Mob is invited to join the Paranormal Club, mainly to make up numbers. However, because Mob rejects his own paranormal abilities, he rejects the opportunity to form social relationships with other members of the club. As explained at the start of this section, self-exclusion can lead to a loss of self-esteem and by Othering such an intimate part of himself from his lived reality, Mob often comes across as lacking in self-esteem. It is revealed that Mob's rejection of his psychic powers largely derives from when he was younger and accidentally harmed his brother Ritsu, leading to his self-perception as a threat and thus, Other. For the longest time, Mob is the only person he knows who has psychic powers, which means he deviates from the social norm, by being Other-as-threat.

Mob does not want to be perceived by those around him as Other-as-threat, because this would reaffirm his Otherness within a wider social context. As such, it appears as though Mob rejects his psychic powers to avoid harming others, as well as to avoid being socially rejected by others. Significantly, Mob is inspired by members of the Body Improvement Club and intends to regain a sense of self-esteem, by improving his physique. Mob joins the Body Improvement Club and gains an avenue towards developing an identity without psychic powers.

Participants allude to the notion that self-exclusive behaviour is partly the product of avoiding social rejection, which is consistent with findings of self-exclusion through *Mob Psycho 100*. Bronson notes that he refrains from opening

up to others, on the basis that “[people] don’t really wanna talk about themselves too much, because as soon as you do, you get judged” (Bronson). When I inquired further, Bronson explained that “there’s definitely an issue of self-worth in general” that influences one’s withdrawal from social interaction (Bronson). However, the contrast between Ophelia’s and Bronson’s statements suggests that self-exclusion can be caused by a lack of self-esteem as much as it results in a lack of self-esteem, both supporting and somewhat expanding upon Seeman’s findings (1959).

Dolton adds to this, explaining that due to his father’s work, Dolton had to move from country to country and thus found it difficult to locate a “social window” to socialise and make friends (Dolton). Sometimes, Dolton would arrive at a new school midway through the year and soon came to notice how “people [had] already formed their bonds with classroom friends” (Dolton). Dolton felt that his peers were unwilling to include him at school, whilst at home, his parents spent most of their time working, so there was “pretty much no one to talk to...” (Dolton). Spending consistently more time alone meant that Dolton became uncomfortable around other people and would “choose to stay away from them” (Dolton).

Pointing out an example of a self-excluding character in the series *Oregairu*, Dolton demonstrates a paradox, whereby individuals can be led to shy away from social interaction, whilst simultaneously wishing to be included and accepted. The *manga* series follows the life of a teenage boy called Hikki, who has an extremely negative worldview. Dolton describes him as “this antisocial guy, excluded from everything and just watching him, he’s giving up on modern society, more or less” (Dolton). The story almost exclusively follows Hikki’s narrative perspective and while the reader understands he is the main protagonist, to those around him he is the primary antagonist. Hikki’s self-exclusion stems from when he was younger and his romantic advances are rejected by two girls, separately. Years prior to the series, Hikki confesses his feelings for a girl with whom he has developed a friendship, but she rejects him and instead asks to remain friends. However, she never speaks to

him again. Later, but still slightly prior to the start of the series, Hikki has developed feelings for another girl and upon finding out she likes someone else, he asks her "could it be me?" (ORE, ch2: 28). The girl scoffs at the idea and with a look of disgust, rejects him. The next time Hikki enters his classroom, the whiteboard has been graffitied with a hand-drawn caricature of him asking "*could it be me?*" (ORE, ch2: 28).

Upon being subjected to public humiliation, Hikki chooses to withdraw entirely from the social circles around him. Over time, he starts resenting everything about mankind and "*deliberately pushes people away*" (Dolton), finding social interaction uncomfortable. Hikki is forced to join a club that helps students with their problems, but because his worldview is so nihilistic and because he can be so cold, his peers feel worse about themselves after interacting with him, causing them to resent him for it. Nevertheless, he successfully helps them solve their issues and the more he does this, the more it becomes clear that he wants to be accepted.

This account of Hikki as a self-excluding Other supports Çeçen's hypothesis that self-exclusion can both derive from and lead to feelings of purposelessness (2006), as nihilism is fundamentally the belief that life is meaningless. Furthermore, it also supports the argument I posited at the start of this chapter, suggesting that by being socially distanced from the Self, which in *Oregairu* is represented by the wider student body, the Other's needs and struggles are more easily disregarded. Hikki evidently needs a sense of belonging and recognition, but his cold exterior causes him to be misunderstood and thereby, resented. In other words, Hikki's self-exclusion leads to his social rejection, which perpetuates him as the Other.

Dolton identified with Hikki through the shared experience of self-exclusion, as well as by way of their shared desire for "*acceptance*" (Dolton), that contrasted their self-exclusive behaviour. From Dolton's account of his personal experience of self-exclusion, it can be inferred that being consistently excluded from social circles at school normalised within Dolton a negative self-perception and thus, a sense of

Otherness that led him to self-exclusion. Dolton expressed a desire for recognition, commenting that as there was *"pretty much no one to talk to,"* he was left wanting to *"be accepted"* and to *"just do something that says 'I was there'"* (Dolton). Dolton displays signs of feeling forgotten, ignored and unseen, which Scotland-Stewart notes as being symptomatic of the socially invisible Other (2007). Had Hikki not been forced to socially interact by way of his participation in an after-school club, it is very likely he would have become socially invisible to his peers. In this way, I argue that self-exclusion, through social disconnected, can lead to social invisibility.

Anderson's example of *Watamote* further support this and also demonstrates that low self-esteem, based on normalized standards of what an individual should be like, can lead to self-exclusion. Anderson grew up in the countryside and wanted to study medicine, but as he did not come from a medical background, he received no support to that end. Instead, he was placed *"under an immense amount of pressure from [his] parents"* to achieve during GCSEs and A-Levels (Anderson). The pressure to study coupled with the lack of familial support meant sacrificing his social life; over time, he started viewing his parents as the enemy, because the pressure they placed on him effectively denied him a social life. As *"school [had been his] only avenue for friends"* (Anderson), this left him socially isolated.

Over time, Anderson developed a fear of social interactions that he called *"completely irrational"* (Anderson). Furthermore, his self-perception gradually got worse, it *"warped and it [became] a multiplier effect"* (Anderson), whereby the more he saw himself as the Other, the more he would self-exclude and vice versa. When confronted with social situations among peers, Anderson described his thought process as *"I shouldn't be in the same place as they are, so... I'm gonna become completely invisible"* (Anderson), which further supports my argument that self-exclusion can lead to social invisibility. When Anderson was asked if there were any *manga* in particular that stood out to him, or any characters that resonated with him, he highlighted the series *Watamote* and its protagonist, Kuroki Tomoko.

*WataMote* follows Tomoko, a complete recluse who spends all of her free time playing dating games and who has no interaction with anyone outside of her home and even then, she only rarely interacts with her younger brother. Anderson identified *WataMote* as appealing, because he found Tomoko to be a highly relatable character. Anderson identifies a very specific scene, where Tomoko goes to a fast-food store (*WataMote*, V1CH4). Before ordering her hamburger, Tomoko notices a group of classmates enter the building and starts panicking. Tomoko imagines a variety of worst-case scenarios in the event that they happen to see her. Anderson explains that *"because her mindset is so dark, and the perspective she has of herself is of inferiority, she thinks 'I shouldn't be here,'" and "runs into the bathroom to hide"* (Anderson). This experience bears remarkable similarities to Anderson's own.

Like Tomoko, Anderson had seen some of his classmates in town *"and it would [have been] fine to walk past them"* (Anderson), but because he had such a negative self-perception and such low self-esteem, he hid indoors for over half an hour, until he was certain they had left. He recalls acting this way *"because [he] couldn't tell otherwise and [he] had no reference to go 'this is messed up, not everyone is like this'"* (Anderson). However, by following Tomoko from her own narrative perspective, *WataMote* showed Anderson *"[his] shit in a funny way, in a relatable way"* (Anderson), but from an external, objective point of view.

*WataMote* was helpful, because it enabled Anderson to *"reflect on [his] real-life issues from a detached position"* (Tsai, 2015: 51), which is indicative of reader identification (Rosenblatt, 1970). Being able to relate to Tomoko, especially through their shared experience of hiding from their peers, will have made his self-reflection easier. Anderson notes that the process of questioning why Tomoko is acting that way *"suddenly loops back around"* to Anderson realising that *"this was [his] thought process"* as well (Anderson). Upon reflecting on his own actions through Tomoko, he asked himself whether this was the person he wanted to be. Identifying with

Tomoko and reflecting upon his own behaviour by questioning the rationale behind identical behaviour in a character could assess from "*another viewpoint*" enabled Anderson to improve his self-perception and alter his mindset (Anderson).

Anderson is not the only participant to be inspired to shed the self-exclusive mentality by way of engaging with *manga*. Dolton was "*inspired*" by *Oregairu* to seek out other *manga* fans, where he would normally "*choose to stay away*" and credited watching Hikki "*slowly, slowly warm [his] way back into humanity*" (Dolton) as the catalyst. For the longest time, Frankson "*had an idealised version*" of social relationships and lamented the fact that real relationships require "*effort and you don't instantly click with people*" or even that "*sometimes you... can't be bothered*" (Frankson). Being unable to establish and maintain meaningful friendships led Frankson to perceive himself as "*weird or deficient*" and refrain from seeking out social interaction (Frankson). However, reading *manga* made Frankson aware of the value in having "*actual friends, or [being] closer*" to others (Frankson).

Cumulatively, participant accounts of self-exclusion refer unanimously to the withdrawal of the Other from social interaction, both in *manga* and by way of lived experience. Accounts posit the notion that normalized social perceptions of what an individual should be like, play an influential role in an individual's self-perception as Other; this is seen in *Mob Psycho 100*, whose protagonist perceives normal people as not having psychic powers, or presenting a threat to those around them; this is also seen in *WataMote*, where Tomoko perceives popularity as the norm and as she is unpopular, she is Other and thus hides herself from her peers; and this is seen in *Oregairu*, through Hikki, who displays awareness that his nihilistic worldview contradicts the majority. These self-excluded Others come to perceive themselves as Other, because they deviate from the norm. In turn, they engage in the self-Othering practice of self-exclusion, which perpetuates their role as Other.

In the literature review, the process of normalising characterizations and thus perceptions of Self and Other is practiced by those dominating discourse, who

deploy "a strategy of 'splitting'... the normal and acceptable from the abnormal and unacceptable," before "[excluding] or [expelling] everything which does not fit, which is different" (Hall, 1997: 258). Hall argues that this is conducted by "radiating power *downwards* on a subordinate group... from above" (1997: 261). Although there was no discussion of power dynamics within this section, self-exclusion is the product of perceptions of Otherness that are formed by those with power. By self-excluding, participants and characters are acting out their roles as Other.

By engaging in self-exclusion, the Other socially distances itself and avoids social interaction, something identified unanimously by participants and noted regarding characters. In this way, despite desiring acceptance and social interaction, the self-excluding Other comes to fear it, because it also fears being socially rejected and thus being confirmed as the Other. This finding largely derives from the Other's lack of self-esteem (Williams, 2002), and was most notable in Dolton's case. By watching self-excluding characters -with whom participants identify- struggle to gain some form of social connection, participants are able to perceive their behaviour from an objective perspective and alter their self-perceptions. In this way, participants resist acting out their roles as Other and in turn, come to resist the dominant power. These findings further support the notion that lived experiences influence the Otherness themes and the Othered characters that -and with whom- UK readers identify.

Lastly, self-exclusion as a withdrawal from social interaction (Skrobanek and Jobst, 2010), also point towards social distance and thus, social disconnectedness. Participants like Dolton and Anderson, as well as characters like Mob and Tomoko all demonstrate the inherent link between self-exclusion and social invisibility. In some instances, the self-excluding Other actually tries to become socially "*invisible*" (Anderson). Given this connection, I shall now move onto social invisibility.

### 4.3.2: THE DISCONNECTED OTHER - SYSTEMATIC DISREGARD

In the literature review, social invisibility was a physical separation of, or a systematic disregard of the Other (Scotland-Stewart, 2007). Participant accounts of social invisibility unanimously revolve around disregard, both at the interpersonal and the intergroup level; in other words, the Other as an entity with needs and struggles of its own, as well as the Other's existence entirely, is disregarded. Participants have noted that their engagement with *manga* has led them to consider social invisibility in *manga* narratives, whereby characters and collectives who are not central to the plot embody the Other. The identification of social invisibility at the collective level has led some participants to consider class division.

Social invisibility at the interpersonal level revolved around characters who were forgotten, whereas at the intergroup level, it revolved around collectives who were systematically disregarded. Only at the intergroup level was social invisibility in *manga* applied to the lived experiences of participants, but this again revolved around normalized characterizations of the Self. *Manga* series that feature include the *seinen* series *Puella Magi Madoka Magica* (2011), as well as *Bleach* (2001), *Naruto* (1999), *Soul Eater* (2003) and *Black Lagoon* (2002). *Manga* series that feature in relation to class and the subjugation of the disconnected Other include *Dragon Ball* (1982), *Attack on Titan* (2009), *Bleach* (2001) and *One Piece* (1997).

According to participants, the disregard of characters is intentional, as authors appear to draw attention to their social invisibility, by ensuring they are forgotten -in some way- by their peers. This way, authors demonstrate the negative impact that being forgotten can have on the Other. Highlighting a side-character in *Puella Magi Madoka Magica* (PMMM), Tilda discusses how happy endings for protagonists can mean unhappy endings for other characters. Sometimes readers "just [wants] fictional characters to have a good end, because life doesn't" (Tilda). However, PMMM emphasises a side-character who "goes absolutely crazy, because she wasn't happy with the end... even though everyone else was" (Tilda).

Similarly, Roxanne discusses the protagonist of *Bleach*, Ichigo Kurosaki. Over the course of the series, Ichigo becomes one of the most powerful beings in the narrative world, but abruptly loses his powers and "*literally hits rock bottom... it's this huge part of his life... gone in a way*" (Roxanne). Roxanne explains that the whole point of this story arc is that "*everyone... had forgotten him*" (Roxanne), which leaves Ichigo in a state of desperation. In order to regain that which he had lost and to regain a sense of purpose, Ichigo seeks out a new source of power.

Both the side-character in *PMMM*, as well as Ichigo in *Bleach* are powerless in the sense that their "own behaviour cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes, or reinforcements" that are sought (Seeman, 1959: 784). Both characters have been intentionally disregarded by the dominant power lauding over their respective *manga* series - the author. As such, both react in similar ways; through displays of struggle and resistance. Ichigo's is more significant, because Ichigo was the protagonist. As such, Ichigo is willing to latch on to a new and unknown source of power, in an attempt to return himself to a place of narrative significance. Ichigo succeeds, because in the grand scheme of the *manga*, he is the protagonist.

As such, Ichigo, who became Self-as-Other by being forgotten, was never truly forgotten and thus, never truly Other. As it turns out, Ichigo's allies slowly but surely regained their memories of him and sought him out, to return to him the powers he had initially lost. In the case of the side-character from *PMMM*, however, no amount of anger, or struggle changes anything. This finding suggests that unless the social environment in which the Self-as-Other is normalized as the Self, is overturned, the Self-as-Other never truly becomes Other, whereas the Other can never become the Self; this idea is present at the intergroup level as well.

When asked about exclusion, Isakson and Jackson both brought to attention the way some *manga* portray those who are considered "*normal*" (Isakson), or background characters. In *Naruto*, the reader follows a story about "*powerful characters*" that possess "*teleporting powers and substitutions*" and so on (Isakson).

When normal characters appear in the story, although they might function as "*minor plot conveniences every now and then*," Isakson's first reaction is "*I don't need to know about them*" (Isakson). They appear very infrequently in the narrative and in the context of the story, "*those normal people don't matter*" (Isakson). Gustafson describes *Naruto* to be a commentary about "*warring states*" (Gustafson); there exist many characters who are constantly endangered, who are collateral damage, or are seeking refuge from war-torn areas, whose struggles remain unseen.

These collectives systematically disregarded by the author as the author tells the story, because they are neither protagonists, nor allies, nor antagonists, and thus do not influence the narrative. Those who do not influence the narrative do not possess the power to draw in audiences and thus, these *normal* characters become the socially invisible Other. They are disconnected from the narrative, they are forgotten, ignored and most often, remain unseen (Scotland-Stewart, 2007).

Along the same lines, Jackson notes that such characters, outsiders to the story, are visually depicted as "*just plain-faced*" (Jackson); referring to both *Soul Eater* and *Black Lagoon*. Once again, *normal* characters that are not directly involved in the plot are greyed out, or depicted as outlines. While the identification of such characters was not of personal significance for Isakson, Jackson, who comes from Glasgow, struggled with extensive bullying in his youth. What he learned was that "*if you're not involved in any of the football stuff*" the city is centred around, "*you barely register*" (Jackson). Much like these characters, those who are not included, blend into the background and appear invisible in the grand scheme.

Scotland-Stewart (2007) notes that social invisibility can be a physical separation between *Us* and *Them*. If characters who are relevant within any narrative can be considered the *Us*, then those who contrast that, those who are physically removed from the narrative, those who go without dialogue, without contribution, and whose struggles are rendered unknown to the reader, can be considered the *Them*. For Isakson and Jackson, *normal* characters symbolise the Other. As noted

in the literature review, the Other exists in a dichotomy with the Self (Fichte, 2000), and particularly when power relations are considered, the Other's central feature is their relative power deficiency in relation to the Self, within various "domains of life" (Viladrich & Loue, 2009: 1). As such, participants also identified *normal* characters as powerless in relation to characters who are central to the plot, and this dynamic was represented by class division within *manga* narratives, where normal characters were socially invisible in terms of the systematic disregard of their needs.

Bronson feels as though class breakdowns are "*just the constant in this reality*" and he doesn't "*see it ever ending, because [it's] human nature*" (Bronson). A testament to this is in Roxanne's example of class in *Bleach*, which is a story about Shinigami (Soul Reapers) and Hollows (Ghosts). In its fictional afterlife, which is referred to as Soul Society, the place where these Soul Reapers live, there exists a district called "*the Rukongai*" where the "*lower class*" and the impoverished are segregated (Roxanne). Bronson notes that in many *manga*, class breakdowns can often be represented by "*skill level*" (Bronson), or power level, which can function as a measure of status. This is seen in *Bleach*, where those with large amounts of Spirit Energy - a type of power that Soul Reapers use to combat Hollows - will live and train in Soul Society, but those without are often left in the Rukongai.

It is also seen in *One Piece*, which to reiterate is about a world of Pirates and a fabled Pirate treasure known as One Piece. The protagonist, Luffy, aims to become the King of Pirates, which he can only do by being the strongest Pirate Captain, having the strongest crew and ruling the seas. In *One Piece*, the stronger a character becomes, the more that battle power begins to determine status. Marge mentions a Pirate called Kaido, who is a *Yonkou*, or in other words, one of the Four Emperors. The *Yonkou* are the four most powerful and notorious Pirates in the world of One Piece and Kaido is "*protected by the Marines*" (Marge), an institution that exists to stop Pirates. Kaido's battle power and resulting social status begets more power, "*so he can do whatever he wants*" (Marge). As such, Kaido, who is "*in control*" of the

"Wano Kingdom," systematically denies its population access to basic resources like food and water (Marge), disregarding their existence as human beings.

Examples of Rukongai inhabitants in *Bleach* being denied access to Soul Society, due to the lack of Spirit Energy, as well as inhabitants of the Wano Kingdom in *One Piece* being denied access to food and water, due to their lack of value, is demonstrative of social closure. To reiterate, social closure is the establishment of "real, or symbolic boundaries" (Kastoryano, 2010: 79), that are "used to perpetuate inequality" (Silver, 1994: 253). These examples present powerlessness as measure through which these boundaries can be established, perpetuating Otherness. By denying them resources like training and nourishment, power cannot be amassed. As such, these accounts of *Bleach* and *One Piece* show the Other as disregarded, as characterized by features that are symptomatic of social invisibility -like being ignored- (Scotland-Stewart, 2007), and as representative of the lower class, through powerlessness and a consequential lack of value (Viladrich & Loue, 2009). The lack of repercussions on Kaido by the Marines, suggests that the Otherness of *normal* characters within the narrative's social environment has been normalised. The most in-depth account of social invisibility leading to social closure through class division is provided by Clarise, who specifically highlights the *manga Attack on Titan*.

*Attack on Titan* is set in a post-apocalyptic world, where the surviving human population lives within one giant city, surrounded by three enormous, circular walls. Humanity struggles for survival against giants called *Titans*, that eat human beings for entertainment. Humanity has an army that exists to protect the rich, to police the streets and maintain order, to explore the world beyond the walls, but most importantly, to defend humanity from the Titans. When looking at the construction of their city, it becomes evident that class plays an enormous role in the way the population is distributed. The walls are circular, so the area within each layer becomes increasingly smaller and better guarded. The innermost wall is called Wall Cena; beyond that stands Wall Rose; the outermost wall is called Wall Maria.

Towards the centre, “[you] have the really rich people” (Clarise), whereas the poorest live out in the impoverished extremities. If Titans invade, Wall Maria is the first to be breached, meaning that the lower-class inhabitants of Wall Maria function as fodder for the middle-class inhabitants of Wall Rose. Similarly, the inhabitants of Wall Rose then act as fodder for the upper-class living within Wall Cena.

Clarise notes that “[even] when you have all this horrific stuff going on, humans are still back-stabbing each other” (Clarise). At the start of the series, the outermost wall, Wall Maria, is breached. As the city’s outer ring is no longer safe, the majority seek safety within the boundaries of Wall Rose, but “there’s too many people” (Clarise), so those with power “send lots of people out to go battle the Titans” knowing that most will not return (Clarise). There exists social closure within the military as well, which is divided into three components. The Military Police “don’t actually do much, they just protect the rich people” in the innermost wall (Clarise); the Garrison are the first to battle Titans if the walls are breached, which has not happened in many years; they “have a reputation for being drunks” (Clarise); lastly, there are the Scouts, who go beyond the walls, in efforts to try and reclaim land for humanity, but “quite a few of them die horrific deaths” (Clarise).

Through her account of *Attack on Titan*, the Other is socially invisible and the value of its life is wholly disregarded. *Attack on Titan* embodies the notion of social distance between the Self and the Other -with the Self living in Wall Cena and the Other living outside- leading to the dehumanization of the Other (Waytz & Epley, 2011). It also reiterates something that was discussed in 4.1.2, when Pascalie gave an example of Yugi from *Yugioh* being bullied, only for his bully to be bullied by a bigger bully; the further from the Self the Other is, the more Other they become. In other words, Otherness can be perceived as scaling with social distance.

Where participant accounts of self-exclusion implied the Other’s perception of normalized characterizations of Self and Other within a given social environment, participant accounts of social invisibility elaborated on the fixed nature of the

dichotomy of Self and Other. Participants most commonly did so by highlighting examples of class division within *manga* narratives. As powerless, the disregarded Other was constructed from the perspective of the Self, which was embodied by the upper class, whilst the Other was embodied by the lower class. Social closure was a process to which the Other was subjected in every class-oriented example. While participants were able to identify the socially invisible Other as forgotten, or as systematically disregarded, and while participants were able to reflect upon these examples and apply them to real-world situations, only the two Glaswegians shared personal experiences of social invisibility through systematic disregard, on the basis that they did not share a passion for football with the rest of the city.

Throughout this section, participant accounts of social invisibility have shown that by being placed at social distance from the Self, the Other is more likely to be subjected to dehumanizing process (Waytz & Epley, 2011); which support my argument that Other's struggles are more easily disregarded and thereby, is more easily devalued. Through disregard, the socially invisible, or the socially distant Other is likely to be subjected to social closure (Scotland-Stewart, 2007), in other words, processes that "perpetuate inequality" (Silver 1994: 253); this finding further supports my argument that *manga* makes UK readers aware that the Self has the power to normalise the Other as the Other within a given social environment.

Findings on social invisibility are highly reminiscent of the territorial Other, and according to Staszak, territorial Otherness used to be dependent on "supposed spatial marginality" between *Here* and *There* -as represented by *Us* and *Them*- poles (2008: 1). *Here* and *There* were physically distant locations, were little effort was required to *understand* or *assimilate* the Other (Staszak, 2008: 5). This is best demonstrated in *Attack On Titan*, where giant walls physically separate the various classes. However, migration, the expansion of I.T. and globalizing markets "have destroyed relatively stable and territorialized figures of the Other and created new, transient, ever changing and space-independent figures" (Praxmarer, 2016). Voicu

argues that territorial Otherness is now determined by local marginality, but my findings on social invisibility suggest that UK readers also perceive space-dependant Otherness to be determined by social distance instead. Examples of the greyed out and faceless *normal* characters as presented by Jackson and Isakson reveal that these Others very much intermingle within the same physical spaces, but they are kept at a social distance by members of the dominant power, they are systematically disregarded, ignored and over time, they are forgotten about. This section thus argues that by normalizing characterization of the Other.

## CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 04

This chapter argues that UK readers perceive exclusion as a process that is intended to perpetuate power hierarchies, or to prevent power hierarchies from being overturned. The excluded Other is either one who possesses power that exceeds that of the Self, thereby posing a threat to pre-established power-based hierarchies of Self and Other, or is powerless and is thus subjugated so the Self may normalise and perpetuate characterizations of the Other as Other within a given social environment. In turn, this appears to characterize power as valuable, which therefore also characterizes those who possess power -the Self- as valuable. By contrast, the Other is characterized as lacking in value, because it lacks power.

Based on the findings, UK readers most commonly perceive exclusion in the form of social rejection -largely because they share lived experiences of social rejection with characters- which functions as a way to socially distance the Other from the Self. Social distance serves as a way to socially disconnect the Other from the dominant power -the Self- which in turn makes it easier to devalue the Other, by "radiating power *downwards*" and in turn fix their own value in society (Hall, 1997: 261). At an interpersonal level, social rejection was most commonly identified as experienced by *manga* protagonists, who would commonly resist their perpetuated

Otherness and in doing so, would act as examples for readers to do the same. At an intergroup level, social rejection was commonly identified as experienced by antagonists, who posed a threat to the dominant power -represented by the human collective within the narrative. These threats were often symbolic of the potential to overturn existing power hierarchies; these collectives were socially rejected and normalized as antagonists within the narrative, who were then persecuted, which commonly led to intergroup conflict. By giving readers insight into the various points of view regarding intergroup conflict, readers were challenged to reflect upon their sense of morality, which in turn supports Tsai's (2015) findings.

Social distance was embodied by the self-excluding and the socially invisible Other. In the case of the former, the Other would choose to self-exclude on the basis of their awareness that they displayed characteristic associated with normalized perceptions of the Other. The socially invisible Other was identified in *manga* as the powerless masses, who are subjected to systematic disregard and often, particularly when class divisions were considered to represent the dichotomy of Self and Other in *manga*, the socially invisible and thus lower-class Other would be subjected to social closure. This chapter displays an undeniable and intimate link between exclusion and dehumanization, as such, I shall now move onto Chapter 05.

## CHAPTER 05: DEHUMANIZATION

In the previous chapter, power dynamics were found to play a significant role in the exclusion of the Other. By being socially rejected and socially disconnected, the Other was more easily dehumanized, which supported findings by Waytz and Epley (2011), and was supported by Park and Park (2015), who discovered that social ostracism is more likely to lead to the dehumanization of the ostracised. It was also found that UK readers commonly saw the Other as disregarded by society, which in turn would cause the Other to struggle for recognition. Through power and disregard, exclusion and dehumanization were shown to be inherently linked; as such, this chapter broaches the overarching theme of dehumanization. In doing so, the significance of power and disregard to UK readers will be expanded upon, particularly in their identification of the dehumanized Other in *manga*.

Haslam describes dehumanization as the “denial of full humanness to others” (2006: 252), which comes in two forms: *Animalistic* and *Mechanistic*. According to Haslam, one’s humanness, based on Western perceptions of what constitutes a human being, is that which distinguishes them “from the related category of animals” and “from objects” respectively (2006: 256). Animalistic serves to reduce the Other to a status of inferiority, and characterizes it as uncivilized, coarse, amoral, irrational and childlike (2006: 257); mechanistic devalues the Other, characterizing it as inert, cold, rigid, passive, as well as superficial (Haslam, 2006: 257). These forms are significant throughout this chapter, because when participants were asked if they had ever considered dehumanization when reading or reflecting upon *manga*, 29 out of 40 answered that they had, and of those 29, 25 brought up mechanistic processes of dehumanization. In other words, UK readers appear far more likely to associate a lack of human value with Otherness, than they would inferiority.

As noted in the literature review, devaluation, according to Haslam, is directly associated to disregard. When the Other is “perceived to have dissimilar values” to the Self, the Other is “perceived to lack shared humanity and its interests can be disregarded” (2006: 255). Devaluation is thus the process of reducing the perceived value of the Other, until the Other lacks human value. Participants identified the devaluation of the Other as practiced by *manga*, through underrepresentation, through objectification and through stereotyping. Participants also identified the devaluation of the Other as addressed by *manga*, through the representation of the Other as a monster -both manmade and supernatural- within its narratives.

This chapter thus presents three overarching arguments: that *manga* actively contributes to the normalization of Otherness and as a result, fails to provide certain Othered identity groups with adequate recognition. This chapter also contends that the presentation of the Other-as-monster serves -within *manga* narratives- as a warning to members of the dominant power, that by deviating from normalized characterizations of Self, individuals will be stripped of their human value and face social rejection. However, *manga* protagonists who embody the Other-as-monster tend to display traits that are more characteristic of the Self, whereas the Self, by dehumanizing the Other, displays traits that are more characteristic of a monster. By accepting their Otherness, whilst maintaining their morality, *manga* protagonists as Other-as-monster resist the dominant power. As such, this chapter posits that *manga* encourage readers to resist the dominant power, and in doing so, *manga* becomes a site of paradox, where the medium dehumanizes Othered identities, whilst *manga* narratives actively encourage readers to embrace them.

As a result, this chapter will comprise of two sections. 5.1 *Othered By Manga* will address the dehumanization of Othered identity groups by *manga*, with an emphasis on the underrepresentation of queer and darker-skinned characters, the objectification of females, and the stereotyping of queer and overweight characters. Therein, UK readers, most of whom are seeking recognition for their value as human

beings, are shown to be more likely to identify the devaluation of their own identities by *manga* series. 5.2 *the Monstrous Other* will explore manmade monsters, whereby the Other-as-freak and the Other-as-villain are revealed to be the product of human experimentation, or the product of their social environments respectively. It will also explore supernatural monsters, whereby the Other-as-hybrid bears power beyond the realms of human understanding and becomes the Other-as-threat. As a threat, both realistic and symbolic, the Other is devalued and socially rejected.

### **5.1. OTHERED BY MANGA**

*Manga* as a literary medium is undeniably a contributor to social discourse. As touched upon in the literature review, social discourse can refer to authoritatively spoken, or written communication (Diamond & Quinby, 1988), as well as -and more than- "ways of thinking and producing meaning" (Weedon, 1987: 108). Discourse is circulated by power, and in a dichotomy such as that of Self and Other "there is always a relation of power between the poles" (Hall, 1997: 235). While often understood "in terms of economic exploitation and physical coercion," power should also be understood as the ability to "represent someone or something in a certain way" (1997: 259); as being capable of constituting knowledge (Said, 1978); of governing the beliefs and emotions of those within a social environment (Weedon, 1987). Discourse is structured by dichotomies that characterize these poles and signify the "absolute difference between" them (Hall, 1997: 243). Once dichotomies have remained constant for long enough, they become normalized and characterizations of each pole become intimately associated with them.

As such, this section will critically analyse the normalization of Othered identities by *manga* -as perceived by participants- through the medium's use of discursive practices that serve to dehumanise the Other. Practices criticized by participants include underrepresentation, stereotyping and objectification, each of which will therefore be analysed individually. Nussbaum (1999) is significant here,

because although objectification is commonly considered a form of subjugation through which the Other is treated as a means to an end (Gruenfeld et al., 2008), Nussbaum considers the concept “a cluster term” that encompasses a wide variety of processes including stereotyping (1999: 219), which she refers to as “fungibility” (1999: 218), and can be stretched to include the “denial of subjectivity” (1999: 224); stereotyping denies an individual its individuality, thereby treating it like an object. However, to simplify this analysis stage, I will consider stereotyping a separate practice, but I will continue to use Nussbaum (1999) as a literary reference.

### **5.1.1: OTHERED BY MANGA - UNDERREPRESENTED**

Underrepresentation refers to an identity group’s inadequate, or irrelevant representation in the media, in the workplace, in sports and in various other areas, proportional to their population, in relation to the remaining identity groups within a given social environment. Zerubavel (2015) uses optical illusions as an example of the detriment this can cause the underrepresented identity group. Optical illusions can be different things when looked at in different ways. By paying attention to a single part of the illusion, “the other fades into irrelevance” (Luhmann, 2016); the same can be said for identity groups. With a focus on the underrepresentation of identity groups in media, Klein and Shiffman (2009) note that by condemning, omitting, or trivializing identity groups, the media performs a symbolic annihilation, whereby consumers are taught that these groups have no societal value.

In Western media, commonly underrepresented identity groups include females -largely in roles of importance- (Lauren & Dozier, 2005; Ceci & Williams, 2011), racial minorities (Eschholz & Bufkin & Long, 2002; Glascock & Preston-Schreck, 2004) and non-heterosexuals (White, 2002; Fouts & Inch, 2005). The latter group suffers from queer-baiting, which is the allusion to queerness in narratives, but the creator’s reluctance by creators to explicitly confirm it (Ng, 2017). Among participants, underrepresentation was most commonly highlighted in relation to

darker-skinned and queer characters. The series to be criticised, included *One Piece* (1997), *Attack on Titan* (2009), *Dragon Ball* (1984) and *Naruto* (1999).

Nelly, a black female, explains that she “grew up with a very open mind” (Nelly). She loves Barbie Dolls and remarked that “[she] never once looked at the doll and thought: ‘this doll doesn’t look like me’” (Nelly). As she grew older, Nelly recalls how she “always got taught” that she was not represented in Western media. Arguments that black females were “never represented” became more frequent and given that her undergraduate dissertation explored “the representation of black women in media” (Nelly), she found a good reason to research the topic.

Other than an “over the top stereotype” of a “thin black girl with a ginormous afro” (Nelly), Nelly eventually concluded that she really did not exist- not in adverts, not in cartoons, not in *manga*. Upon delving deeper and looking specifically for examples of black females in *manga*, she found no memorable examples, conceding that “there are barely any” (Nelly). On a similar note, Marge, who describes herself as “brown,” feels “there’s not really much feedback” in terms of characters who share her skin colour (Marge). In fact, Marge criticises *manga* for their general character designs, suggesting that they tend to have “Caucasian features,” including the diversity of hair colour, eye colour, and most apparently, skin colour, that combine to give a “Eurocentric feel to the drawings” (Marge).

Clarise, a white female, echoes this notion, claiming that *manga* have far more “white characters,” whose faces in particular, are “very sort of Anglicised” (Clarise). However, a Youtuber called *That Japanese Man Yuta* (2017), explores this perspective by conducting an experiment asking Japanese readers whether *manga* characters looked white. Respondents were handed an image of a character and asked what nationality said character looked. Most answered that characters looked Japanese, but other common responses included Korean and Chinese.

While characters are often lighter-skinned, they are no more Anglicised, Caucasian, or Eurocentric in design than they are East Asian - it merely depends on

the background of the reader. However, there is truth to the fact that darker-skinned readers will feel underrepresented. Clarise, echoing Nelly's observation, recalls introducing her Somalian friend to *Attack on Titan* (2009). This friend asked if there were any black characters in the series, but there were none whatsoever. This was the first time Clarise had ever considered the skin-colour in *manga*, noting that "*it's something that you're not aware of unless it applies to you*" (Clarise), suggesting that personal relevance influences the identification of race-related themes.

The dearth of black characters in *manga* "*didn't bother [Nelly],*" because she considered that the people writing these stories, as well as their target readership, does not consist of "*black people, they will not make stuff for black people, it's not in their interest...*" (Nelly). Marge added that when she reads *manga*, she does not go out of her way in search of characters that share her appearance, because for her, character personalities are more important than their skin colour. Although darker-skinned participants did not feel Othered by their lack of representation in *manga*, the opposite was the case for queer participants, some of whom turned to *manga* specifically in search of representation. Nelly's comment here is significant, because Japan has both an extremely low foreign population, at approximately 2%, of which less than 0.5% are not Asian (CIA, 2020). They have so few darker-skinned inhabitants, that those who live in, or visit Japan, are at times subjected to outdated, or extremely generalized stereotypes. YouTube couple *Rachel & Jun* published a documentary about the lives of eight black people in Japan (2015), where one of the interviewees recalled being commonly compared to Beyoncé, even though she looked nothing like her. Nelly mentioned the exact same experience, claiming that although she was "*so rare to them... the only thing they could compare [her] to was Beyonce,*" because "*that was the only frame of reference they had*" (Nelly).

By contrast, the openly LGBTQ population is higher in Japan than it is in the UK. According to statistics from Dalia (2016), the openly LGBTQ population in the UK is 6%, which matches the European average. Conversely, Japan has an openly

LGBTQ population of 8.9% according to statistics from Dentsu (2018). Whilst a nation's racial diversity is determined by past and present migration patterns, on average, nations across the world have estimated LGBTQ populations between 5% and 10%, wealthier countries commonly being more accepting (PEW, 2020). It would therefore come as no surprise if LGBTQ *manga* readers were more likely to seek out representation for their identities in *manga*, whilst darker-skinned readers like Marge and Nelly did not. In fact, Nelly feels that she "*shouldn't care*" that *manga* do not represent blacks, "*because [she's] here, [she] can write that*" (Nelly). The underrepresentation of darker-skinned characters in *manga* is thus not seen as their symbolic annihilation by *manga*, but as reflective of Japan's racial diversity.

As mentioned, the perception towards underrepresentation among LGBTQ participants is significantly different. Mikelson describes himself as an "*incredibly fem*" and "*gender non-conforming*" homosexual male (Mikelson). From his point of view, "*all of the gay content in the UK... is super masc,*" which means there is little that represents him. Accessing "*gay content in the UK and in mainstream media that reflect the sort of gayness...*" he embodies, is thus extremely difficult (Mikelson). Mikelson is looking for "*gender non-conformistry*" and *manga* are "*more than happy to give you really, really beautiful men*" (Mikelson). Mikelson would actively seek out *manga* displaying gender non-conforming homosexual males, but he laments that "*to even see men who looked like [him],*" he has to turn to the *yaoi* demographic, which is not intended for him (Mikelson). To reiterate, *yaoi manga* tends to be lightly pornographic; it is written for females, by females, who fetishize same-sex relationships between males. Consequently, in order to access gay content that represents him, Mikelson's trade-off is being sexualised and fetishized.

Unlike Mikelson, Lillian's consumption of *manga* has largely been restricted to mainstream series of the *shonen* demographic - aimed primarily at young Japanese males under 18. A frequent reader the *Naruto* (1999) in her youth, Lillian recalls having wondered why "*there are no characters like [her]; there are no girl*

*characters who are like [her]*" in the series (Lillian). Upon further reflection, Lillian felt this was the case with almost every series she had read, so when she was asked if this meant that these *manga* had nothing for her to relate to or identify with, she explained that it was "*just that there's nothing related to [her] queer identity... not explicitly*" (Lillian). Noteworthy is her use of the term *explicitly*, which is a strong reminder of process of queer-baiting, where the queer identities of characters are alluded to within narratives, but are never explicitly confirmed (Ng, 2017).

Based on the above accounts, *shonen manga* do not cater to queer readers. When *shonen* series allude to queerness, Lillian notes that their queer identities are never made explicit, which essentially serves as a denial of the legitimacy of their queerness. Alternatively, Mikelson had to search beyond the mainstream to find queer male characters, where such identities would become the objects of female desire; thereby limiting their perceived value to the fetish they service.

The underlying issue with underrepresentation, is that it leads individuals to question their relevance in society. Even among *manga* readers, questions were asked regarding "*where [they are] in media*" (Nelly), or "*where [they stand] in society and what society views [them] as*" (Mikelson), only to conclude that "*[they] really don't exist*" (Nelly). Although participants did not go into extensive detail on any specific *manga*, they all identified underrepresentation in the same way; through omission (Klein & Shiffman, 2009). There exists "a relation of power between the poles" of a dichotomy (Hall, 1997: 235) and their characterizations signify the "absolute difference between" them (1997: 243). An identity group's lack of representation symbolizes its value to those with the power to represent, which is exactly why participants have begun to question their own societal value.

For some, like Marge and Nelly, *manga* is not about whether they are represented, but others like Mikelson and Lillian, want to feel like these series have been written for them. The medium's underrepresentation of their identities is disappointing, especially considering *manga* are very capable of providing minority

identity groups with strong, positive representation. Leading roles are occupied by amputees in *Full Metal Alchemist* (Wendy) and by gender non-binary characters in *Ranma ½* (Wendy), whilst *Sailor Moon* features characters with an “androgynous relationship with gender” that becomes increasingly apparent (Lillian).

Cumulatively, the findings show that the identification of underrepresented identity groups is nearly unanimous among those who identify with those identity groups. Participant accounts suggest that personal relevance dictates the exact underrepresented identity group a reader will identify. There appeared to be an intersectionality between race and sex, as well as queerness and sex; for example, Nelly, Lillian and Mikelson all discussed representation in characters who were the same sex as them. Lastly, participant accounts on underrepresentation support my argument that *manga* actively contributes to the normalization of Otherness, but this appears limited to queer identities, who are either alluded to but never explicitly confirmed as queer, or whose fetishized portrayals fail to reflect the individualism of members of the queer community. In both cases, manga systematically disregard facets of queerness. Queer-baiting intentionally denies the existence of queerness within characters, whereas fetishization can be seen as a homogenization of the behaviour of queer characters. Either way, queer readers are devalued.

### **5.1.2: OTHERED BY MANGA - STEREOTYPED**

Referred to by Nussbaum as fungibility (1999: 218), stereotyping is the practice of forming an assumption about an individual, or collective, on the basis of the behaviour of those with whom they identify; these assumptions are generalized across the entire identity group and tend to be incorrect. Furthermore, stereotyping tends to be attributed with negativity. Fiske explains that stereotyping is influenced by “social structure” and appears to be a largely “cognitive” action, distinguishing itself from prejudice, which she notes as more “affective” (1998: 357). Throughout this section, participants discuss stereotyping almost as demonization, commonly

pointing out the stigmatization of fatness, and the process of queer-coding. There is a single participant who highlights it as a completely neutral action; Agatha brings attention to the *manga* series *Hetalia Axis Powers* (2006), a parody about countries who are manifested as school children. Agatha notes that “everyone is stereotyped and parodied equally” and she is enormously fond of the series (Agatha).

Fatness has been a source of social stigma for decades, particularly by the media (Ravary & Baldwin & Bartz, 2019). Fatness is commonly associated with poor health and resulting health-related issues, but there are those who believe the argument against fatness is a “big smoke-screen for fat hatred” (Wann, 1998: 33), that medical research does not support claims that weight leads to health-related issues (Burgard, 2009; Kardoso & McHugh, 2015). Media representations have led to negative biases against fatness (Robertson & Vohora, 2008), that equate being overweight with being unattractive, or with ugliness (Eknoyan, 2006). Fat-shaming, or an open prejudice against fatness that serves to shame overweight, or obese individuals, causes victims “dangerous psychological and physiological stress” and can “perpetuate poor lifestyle choices” (Spurkland, 2016). Negative biases against fatness have been normalized among western social environments and those who are not slim, are Othered on the basis of their body mass and shape. The *manga* highlighted by participants serves to perpetuate the Otherness of fatness.

Among Jacqueline and Scarlet, the stereotyping of fatness was implicit. Both brought up the *shojo manga* series *Kiss Him, Not Me* (2013), which follows an overweight girl called Kae. When one of “her favourite characters in an anime, dies” (Jacqueline), she stops eating out of sadness and loses lots of weight, when suddenly, a handful of “guys fall in love with her” (Scarlet). The protagonist, Kae, was never the source of anyone’s affections whilst overweight, meaning the *manga*’s premise is built on weight being unattractive (Eknoyan, 2006). Furthermore, Kae was “bullied in school” (Scarlet), but the boys who later fell for her were never around to prevent her from being bullied. Although the participants were fond of

the series and did not identify this particular issue, the *manga* romanticises the notion of slimness, whilst simultaneously shaming the state of fatness. While neither participant explicitly discussed the demonization of fatness by the series, the stereotyping was implicit within their description of the story.

Clarise pointed out several characters from *Naruto* (1999), who were Othered for their fatness; namely, the side-characters Choji and Anko. Neither one is taken seriously; Choji, "*is fat and he's... a joke,*" whereas Anko "*gets fat at the end*" and is suddenly portrayed as "*silly*" (Clarise). Anko's was a particularly "*dark character*" with a "*horrible background*" (Clarise), but her portrayal changed drastically after she gained weight. From Clarise's perspective, both characters are ridiculed purely because of their bodyweight. Stereotypes of fatness as unattractive, or fat people as ridiculous, by *manga*, reveals its participation in the perpetuation of Otherness; particularly through ridicule, fat individuals are portrayed as inferior Others.

Queer-coding is a form of stereotyping that continues to this day from outdated social structures. It is the "historic and persisting characterization of villains with stereotypes often associated with homosexuality" (Kim, 2017: 156). Kim traces the process back over a century, to a time when homosexuality was perceived not just as "a sexual preference but a flaw in the nature of a person" (2017: 157). What queer-coding does is "equate deviancy with villainy" (2017: 156), which reinforces real-world stereotypes that queer individuals deviate from social normality. Traits associated with queer-coding can be physical and mannerist, including "delicate features... finer bone structure, high cheekbones, thin bodies... touched up with makeup" (2017: 159), as well as how they "sit, walk and talk" (2017: 160). Some of these characteristics are pointed out by participants in their examples.

According to Mikelson, the stereotypical gay male in Japan "*is not negatively portrayed,*" rather he is "*very, very buff; he has a shaven head; he [has] lots of muscles; he's big and round and gentle and kind*" (Mikelson). However, Mikelson has previously explained that he is a gender non-conforming homosexual and

characters that match his identity in *manga* "have facial hair, but... would also be wearing make-up" and would be very "trans-misogynistic" (Mikelson). Noting the antagonists, Shuu and Hisoka, from the *manga* series' *Tokyo Ghoul* (2011) and *Hunter x Hunter* (1998) respectively, Mikelson reveals two queer-coded characters who share very similar characteristics. Both characters exhibit traits "that are usually stereotypically attached to gay people" (Mikelson); both have "delicate features... high cheekbones, thin bodies" and are "touched up with makeup" (Kim, 2017: 159), Hisoka more so than Shuu; both are over-the-top and highly flamboyant.

Mikelson explains that "[he ends] up loving them, because [he sees himself] in them," but at the same time, he acknowledges that "we're not meant to love them" (Mikelson). Both characters are predators; whilst Shuu is a Ghoul known as *the Gourmet*, Hisoka is "explicitly a sexual predator" (Mikelson), who fantasizes over the *manga's* protagonist, a young teenage boy called Gon. Lillian adds to this list a character from *Naruto* called Orochimaru, another antagonist. Although she brings him up in relation to his refusal to integrate in the society within *Naruto's* narrative, Orochimaru shares many similarities with Shuu and Hisoka and again matches the traits specified by Kim (2017). Mikelson discloses how Othering it is to "know that [he's] meant to hate" characters he identifies with "for the same reasons that [he identifies] with them" (Mikelson). It has left him questioning how people like him are viewed in society, given that his identity type is symbolic of social deviance and occupies an antagonist role in society. Lillian agrees "queer coding... is a big issue," but believes social perceptions towards LGBTQ are changing (Lillian).

Lillian argues that there are many characters in *Attack on Titan* who are "queer coded... and they're not necessarily demonised for it" (Lillian), but does not specify which characters she is talking about. Nevertheless, both Lillian and Mikelson credit *manga* with having an enormous influence on their identities, despite their given examples of queer-coded characters. For Mikelson, *manga* "was an important source of identity resonance," wherein "all of these boys and gender-nonconforming

women... helped shape [his] identity as a young queer kid" (Mikelson). For Lillian, the influence was similar, as her queer identity was being formed at a time when she "was reading the most manga" (Lillian). Although the above examples reveal *manga* to sustain a cycle that equates queerness with villainy, for these participants at least, negative representation appears preferable to no representation. This in turn connects to section 5.1.1, and supports my argument that most UK readers are seeking recognition for the value of their identities, and as human beings.

Despite the criticisms of *manga*, participants did highlight instances where the medium subverted stereotypes, pointing once more towards the series *Naruto* (1999) and *Attack on Titan* (2008). Firstly, Clarise touches on the subject of males crying, the refrain from which has been put down males conforming to masculine norms (Vogel et al., 2011). Clarise exclaims that "lots of male suicides" are "because men suppress their emotions" (Clarise). According to Cleary (2012), constructions of masculinity have indeed led to the suppression of emotions by males and instead of seeking help, or expressing these emotions, they have opted for suicide. As such, "it's really good in *Naruto* how they have men crying" (Clarise), as often "they're told to be powerful" and that power is manifested in the suppression of emotion, yet in *Naruto*, "you have really powerful characters... and they just cry" (Clarise). These characters are not powerful because they do not cry, they are powerful *and* they cry, which implies that power and the expression of emotions are not entwined.

Clarise moves on to *Attack on Titan*, wherein she specifies a character called Levi, who is "really short, but he's really powerful" and subverts "the stereotypical... powerful butch male" trope (Clarise). Clarise's reference to power differs between these *manga*. It is not social power, rather combat prowess and as combat differs from *Naruto* to *Attack on Titan*, the type of power they possess differs as well. It is important to note that the subversion of stereotypes appears to be centred around slim, heterosexual male characters. In other words, Othered identity groups to be

highlighted by participants throughout this sub-section, ergo the overweight and the LGBTQ, remain susceptible to stereotypes and in turn, remain Others.

On the whole, most participants claimed that their lives had been positively influenced by *manga*. For Agatha, reading *Hetalia Axis Power* (2006) and witnessing how the series personified countries, along with "*the stereotypes, the persona and all of the history... meant [she] became more... understanding*" of other countries and their struggles with stereotypes (Agatha). The participants for whom *manga* was most influential, all deviated from heteronormativity. For Mikelson, it helped shape his "*identity as a young queer kid*" (Mikelson), and for Lillian, *manga* and her identity "*are sort of tied*" to one another (Lillian), as the medium was a mainstay in her life while she was forming her queer identity. Nevertheless, it does not change the fact that by ridiculing the overweight and by queer-coding villains, *manga* actively has engaged in the generalizing and demonizing of the Other. Both examples demonstrate a systematic disregard for the individuality of overweight, and of queer individuals, which serves to devalue Othered UK readers, supporting my argument that *manga* contributes to the normalization of Otherness.

### 5.1.3: OTHERED BY MANGA - OBJECTIFIED

To reiterate the literature review, objectification is commonly considered a form of subjugation, whereby the Othered individual is treated as a means to an end (Gruenfeld et al., 2008). As explained at the start of 5.1, I have considered stereotyping and objectification as being separate practices, despite Nussbaum's reference to the latter as a "cluster term" that encompasses the former (1999: 219). I also noted that I would continue to use Nussbaum as a literary reference, as she goes into significant detail on the Othering practices that are fall within Gruenfeld et al's (2008) interpretation of objectification. With that in mind, "instrumentality" refers to the treatment of the Other as a tool (1999: 220); "inertness" refers to the treatment of the Other as lacking the -or denying their- capacity to act, react, resist, or respond; "ownership" refers to the commodification of the Other (1999: 221); the "denial of autonomy" refers to the dictation of the Other's behaviour for them (1999: 224); "violability" refers to the treatment of the Other as lacking either integrity, or boundary integrity (1999, 218). Nussbaum is significant here, because participants raised examples of objectification that could be categorized accordingly. In turn, this reveals the objectifying practices *manga* employs to devalue the Other.

The identification of objectification by participants was limited to sex. While participants did identify the objectification of both males and females, where males were unanimously instrumentalized, females were most commonly treated as inert. A significant difference therein was that male characters were widely recognized as possessing power; although their humanity was disregarded, their power was valued and weaponized by the dominant power within their respective social environments. Females however, were commonly considered powerless; they were commonly treated as possessions and tended to be subjugated by males. As objectified Others, male characters were less likely to embody characteristics

associated with Otherness -i.e. the lack of power and value - than females. This supports the notion that to UK readers, the dominant power is patriarchal.

Participants identified instrumentality through the weaponization of male characters. Summaries of *manga* storylines will again be necessary for context, and to draw on the methodology, the interpretations of these storylines are largely drawn from the accounts provided by the participants themselves. Noteworthy examples were provided in the series *Naruto* (1999), *Mob Psycho 100* (2012), *Dragon Ball* (1984) and *Soul Eater* (2004). Gustafson considers *Naruto* to be a "commentary about living in warring states" (Gustafson), pointing out that the protagonist and his peers effectively function as child soldiers. Much of the story follows a group of children, who are trained to become Ninjas, who are tasked with a variety of missions, many of which involve some form of violent conflict. Furthermore, these children are taught in the Ninja Academy to suppress their emotions, so that they can become truly effective. For Gustafson, no character embodies this better than Gaara, who is "raised as a weapon" (Gustafson). Gaara loses his emotions and his sanity; the outcome of which, is that those around him come to socially reject him. A panel survey by Aubrey (2006) revealed that when exposed to objectifying media, objectified individuals are more likely to start self-objectifying, which can have a self-Othering impact on victims. In the case of Gaara, his surrounding social environment constantly reminds him that he is a weapon, which leads him to perceive himself as a tool for killing, self-objectifying.

Ophelia returns to *Mob Psycho 100*, which as explained in Chapter 04, is about a boy called Mob, who possesses psychic powers that "are kind of a burden to him" (Ophelia). Mob "wants to be normal and he's not" (Ophelia), so he rejects these powers and does his best not to use them. Reigen, a con artist and false psychic, adopts the role of mentor. While Reigen is "very fond of" Mob, he also "views [Mob] as an asset to his business" and uses him as exactly that (Ophelia). There is a subplot after Mob has developed as an individual, his self-perception has

improved and he has formed friendships, where Reigen calls him to help with the business. Mob is reluctant, so Reigen manipulates Mob, by telling him to abandon his friends, because they are fake and just using him. Reigen claims he is the only one who understands Mob, but in reality, he needs Mob to exorcise spirits.

Another example Ophelia provides is from *Dragon Ball*, where she focuses on the dynamic between two antagonists, Frieza and Vegeta. *Dragon Ball* is about a boy called Goku, who is actually an alien called Kakarot from Planet Saiya. The author introduces Frieza, a ruthless villain, who clears planets of their populations, in order to sell them on for a profit, a process Richardson “[considers] a metaphor for gentrification” (Richardson). A prophecy foretold that only a Saiyan could kill Frieza, so he destroys Planet Saiya with the intent of exterminating the Saiyan species. Several Saiyans survive, one of whom, known as Vegeta, becomes Frieza’s henchman. According to Ophelia, their dynamic is one of pure subjugation based on power radiating downwards (Hall, 1997), noting that Vegeta “saw his entire race get killed and Frieza basically insulted and subjugated him” (Ophelia).

Oxson presents a literal account of humans being used as weapons in the series *Soul Eater*, which is set in a fictional world of witches and demons. Herein, some human beings have the ability to “turn into weapons” (Oxson); these human weapons are wielded by human masters. The protagonists, Maka and Soul, are master and weapon -female and male- respectively, whose purpose is to “stop demons from coming into the world” (Oxson). When they pair must confront demons, Maka wields Soul in his weaponised form, whereby Soul embodies a scythe. Beyond highlighting *Soul Eater* for its face value instrumentality, Oxson does not go into further detail. Oxson raised this as an example of Soul’s dehumanization, but without Soul, Maka cannot defeat demons. As such, Maka can in fact be seen as reliant on Soul’s power, which repositions the powerful male Soul as Self.

In relation to the process of instrumentality, participants are communicated Otherness in the same way. Participants identify -but do not identify with- characters

who are subjugated and treated as tools. From this, the lack of identification by UK readers can be interpreted as their lack of lived experiences of instrumentality. Noteworthy is that the manner in which the aforementioned characters have been objectified, differs to some degree; Gaara, Vegeta and Mob are either physically, or emotionally coerced to function as weapons. However, because Gaara's power is recognised by his surrounding social environment, they fear him; because Vegeta's power is acknowledged by Frieza as superior to all but Frieza himself, Frieza uses him; because Reigen cannot perform exorcism without Mob's power, Mob's value is recognised; because Maka cannot kill demons without Soul's power, Soul's value is recognised. If one considers those who use these characters as weapons to be the Self, then each of these Othered characters is recognized in some way.

The instrumentality of powerful male characters presents a stark contrast to the subjugation of powerless female characters. Participants identified inertness purely through female characters. Noteworthy examples were provided in the series *Naruto* (1999), *Bleach* (2001) and *My Hero Academia* (2014). To reiterate, inertness is the treatment of the Other as lacking the -or denying their- capacity to act, react, resist, or respond. To that end, Clarise criticises the portrayal of female characters in *Naruto*; not only do they all perform supporting role, but they are depicted as "*completely useless*" (Clarise). Clarise exclaims that "*it's terrible*" how Sakura, Naruto's initial love interest and a qualified Ninja in her own right, "*just sits there and cries all the time*" (Clarise). As the series progresses, Sakura becomes "*a physically powerful character*" with body strength that is almost unparalleled, yet "*she's just completely useless*" and "*gets overshadowed*" by her male counterparts anyway (Clarise). Other significant female characters, such as Hinata and Ino are criticised for being "*weak characters; physically, they're really weak*" (Clarise).

During the final major story arc of *Naruto*, Sakura is positioned "*in the back healing*" (Clarise), rather than actively engaging the enemy on the frontlines. Not only are female characters denied the possibility to act, but their representation as

healers also bears undertones of domestication and nurturing that only serve to reinforce outdated gender stereotypes. Clarise has a similar criticism of *Bleach*, which boasts a rather large female cast, many of whom are supposedly experts in combat and occupy roles to represent that. Nevertheless, Clarise feels the female cast has again been portrayed as useless within the narrative, pointing out only a single strong female character, whereas "*all the [others]... need saving, they can't hold their own*" (Clarise), a pattern that becomes repetitive and predictable.

Inadvertently, Bronson's reference to the Villain known as Overhaul from *My Hero Academia* presents a similar portrayal of female characters as inert. To reiterate, this series is set in a world where most people have Super Powers called Quirks and humanity is mostly divided into Heroes and Villains. Overhaul tortures a "*a small, 8-year-old*" girl called Eri, who possesses the "*ability to regress things backwards*" in time, providing she touches them. The longer she touches them, the further they regress, until "*they... become nothing*" (Bronson). Overhaul is "*trying to create... a weapon*" using her ability, but in order to do so, he "*needs... [her] genetic makeup*" (Bronson). Overhaul "*has the ability to dismantle stuff*" (Bronson); he can reassemble that which he has dismantled. As such, he extracts her genetic code, by "*blowing up [Eri] over and over again... [taking] some blood, [putting] something in, [recombining] her*" and repeating the process (Bronson).

According to Bronson, the only function Eri has in the *manga* is that of a "*test tube... of chemical manipulation*" (Bronson), with the purpose of providing Overhaul with bullet "*cartridges*" that can strip them of their powers. Bronson refers to Overhaul's actions as "*horrifying*" and "*evil,*" which is an identical reaction to the Heroes who "*[raid] his base*" (Bronson). This suggests that Bronson underwent narrative identification, whereby the reader will "*identify with story characters by taking the characters' perspectives and understanding their emotions, goals, and actions*" (Hakemulder et al., 2017: 260). Eri, a female, subjugated by Overhaul, a

male, and is denied the physical possibility to defend herself. In this way, the female is once again characterized as powerless and perpetuated as Other.

In these examples, Clarise reveals how *Naruto* and *Bleach*, as contributions to social discourse, have disregarded their female characters by giving them roles in which the display of power should be common practice, yet revealing them as incapable of displaying power. In this way, female characters are shown within the narrative world as being inferior to their male counterparts, which strips the merit through which they obtained their positions. Through his example of Eri, Bronson reveals how Overhaul disregards her pain and suffering, from being constantly torn apart and put back together. However, the fact that Eri is female is more significant than the fact that Eri cannot do anything to stop Overhaul, because when combined with the representation of female characters in *Naruto* and *Bleach*, it is indicative of existing normalized perceptions of females as inert and ultimately, powerless.

Among the remaining objectifying practices, namely, ownership, violability and the denial of autonomy, the subjugation of female characters becomes more about establishing female subservience to males. Notable *manga* include *Chobits* (2000), a *seinen manga*, *Naruto* (1999), *Btooom!* (2009) and *Fist of the North Star* (1983). The very premise of *Chobits*, for example, is male ownership of the female body. *Chobits* is about androids known as Persocoms, which are exclusively female in design. Dorothy refers to them as the “*human version of SiRi*” and likes it to “*having a secretary*” (Dorothy). While “*they are there to work for you... they can cook and clean,*” they effectively exist to “*be your slave*” (Dorothy). Dorothy notes that Persocoms are highly sexualized and have on/off switches in between their legs. Given that the *seinen* demographic targets adult males, one comes to understand that *Chobits* and its commodification of female androids is not only geared towards satisfying the male gaze, but it fetishizes power by the male over the female.

Dorothy highlights a character within the series, who is “*abandoned by her husband for a Persocom,*” because “*they’re more attractive, they’re better looking*”

(Dorothy). This character claims that within the world of *Chobits*, "*more people are choosing these things than real women*" (Dorothy). While the series attempts to address the issue of ownership over female bodies, the character "*[hates] these [androids]*" and comes across as antagonistic. However, sexism, or in other words, the power imbalance between males and females in contemporary societies, is one of the most heavily discussed forms of mechanistic dehumanization in modern sociological literature (De Beauvoir, 1949; Lacan, 1975; bell hooks, 1992). *Chobits* sends a message to readers sexualising male ownership over female bodies, which is something Dorothy had "*noticed around [her]*" environment (Dorothy).

According to Clarise, female characters are often depicted as preoccupied with their male counterparts, which she finds "*annoying about lots of manga,*" as they "*always ends up [swooning] over a guy*" (Clarise). Specifically referring to the character Sakura from the series *Naruto*, Clarise criticises her depiction as violable, as lacking boundary integrity. Sakura is in love with Sasuke throughout the entire story, despite the fact that Sasuke "*tries to kill her and does awful things to her*" (Clarise); in fact, he also stabs another female character through the heart, but both are constantly shown to be preoccupied with gaining his seal of approval.

Clarise finds Sakura's story particularly concerning, as "*she ends up marrying him*" (Clarise), which sends out misleading messages to readers. By overlooking Sasuke's physically and emotionally abusive actions, Sakura is portrayed as lacking integrity; by failing to present Sasuke with repercussions for his actions, the *manga* suggests "*it's okay to like someone really horrible... really awful to you, you still get with them*" (Clarise). It presents Sakura as lacking boundary integrity, as she accepts abuse and still embraces her abuser. It also depicts female characters as powerless in their capacity to resist their own attraction towards male characters. The greater implications, however, are that it suggests females exist to revolve around males, which in turn reduces their value to whatever value males ascribe to them.

Richardson finds the representation of females equally concerning, specifying the denial of autonomy in *Fist of The North Star* (1983), a *manga* set in a post-apocalyptic, post-nuclear world where mankind fights for water and for survival. A female character called Mamiya has a crush on the protagonist Kenshiro. Mamiya, "a tomboy kinda girl" was "about to take up arms to save her village" from bandits (Richardson). Kenshiro arrives just in time to save the day and according to Richardson, Kenshiro does not want her to fight, because he would merely "like to see her live her life as a happy woman again" (Richardson). Richardson feels that the entire series portrays the ideal woman as nurturing and domesticated, which means that a happy life for Mamiya is implicative of living a domesticated life, in turn stripping her of autonomy. Furthermore, Mamiya's circumstance suggests future domestication for females who deviate from this image. Richardson remarks that this message is "scary if you wanna put it into a real-life context" (Richardson), as it again places females into a position of service and subservience to males.

Clarise notes a slight different example of objectification in the *seinen* series *Btboom!*, which is about people who are trapped inside of a survival video game. Clarise points out a socially reclusive, obese male side-character called Mitsuo, who "tries to rape the main character" for no particular reason (Clarise). The intended victim, Himiko, is female, but *Btboom!* instantly addresses this when she kills the perpetrator in self-defence. However, it is the *manga's* portrayal of obese characters that Clarise subjects to criticism. Mitsuo is depicted as desperate and disgusting, as lacking integrity and as perceiving females as lacking boundary integrity. Given the stereotyping of overweight characters in section 5.1.2, this furthers the notion that *manga* perpetuate the negative characterization of fatness. Rather than represent obese characters as socially inept and morally deplorable, Clarise would rather *manga* did not add any obese characters in the first place. However, this then implies that underrepresentation is preferable to objectification, but based on discussions of queer-coding in section 5.1.2, queer UK readers appeared to favour

their identities to be negatively represented than not represented at all. Perhaps this preference is dependent on the Othered identity group in question.

Throughout this section, objectification has been identified in two ways; male characters who are instrumentalised and used for their power, which has been shown to disregard their autonomy, whilst recognising their power; alternatively, female characters who have been subjugated by -and in relation to- males, to establish the dominance of males within a power hierarchy of male and female as Self and Other. Throughout this thesis thus far, power has been characteristic of the Self, or when possessed by the Other, as noted in Chapter 04, has been perceived as a threat to the pre-existing power-based hierarchies between Self and Other, commonly leading to the Other's social rejection. In this section, Self and Other have been shown to represent male and female respectively, particularly in examples provided by Clarise, of females-as-Other possessing power in *Naruto* and *Bleach*, who are mysteriously incapable of flexing that power to dispatch enemies.

It has already been established that discourse has the capacity to constitute knowledge (Said, 1978) and that this knowledge has the capacity of governing the beliefs and emotions of those within a given social environment (Weedon, 1987). It is therefore concerning, as noted by both Clarise and Richardson, that UK readers perceive manga to represent females as inert, as commodities, as lacking integrity, boundary integrity, as subservient and obedient. As a medium that contributes to social discourse, manga has the power to constitute knowledge, to establish beliefs and to normalize perceptions. Through their objectification of females, *manga* are actively participating in the characterization of females as under the control of the males, who thereby occupy the role of the dominant power. In turn, this devalues females as equal in their humanity, perpetuating their existence as the Other.

As explained at the start of 5.1, within the dichotomy of Self and Other, there is "always a relation of power between the poles" (Hall, 1997: 235). Power is used to emphasise the "absolute difference between" these poles (1997: 243). Discourse

is circulated by power, meaning that *manga*, as a contributor to discourse, must therefore be understood to be manipulated by the dominant power. By identifying the underrepresentation of darker-skinned and queer characters, UK readers inadvertently associate power with lighter skin and heteronormativity. By identifying the stereotyping -or demonization- of overweight and queer characters, UK readers inadvertently associate power with slimness and heteronormativity. By identifying the objectification of female characters, UK readers actively associate power with being male. In turn, UK readers paint a picture of a lighter-skinned, heteronormative patriarchal dominant power; and as they almost unanimously identify Otherness themes and Othered characters that closely match their own Othered identities, UK readers perceive themselves as powerless Others within a power hierarchy.

Cumulatively, this section argues that *manga* actively contributes to the normalization of Otherness and thereby fails to provide certain Othered identity groups with recognition. UK readers almost unanimously identify characters who are systematically Othered by *manga*, whose identities resemble their own. Darker-skinned readers brought up the underrepresentation of darker-skinned characters, the underrepresentation and queer-coding of queer characters was unanimously discussed by queer participants, and the objectification of females was almost unanimously highlighted by female participants. This finding supports my argument that UK readers are seeking recognition, and their criticisms of *manga* allude to the notion that they want *manga* to be somewhere they can find that recognition.

Participants found the Othering of identity groups by *manga* as "*frustrating*" (Clarise), "*scary*" (Richardson), and as a "*red flag*" (Dorothy). However, Lillian found drew positives from *Attack on Titan's* (2009) portrayal of a character called Hanji, "*a mad scientist*" whose "*femaleness isn't really important*" (Lillian). Lillian finds it refreshing to see such a female character "*[get] to be funny in their own right, without it being to do with their femaleness*" (Lillian). Hanji is an important member in the *Attack on Titan* universe and over the course of the series, rises up the military's

ranks until she eventually leads one of its key branches, along with which comes power. Not only does Hanji benefit from positive, ungendered representation, but she also occupies a position of power and authority within the context of the *Attack on Titan* narrative. Although this is merely one example to contrast many, it alludes to the notion that *manga* authors are starting to reflect upon how *manga* have been representing Othered identities groups and in doing so, are starting to challenge the dominant power and their normalized characterizations of Otherness.

## **5.2. THE MONSTROUS OTHER**

For Kearney, monsters are “figures of Otherness” that “occupy the frontier zone where reason falters and fantasies flourish... because they threaten the known with the unknown” (2002: 3). According to Lawrence, monsters are “indicative of the moral and existential challenges faced by societies” (2015). Cohen (1996) contends that monsters are symbols of a society’s unease, with the capacity to shape its behaviour. In the past, monsters would symbolize “warnings of divine wrath,” or they would be expressions of “strong political attitudes,” or they would epitomise the “frightening unknown” (Lawrence, 2015: para. 6). Nowadays, the monster represents mankind’s backlash at overstepping moral boundaries. When a person does this, they are portrayed as a monster, they are vilified, demonised, subjected to social scapegoating and in the process, this offers the ‘morally just’ “absolution from the underlying horror at what mankind is doing to the natural world” (2015).

According to Cohen, common depictions of monsters include the beast, the demon, the fiend and the freak (1996). Alternatively, both Larcom, Sarr and Willems (2016) and Nordlinger (2017) perceive dictators to be monsters. In other words, those who have committed atrocities and crimes against humanity, those who are morally reprehensible, can therefore also be considered monsters. Goffman notes that monsters “[are] disqualified from full social acceptance” (1963: 9). In turn, this

creates a social distance between the Other-as-monster and its surrounding social environment, which ultimately serves to perpetuate its Otherness. Consequently, this section focuses on the dehumanization of the Other-as-monster, both morally and visually. As mentioned at the start of this chapter, participants either identified monsters as manmade, or as supernatural beings. Manmade monsters were either freaks, who had been turned into monsters as a result of human experimentation, or they were villains, many of whom were the products of their social environments. Supernatural monsters, however, were commonly identified as hybrids, possessing power that exceeded human understanding and embodied the unknown.

Throughout this section, I argue that the representation of the Other-as-monster within *manga* narratives -as interpreted largely by the participants themselves- acts as a warning to members of the dominant power within those narratives, that their deviation from fixed characterizations of Self can lead to their social rejection and thus, their devaluation. I also argue that those within *manga* narratives who participate in the Othering of freaks, villains and hybrids are more likely to display monstrous characteristics than those they are Othering. In turn, characters who are identified by UK readers as Other-as-monster actually resist the dominant power by subverting normalized characterizations of Self and Other and in turn encourage UK readers to embrace Otherness.

### **5.2.1: THE MONSTROUS OTHER - MANMADE FREAKS**

According to Inderbitzin, Bates and Gainey, the *freak* is commonly associated with ideas of "monstrosity" (2017: 22), particularly on the basis of "*monstrous or abnormal physical traits*" (2017: 28). They are rooted in "antiquated ideologies concerning race, experimentation in the name of medical science, and strict binary categorizations of gender" (2017: 28). More recently, *freaks* have been categorized in two different ways. There are *born freaks*, those born with an extreme "physical

anomaly" (2017: 28); and *made freaks*, those who do something to themselves "to become unusual enough... to warrant exhibition" (2017: 28). In none of the cases where participants identified *made freaks*, did the characters to be identified as *freaks* willingly alter themselves. Their existence as *freaks* within their respective narratives was partly, or entirely, the product of external influence. *Made freaks* were unanimously identified as the outcome of scientific experimentation.

Participants identified *made freaks* in the form of cyborgs, chimeras and clones, in the *manga* series *Full Metal Alchemist* (2001), *Assassination Classroom* (2012) and *Tsubasa: Reservoir Chronicles* (2003). The cyborg refers to a cybernetic organism; a combination of organic and biomechatronic parts (Clynes & Kline, 1960), whose physiological processes and physical abilities extend beyond "normal human limitations by mechanical elements built into the body" (*Oxford Dictionaries*, 2015). However, Brasher instead refers to them as "technological golems that haunt dystopic and utopic chimerical worlds" (1996: 809). Not only does Brasher's generalization of the portrayal of cyborgs hint at monstrosity, but it also implies an inherent link between cyborgs and chimeras. Chimeras, by contrast are defined as "living organisms that have, as part of their bodies, some living tissues, organs, or structures of human origin and some of nonhuman origin" (Greely, 2003: 18) which also happens to be an apt -albeit indistinct- description for cyborgs.

A clone is defined as "the aggregate of genetically identical cells or organisms asexually produced by or from a single progenitor cell or organism" (Merriam-Webster, 2020). Other definitions of *clone* suggest that it could be an individual who is extremely similar to another. I shall be discussing clones insofar as it refers to an asexually produced genetic copy of an original. While this could be a cyborg, or a chimera, the participant to identify clones did so in reference to questions of humanness; as such, I shall be discussing clones as human clones. Like cyborgs and chimeras, clones have also come to be associated with notions of monstrosity. Nelkin and Lindee iterate mankind's fear of cloning upon the success

of Dolly the Sheep, where among imagined creations were included “Frankenstein’s monster” and “Adolph Hitler” (1998: 145), whereas Kass advocates for the banning of human clones on grounds that “man [is] playing at being God” (1998: 679). Grounded in reality, these manmade entities are all perceived as monsters, but their presence in *manga* speaks volumes of social constructions of Otherness.

Anderson highlights the idea of taboo that underpins the series *Fullmetal Alchemist*. Two brothers, Edward and Alphonse Elric live with their mother Trisha, their father having disappeared years prior. They both display a talent for alchemy, but one day their mother dies. Due to the pain of losing their mother forever, the brothers attempt human transmutation, the alchemical procedure of bringing the dead back to life. Anderson explains that “*human transmutation... [is] seen as a complete taboo,*” which leads them to be perceived as “*freaks*” (Anderson). Their status as “*freaks who’ve tried human transmutation*” also causes many people around them to be “*fearful of them*” (Anderson). Largely, because their attempt at rewriting death ends in abject failure; Edward loses his left leg, whereas Alphonse loses his life. In order to save Alphonse from certain death, Edward chooses to sacrifice his right arm and seals Alphonse’s soul into a suit of armour.

Within the world of *Fullmetal Alchemist*, there exist prosthetic limbs that function as real ones, called *Automail*. Edward’s childhood friend, Winry Rockbell, is an *Automail* mechanic upon whom he relies to design and maintain his prosthetic limbs, so that he can perform alchemy and engage in combat without his movement being impaired. As such, Winry’s role in Edward’s life is pivotal and due to this *Automail*, both brothers are cyborgs; Edward has a predominantly human body with two *Automail* limbs, whereas Alphonse is a talking suit of armour.

Alphonse’s circumstances in particular lead to questions within the *manga* itself of his humanness, but it also causes the reader to ponder the same things, with Anderson posing the question: “*is he really the same person he was as a human now he’s encased in a suit of armour?*” (Anderson). He questions whether someone can

be considered human if he or she no long "eats," or "sleeps," further noting that he does not show "human characteristics" (Anderson). Wendy adds to this, whilst attempting to compliment the *manga* for its positive representation of amputees when discussing Edward, but she notes that Alphonse was "was kind of like a robot" (Wendy), further placing his humanness, even amongst readers, in doubt.

Edward and Alphonse epitomize what Lawrence (2015: para. 6) refers to as the "frightening unknown" and symbolize their society's unease at what alchemical practices are capable of. Anderson comments that human transmutation is seen as "a line you absolutely should not cross," even "among other alchemists" (Anderson). The stigmatization of Edward and Alphonse as *manmade freaks* on the basis of breaking taboo supports my argument, that the representation of the Other-as-monster warns members of the dominant power within *manga* narratives, to refrain from deviating from social norms, because they will be socially rejected -just as the brothers were- and they will be devalued, as was evidenced by Alphonse' likeness to a robot, as well as the questions that were posed of his humanness.

According to Haslam et al. (2008), robots are a core comparative according to which dehumanization is measured. They note that "robots chiefly lacked emotion- and desire-related capacities" in comparison to humans (2008: 248), which is what characterizes their lack of humanness. By pointing out Alphonse's lack of desire to eat and sleep, Anderson clearly identifies Alphonse as the Other and by likening him to a robot, Wendy displays an awareness of Alphonse's lack of human desires, also identifying him as Other. Even if Edward is a double amputee, the measure of comparison is no longer a *normal* human, but one without a body. This suggests that the more of one's body an individual loses, the less human they become and the less human they appear, the more Other they become.

The existence of Edward and Alphonse cyborg alchemists who have broken taboo is not the only portrayal of monstrosity within the *manga*. Their attempts to resurrect their mother is also merely the first instance of alchemical experimentation

on humans within the *manga*. Wendy and Clarise both mentioned the story of a five-year-old girl called Nina Tucker and her beloved pet dog. Nina's father, Shou Tucker, was a bio-alchemist working for the State and an expert in Chimeras. Shou's work was experimental and in recent history, had resulted in multiple failures. His licence to practice was going to be revoked if he did not make any progress, so out of fear of losing his job and the greed of retaining his subsidized research privileges, he alchemically transmuted his daughter, Nina, together with her dog to create the illusion of having made a chimera capable of human speech from scratch.

Nina saw Edward and Alphonse as her big brothers and used to refer to Edward as such. When the two boys become aware of what has happened, the only thing the chimera is capable of saying is "Edward" (FMA, ch5: 29). Clarise notes that the scene "*was pretty horrific*" (Clarise). Similarly, Wendy notes how her very first reaction to the *manga* "*[daring] to kill a child and a dog*" was, "*that's horrible!*" and that the entire scene "*really got to [her]*" (Wendy). It also forces the reader to question whether the chimera, or the scientist is the true monster, but as Wendy notes, "*Edward's reaction kind of felt like [her] reaction*" (Wendy), which was disgust, contempt and sadness combined. As noted in section 4.1.3, disgust and contempt are indicative of animalistic dehumanization, and are commonly held towards the Other prior to its social rejection. In this case, Wendy holds these emotions towards Shou for his willing participation in the dehumanization of his own daughter, which supports my argument that characters who participate in Othering practices are more likely to display monstrous characteristics than those they Other.

During Edward's enraged reaction upon discovering what Shou has done, Shou reminds the brothers that they have dabbled in human transmutation. This discussion forces the protagonists, as well as the readers to reflect upon the morality of their actions. However, Shou's deflection supports Lawrence's argument, that the Other-as-monster is demonised and scapegoated as a way of providing the Self - Shou- with "absolution from the underlying horror" of his own actions (2015). By

raising multiple examples within the same *manga*, but reacting affectively only to Shou, it can be implied that Clarise and Wendy perceive the cyborg bodies of Edward and Alphonse as less indicative of monstrosity than Shou's actions, despite the fact that none of the participants to discuss Alphonse identified with him.

This carries forward to the examples provided by Carlson and Peterson. They both highlight the *manga Assassination Classroom* and its protagonist Koro-sensei, with Carlson referring to him as "*the great monster of it all*" (Carlson). *Assassination Classroom* centres around a talking octopus with the power to destroy the moon, who adopts the role of a teacher. In events prior to the start of the *manga*, Koro-sensei, who was a master assassin, was caught and "*transformed into Koro Sensei through [an] experiment... going haywire*" (Peterson). With his newfound power, he threatens to destroy the world in exactly one year. Koro-sensei gives humankind the option to try and kill him before this happens, but only under very specific conditions; Koro-sensei wants to "*teach the worst kids*" in a specific school and turn them into "*the best students*" (Carlson). Koro-sensei even provides the government with "*the stuff, which will harm [him],*" as long as "*only these kids*" are the ones to use it; he also guarantees he will turn them into *the best assassins*" (Carlson).

The series focuses on the dynamic between Koro-sensei and his pupils (Carlson), in a school where pupils are divided according to their grades, from classes A to E, and where those in Class E are treated as subhuman by their surrounding social environment. The headmaster actively encourages this, because through fear, it guarantees that 80% of each year-group performs excellently at the expense of the remaining 20%. Although the *manga* does not explicitly state that Koro-sensei is a chimera, the character best matches this description. Despite his visual depiction as a monster, Carlson believes that Koro-sensei's purpose is to expose that infrahumanistic hierarchies like the one implemented by this particular school are "*fucked up*" (Carlson). As a result, Carlson questions whether he is "*really*

*a monster, or a person trying to take an active stride to try and improve*" not only the prospects of these children, but also their sense of self-worth (Carlson).

Peterson makes a note of when characters whose *"only purpose of... being there is just to help kill Koro-sensei quicker,"* join the class (Peterson). No pupil in the class Koro-sensei is teaching *"will be keen on the [new] person,"* because they have all grown fond of their teacher. Furthermore, in time, these new characters will *"end up being more connected to everyone"* because they also grow fond of him (Peterson). Waytz and Epley (2011) found that human beings were more likely to dehumanize those socially more distant from them. In *Assassination Classroom*, this is shown to be true on several occasions. Characters introduced to the series, who have never met Koro-sensei are happy to try to kill him, but after spending time in his classroom, where that social distance is significantly reduced, they grow fond of him. By the end of the series, those who know him cannot bear to lose him.

Koro-sensei, like Alphonse, was initially perceived as a monster on the basis that he lacked a human body. However, he also threatened the destruction of Earth, which led global governments to treat him as a hostile force. Despite this, his social interactions with those involved in his attempted assassination commonly display warmth, flexibility and profundity; traits that contrast those associated with the mechanistically dehumanized Other; coldness, rigidity and superficiality (Haslam, 2006: 257). This supports my argument that *manga* protagonists, like Koro-sensei, like Edward and Alphonse, who embody the Other-as-monster whilst maintaining morality, tend to display traits that are perceived as characteristically human. In doing so, they resist the dominant power that devalues them for their power, or for their appearance, in turn suggesting that monstrosity lies in one's actions.

Humanness is also questioned by Henrietta, in *Tsubasa Reservoir Chronicles*, with regards to clones. To reiterate, I have interpreted a clone to be an asexually produced genetic copy of an existing human being. A clone's only abnormality is the asexual nature of its creation. Henrietta points out a character called Syaoran,

a clone of the *manga's* protagonist, Tsubasa. The existence of Syaoran as a clone leads her to question whether "*clone Syaoran [is] any less Syaoran because it's a clone*" (Henrietta), explains that "*impression*" she got from the series, when reading it, was that "*he was the less*" of the two characters (Henrietta). Henrietta's example raises questions of authenticity, which is a debate normally found in relation to hybrid identities. From the literature review, it was understood that scholars believe hybrid identities should enable the perception of similarity where there exists difference (Hall, 1996), but often, they are perceived as making sense, only on the basis of an assumed pre-existing authenticity (Pieterse, 2001). Syaoran's humanness is dependent on what makes an individual authentically human.

Based on participant examples, *freaks* are generally identified on the basis of their physical appearance, which explains why participants did not identify with Alphonse, or Koro-sensei. Another factor, however, is the artificial nature of their creation; in other words, they are manmade. When applied to real-world, socio-cultural contexts, this certainly has troubling implications for minority ethnic groups, the disabled, and transgender identities. However, through the dynamics between *freaks-as-monsters* -commonly protagonists- *manga* portray the Other as displaying traits that Haslam refers to as human nature (2006: 256), the lack of which commonly leads to mechanistic dehumanization. Such traits include interpersonal warmth, cognitive openness, individuality, agency and depth and were mostly identified in Koro-sensei. Similarly, through the portrayal of characters who were members of the dominant power within *manga* narratives, namely Shou Tucker, *manga* revealed that the Self could display traits associated with monsters, i.e. amorality.

When Clarise and Wendy were challenged to reflect on the morality of the human transmutation performed by Edward and Alphonse, versus the creation of chimeras performed by Shou Tucker, they were disgusted by Shou and held him in contempt, because he treated his daughter as an instrument, but they showed a fondness for Edward, particularly because he sacrificed himself to save Alphonse's

soul. It can thus be inferred from their responses that UK readers perceive freaks to be Other-as-monster only if they engage in the dehumanization of others.

This section also argues through the stigmatization of Edward and Alphonse, the perception of Koro-sensei as threat and the perceived devaluation of Syaoran by the author of *Tsubasa: Reservoir Chronicles*, that one's portrayal as a freak-as-monster serves as a warning by the dominant power, that deviating from social norms and normalized characterizations of Self will lead to one's social rejection and devaluation. Furthermore, this section argues that by applying characteristics commonly associated with Self and Other to Other and Self respectively, *manga* are starting to challenge normalized characterizations of Self and Other.

### **5.2.2: THE MONSTROUS OTHER - MANMADE VILLAINS**

In Dolton's eyes, there are two ways in which great villains are made. The first is by dehumanizing them "*and [making] them monsters*" (Dolton); the second is by "*[making] them sympathetic... not completely evil; their "point of view is just different"*" (Dolton). However, to refer to Otherness literature, when the values of the Other differ from those of the Self, the Other is perceived as differing from humanity (Schwarz & Struch, 1989; Haslam, 2006). Furthermore, monsters are made when mankind oversteps moral boundaries; they are those who have been rejected by society (Goffman, 1963; Lawrence, 2015). In section 4.2, the Other-as-threat was shown to commonly possess ideological differences bearing the potential to "challenge, change, supplant, or destroy" those of the Self (Stephan & Ibarra & Morrison, 2015: 4). It can be surmised that great villains -insofar as Dolton perceives them- can in fact become monsters, as a result of differing points of view.

Participants generally identified the monster-as-villain as living embodiments of backlash at their surrounding social environments, particularly for the way the dominant power had come to systematically disregard the lives of the *normal*

masses, which relates back to section 4.3.2 on the socially disconnected Other. It also shows that *manga* authors are giving recognition to the disregarded Other, by way of antagonists who are sympathetic to their Otherness and the struggles that come with being disregarded. Throughout this section, noteworthy *manga* include *Naruto* (1999), *My Hero Academia* (2014) and *First of the North Star* (1983).

In *Naruto* (1999), Dolton introduces two Villains, Nagato and Obito, from an organisation called Akatsuki. As explained previously, *Naruto* is set in a world of warring states, where Ninjas constitute a nation's military, whilst Vessels constitute their military power. Akatsuki's aim is to monopolize war by harvesting the immense Spirit Energy sealed within Vessels. This will kill the Vessels, but will facilitate the creation of a weapon of mass destruction that will dissuade the Ninja world from ever again waging war, as said weapon will guarantee the end of humanity. Nagato and Obito have both suffered enormously as a result of these wars and despite being members of an organization that hunts and kills Vessels, neither is "*trying to destroy the world, they're trying to save it*" (Dolton). They wish to end suffering and "*in their own warped sense,*" Dolton believes they both "*have good intentions*" (Dolton). For both the aim is to "*save the world from pain*" (Dolton), but the means through which they want to achieve this comes at the cost of freedom.

As a child, Nagato's parents, civilians, were accidentally killed in an ongoing war between his country and Naruto's, known as the *Second Great Ninja War*. As a teenager, Nagato had established himself as a leading member of a rebel group that wished to end said war, but his closest friend was killed in an ambush during planned peace talks. From this moment, Nagato decided he would be the one to rid the world of suffering. A similar scenario befell Obito, who was mocked in his youth for being an inferior Ninja. Eventually, he managed to establish friendships with two individuals who became his best friend and his love interest, Kakashi and Rin, respectively. One day, in his teenage years, Rin was captured by the enemy. Obito and Kakashi were sent on a mission to rescue her, but they were blindsided

and at the expense of his own life, Obito saved both. Somehow, Obito survived and upon resurfacing, he watched Kakashi stab Rin through the heart. Witnessing Rin perish before his eyes instilled within Obito the desire to end suffering.

As the leader of Akatsuki, Nagato's solution was to create a weapon of mass destruction and enforce peace through fear. Conversely, Obito's solution was to obtain the power to hypnotise humanity and in doing so, trap them within an idyllic dream, where each individual would experience their own version of happiness for eternity. For these scenarios to come to fruition, lives would have to be sacrificed. Dolton does not believe either character has set out to do "*what is evil*", noting that "*point of view is a huge aspect of manga*" (Dolton). Dolton notes the importance of "*seeing things from characters' points of view*" (Dolton) and *manga*, as evidenced in the previous chapter, does a good job at presenting multiple perspectives in a way that leaves the reader to reflect upon the morality of the situation.

From the perspectives of these antagonists, endless wars have taken far too many lives. From the perspectives of the Ninja collective, without war, they have no purpose. This example bears strong resemblances to Lawrence's explanation of how contemporary monsters are made. To reiterate, she notes that in scapegoating the Other as a monster, humans are offered absolution "from the underlying horror at what [they are] doing to the natural world" (2015). In this case, the Ninja collective portrays Nagato and Obito as monsters, "who [are] disqualified from full social acceptance" (Goffman, 1963: 9), because they are putting countless lives at risk; yet they intend to bring an end to war. There have been three iterations thus far and each has not only been caused by different factions of this Ninja collective, but they have all risked more lives and caused more suffering than the methods of Nagato and Obito ever could. Therefore, by scapegoating these Villains, the Ninja collective can divert attention away from its own responsibility in destroying lives.

In *Fist of the North Star* (1983), Richardson identifies an example of the abuse of power, whereby he subverts the reader's perception of the protagonist, Kenshiro,

who was brought up in section 4.1.3 by Timson for his morally righteous behaviour. *Fist of the North Star* is set in a post-apocalyptic world where bandits roam the lands and small factions attack each other for supplies like food and water. However, the First of the North Star within the story, is a martial art that Richardson refers to as the *"ultimate fighting style"* with the power to *"restore light to the world"* (Richardson). Given the power of this martial art, Richardson questions how the protagonist and his predecessors ever *"let a post-apocalyptic event take place,"* which leads him to entertain the *"scenario where these good guys with ultimate powers maybe let an apocalypse happens, so they could be top of the game again"* (Richardson). In other words, it is impossible to restore light to a world that is already bathed in it; as such, Richardson posits that those who practiced the Fist of the North Star martial art, allowed the apocalypse to take place, so as to regain a sense of meaning.

Thinking back to Dolton's *Naruto* example, the Ninja collective might have demonized Nagato and Obito, because ending all war would have meant losing their purpose in life - which, as noted by Gustafson in section 5.1.3, was to function as weapons of war. Practitioners of Fist of the North Star would have to perceive themselves as fundamentally superior to the *normal* human masses, who would thereby represent the dehumanized Other; they would also be forced to subject the Other to moral exclusion, in order to disassociate themselves from applying moral consideration to the Other, thereby allowing them to engage in the kind of extreme violence that could cause an apocalypse. Richardson's theory positions Kenshiro as representative of the Self, whilst the story's antagonist, Raoh, becomes the Other-as-monster and monster-as-villain. From Richardson's perspective, Raoh is driven by *"self-loathing in a way,"* which is symptomatic of the socially rejected Other (McDougall et al., 2001). Furthermore, Raoh *"loathes martial arts,"* because he has witnessed *"people get corrupted"* by its power; consequently, Raoh wishes to *"do away with martial arts"* and *"unify the world under one banner"* (Richardson), which is extremely reminiscent of the moral drives behind Nagato and Obito.

Raoh “resorts to some horrible stuff,” but Richardson argues he is “probably [looking] at the bigger picture” (Richardson). Again, the same could be said for Nagato and Obito; they both persecuted Vessels and killed many who stood in their way, because they were looking at the bigger picture. Richardson compares the hypothetical attempt at instigating a global apocalypse by former practitioners of Fist of the North Star to “some of the crimes committed by real-life dictators or heroes who actually did horrible things” (Richardson). To reiterate Larcom, Sarr and Willems (2016), as well as Nordlinger (2017), dictators are monsters. They commit atrocities and crimes against humanity; their actions and behaviours make them morally reprehensible, which ties findings from section 5.2.1, where monsters were perceived to be individuals who engaged in the dehumanization of others.

In section 4.2.2, it was noted that readers could empathise with characters, despite simultaneously condemning them (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2012). Hogan (2011) posits that when a character possesses a multi-dimensional personality, they become difficult to categorise according to good and evil labels, which makes them morally ambiguous. While Nagato, Obito and Raoh are undeniably perceived by UK readers as villains for morally reprehensible actions they have committed, their intent to resist the dehumanization of the *normal* masses by the dominant powers, so that the dominant powers might maintain a sense of purpose, causes them to be scapegoated as monsters-as-villains within their respective narratives. Essentially, these monsters are direct products of their surrounding social environments.

Eventually, all three are defeated, which further normalizes the association of power with the Self and powerlessness with the Other. Moreover, their social rejection also supports my argument that the monster serves as a warning within *manga* to members of the dominant power, that their deviation from social norms, the intent to cause “physical harm,” strip away “power and/or resources” (Stephan & Ibarra & Morrison, 2015: 5), or attempts to challenge the “integrity or validity of the [Self’s] meaning system” (2015: 4), will lead to their devaluation. In other words,

the monster-as-villain becomes the embodiment of the Other-as-threat. Conversely, Anderson presents an example in *My Hero Academia*, where the opposite is true; the Other-as-threat is forced into occupying the role of monster-as-villain.

Anderson identifies the side-character Hitoshi Shinso, a Hero whose Super Power (Quirk) is to gain an individual's subservience providing they answer one of his questions. During Hitoshi's childhood, *"no one ever thought [he] could do good... they always assumed that he would become a Villain, because that Quirk is so... dangerous"* (Anderson). The series divides people into Heroes, Villains and Citizens and the sole purpose of Heroes is to defeat Villains, meaning that Hitoshi was demonised as a potential Villain in his youth, purely on the basis that the applications of his Quirk as a Villain *"far, far outweigh [its] applications [as] a Hero"* (Anderson). Hitoshi was subjected to bullying and ostracism by classmates during as a direct result; nevertheless, he maintained his ideology of using his Quirk to *"save someone else"* rather than *"for [his] own personal gain"* (Anderson).

Anderson's example also matches Fiske's prejudice (1998), on the basis that demonizing someone as a Villain on the basis of a Quirk's potential would require a cognitive assessment of said Quirk. Hitoshi was subjected to different forms of social rejection by peers on the basis of their estimation of *what a Villain would use it for*. To reiterate McDougall et al. (2001), being subjected to any form of social rejection can result in inordinate amounts of emotional pain, but also lead the Other to direct aggression towards the rejecting party. Had he reacted by using his Quirk to harm those subjecting him to social rejection, *My Hero Academia* would have displayed a direct example of one's social environment creating a monster-as-villain.

However, Hitoshi chooses to use his Quirk only to *"save someone else"* (Anderson), whereas Nagato, Obito and Raoh, are willing to cause suffering in order to end suffering. Ultimately, it is one's behaviour, as explained in section 5.2.1, that determines for UK readers whether or not the Other is a monster. Dolton reveals that prior to reading *manga*, he *"was scared of [villains]; they're evil. Don't forgive"*

them" (Dolton). However, the series *Rurouni Kenshin* made him aware that "the worst people can sometimes end up being the best heroes and... the best heroes can end up being the worst villains" (Dolton). Dolton perceives the characterization of someone as a villain to revolve around several things, but "it's not necessarily what is evil" that makes an individual a monster (Dolton). Dolton believes that "point of view is a huge aspect of manga" (Dolton); in other words, monsters are most often formed from a specific point of view. Based on participant accounts throughout sections 5.2.1 and 5.2.2 on manmade monsters, this is the perspective of the dominant power, because manmade monsters, both as *freaks* and *villains*, inherently threaten both the ideologies and values of the Self.

Throughout this section, UK readers have identified the monster-as-villain as those who resort to extreme violence in order to overturn existing power hierarchies of Self and Other, with the aim of putting an end to the systematic disregard of the socially invisible Other. The scapegoating of these villains has served as a warning by the dominant power to deter others from deviating from social norms, on the threat of social rejection and devaluation. However, by revealing to UK readers the motivations of such villains, readers become aware that the dominant power -the Self- is equally as monstrous as, if not more so than, the Other. UK readers therefore perceive the true monster to be the one that actively dehumanizes the Other, which is why monster-as-villain like Nagato, Obito and Raoh, garner empathy.

Through these antagonists, the former two who were likened within the *manga* to the *Naruto* protagonist Naruto before becoming villains, and the latter who is perceived by Richardson as the hidden protagonist, *manga* presents a site of resistance against the dominant power and its Othering processes; albeit a failed one. However, through potential antagonist Hitoshi, *manga* successfully presents a resistance against the dominant power's attempts to create a new monster-as-villain. This section argues that through monster-as-villains, *manga* are beginning to self-reflect and self-criticise, regarding their perpetuation of Otherness. In doing

so, this section argues that *manga* are starting to encourage readers to resist the dominant power and embrace their Otherness, on the basis that one's Otherness can only truly be characterized by their participation in Othering processes.

### **5.2.3: THE MONSTROUS OTHER - SUPERNATURAL HYBRIDS**

Kearney explains that each monster-related fable "recalls that the self is never secure in itself" (2002: 3). The portrayal of supernatural monsters represents humanity's fear of that which lies beyond its understanding. When considering that participants brought up examples of supernatural monsters as individuals who were hybrids between humans and beasts, demons, or fiends, one can infer that this fear is the fear of power that threatens the dominance of the human-as-Self, or even the Self-as-human. Noteworthy *manga* series include *Tokyo Ghoul* (2011), *Blue Exorcist* (2009), *Bleach* (2001), *Naruto* (1999) and *Vampire Knight* (2005), some of which were discussed in relation to social rejection and Other-as-threat. Throughout this section, participants are shown to identify with the monsters-as-hybrids they highlight, on the basis of shared experiences of Otherness through hybridity.

As explained in Chapter 02, the hybrid Other commonly intersects territorial, national, cultural and social identities (Bhabha, 1994; Hall, 1996; Gilroy, 2000; Voicu, 2011). While Gilroy argued that hybrid identities should offer "alternatives to the metaphysics of race, nation and bounded culture" (2000: 123), they instead lead to "oppositional and exclusive modes of thought about people" (Voicu, 2011: 325). In other words, any hybrid is considered an inauthentic identity that results from a coming together of pre-existing authentic identities (Wickramasinghe, 2011), rather than a new space within conceptions of identity that bears the potential to facilitate the construction of entirely "new forms of authenticity" (Voicu, 2011: 333).

To simplify, the hybrid Other is subjected to social rejection on the basis of perceived impurity from the perspective of the non-hybrid Self. Its perceived

impurity is what characterizes it Other, but because it epitomises the “frightening unknown” (Lawrence, 2015: para. 6), it is perceived as a monster and thus “disqualified from full social acceptance” (Goffman, 1963: 9). Hybrid Others commonly experience a lack of belonging in relation to both identity groups, whose authentic identity they are perceived to have *tainted*. Its differences are highlighted and it can and most likely will experience a “double consciousness” (DuBois, 1996: 2), which positions it as an outsider to every social environment (Cohen, 1997; Loya, 2016). This section introduces the argument that *manga* protagonists embody the Other by embracing Otherness -particularly through hybridity- and by resisting the dominant power. In turn, *manga* actively encourage readers to embrace their Othered identities.

Wentworth experienced the *double consciousness* of hybridity in his youth and identified with Kaneki Ken, the protagonist of the *manga* series *Tokyo Ghoul*, as a direct result. Wentworth is part Eritrean, part Somalian and where he comes from in “*South East London, there’s a big Somalian community, but there’s not a lot of Eritreans*” (Wentworth). Unable to speak Somali, Wentworth recalls being made to feel like an outsider to that community, especially when people would use the language to converse around him. In order to get by, Wentworth was forced himself to learn this language, commenting on how he “*didn’t want people talking behind [his] back*” (Wentworth). His experience demonstrates that a level of conformity is necessary for any individual to gain membership to an identity group.

Reader identification with Kaneki led Wentworth to highlight the character. *Tokyo Ghoul* was discussed in Chapter 04, on the topics of the Other-as-threat and how *manga* facilitates moral reflection in readers through the use of perspective. Kaneki was the physical manifestation of dual perspectives in a series that revolves around an ongoing conflict between Humans and man-eating Ghouls; as creatures whose sole purpose is to consume human beings, Ghouls are monsters. Kaneki starts off as a human being, but is turned into a Ghoul and thus understands both

sides of the conflict. As a former human, Kaneki's intimate link to both Humans and Ghouls caused him severe internal conflict. Lawson refers to this as his "*massive duality*" (Lawson). Kaneki's *double consciousness* becomes so severe, Lawson refers to him as having "*split personalities*" (Lawson). Kaneki can be seen to embody the hybrid Other and in order to survive, he must discard one aspect of his identity and fully conform to the Other. Conflict breaks out between a party of Ghouls and Humans and Kaneki is forced to pick a side, ultimately aiding the Ghouls, as Ghouls had taken care of him and protected him since he was turned into one.

In order to navigate hybridity, Wentworth's experience suggests that one must embrace an *authentic* identity and conform to the customs through which they identify themselves. Wentworth does not mention being forced to discard either aspect of his identity, but did reveal that when "*you're mixed between the two... it can get difficult... strainful and... hard balancing things*" (Wentworth). However, Kaneki's experience seems to indicate that one must discard one aspect of their identity entirely, in order to be accepted as a member of the other. While there are allusions to Kaneki adopting the role of a "Third Space" (Rutherford, 1990: 211) to navigate away from "oppositional and exclusive modes of thought about people" (Voice, 2011: 325), it is actually the side of the humans who prevent Kaneki from being able to do so, by actively engaging in life-or-death conflict with him. As an entity that feasts on humanity and possesses powers beyond human understanding, the Ghoul is a manifestation of the Other as a supernatural monster. The dominant power demonstrates that it does not want coexistence, it wants dominance.

As a child, Wentworth experienced violent social rejection on account of his blackness, recalling that when he was younger, "*there was a gang*" that "*used to come to the cage where [he played] football... in cars... trying to chase him down with their dogs*" (Wentworth). In the same way that Kaneki was hunted for being a human, but a Ghoul, Wentworth was *hunted* for being British, but black.

Jacqueline, also British and black, experienced social rejection on account of her blackness. Jacqueline was one of the only "*black people*" in a school where the "*majority of the kids were white*" (Jacqueline). As well as with Kaneki, Jacqueline identifies with Naruto and *Blue Exorcist* (2009) protagonist Rin Okamura, because they are "*all different from a whole community, so either they're half and half or they're completely something different*" (Jacqueline). However, Jacqueline places a particular emphasis on Rin, the half-human "*son of Satan,*" who was adopted "*by a priest*" (Jacqueline), on account of their shared experience of ostracism.

*Blue Exorcist* is set in a world where Satan is real, where there exist Demons, and Exorcists who battle these Demons. The story follows Rin on his journey to become an exorcist and defeat Satan; to do so, Rin joins an academy that trains Exorcists. Rin's fellow Exorcists-in-training are those whose lives were destroyed by Satan. Under the pretence of being human, Rin makes friends with these people. One day, during a battle where he and his peers were outmatched, Rin made the thought-out decision to use his demonic powers to protect his friends. When using his power, blue satanic flames cloak his body, forming horns and a tail. What struck Jacqueline was that despite saving these people, "*everyone just started avoiding him... they just distanced themselves from him fully*" (Jacqueline). When one of the supporting characters "*calls him a demon*" outright, Jacqueline asks "*how do you think he's feeling*" (Jacqueline). However, once someone is demonised, their capacity to experience emotion is called into question. Ulfson demonstrates this in relation to another *manga*, where its protagonist loses an emotion every time he dies. When said character "*dies enough times, he will be this perfect demonic monster*" (Ulfson). As such, Rin's peers are shown to ostracise Rin, to disregard his feelings and his struggles, in turn stripping his value as a human being.

In Jacqueline's case, her peers would *avoid* her the way Rin's peers avoided him. Based on participant accounts, there is a definite connection between the identification of hybrid characters and the reader's lived experiences of being

Othered for their hybrid identities. Ostensibly, the hybrid Other threatens to taint perceptions of an authentic human identity. As highlighted by participants in *manga*, however, the monster-as-hybrid also appears to threaten the notions of the Self as human and the human as powerful. On the understanding that power has value and therefore those with power are valued -as discussed in section 4.1.1- the monster-as-hybrid thereby threatens the value of the human identity. Humanity-as-Self dismisses notions of coexistence in favour of persecution, because coexistence still challenges the human worldview of humans as the dominant power. In both Kaneki's and Rin's case, the monster-as-hybrid is in opposition to humanness.

This notion is also present in Roxanne's example from the series *Bleach* (2001). The premise of *Bleach* revolves around Shinigami (Soul Reapers), who guide deceased souls from the realm of the living (Earth) to the realm of the dead (Soul Society). Souls that do not transition, that linger on Earth for too long, start to lose their humanity, which is represented by a chain (Chain of Fate) that links the deceased's ethereal soul to their physical body. When this chain breaks and their humanity is lost, they become monsters called Hollows; hollow because once their Chain of Fate has broken, they are left with a gaping hole in the middle of their chests. They are then overcome by a never-ending, insatiable hunger to devour all souls, which represents their desire to regain their own. Roxanne comments that a Hollow is "*not a person,*" referring to it instead as "*an amalgamation*" (Roxanne). Because they eat other people "*and... other Hollows... there's a lot of people in there,*" suggesting that they are a hybrid of "*multiple persons*" (Roxanne).

Hollows are literally the product of their social environment. When a human soul lingers on Earth, it does so to fulfil certain goals. If these goals are not achieved, or if those to whom they have attachments move on, their Chain of Fate will break, causing them to transform. Hollows are some of the main antagonists in *Bleach*. There are also different types; the more souls a Hollow devours, the stronger it becomes. There are those at the pinnacle of power, known as the Arrancar, who

more closely resemble human beings than they do the weaker Hollows. Roxanne's example again shows how humanness is used as a measure of power. The less human Hollows appear, the more monstrous, yet weaker they are. Conversely, the more human Hollows appear, the more civilized, yet threatening they are. When applied to a real-world context, power can again be associated with humanness and a lack of power by contrast can be associated with a lack of humanness.

Gaining power by consuming other souls can be applied to power dynamics among human beings, which is at the expense of others. Applied to the dichotomy of Self and Other, the Self gains power at the expense of the Other. Considering characteristics of Self and Other, the Self always possesses some form of power and the Other is always powerless. This is seen in Hegel's Master/Slave dialectic (1807), the struggle for resources (Marx, 1977; Jackson, 1993), and the Other's struggle for recognition (Honneth, 1995; Heidegren, 2004). The Self always has the power to deny the Other what it seeks. It must be noted, however, that although Bleach perpetuates the association of power with humanness and thus, the Self-as-human, the protagonist, Ichigo, starts to resemble a Hollow whenever he grows in power. In this way, Ichigo resists normalized characterizations of Self, and reveals to readers that gaining recognition as monster-as-hybrid is possible, without being forced to sacrifice either aspect of one's hybrid identity in exchange for the other.

In fact, Lillian reveals that *Naruto's* title-character also resists the dominant power, by embracing his Otherness -which of course refers to the Tailed Beast sealed within him- rather than condemning it like the dominant power has. Despite being a Ninja like everyone around him, the fact that Naruto was also a Vessel and thus, a hybrid, saw him demonised, socially rejected and devalued. Lillian notes that Naruto has *"this beast inside him that he's coming to understand"* and that the relationship he had with it *"really resonated with [her]"* (Lillian), because she saw it as representative of her queer identity. Naruto saw the Tailed Beast as *"an enemy at first, but over time"* they grew closer and eventually became friends. Similarly, Lillian

reveals that when she *"was 11, [she] hated the fact that [she] was gay, [she] really hated it"* (Lillian). Lillian was often bullied and attributed this to her sexuality; she saw her identity as devalued and her struggles as disregarded. However, just as Naruto embraced his inner monster, Lillian's sexuality has become *"something that [she] really [loves] about [herself]... something [she's] proud of"* (Lillian).

A consistent trend among participants is how supernatural monsters in *manga* encouraged them to embrace Otherness and reject notions of conformity. While the *manga* appear to have achieved this through the decisions made by their protagonists, but the similarity of Otherness experiences between participants and characters also played a role. For example, Kaneki, Rin and Naruto all faced some form of social rejection, as did the participants to point them out. Lillian even began rejecting her sexuality, because it deviated from what she perceived normalized characterizations of Self to be - in other words, heteronormativity. According to Jacqueline, reading *manga* *"has ... made [her] more open to being [herself], even if people don't agree with her"* (Jacqueline). Wentworth said there are *"always gonna be people who wanna go against you,"* but *"you should stay resilient"* (Wentworth). For Lillian, who was *"forming [her] identity"* whilst reading *manga*, having characters like Naruto to aspire to *"was very important in terms of development"* (Lillian).

Based on normalized characterizations of Self-as-powerful, the identification of supernatural monsters as hybrids and in turn, of hybrids as representative of the "frightening unknown" by way of power that exceeds the human understanding (Lawrence, 2015: para. 6), challenges the worldview of humans-as-powerful and thus, humans-as-Self. Unlike manmade monsters, supernatural monsters are not Othered to serve as warnings to members of the dominant power to conform to social norms, because supernatural monsters have no choice in their non-conformity. However, they are hybrids and thus demonstrate an avenue for Self and Other to overcome difference, but because they threaten the known worldview of the human-as-Self, with the alternate worldview of the human-as-Other (Kearney,

2002: 3), the Self perceives the monster-as-hybrid as Other-as-threat and rejects it anyway. This supports the argument made in the previous chapter, that the Self will subject the Other to social rejection, in order to maintain existing power hierarchies.

Participant accounts of supernatural hybrids demonstrate that *manga* protagonists embody the Other and in doing so, actively resist the dominant power. Kaneki does this by siding with the Ghouls; Rin does this by embracing his power as the son of Satan and using that to save his friends, despite their hatred of Satan and of demons; Naruto does this by befriending the Tailed Beast within him and using that power to climb to the pinnacle of the Ninja world; and Ichigo does this by embracing the power of Hollows to surpass his limits and defeat the *manga's* main antagonist early on - Aizen. Through their actions, *manga* protagonists are able to encourage UK readers to resist the dominant power and embrace their Otherness, which is something that monsters-as-villains were unable to do. The main reason for this is that although monsters-as-villains put up a resistance against the dominant power for its active dehumanization of the Other, they also committed amoral actions. As such, readers were able to empathise with monsters-as-villains, whilst simultaneously condemning them (Kümmerling-Meibauer, 2012).

Lastly, readers were able to identify with monsters-as-hybrids, because they were hybrids between Self and Other, between human and monster. In 5.2.1, readers were shown to identify with Edward from *Full Metal Alchemist*, but not with his brother Alphonse, because Alphonse was a sentient suit of armour, whereas Edward was a human being with a metal arm and metal leg. Similarly, in 5.2.2, readers identified with none of the monsters-as-villains, because they had behaved in morally reprehensible manners. This finding further supports my argument that UK readers are more likely to identify Otherness themes that resemble their lived experiences of Otherness, as well as the fact that UK readers are more likely to identify with Othered characters who more closely resemble themselves.

## CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 05

The vast majority of participants were communicated Otherness through the practice of devaluation. Participants either saw *manga* as guilty of facilitating the Othering of identity groups, through the underrepresentation of ethnic minorities and queer identities, the stereotyping of queer identities and the overweight, and the objectification of females; or they identified the Other as a monster, whose existence threatened normalized characterizations of Self, through its appearance, its ideologies, or through its access to power that derives from the unknown. The process of devaluation is central to mechanistic dehumanization (Haslam, 2006) and can lead to the disregard of the Other, its value systems, its needs, its interests and its struggles; this disregard has been prevalent throughout every section.

Section 5.1 demonstrates that by engaging in Othering practices, insofar as *manga* contributes to social discourse, the medium can be perceived to function as a site of resistance by the Self, against the subversion of existing social hierarchies and norms. To reiterate the literature review, this is concerning, because academics believe *manga* to be extremely adept at communicating ideas, messages, themes and worldviews, more so than many other forms of text (Schodt, 1996; Schwartz and Rubenstein-Avila, 2006; Berndt, 2010; Bryce et al., 2010). In fact, Delgado-Algarre (2017), asserted that *manga* can influence moral values in readers, which includes by way of the under- or negative representation of identity groups. In other words, if *manga* disregards the existence of Othered identity groups, or demonizes them, villainises them, or portrays them as dominated, there is a possibility that readers will be influenced by these representations and perpetuate that Otherness.

However, participants generally tended to identify the Othering of identity groups when they considered themselves members of those identity groups; in other words, readers displayed an awareness of the Othering of their own identities. On the one hand, this implies that UK readers are only perceptive of dehumanizing

practices when those practices directly affect them; on the other hand, this also suggests that UK readers see themselves as the Other through devaluation. Both of these findings support the argument I made in Chapter 04, whereby I posited that a reader's lived experiences of Otherness directly impact their capacity to identify Otherness themes, or to identify with Othered characters, in *manga* series.

Conversely, section 5.2 demonstrates through the portrayal of the Other-as-monster, that UK readers also perceive *manga* to function as a site of resistance by the Other against normalized power-hierarchies. Although *manmade freaks* are Othered predominantly for their physical appearance, and although they serve as warnings within their respective narratives against deviating from normalized characterizations of Self -lest they face social rejection and devaluation- these monsters-as-freaks are shown to display emotional responsiveness, interpersonal warmth, cognitive openness, individuality, agency and depth (Haslam, 2006: 257). According to Haslam, these are traits that biologically define human beings (2006, 256), and are displayed as lacking in the dominant powers who Other them. In this way, *manga* reveal the Other to act more like the Self than the Self does, which in turn subverts the characterizations of humanness associated with the Self.

The portrayal of monster-as-villains exacerbates this notion that the Self can be equally morally reprehensible, and that both Self and Other merely exist from the perspectives of those with the power to normalize characterizations of each, which supports my argument that UK readers perceive those who participate in Othering practices as displaying monstrous characteristics more so than those they are Othering. Lastly, through supernatural monsters, with the power to challenge existing power-based hierarchies of Self and Other (Stephan & Ibarra & Morrison, 2015: 4), embodies the Other-as-threat and is socially rejected by the Self, in order to maintain the Self-as-powerful, power-as-value and, Self-as-valuable. However, these supernatural monsters embrace their Otherness, which in turn empowers

them to resist the dominant power of their respective social environments, which in turn has encouraged UK readers to embrace their own Othered identities.

This presents a paradox in *manga*, where the medium dehumanizes Othered identities, whilst the narratives actively encourage readers to embrace them. This is something Deman (2010) identified in American comics, wherein he noted that they often relied on "Othering practices such as the stereotype when representing minority characters" (2010: iii), which in turn created and perpetuated Otherness, especially among the comic readership. However, Deman also argues that recent authors have begun to undermine the processes that normalize the dehumanization of minority identities in comics, suggesting that they have entered "self-reflexive dialogue" with regards to the morality of Otherness (2010: v). In this chapter, UK readers have shown to reflect on the morality of the Othering process, as well as contemplating the lack of morality of those who engage in such processes.

## CHAPTER 06: OTHERED IDENTITY

As mentioned in the methodology, when participants were asked whether they had ever considered *Othered Identities* in *manga*, they would at times respond by asking what was meant by the term. As such, the question was altered to inquire if participants had ever considered the negative characterization of *identities* and *difference* when reading or reflecting upon *manga*. On the whole, 39 of the 40 total participants responded that they had; this tended to be in relation to how they refused -or were unable- to conform to social norms and were Othered as a result; how they perceived themselves as underdogs in society, who are forced to struggle for recognition; or how engaging with *manga* beyond the textual level, particularly through social interactions with other *manga* fans, provides them with a sense of recognition. It can be concluded that UK *manga* readers are near-unanimous in their capacity to identify Otherness, providing it pertains to their sense of identity.

Consequently, discussions of Othered identities by participants brought to attention the notions of non-conformity, underdogs and the manga community as a community of Others. Participants identified non-conformity in *manga*, through reader identification with *manga* protagonists, as a result of aspects of themselves that did not conform to normalized characterizations of Self. Participants identified characters they considered to be underdogs, because they perceived themselves as underdogs and as a result, they often related the struggles of *manga* characters back to their own struggles and vice versa. Participants believe that their ability to achieve a sense of belonging within a community of *manga* fans, while certainly facilitated by a shared interest in *manga*, is largely down to the fact that most *manga* fans are like-minded insofar as they share the experience of being Othered.

This chapter thus presents three overarching arguments: that *manga* attracts Othered individuals, because its protagonists embody the Other and in turn, reflect

the desires and struggles of the readers who identify with them, but also that by being a subcultural medium, *manga* causes readers to be Othered; that by way of underdog characters, UK readers perceive Otherness to be both a lack of recognition and a lack of power; that by embracing their Othered identities, UK *manga* readers realize the values prized by the *manga* protagonists with whom they identify and in turn, are able to establish social identities as Other-as-Self within a community of Othered individuals that acts as its own social environment.

Given the focal points of *non-conformity*, *underdogs* and *community*, this chapter will comprise of three sections. 6.1 *Manga Readers as the Other* broaches the non-conformity of participants and *manga* protagonists like, the latter of whom are revealed to resist the dominant power by pursuing grand goals despite being the Other, and without compromising that which makes them Other. 6.2 *Underdog Expectations* explores underdog characters as a source of motivation for readers, to resist normalized characterizations of Self and to embrace Otherness. Lastly, 6.3 *Accessing a Community* explores *manga* as a point of contact for individuals with Othered identities, wherein Otherness become a vector of identity formation.

## **6.1. THE NON-CONFORMING OTHER**

Under the hypothesis that people tend to conform to the behaviours of those they identify with, Stallen, Smidts and Sanfey (2013) conducted a quantitative experiment to explore why. Their experiment confirmed that “participants identified more strongly with in-group members... had more positive associations with in-group members... reported greater trust in in-group members... than... out-group members” (2013: 3). Participants were also revealed as being able to “[take] the perspective” of others more when others were in-group members (2013: 5). Stallen, Smidts and Sanfey concluded that people were indeed far more likely to conform “to in-group judgements than out-group judgements” (2013: 3), noting that this in-

group conformity is “strongly associated with the experience of positive affect and reward” (2013: 4). Rewards can include tangible goods, as well as more abstract concepts like recognition, belonging, “reputation or status” (2013: 4).

In-group favouritism, as explored briefly in the literature review, is dependent on in-group conformity and is influenced by two psychological forces. According to Dasgupta, these are an individual’s “confirmation of their high self-esteem” and their “confirmation of the socio-political order in society” (2004: 143). Both of these develop upon Tajfel’s social identity theory (1979), wherein he perceived in-group conformity to provide an individual with a sense of belonging, whilst in-group favouritism derived from an individual’s pursuit of a positive self-concept. In both of these theories the Other provides contrast to the Self by failing to conform to the in-group and thus far, this thesis has demonstrated the Other to be frequently associated with non-conformity. In section 4.1.1, the queer identities of Oxson and Evangeline are shown to deviate from heteronormativity, and Isakson highlights the *My Hero Academia* (2014) protagonist Deku for his inability to conform to social norms in an environment where people are expected to have Super Powers. Section 4.1.2 broaches non-conformity as being overweight through Dorothy, whereas Anderson points out in section 4.2.2, how *My Hero Academia* characters fail to conform to pre-established categories of Heroes and Villains. In section 5.1.1, Mikelson discusses gender non-conformity and in section 5.1.2, Clarise highlights the subversion of gender stereotypes by way of male characters crying. Lastly, section 5.2.3 reveals how the supernatural monster-as-hybrid is an inherently non-conforming entity, because it is beyond human and thus no longer human.

Chen (2011) concluded an inherent link between *manga* and Otherness at the level of the reader deriving from the reader’s non-conformity with the mainstream, which the above examples support, as well as their “resistance to social norms” (2011: 278), which this section intends to explore in greater detail. Tsai further argued that media like *manga* “fulfil [readers’] desires to be who they want

to be, rather than what the dominant power expects them to be" (2015: 71). This in turn facilitates the Other's resistance against being incorporated "into the dominant power that attempts to discipline and control them" (2015: 72), supporting the conclusion at the end of Chapter 05, that *manga* function as a site of resistance for the Other. In the literature review, whilst looking at the transcultural properties of *manga*, the possibility was explored that by being sites where "new meanings and values" are created (Adamowicz, 2014: 38), *manga* can draw the Other to it, offering it ways of navigating its Otherness; however, *manga* was also revealed to be a site that could create a new type of Other in the transcultural *manga* fan. Accounts of non-conformity in this section confirm that *manga* can -sometimes simultaneously- both ease and cause readers struggles associated with non-conformity.

### **6.1.1: THE NON-CONFORMING OTHER: MANGA PROTAGONISTS**

For many participants, non-conformity was not an active choice, rather, they are characteristics, traits and interests they were born with, or happened to develop when young. Participants who emphasised their non-conformities as vectors of Otherness, instead of in relation to themes of exclusion or dehumanization, covered hearing disabilities, external expectations and bisexuality. In each of these cases, participants' struggles with their non-conformities were disregarded by those around them. Participants revealed how engaging with *manga* provided them with a source of recognition, often identifying characters who reminded readers of themselves, as a result of shared Otherness through non-conformity. Throughout this section, noteworthy *manga* series include *One Piece* (1997), *Naruto* (1999), *Gintama* (2003) and lastly, the *shojo manga* series *Fushigi Yuugi* (1992).

Carlson and Evangeline, for example, were both born with hearing difficulties and both struggled with this in school, where pupils were taught audibly. Their hearing difficulties became characteristics according to which they were identified

and Othered by peers; Carlson recalls that he *"used to have people think [he] was autistic"* (Carlson), whereas Evangeline was constantly *"labelled as someone who always needed help, even though [she] didn't"* (Evangeline). When young, Carlson had problems with his eardrums, explaining that *"they weren't tight enough, so the doctors tried to fix them, but they burst [one] eardrum, put a grommet on [the other] side"* (Carlson). Carlson became deaf in one ear and because of the hole in that eardrum, he was no longer allowed out, nor was he allowed to socialise, because the doctors and his parents were afraid this would cause issues, be it *"a gust of wind, anything"* (Carlson). Carlson was forced to spend much time inside alone.

Carlson used to have a hearing aid, which he likened to *"a tape recorder, amped, plugged in... [he] had to get the microphone to the teacher"* (Carlson), which was connected by a one-and-a-half-meter cable that he would have to walk around the classroom with. Not only did his teachers not attempt to make his life easier, but because of his hearing aid, he was *"bullied all the time,"* commenting that to his peers, *"[he was] not normal, [he was] something else"* (Carlson). So, Carlson stopped using his hearing aid, because other children would *"pull pranks"* on him. Carlson was then taught Sign Language, but *"learned not to use that"* (Carlson), because other children would make fun of him for it. Carlson notes that avoiding things that led to teasing meant *"stacking the deck up against [himself]; taking away aspects where [he] could be different"* (Carlson). In doing so, Carlson was attempting to conform to normalized characterizations of Self, by discarding things that exacerbated that which made him Other. The rejection of facets of one's own identity has been seen in section 4.3.1, among self-excluding Others.

Evangeline was not only blighted by partial deafness, but she was also *"dyslexic,"* which meant she struggled extensively in primary school (Evangeline). Evangeline recalls having worn a hearing aid in school and one day the batteries ran out, but *"[she] had a teacher... who wouldn't let her change"* them (Evangeline), so she was unable hear what was being said. Rather than provide her with some

form of assistance, Evangeline's teacher displayed a disregard towards her struggle in a similar way to how Carlson's struggles were disregarded. In both cases, showing indifference towards the Other is symptomatic of mechanistic dehumanization (Haslam, 2006), which supports the hypothesis in Chapter 05, that UK readers are likely to have experienced Otherness through processes that devalue them.

Evangeline's primary school had different difficulty levels for classes and despite her struggles with her hearing and her dyslexia, Evangeline "*kept proving to teachers... [she] could do the work*" (Evangeline). However, she notes that "*once you're labelled as something, they just keep you down the entire time*" (Evangeline), recalling that she was always forced into the lowest tier. Over time, Evangeline's constant Othering led her to become "*aggressive, because... [she] wasn't able to get along with other people*" (Evangeline). To reiterate McDougall et al. (2001), the socially rejected Other can be pushed to divert its aggression at its rejectors, which made the subsequent years of her life were "*rough*" (Evangeline). Evangeline "*couldn't get on with people well*" and felt as though "*people didn't get [her],*" as though "*there was a barrier*" that she was unable to pinpoint (Evangeline).

Both participants sought some form of recognition and both stumbled across that in *manga*. As the analyses do vary in length, some *manga* series will require summaries of their storylines for context. To reiterate section 3.5, interpretations of any *manga* narratives largely originate from the participants themselves. Specifically highlighting the *manga* series *One Piece* (1997), Carlson explains resonating with its main protagonist, a boy called Luffy. As noted earlier, *One Piece* is set in world where Pirates reign supreme and spend most of their lives at sea. Luffy's dream is to become the Pirate King, but one day he eats a magical fruit that grants him the power of a Rubber Body in exchange for his ability to swim. Now that Luffy "*can't swim anymore, [he] really shouldn't be on a boat*" (Carlson). Whilst Carlson struggled to hear, Luffy struggled to swim; Carlson identified with Luffy based on their shared experience of Otherness due to non-conformity, which was also the

case for Evangeline and Naruto. Evangeline highlighted *Naruto* (1999), because like her, the protagonist was “*treated differently by so many people*” (Evangeline), and for a very significant portion of his life, he had no understanding as to why.

Certainly, seeing *manga* protagonists struggle with non-conformities led the participants to different responses. On one hand, watching Luffy unapologetically be himself and strive to become the Pirate King made Carlson believe “*there’s no harm in being who you are*” (Carlson). Carlson learned lip-reading, which he noted he still uses today and has thus learned to live with his hearing impairment. On the other hand, watching *Naruto* “*struggling with [non-conformity], but coming out better for it*” made Evangeline “*happy,*” provided her emotional “*support,*” kept her “*grounded*” and “*positive*” (Evangeline); she has even come to describe *manga* series like “*Naruto and One Piece*” as an “*emotional anchor*” (Evangeline). This finding suggests that, through their acts of resistance, *manga* protagonists are capable of instilling readers with self-value, which is capable of manifesting in the form self-acceptance, as well as the sense of emotional support. This reiterates and expands upon findings from section 4.3.1, among the self-excluding Other.

These accounts support my argument that UK *manga* readers identify non-conformity in *manga* on the basis characteristics they possess that do not conform to normalized characterizations of Self. Furthermore, there appears to be a consensus among participants that *manga* protagonists embody the Other, which was first posited by Sasada (2011) in relation to the *One Piece* protagonist, Luffy. Touched upon in the literature review, Sasada (2011) describes Luffy and his crew as “*outsiders*” (2011: 192). Sasada further argued that they were a symbol of the Other’s resistance against the dominant power, in that they would “*carry out ‘poetic justice’ by assisting the weak and resisting the strong, even at risk to their own lives*” (2011: 192). Luffy’s desire to be Pirate King is the desire to “*be more powerful than those whose rights and status is determined by birth*” (Sasada, 2011: 192).

The same can be said for *Naruto*, whose protagonist desires the title of Hokage (Shadow); in other words, to be the most powerful, most recognisable Ninja within the world of *Naruto*. *Manga* protagonists generally embody non-conformity and their journeys force those around those around them to recognise them on the merits of who they are, rather than how similar, or dissimilar they are. Protagonists thereby mirror the desires of the readers who identify with them, and demonstrate that the Other can become Other-as-Self without rejecting that which made them Other. Many of my participants claim that "*main characters... tend to be something that doesn't quite fit into society and doesn't quite belong, or doesn't necessarily have people that understand them*" (Tilda); sometimes they take the form of "*quite isolated*" individuals (Nelson). Readers will often draw parallels with such characters by way of their own non-conformities and will perceive themselves as "*the other thing*" (Tilda), or will find it "*a bit strange and a bit hard to fit in*" (Imogen). However, these characters never reject their Otherness; they do not succumb to normalized characterizations of Self and in this way, can be seen to actively resist conforming to the dominant power. Not all protagonists have grand aspirations, though; some, like Sakata Gintoki from *Gintama* (2003), have no aspirations whatsoever.

Identified by Ursula, *Gintama* is about a former samurai who once took up arms to fight off an alien invasion. After the aliens won the war, took over the planet and banned samurais from carrying swords in efforts to erase their identity and their spirit, Gintoki started an odd-jobs company. Gintoki consistently breaks the status quo; he is brash, lazy and does not "*fight for peace*" (Ursula); he makes no money from his job; he is always in debt; he does not pay rent, yet he is "*a gambler*" and although he "*used to be the best, when he was at war... now he's broken*" (Ursula). When Ursula was first introduced to the character, these were some of the things that she "*didn't really like*" and "*didn't appreciate*" about Gintoki. However, she was drawn to him, because not only could he "*accept all that,*" but more importantly, Gintoki simply "*does not judge people*" for being who they are (Ursula).

*Gintama* was significant for Ursula, because her perfectionist background, wherein “everyone always encouraged me to do better all the time,” could become “a bit too much and nobody tells you when to stop” (Ursula). This became a pressure “to be better,” which she eventually started applying to herself, constantly asking “what’s the best” (Ursula) and thinking that “academically and as a person... [she] can still work better, work harder... but sometimes [she feels] the anxiety to work, even when resting” (Ursula). Gintoki stands out, because he is “happy about not being the best,” he is not pressured into conforming to the expectations of others, which in turn led Ursula to respect those “who don’t want to be the best” (Ursula). Ursula feels that *manga* represents “the real world. It’s conflicting, it’s complicated, it has so many things in it; you just find the part that you relate to” (Ursula).

Again, there is this notion of *manga* providing readers with support. Upon watching how Gintoki carried himself, displaying wholesome qualities despite being “broken” (Ursula); embracing his Othered samurai identity in a world where being one is illegal; despite being smaller gestures than those of Luffy’s and Naruto’s, they still have the power to influence readers to accept themselves, as seen in the case of Ursula, who was motivated by Gintoki to put less pressure on herself. This finding support Tsai’s who argues that *manga* “fulfil [readers’] desires to be who they want to be, rather than what the dominant power expects them to be” (2015: 71). Gintoki represents a way to live life proudly, without being a perfectionist. If Ursula had never struggled with the constant need to be perfect, it is highly likely -given the propensity for non-conforming readers to identify with characters who are similarly non-conforming- that she would not have been influenced by him.

The notion of *manga* protagonists embodying the non-conforming Other and resisting social norms extends beyond *shonen* series like *Naruto*, *One Piece* and *Gintama*, Tilda identifies the series *Fushigi Yuugi* (1992), which revolves around a girl who “doesn’t fit in at school” for various of reasons, the main one being that

*"she's not as bright as everyone wants her to be"* (Tilda), which includes her parents. Again, there are parallels between protagonist and reader, as Tilda *"never quite fit in"* either; not at school, nor *"with what [her] family and specifically [her] parents wanted from her"* (Tilda). Unlike the prior examples, *Fushigi Yuugi* addresses the value of the non-conforming Other by transporting the protagonist to an alternate world, where she discovers that she has an incredible destiny ahead of her and in doing so, the series provides Tilda with emotional support, by being *"the first thing that [she'd] ever read that actually said... it is okay if you are different"* (Tilda).

Agatha, who has Asperger's Syndrome, has spent much of her life feeling *"like everyone else knows something that [she] should know, but [doesn't], so they leave [her] out"* (Agatha). Agatha, like Tilda, also highlights *"storylines"* with parallel worlds that begin with a protagonist who lives in an *"ordinary world,"* is *"failing exams,"* has a *"boring home life"* and *"doesn't get on"* with anyone until suddenly, they fall *"through a rabbit hole and... the fact that [they're] autistic means [they] can read all these things... we can't"* (Agatha). Wentworth finds these kinds of stories featuring -particularly middle-aged- protagonists, who are transported to *"this alternate world,"* away from their regular lives that appear devoid of meaning *"inspirational,"* because *"it just gives you an idea that it's never too late to change, no matter how old you are; no matter what position you're in"* (Wentworth). They present readers with the belief that there is value to each of them and encourage them to embrace their non-conforming identities, whatever they may be.

To this end, Tilda highlights a side-character from *Fushigi Yuugi* called Nuriko, who is first perceived by the reader to be female, but is later revealed to be male. After Nuriko's sister -their parents' favourite- passed away, Nuriko was made to feel responsible for her death and began living as his sister *"to keep her memory alive"* (Tilda). Nuriko is bisexual and fell in love with the Emperor, a male. However, *"even though he passes as a woman, the Emperor needs to have children"* (Tilda), meaning such a romance is impossible and therefore, unrequited. As the story

progresses, Nuriko starts to develop feelings for the main protagonist, a female. Eventually, Nuriko cuts his hair, decides to live his life as a man and confesses his feelings for the protagonist. In the *Fushigi Yuugi's* epilogue, Nuriko is reincarnated as a female, which Tilda interprets as an opportunity for Nuriko to "*marry the man that he loved*" (Tilda). Although this reincarnation could be interpreted as a denial of same-sex relationships, Tilda interprets this as the only way for Nuriko to maintain and express his bisexual identity, given the socio-historical context within which the *manga* is set. As such, regardless of the sex of the body that Nuriko inhabits, Tilda still perceives Nuriko as Nuriko, who in turn is still attracted to both sexes.

Tilda identifies this Nuriko on the basis of reader identification, because for the longest time, Tilda "*was brought up you could either be one or the other,*" straight or gay (Tilda). Eventually, she concluded "*[she] must be straight,*" because she was attracted to males (Tilda). However, reading *manga* "*helped open [her] eyes*" to her bisexual identity and it did so whilst reassuring her that being bisexual was perfectly acceptable, despite what she was told by her parents. Tilda found it comforting to read about characters who experienced the same struggles as her, highlighting the case of Nuriko as particularly impactful on her sexuality.

Based on the above accounts, *manga* is capable of drawing in those who are seeking some form of recognition for their identities, based on the similarities of non-conformity they share with Othered readers. Participants have found in *manga* protagonists like Luffy, Naruto, Gintoki and more, characters who "*break the status quo*" (Frankson). In Luffy, Carlson identifies perseverance, in the sense that despite "*what's been thrown against him and regardless of what anyone says... he still fights for*" recognition as the Other (Carlson). In Naruto, Evangeline has found someone who manages to change the opinions of all those around him "*by being himself and keep going*" (Evangeline). In Gintoki, Ursula found a wholesome character, who accepted his Otherness and defiantly flaunted it, which changed her perception of how she should live her life. Moreover, participants were almost unanimous in their

awareness of manga protagonists being characters who not only embraced their own Otherness, but would also look beyond the Otherness of those around them and “include people in their group that they otherwise wouldn’t” (Frankson).

Stallen, Smidts and Sanfey pointed out that in-group conformity is “strongly associated with the experience of positive affect and reward” (2013: 4). However, by identifying and being inspired by manga protagonists, participants seem to have accepted their Othered identities, which in itself reveals positive affect. Moreover, these findings support Chen’s (2011) conclusion that there exists an intimate link between *manga* and Otherness at the level of the reader, deriving from their non-conformity and expands upon Sasada’s (2011) argument that *manga* protagonists resist social norms. However, these findings differ from Chen’s (2011) in the sense that Chen concluded that US readers were actively seeking to resist social norms, and engaged with *manga* with that purpose in mind. By contrast, my participants did not approach *manga* with the intent to resist social norms, rather they reveal that the medium itself encouraged them to do so and subsequently, in resisting social norms, they not only found a sense of self-acceptance, but also displayed a rejection of “the socio-political order in society” (Dasgupta, 2004: 143).

In the Chapter 02, the cultural odour of *manga* was addressed as playing no role in the capacity for readers to make meaning of *manga* texts. However, using Adamowicz (2014) interpretation of *mukokuseki* -which for Iwabuchi (2002) meant the lack of cultural odour- the transcultural properties of *manga* were embraced and *manga* texts were perceived as sites where “new meanings and values” could be created (2014: 38). On one hand, *manga* could draw the Other to it, offering it ways of navigating its Otherness, as has been revealed throughout the section thus far, but on the other, the possibility existed for *manga* to function as a site wherein a new form of Otherness could be created, namely the transcultural *manga* fan. The next section will explore how the *manga* subculture creates readers-as-Others.

### 6.1.2: THE NON-CONFORMING OTHER: MANGA READERS

Several participants have noted that engaging with *manga* has directly led to being perceived and treated as the Other, demonstrating that among UK readers at least, the transcultural *manga* fan forms a legitimate Othered identity. Otherness deriving from an individual's engagement with *manga* texts appears to be the result of the reader becoming aware they are members of "a subculture" (Henrietta & Mikelson); the perception that *manga* is a medium intended "for kids" (Anderson, Frankson, Gustafson & Stevenson); and lastly, that *manga* as an "interest" fails to conform to the social norms of the surrounding environment (Hanson, Jackson & Ulfson). The majority of participants to discuss this particular topic are male, but it is unclear as to whether sex contributes to this Otherness experience.

Both Henrietta and Mikelson are in their early thirties and both participants started reading *manga* when they became teenagers, which was at the turn of the century. As mentioned in the literature review, the growth of *manga* in English-speaking countries especially, did not take place until 2002 (Brienza, 2009 & 2010 & 2011 & 2014a & 2016), meaning that the consumption of *manga* by Henrietta and Mikelson was restricted for several years. Not only did the UK have limited access to the medium, but the *manga boom* started in the United States and spread to the UK over a period of years. Henrietta, who grew up in Canada, was fourteen when she started reading *manga* and was fifteen by the time she moved back to the UK, recalls how "there was no *manga* anywhere" in the country (Henrietta).

Mikelson had a similar experience, revealing how "back in the older times there was pretty much no way to buy *manga* in mainstream shops in the UK" (Mikelson). Both participants ultimately decided to purchase *manga* from abroad, but because most series were unavailable in English, this meant purchasing foreign language translations. Henrietta, who would go to France during the summer, where "they're really big on it... would buy them there" in French (Henrietta), whereas Mikelson, initially tried to buy *manga* directly from Japan, but the cost was too high and he

was unable to read Japanese. Mikelson noted that “*there were a lot of German translations of manga*” (Mikelson). As he was “*learning German at the time*” and could somewhat understand it, he bought them in German (Mikelson).

Having to “*go out of [their] way to get access to this media content*” both participants found it “*incredibly Othering*” (Mikelson); they could “*feel that sense of Otherness*” when reading *manga*, “*because... in England, it’s much more of a minority of people that read it*” (Henrietta). Mikelson explained that he was aware he was “*not accessing mainstream media content*” and reading German-language translations made it “*a very obviously subcultural experience*” (Mikelson). Henrietta used to justify her interest to herself, remarking on how it felt “*more of an intellectual pursuit*” to read “*a children’s comic in another language*” (Henrietta). Opportunities to socialise around *manga* were limited, which made it “*difficult to talk to people about it*” and thus also made her “*feel [she was] in a subculture*” (Henrietta).

Hebdige states that a subculture is a way of “*interrupting processes of normalisation*” (1979: 18), whereas Huq writes that subcultures are a “*way to resist dominant cultural norms*” and “*mainstream culture*” (2006: 12). In an international context, the subcultural identities of *manga* fans “*involves the recognition and appreciation of the difference between the local cultural and the Japanese culture*” (Tsai, 2015: 82), which here can be interpreted an awareness that while *manga* consumption is the norm in Japan, it is not in the UK. Both participants displayed such awareness; Henrietta explicitly highlighting how cultural perspectives towards *manga* differed between countries. By engaging with *manga*, particularly with the awareness that they are participating in a subculture, UK readers demonstrate an active resistance of the dominant power and a refusal to conform to normalized characterizations of Self, which evidently do not include *manga* consumption.

This presents a contrast between section 6.1.1 and 6.1.2, whereby *manga* readers are no longer Others who happen to find value in their identities by way of engaging with *manga*. Rather, *manga* readers value their identities and therefore

they are willing to resist social norms in order to express those identities. This, in turn, does support Chen's findings that *manga* readers seek to resist mainstream values (2011: 236). Nevertheless, both the existence of non-conforming Others who become *manga* readers -as seen in section 6.1.1- and *manga* readers who display a "resistance to social norms" (2011: 278), support Chen's argument that there exists an inherent link between *manga* and Otherness at the level of the reader. Moreover, when non-conforming Others find *manga*, by continuing to consume *manga*, they are willingly engaging in a subculture, which based on accounts by Mikelson and Henrietta, as well as definitions of subculture by Hebdige, Huq and Tsai, means they are resisting the dominant power and thereby perpetuating their Otherness.

The Otherness of *manga* also derives from its long-standing reputation in the Western world, "for vulgarity, violence, and bad drawing" (Bouissou, 2010: 17). Its reputation was notoriously negative during the 1970s and 1980s when *gekiga* (dark, adult) *manga* was more heavily circulated. The 'Otaku Killer's' affiliation with violent *hentai* (pornographic) *manga* caused widespread generalisations that cast the medium in a negative light for decades (Chambers, 2012: 95). According to participants, this stigmatization still exists. Frankson reveals a divide within his own home, in relation to perceptions of *manga* among non-readers. Although his mother is "on board with anime and manga," his sister constantly displays a level of ignorance towards it, asking "why [he is] watching anime porn" (Frankson).

Conversely, Phoenix posits that "comic books and cartoons have traditionally been relegated to the realm of childhood" in the West, despite the fact that titles "usually deal with issues that are not generally considered... appropriate for children" (2006: 3). These kinds of uninformed stereotypes held by non-readers reflect have caused readers to be stigmatized, with Anderson revealing how "at school, you were considered very weird if you read or watched manga or anime" respectively (Anderson). Henrietta, as previously mentioned, referred to *manga* as a "children's comic," which when read in a foreign language, gave it the semblance

of *"an intellectual pursuit"* (Henrietta). Not only does this demonstrate Henrietta's implicit awareness of the stigma attached to *manga*, but it also suggests a level of normalization in UK society, wherein *manga* is associated with immaturity.

This association of *manga* being *"for kids"* exists among several participants; Anderson was led to believe that it was *"weird to essentially be watching cartoons when you were eighteen years old"* (Anderson). Gustafson, who was so passionate about the medium that he wanted to begin creating his own *manga* -and succeeded- recalled how he was *"always... met with negativity"* (Gustafson). The main criticisms he received were that he would *"never... make a living off it,"* because *"it's for kids"* (Gustafson). Similarly, Stevenson's peers would tell him that his interest *"has no emotional value,"* and when he would challenge them to read a series, they would refuse on the basis that *"it's for kids"* (Stevenson). Frankson notes how ingrained the infantilization of *manga* is in the West, as he recalls a television series, wherein a character enters a *"manga bookstore"* and their bodyguard is about to follow them in (Frankson). To shake the bodyguard, the character tells him *"[he's] an old man, [he] shouldn't be reading stuff for little kids"* (Frankson).

While *manga* has traditionally been stigmatized for its violence and sexuality, participants believe more recent representations of the medium serve to reduce the maturity of the medium, which in turn infantilizes its readership. As explored in the literature review, infantilization is a form of animalistic dehumanization (Haslam, 2006), where the identity group being Othered -in this case *manga* readers- are perceived as lesser to the group engaging in Othering practices. Applying his own experiences of being negatively stereotyped to the Othering of minority identity groups, Frankson comments that *"now [he knows]... on a much lesser version... how people must feel when they get stereotyped as their race"* (Frankson).

Based on several participant accounts, the Othering of *manga* readers does not end at stigmatization, but it extends into the realms of social rejection. To reiterate, social rejection is the deliberate exclusion of an individual from a social

relationship, or from social interaction (Williams & Forgas & von Hippel, 2005). It can be passive, or active; passive social rejection commonly refers to ostracism, whereas active social rejection commonly refers to bullying, but can include other forms of aggression directed at the rejected Other (Williams, 2002). Either of these forms can cause the rejected party inordinate amounts of emotional pain, feelings of loneliness, depression, self-loathing and insecurity (McDougall et al, 2001).

To that end, Hanson was ostracised for his interests, at a time when he was *"discovering stuff like manga"* (Hanson); in other words, non-mainstream media that included heavy metal, comics and *manga*. Although Hanson recalls that he *"wasn't physically bullied,"* he spent every day at school *"on [his] own... had no friends"* and was *"kind of isolated"* (Hanson). Jackson and Ulfson both explicitly recalled being bullied; Jackson remembers *"[spending] most of [his] time being bullied"* for his enjoyment of all comics, including *manga* (Jackson), whilst Ulfson commented on having been *"bullied a fair bit for [his] interest"* in *manga* specifically (Ulfson).

Referring to himself in his youth as a *"socially maladroit young man"* (Hanson), Hanson explains that he *"was just one of these people who had no confidence"* and looking back, he *"could feel that [himself], [he] was the Other"* (Hanson). Originating from Glasgow, in the 1970s and 1980s, *"you supported Rangers or Celtic, or you're one of those weird guys with long hair, you're one of those weird guys who likes goth music"* (Hanson). Fellow Glaswegian participant, Jackson, made a similar observation: *"if you're not involved in any of the football stuff and you're older, you barely register"* (Jackson). From their perspectives, there was an existing social norm that most people within that environment conformed to, and the consequences of their non-conformity, aside from being characterized as *weird*, was active social rejection through different forms of aggression.

Hanson explains that *"the last thing he wanted was attention,"* but recalls walking *"down the street and local chavs would spit on [him]"* (Hanson). Jackson, on the other hand, remembers being *"a punching bag"* (Jackson). Aside from the

"typical slagging" and being "made fun of," he recounts one instance in particular, where one of his bullies clubbed him around the back of the head with tripod stand for a Bunsen Burner (Jackson). According to Hanson, *manga* has been perceived for decades as comprising of "perverted... strange comics full of tentacles;" it targets "people who weren't ideal," and has led readers like himself and Jackson to be characterized as "weird guys who like weird Japanese comics... full of tits" and "demons that rip off peoples' heads" (Hanson). Consequently, both participants described feeling like they lived "on the outside" (Hanson & Jackson).

The feeling of "being the person outside" (Jackson) is coincidentally what drew both participants to the *manga* series *Devilman* (1987), a story about a boy called Akira, whose best friend discovers the existence of an ancient species, referred to as Demons, that once stood at the top of the food chain. Only those who are pure of heart can harness the power of Demons when possessed and it just so happens that Akira is pure of heart. Akira is a regular guy "a guy who wears a black T-shirt.... everybody gives him crap" (Hanson). One day, a powerful Demon called Amon attempts to possess Akira, but fails, leaving Akira in control of Amon's powers. Amon's influence on Akira's body sees the character become taller and visibly more athletic. Hanson refers to Akira's transformation as "this liberation" from the pressure to conform, as he now differs even more from social norms than he did before. Having become Other-as-hybrid, a notion that was explored in section 5.2.3, Akira is enabled to "do anything he wants" (Hanson), which can be interpreted as *manga* encouraging the reader to embrace Otherness, as a form of liberation.

Participants once again see their desires in the character. Hanson, who made a comment about often wearing a "black t-shirt" (Hanson), saw the protagonist as a reflection of his failure to conform to the football culture in the city, where those around him wore the green, or blue colours of Celtic and Rangers respectively. Jackson, alternatively, saw in Akira an individual who "was angry at society" just as he himself was, especially noting the feeling of "helplessness" (Jackson), which was

explored in the literature review, as being indicative of a lack of power, a lack of control and a lack of meaning on the side of the Other (Eidelson & Eidelson, 2003); some of the main causes of social alienation, according to Seeman (1959).

Through Akira's bonding with Amon, the non-conforming Other is shown to regain power, control and meaning. Ultimately, the message appears to be for the Other to embrace its Otherness. Even though *manga* may have contributed to their Otherness, Hanson explains that "*manga gave you a world to enter where... you actually didn't give a damn if these people didn't like you... it actually made you a bit defiant*" (Hanson). By engaging with *manga*, Hanson realised "[he] might be different," but came to view it as a "*good thing, because [he doesn't] want to be somebody who spits on people*" (Hanson). This actually harkens back to section 5.2, wherein *manmade monsters*, despite often appearing Other, would display traits that would commonly be associated with the Self, whereas the Self, who would actively engage in the dehumanization of others, was perceived by readers as the Other. Jackson notes on his identify as the Other that reading *manga* "*probably made [him] embrace it more;*" it gave him confidence in his identity despite its non-conformity; it made him "*feel better*" and "*helped [his] life*" (Jackson). In the same way as was discovered in section 6.1.1, *manga* provides readers with support for their identities as Others, even if they are Othered for engaging with *manga*.

According to participants, the awareness of -and engagement with- *manga* as a subcultural medium (Huq, 2006; Tsai, 2015), and the historical stigmatization of *manga* in West (Bouissou, 2010; Chambers, 2012), has led to their existence as non-conforming Others. In support of Chen's findings (2011), engaging with *manga* with the knowledge that it is a subcultural medium, as was shown to be the case by most participants, functioned as an act of defiance (Hanson & Jackson), and an act of resistance against the dominant power (Mikelson & Henrietta). These findings therefore support my argument that as a subcultural medium, *manga* perpetuates the Otherness of non-conforming readers, either by "interrupting processes of

*normalisation*" (Hebdige, 1979: 18), or by being subjected to negative characterizations, which become associated with -and reflect on- UK readers. Either way, this creates an Othered identity group in the form of the transcultural *manga* reader-as-Other, which was previously hypothesised by Adamowicz (2014).

Adamowicz posited that by embracing the transcultural properties of *manga*, the medium could become a site that facilitates the creation of new meaning and new values in readers (2014). When applied to non-conformity, *manga* functions as a site wherein non-conformity is embraced by reader. Although non-conformity may be negatively characterized by the normalized standards of society, this does not apply to the UK *manga* reader, who is encouraged to perceive this non-conformity as something positive, supporting my argument that *manga*, particularly through its protagonists, encourage readers to embrace Otherness.

However, Adamowicz also highlighted the possibility that *manga* could also create a new form of Otherness in the transcultural *manga* fan, which was proven to be true. *Manga* contributed to the Otherness of readers, through stigmatizations attached to the medium, that in turn became associated with readers. However, this is also due to the nature of transcultural fandom; as a foreign product, *manga* does not occupy a place in mainstream UK media. As such, participants like Mikelson and particularly Henrietta, showed awareness of the exoticism of the medium and often felt lonely and Othered by their non-conforming identities as UK *manga* fans.

Cumulatively, this section argues that *manga* protagonists embody the Other (Sasada, 2011), which is evidenced by the fact that UK readers tend to identify with such characters by way of shared lived experiences of non-conformity. Furthermore, this section argues that *manga* protagonists encourage UK readers to embrace their Otherness as an act of resistance against conforming to "the dominant power that attempts to discipline and control them" (Tsai, 2015: 72), by presenting similar displays of resistance. As non-conforming Others, the manga reader inadvertently participates in acts of resistance by consuming *manga*. Alternatively, those who are

already aware of *manga* as a subculture actively engage in acts of resistance. In both cases, the UK *manga* reader can be considered a unique Othered identity.

## **6.2. STRUGGLE OF THE UNDERDOG**

In the previous section, it was argued that *manga* protagonists embody the Other and that watching protagonists resist -and struggle against- the dominant power tended to inspire participants to embrace their identities. This is because several participants recalled succumbing to normalized characterizations of the Self and in turn, rejecting aspects of their identities, to avoid being Othered. This section argues that *manga* protagonists and UK *manga* readers, as reflections of each other, are both struggling for recognition for their Othered identities. Furthermore, in this section, I argue that the struggle for recognition is also a struggle to obtain power, which is evidenced by the goals *manga* protagonists have set for themselves, as well as the perception by participants, that both they and the *manga* protagonists with whom they identify -or by whom they are inspired- are underdogs.

In the introduction, struggle was shown to be central to arguments by Whaley (2007) and Fuller (2012), that inherently linked Otherness to *manga*. Both scholars studied works by Tezuka and believe he inspired a generation of artists to follow in his footsteps. Tezuka championed the theme of “bettering humanity to avoid a dark future,” which in turn was thought to be dependent upon “[humanity’s] ability to settle [its] differences” (Fuller, 2012: ii). As mentioned earlier, Whaley concluded that Tezuka perceived humanity as “unwilling or unready to accept... difference” (2007: 91), which inevitably resulted in a renewal of both the good and the bad at the end of his stories. Whaley saw this renewal to represent a never-ending cycle of Otherness, whereby the Other would face rejection for its differences and be forced to struggle perpetually for recognition. Largely using participant interpretations of

*manga* narratives, this section argues that subsequent *manga* have been encouraging readers to embrace Otherness so as to overcome difference.

Chen (2011) posited that Otherness was linked to *manga* through the reader; by combining perspectives, it can be surmised that as reflections of each other, both the reader and the *manga* protagonist struggle as Others. Struggle can mean “to experience difficulty” and “to use a lot of effort to defeat..., prevent..., or achieve” (CAM, 2020); alternatively, struggle can be synonymous with “[engaging] in conflict,” which is often “forceful or violent” (LEX, 2020). In the literature review, two types of struggle were presented; the struggle for recognition and the struggle for resources. As recognition is a “basic medium of social integration” that it is crucial to both “socialization and identity formation” (Heidegren, 2004: 365), those who are unrecognized are unable to integrate, socialize, or form socially accepted identities (Honneth, 1995; Heidegren, 2004). By contrast, the struggle for resources, a major cause of intergroup *conflict* and *violence* (Jackson, 1993), derives from an imbalance of wealth, power, status, health and security. In other words, the Self possesses these resources in abundance, the Other does not (Marx, 1977).

Throughout this thesis, the Other has been depicted as both powerless and disregarded, it has also been depicted as powerful, but persecuted. On the one hand, for the UK *manga* reader, the struggle for recognition is thus also a struggle for power. On the other hand, it is not enough to simply possess power as the Other. Consequently, I argue that through *manga*, UK readers are taught that such power must not be used to merely resist the dominant power, but to erase normalized characterizations of Self and Other in their entirety, so that Otherness on the basis of *difference from* the Self, might eventually be overcome. Participant accounts suggest that *manga* do this through underdog characters, whose attitudes of “*never giving up on yourself*” (Gustafson), inspire readers to stay true to their identities and to persevere without conforming, in pursuit of recognition.

### 6.2.1: STRUGGLE OF THE UNDERDOG: EMPOWERMENT

In a competitive context, the underdog is one who is “expected to lose” and one who can “only gain” when overcoming “the top dog” (Goldschmied, 2005: 1). The lack of expectation is due to the underdog’s “disadvantageous position,” which is largely determined by “resource availability” (2005: 51). Vandello et al. (2007) explain that competitors gain increased support when framed as underdogs, owing to their “low probability of success” and having fewer “resources than an opponent” (2007: 1603). In other words, the underdog does not receive “support if positive outcomes are not seen as deserved” and this notion of *deserving* rests on the idea that the underdog is at a disadvantage that is not of its own making (Vandello et al., 2007: 1603). Consequently, support for those who struggle over those who do not is known as the underdog effect (Vandello et al., 2007). However, it must be noted that the underdog is met with conflicting expectations; the realistic expectation of failure, versus the idealistic expectation of success (Goldschmied, 2011).

In an Otherness context, the underdog has limited access to resources, is always at a disadvantage, both in terms of who they are and what they aim to achieve. Based on Chapters 04 and 05, the Other is a socially rejected, devalued figure, who is deprived of one or more of the four basic human needs: belonging, control, self-esteem and existential meaning (Williams, 2002). Based on the interviews, while several participants did explicitly state being able to “*relate to that underdog story*” (Marge), or being able to find characters in *manga* they could “*relate to, like an underdog*” (Dolton), most participants alluded to underdogs, by highlighting *manga* characters who “*came up from nothing*” (Wentworth). In such situations, discussions of Otherness oriented themselves around hard work versus talent, with the Other-as-underdog being an individual who has no choice other than to work hard, in order to keep up with those who were born talented.

Nelson turns to *Sakurasou no Pet na Kanojo* (2010), which is a story about an Art student called Sorata Kanda. Sorata is caught breaking University policy by

keeping cats in his dormitory. Sorata is given the option to get rid of the cats and keep his room, or keep the cats and move to "*a separate dorm with all the weirdos*" (Nelson). Opting to keep the cats, Sorata moves to a place called Sakura Hall, inhabited by a group of eccentric students with unbelievable talent in their areas of expertise. Nelson explains that the story goes into detail "*about geniuses and how they don't really have to work as hard as normal people*" (Nelson). Based on Nelson's account, Sorata is the Other, because Sorata represents the Other-as-underdog, who must struggle and hope they have done enough to achieve their goals.

Nelson believes that even if the average person works hard, they will still fail at some point, which leaves them with no option other than to "*keep working hard*" (Nelson). Characters like Sorata have no expectations upon them and thus, when Sorata tries, he inevitably fails; when he fails "*gets really upset and sad,*" but "*he still goes at it again and keeps trying*" (Nelson). Sorata must exceed all expectations, in order to gain some form of recognition within an environment of individuals whose natural talents set them apart for recognition. However, the reader does witness Sorata's struggle and effort, which is why Nelson, who "*had exams*" when he first stumbled across the *manga*, would turn to it for "*a boost*" when studying (Nelson). Nelson uses *Sakuraso* as a source of motivation to overcome his own struggles in the very same hard-working fashion that Sorata tries to overcome his.

While Nelson suggests that *Sakuraso* depicts an innate difference between talent and hard work, Wentworth argues that the potential for growth might be different, but that hard work is actually a core component of developing the illusion of talent. Wentworth comes from a family with a great interest in Martial Arts, but he was always the youngest and the "*least talented,*" which meant playing "*catch up, strength-wise and... everything;*" constantly struggling to "*get out of the shadow of [his] siblings*" (Wentworth). Whenever he picks up the *manga* series *Black Clover* (2015), which is set in a world where magic means everything and almost everyone is capable of using it in some form, bar the protagonist, Asta, Wentworth is reading

about someone who must “*put in the effort and work on [his] craft*” in order to gain respect from those around him (Wentworth). Asta dreams of becoming the Wizard King, the most recognizable, respected and powerful magic user in the world of *Black Clover*, despite being completely incapable of using any kind of magic.

Asta starts off as belittled by Wizards, because they see him as inferior and unbelonging. Asta demonstrates his insecurity regarding his lack of Magic in how he overcomes this disadvantage; he trains his body to an incredible level, earning the respect and mentorship of a powerful Wizard, who unlocks his potential. It turns out that his Otherness -his lack of magic- can actually be harnessed as a source of power that deviates from all preconceived notions of power. Wentworth argues that *manga* readers forget how characters like Luffy from *One Piece*, Naruto from *Naruto*, and Asta first obtained their power; they appear strong, overcome the odds and thus they are labelled as “*overpowered*,” but “*it comes from a lot of hard work to get to those places*” (Wentworth); training montages are an enormous part of many series and they are included to demonstrate that there is no shortcut to achievement, especially if the goal is an abstract concept like recognition.

Both Sorata and Asta can be considered as occupying a “disadvantageous position” in relation to those they are being compared with, and Asta in particular has low “resource availability” insofar as magic is a resource (Goldschmied, 2005: 51). Furthermore, both are framed as having a “low probability of success” in terms of achieving their goals (Vandello et al., 2007: 1603). With that in mind, these examples could quite easily be interpreted as metaphors for class disparity, which was noted in section 4.3.2 in relation to the systematic disregard of the powerless Other. In this instance, those who must work hard can be seen represent the lower-class, whereas those with inherent talent can be seen to adhere to the upper-class. Wentworth elaborates on this, using an example from the *seinen manga* series *Kingdom* (2006), noting that stories where characters “*might be the weakest now, but over time... can be the strongest*” are “*quite inspirational*” (Wentworth).

*Kingdom* (2006) is a fictional adaptation of the Warring States period in Chinese history and its protagonist, Shin, “*came up from nothing*” (Wentworth). After joining the military as a soldier and through a combination of “*hard work*” and “*resolve*” (Wentworth), Shin exceeds all fathomable expectations, amassing power and recognition. This example was particularly relevant to Wentworth, because Wentworth sees himself as an underdog in the same way. Wentworth’s siblings have already have been practicing MMA for years and have set standards for him to live up to, but as a by-product of being the youngest, Wentworth is at a disadvantage. By watching Shin achieve his recognition through hard work, Wentworth is inspired, insofar as “*if [he works] hard, [he] can get to that place*” (Wentworth); through hard work, he can amass the power required to force others to recognise his value.

These accounts position Sorata, Asta and Shin as initially powerless (Seeman, 1959); Sorata is powerless to his mediocrity; Asta is powerless in the sense that he has no magic; Shin is powerless as he starts off as a mere foot-soldier. Furthermore, all three characters are working hard to achieve their goals and for the two latter characters, this is a literal amassing of power. However, according to Seeman, powerlessness is often the feeling that one’s “*own behaviour cannot determine the occurrence of the outcomes, or reinforcements*” that are sought (1959: 784). Using Sorata as his example, Nelson might argue that this is true. By putting in hard work in order to prove their value, they are inherently taking control over the outcomes of their lives. The process of working hard to prove oneself is in itself an act of resistance against the dominant power, because it demonstrates a threat by the Other-as-underdog towards existing characterizations of Self and Other. Even if these participants and protagonists alike fail to achieve recognition for their value from those within their social environments, the attempt itself is empowering.

To this end, Anderson presents a side-character from *One-Punch Man* (2012), who embodies this paradoxical notion of hard work leading to recognition, in spite of remaining unrecognized. *One Punch Man* is set in a world where Earth is always

under attack and needs protecting by superheroes. Its main protagonist, Saitama, can defeat all foes with a single punch. Nevertheless, the author presents Mumen Rider, the gag hero whose only real ability is being "*able to ride a bike*" (Anderson). Mumen Rider is "*well out of his league in most cases*" (Anderson), but despite his clear shortcomings, it is his "*view of... being a hero*" that sets him apart.

Mumen Rider is the embodiment of irrelevance insofar as saving the world is concerned and his efforts should go unheard and unseen within the narrative, because "*he's not really able to do anything physically*" (Anderson). However, the author draws attention to the character, because in spite of his negligible impact on battles, Mumen Rider constantly does his best to help and is always first on scene. During an attack by the Deep Sea King, an aquatic monster, One-Punch Man needs to reach the battle, but does not know where it is taking place. He bumps into Mumen Rider, who gives him a lift on his bicycle and gets him there in time to save the day. Anderson sees Mumen Rider as the embodiment of an underdog, because there are no expectations on him to achieve anything and knowing this, Mumen Rider puts himself in harm's way to protect and support those around him.

Mumen Rider's values set him apart from other Heroes, who might have run at the sight of danger that far outclasses their own capacities. While Mumen Rider will never meet expectations physically, his mindset far exceeds the expectations of other Heroes. Consequently, once the battle is over, One-Punch Man "*sees [Mumen Rider]... in... a noodle-shop and they share pot noodles together*" (Anderson). This act of sharing noodles with Mumen Rider is gesture of recognition by One-Punch Man and in turn, is a gesture of acknowledgement by the author of the Other-as-underdog. Mumen Rider will never become a top-tier Hero, but his existence serves as a message to readers that even without recognition from the dominant power, the Other can gain empowerment through its own attempts at resistance.

This is emphasised by Carlson who refers to the bounty system in *One Piece* (1997). When Pirates within the world of *One Piece* become notorious enough, they

gain a reputation and that reputation converts into a bounty. The higher the bounty, the more widely recognized the Pirate in question has become. Pointing out Luffy, Carlson notes that he *"starts off below the first level and has had to work his way up... [surpassing] everything that comes his way,"* which in turn leads him to *"[gain] a reputation"* (Carlson). Luffy's dream is to become Pirate King, but starts the journey without a crew and without the capacity to swim; he is an underdog.

As explored in the previous section, when Carlson was young, he would get bullied for being deaf. When Carlson was in *"secondary school,"* he was *"a big kid, but usually quite calm, placid, didn't do anything"* (Carlson). One day, during a game of *"spam it,"* which he describes as tag, but *"rather than just tap you, they gotta smack you,"* one of the kids playing, *"snuck up behind as quiet as you could, went for a smack, but caught [Carlson] in the eye"* (Carlson). Carlson snapped, explaining that he *"walked a full circle around [the] school"* chasing this person, needing to be calmed down by a teacher (Carlson). McDougall et al. (2001) note that it is common for socially rejected Others to direct aggression towards the rejecting party, which in this instance is what Carlson was doing. Carlson gained a reputation from that point onwards, *"which [meant] people [were] now gunning for [him]"* (Carlson), just as they gunned for Luffy and in *One Piece*, after Luffy gained his bounty. Even though a bounty by way of notoriety is not a form of positive social recognition, it is recognition and in its own way, Luffy's it can be considered empowering.

Empowerment is broached by Dolton, through *Chivalry of a Failed Knight* (2013), which is set in a world where there exist humans, who are known as Blazers, that possess supernatural abilities. The protagonist, Ikki, is nicknamed *"The Worst One"* (Dolton), because he is not only *"the lowest rank of everyone,"* but he also possesses *"zero magic power, zero potential"* (Dolton). The idea of power-based rank further points to exclusion, or social rejection in this instance, that arises from the interplay of class and power (Silver, 1994: 543). Dolton, who refers to Ikki as *"a failed man,"* sees himself in the character, commenting that *"society... his father...*

*this world's against him*" and constantly reminds him to "*know [his] place*" and to never "*go looking for a higher place*" (Dolton). Ikki is not only being told to perceive himself as the Other by succumbing to his normalized categorization as Other, but he is being subjected to social closure, which as explained in the literature review, is a process used by the Self "to perpetuate inequality" (Silver, 1994: 253).

However, Ikki has a unique ability that "*for exactly a minute,*" allows him to "*fight to his full potential*" and exceed expectations "*become superhuman*" (Dolton). Despite being an "*underdog,*" limited to a 60 second window, Ikki understands the extent of his power and uses it only at "*the right moment*" (Dolton). From this *manga*, Dolton draws the inspiration to "*have more faith in [himself] than the world does,*" because he "*can do much more with [himself] if [he believes]*" (Dolton). In other words, by resisting the dominant power, the underdog is empowered by way of self-esteem, one of the four fundamental human needs that the Other is deprived of (Williams, 2002); which in turn provides the Other with a sense of value.

Dolton's recollection of his youth, suggests that he was deprived of all four basic human needs, pointing towards the *manga* series *Kekkaishi* (2003) for a similar reason, namely he felt like an *underdog* and could relate to underdog characters. For Dolton, underdogs in *manga* tend not to be "*the most social person, [or] the most gifted person,*" but Dolton sees their function for readers as being "*about connecting... and watching them grow*" in the hopes that "*maybe you'll grow as well*" (Dolton). *Kekkaishi* set in a world where Demons exist and try to take over the lands, but are countered by demon exterminators called Kekkaishi, who use barriers known as Kekkai, to capture and destroy these demons. The story's protagonist, Yoshimori, is a descendant of a long line of Kekkaishi, but is overshadowed by his cousin. For Dolton, watching *Kekkaishi* is about "*watching [Yoshimori] grow*" and "*prove himself as equal to his... more talented cousin*" (Dolton). Yoshimori is an underdog, because "*she's always been above him*" and "*he's always seen himself as below her*" (Dolton). Again, there is the notion of a power-based hierarchy.

While those around him had expectations of Kekkaishi from his lineage, no one ever believed Yoshimori could match them. As the series progresses, a war breaks out between Demons and Kekkaishi and Yoshimori winds up at the heart of it. Yoshimori's journey, which started off as one of recognition by *"trying to equal his cousin,"* eventually turned into something *"much bigger than himself,"* it became about *"saving the whole world"* and Dolton comments that the same thing happens in *Naruto* (Dolton). By the end *"[Naruto] wasn't thinking about becoming Hokage anymore... it was about saving everyone else"* (Dolton). Both characters put in a considerable amount of effort to improve themselves in pursuit of recognition, just as Sorata did, just as Asta and Shin did. As events unravelled, Yoshimori *"finally [found] his goal,"* he finally found a sense of meaning. It must be noted that Dolton mentions how *"finding your goal"* is *"a thing for [him]"* (Dolton); from this it can be inferred that for the longest time, Dolton also lacked a sense of meaning.

These participant accounts further support the fact that readers identify with characters based on shared lived experiences of Otherness. In Dolton's case, he shares his self-perception as a *"failed man"* with Ikki (Dolton), which demonstrates the influence that normalized characterizations of Self and Other have had on his propensity for self-Othering. This was seen in section 4.3.1 and was the product of the domination of discourse by the dominant power, who associate the normal with the acceptable and the abnormal with the unacceptable (Hall, 1997: 258). Dolton also shares his lack of existential meaning with Yoshimori, which is characteristic of the socially rejected Other (Williams, 2002) and can leave said Other experiencing inordinate amounts of emotional pain, loneliness, depression, self-loathing and insecurity (McDougall et al., 2001), many of which Dolton has experienced.

This section demonstrates that being the Other-as-underdog is a struggle for recognition, on the basis that the underdog must actively exert a significant effort to prove the value of its identity within its social environment. This is largely because the Other-as-underdog is at a significant disadvantage in comparison to those

around it, as is evidenced by Wentworth's examples of Asta and Ikki in particular. However, being the Other-as-underdog can also be empowering, not only because the pursuit of recognition as an underdog requires one to actively prove their value, but because the process of proving one's value as the Other requires hard work, effort, it requires the underdog to "[works] on [its] craft" (Wentworth). What can be inferred from this, using Wentworth's example of Asta in *Black Clover*, is that the Other-as-underdog does not have access to the same resources as the Self; the Other must embrace its Otherness and amass the power to demonstrate its value, in spite of being Other, in a manner that deviates from existing social norms.

As the Other-as-underdog, Asta trains his body to perfection and proves his value in a manner that subverts social norms. Magic might be the only currency through which power is measured, but there are those who value his physical prowess. If he had never put in the effort, he would never have achieved his self-esteem, or what little recognition he has managed to amass through alternate sources of power. Lastly, by actively attempting to prove its value, the underdog takes control over how it wants itself to be perceived. Williams (2002) notes that control is one of the four fundamental human needs, along with existential meaning, self-esteem and a sense of belonging. Although belonging is not guaranteed, "*over time*" the Other-as-underdog can certainly achieve the others (Wentworth).

### **6.2.2: STRUGGLE OF THE UNDERDOG: NEVER GIVE UP**

Bethany argues that struggle might be "*necessary to... push you forwards; to... get recognition for whoever is excluded*" (Bethany). This sentiment is shared by several participants and in some cases, the lack of struggle can act as a deterrent for participants in their capacity to identify, or engage with characters. Highlighting the *manga* series *Bleach* (2001), Roxanne remarked finding it difficult to "*like*" the protagonist, because he did not struggle enough, specifically pointing out that

*"whatever the narrative threw at him, he would... surmount [it]"* (Roxanne). A reason for this is that *"struggles of identity are something that [participants connect] a lot with"* (Oxson). However, another possibility, which is suggested in works by Krieger (2017) and Cabrera et al. (2013), is that struggle is indicative of progress.

Erikson, for example, feels a *"sense of completion"* (Erikson), when *manga* characters successfully overcome their struggles and achieve their goals. Erikson further argues that the presence of struggle in *manga* makes it feel like *"a real story"* and it enables him to *"feel like they actually do"* (Erikson); it enables empathy. Discussing same-sex relationships in a *yuri* (lesbian) *manga*, Erikson explains that the narrative's social environment is one wherein homosexuality is a taboo and where people *"look down on it"* (Erikson). The two girls engaging in the relationship understand that what they are failing to meet social expectations, so *"when they start to develop feelings for each other, they think it's wrong"* (Erikson). Nevertheless, they choose to pursue their feelings, they *"[fight] through"* their social rejection and eventually *"become happy,"* which makes Erikson *"happy as well"* (Erikson). While Erikson does not relate to their sexual identities, he notes that *"they have their own problems,"* which is *"very relatable"* (Erikson), also acknowledging that their situation *"represents what actual situations are like"* for LGBTQ individuals (Erikson). It remains to be seen whether Erikson would have felt the same *"sense of completion"* had these characters not been shown to struggle (Erikson).

It can be inferred, then, that underdog characters in *manga* must struggle, on the basis that readers will not support underdogs *"if positive outcomes are not seen as deserved"* (Vandello et al., 2007: 1603). The main reason for this, is because readers see themselves in underdog characters, particularly those who are *"underestimated"* and thus have to prove themselves (Dorothy). Oxson in particular notes that *"struggles of identity are something that [he connects] a lot with"* (Oxson), having been forced to prove his value not just to those around him, but to himself as well. Many UK *manga* readers recall experiences of struggle, particularly in

pursuit of recognition for their value as individuals and the value of their identities. By presenting *manga* characters as underdogs, struggling to prove their value, readers vicariously experience the progress that results therefrom, that has yet to manifest from their own struggles (Cabrera et al, 2013; Krieger, 2017).

Consequently, *manga* often feature training montages that demonstrate to readers the hard work a character has put in to achieve. Carlson and Pascale agree, pointing out *Dragon Ball* (1984) protagonist Goku. Goku is not a normal boy; he is actually an alien from a Planet Saiya and will turn into a giant rampaging Gorilla after looking at the full moon. Years prior to the start of the *manga*, Goku turned into a Gorilla and accidentally trampled his grandfather to death. Goku has a talent for martial arts and meets a man called Master Roshi, who becomes his mentor. Goku is entered into a Martial Arts tournament that determines the strongest fighters on Earth, but Master Roshi feels that although Goku is stronger than most of the candidates at this tournament, he might lose a goal to strive towards if he wins it, thereby losing his motivation to keep seeking improvement. During the tournament, Master Roshi wears a "*disguise in order to fool the Goku, in order to beat [him],*" which he hopes will give Goku "*something to aim for*" (Carlson).

If Goku had won his first tournament easily, perhaps the reader would have lost interest. However, the *manga* shows multiple training montages, where Goku progressively achieves more than he did in the last, which retains the reader's interest in Goku's journey. Goku is also revealed as possessing the unique ability of growth upon losing to a stronger opponent, in turn embodying the notion of growth as a result of struggle (Cabrera et al, 2013; Krieger, 2017). As such, the reader sees Goku lose on multiple occasions, but he is incentivised to never give up, because if he perseveres, he will surely defy expectations and defeat his opponent next time they battle. Goku's ability represents *manga's* emphasis on the value of struggling to achieve; the more one struggles, the greater their achievement. Pascal applied Goku's lesson to his own life "*in academia*" and even "*in school, transitioning to*

*academia*," noting one "should never give up... and keep on struggling to do what [they] do" (Prescilla). Characters like Goku provide readers with the determination to persevere, particularly when they are struggling to prove their value.

The reality of the underdog is the ideal of success spliced with the reality of failure. *Manga* address the reality of an underdog by showing characters fail. Stories of underdog success are inspirational, but they set unrealistic expectations that once someone is an underdog, they will achieve; they most likely will not. Yoshimori from *Kekkaishi* failed constantly at the start; that failure set him up to exceed all fathomable expectations, especially the low expectations those around him had of him towards the start of the *manga*. Similarly, Ikki from *Chivalry of a Failed Knight* is only able to use his ability for one minute per day; outside of that very small window of opportunity, he cannot possibly match, or exceed expectations. *Manga* often show the underdog failing, because failure leads to struggle, which leads to growth, as has already been discussed by Carlson and Pascal through *Dragon Ball* (1984) protagonist, Goku. Lillian agrees, noting "what separates [early *Dragon Ball*] from anything that came before, was that Goku would lose sometimes" (Lillian).

Witnessing *manga* protagonists struggle to achieve their goals and lose in the process, affected participants unanimously; they came to interpret struggle as a form of unwavering "determination" (Pascal) to overcome hardship, to self-improve and to achieve goals that would seem unrealistic without perseverance and resilience. According to Pascal, the medium presents a "strong theme of never [giving] up, [keeping] on struggling until you eventually come out on top" (Pascal). According to Gustafson, the theme of "never giving up on yourself" (Gustafson) is something very prominent throughout the narrative of *Naruto*. Jacqueline argues that while the title-character certainly champions this idea, the side-character, "Rock Lee," is consistently shown to embody "human perseverance" (Jacqueline).

Other participants echo the notion that staying resilient is a central take-away from the struggles and failures of *manga* protagonists as Other-as-underdogs.

Carlson loves *the whole plot and the whole story of One Piece... more than anything else,* because *"regardless of what's been thrown against [Luffy] and regardless of what anyone says... he still fights for it"* (Carlson), even if that is a grand aspiration like becoming Pirate King without the capacity to swim. Evangeline points out that at a time when she was unable to see much positivity in life, *manga* like *Naruto* contrasted this by showing her a lot of *"positive stuff in their worlds"* (Evangeline). *Naruto*, whose grand aspiration is to become Hokage (head of his Village), despite being a social reject and starting off the series as incompetent, was inspirational for her, because he managed to change the opinions of all those around him *"by being himself and keep going"* (Evangeline). Carlson notes that *manga* tell readers that *"you can be defeated,"* but that *"doesn't mean it's the end"* (Carlson). In other words, the message in *manga* that comes from the struggling as the Other-as-underdog is the *"resilience"* to overcome hardship (Wentworth); it is to maintain a *"never give up"* mentality, in spite of the hardships that are bound to Otherness (Prescilla); it is to not *"let others... decide what your worth is,"* but to determine *"what your worth is yourself,"* (Dolton), by working hard to prove your value, without giving up.

Some participants reveal how the notion of never giving up has influenced their lives. Dorothy, who has *"always been short... very sexually awake"* relates to characters who *"have been bullied and gone through stuff"* (Dorothy). She points out a side-character from the *shojo* series *Paradise Kiss* (1999) called Miwako, who is *"sexually charged"* and is described as *"ridiculously talented, but small and everyone... underestimated her"* (Dorothy); Miwako reminds Dorothy of herself. Furthermore, Dorothy praises *manga* for allowing these characters to *"break out and be themselves, through meeting new people and [experiencing] new things,"* without restricting their identity expression. Dorothy believes the portrayal of these characters encourages readers to *"persevere, be themselves"* (Dorothy).

Oxson, as explained in Chapter 04, is a homosexual, Jewish male, who was subjected to *"homophobia"* and antisemitic attitudes in a social environment where

there was "a lot of racial tension" (Oxson). Oxson "bullied... because [he's] got Jewish blood" and that a "good, good friend of [his]" rejected him, "took [their] friend group and left," because he came out as gay (Oxson). Oxson explains that "manga like *One Piece*" and *Naruto*, whose protagonists have "something unique about them... that their peers don't really like," inspired him to get through that by fighting back" (Oxson), not necessarily physically, but by resisting succumbing to social norms that characterize him as the Other, as deviant and as devalued.

Gustafson, an atypical autistic who also suffers from dyslexia, has "always been faced with people saying [he] can't do stuff" (Gustafson). Gustafson was devalued by many, for whom his disadvantages characterised who he was; they treated him as though he were incapable. In spite of this, Gustafson has been in a band, has self-published two books and he is an artist who draws his own *manga*. Gustafson states that it is hard to single out any one manga series on the basis of the theme of *never giving up*, "because there's so many stories that are similar to each other in that aspect" (Gustafson); adding that the theme of *never giving up* in *manga* influenced him to such an extent, that he modelled the protagonist of his own series on the concept of "endurance" (Gustafson); he is discriminated against, he is at a disadvantage, and he represents how the Other must "push past the boundaries of what people expect [them] to be" for recognition (Gustafson).

This section, it has been shown that being the Other is in itself a struggle. Participants largely view struggle as experiencing *difficulty*, hardship, suffering and as the exertion of *effort* to *achieve* (CAM, 2020), rather than struggle as *conflict* (LEX, 2020). However, it is shown that UK *manga* readers perceive the struggle for recognition to also be a struggle for power. By identifying *manga* protagonists such as Asta from *Black Clover*, Luffy from *One Piece* and Naruto from *Naruto*, participants are highlighting individuals with goals to reach the pinnacle of power and recognition within their respective social environments. Each has the goal of

achieving recognition, but their solution to doing so is achieving a position of power that stands above all others, which in essence, overturns power hierarchies.

Most participants identify with manga protagonists. In the previous chapter, manga protagonists were noted as resisting the dominant power. As Others -all of whom are at large disadvantages when their journeys begin- by pursuing such ambitious goals, *manga* protagonists can be seen to not only embody the Other, or even resist the dominant power, as Chen (2011) and Sasada (2011), but they are also perceived as underdogs. They tend to lack resources (Vandello et al, 2007: 1603) and within their narratives, there are few who expect them to succeed.

Participants are drawn to underdogs because many see themselves as underdogs, both implicitly and explicitly. Support for the underdog derives primarily from the belief that there is "justice at the core" of that support, in the sense that the underdog must struggle to achieve; secondarily it derives from the "positive emotional payoff" that is gained from the underdog's success (Goldschmied, 2005: 62), as seen particularly through Erikson. Underdogs provide readers with the justification to keep struggling for recognition, because doing so can be considered empowering, particularly as it gives the Other-as-underdog a sense of self-esteem and control over the way they are perceived by society (Williams, 2002).

According to participants, *manga* protagonists are often inspirational figures, whose attitudes towards their positions as Others-as-underdogs gives readers like Wentworth "*that little refresher*" (Wentworth) to keep "[trying] harder to do better" (Henrietta), to seek "*self-improvement*" (Marge), and to keep pursuing recognition. Many participants have recalled adopting mentalities of "*never giving up on yourself*" (Gustafson), of "*perseverance*" (Jacqueline) and "*resilience*" (Wentworth), with some even sharing personal experiences of success as a result. It must be noted that this attitude does not resolve Otherness inherently. Insofar as Williams' four fundamental human needs are concerned (2002), drawing inspiration from *manga*

protagonists can provide self-esteem, a sense of control and can lead readers to make meaning of their lives, but it does not lead to a sense of belonging.

Cumulatively, this section supports my argument that participants identified characters they considered to be underdogs, because they perceived also themselves as underdogs and commonly saw their struggles reflected in those of the *manga* characters they identified with. Furthermore, this section supports my argument that UK *manga* readers perceive Otherness to be a lack of recognition and a lack of power, with the amassing of the latter directly influencing the former. Lastly, this section supports my argument that the underdog is a source of both motivation and inspiration for readers to embrace their Otherness and resist conformity.

As mentioned, recognition is a “basic medium of social integration,” crucial to both “socialization and identity formation” (Heidegren, 2004: 365). Individuals who go unrecognized in society struggle to integrate, socialize, or form socially accepted identities (Honneth, 1995; Heidegren, 2004). Although participants are certainly encouraged by *manga* to embrace their Othered identities and resist the dominant power, and self-esteem, control and meaning certainly reduce the effects of being Othered, such as emotional pain, loneliness, depression, self-loathing and so on (McDougall et al., 2001), participants still seek a sense of belonging, which can only be obtained, as Honneth (1995) and Heidegren (2004) note, through social interaction. They still seek the capacity to express their identities openly. The next section will thus explore how *manga* provides readers access to a wider community, where they gain a sense of belonging and a platform for identity expression.

### **6.3. ACCESSING A COMMUNITY**

As a form of popular culture, *manga* “fulfil [readers’] desires to be who they want to be, rather than what the dominant power expects them to be” (2015: 71);

this has become evident through protagonists resisting social norms, and *manga* encouraging readers to embrace their Otherness rather than conforming. In the literature review, reader engagement with *manga* was noted as often extending beyond the realm of the textual into the realm of the social (Schwarz & Rubenstein-Ávila, 2011). Tsai believes that a reader's commitment to *manga* comes with "social benefits," particularly in relation to the "pursuit of identity and friendship" (Tsai, 2015: 81). Participants did highlight the impact that their engagement with *manga* had on their friendships. Gretchen reveals that "[one] of the first things that [she tells] people is that [she's] into anime and manga," noting that "it's one of [her] defining traits" and a conversation starter (Gretchen). Similarly, Jacqueline noted that when getting to know new people, she would only "talk about anime [and manga]... and if [she doesn't] like the vibe, then [she'll] leave" (Jacqueline). The medium became a gauge for participants, through which they would determine friendships.

For Peterson, the series *JoJo's Bizarre Adventures* (1987) was something "all of [his] friends at College... had... in common," recalling how it "brought [them] all a bit closer as friends" (Peterson). Marge feels that she has become closer "to those people that [she] can talk to about manga, than all of [her] other friendships" and credits her engagement with the medium for having added "greater depth" to these "friendships" and to interactions she has with people she meets, commenting on how it has "given [her] self-identity" (Marge), in the same way that it gave Gretchen self-identity. When Gretchen and her close friend first met at University, one of the first things they did was "[talk] about yaoi manga," which brought them close to the point that they went to their "first Comic Con... together" (Gretchen). Tilda notes that her and her "best friend were introduced to [manga] at the same time when [they] were younger and... went on the same journey" (Tilda), strengthening their bond through a shared passion for the medium. These accounts reveal that *manga* is capable of building and strengthening friendships, and by adopting identities as *manga* fans, the possibility of being rejected and devalued disappears.

Wentworth pointed out that there exist “*all of these things online... like chatrooms*” and forums (Wentworth), that facilitate friendship and socialization opportunities, but what participants most commonly highlighted, were conventions like “*Hyper Japan*” and “*MCM*” (Jacqueline), as well as *anime* and *manga* societies at universities; places where readers can physically meet each other appear the most impactful. Exactly 33 of the 40 participants that were interviewed throughout this thesis were first met at conventions, which either demonstrates a bias towards physical spaces, or it reaffirms their capacity to provoke social interaction.

According to Zubernis and Larsen, an increasing expression of any fandom is its desire to be “physically present at locations related to the object of fandom” (2018: 143). In their chapter exploring fan conventions and fan pilgrimage sites, they contend that the “physical space in which to perform one's fandom identity and interact with other fans” is highly significant (2018: 143). Fan pilgrimage sites will be touched upon in relation to participatory practices towards the end of this chapter, but the emphasis on fan conventions supports the notion that such spaces are in fact significant in facilitating socialization opportunities for readers.

Many participants share features that are reminiscent of what Scheer refers to as *disability culture* (Scheer, 1994). Features include growing up in families that do not share these characteristics, as well as growing up isolated from other individuals who similarly identify. The result of *disability culture* is that individuals are likely not to become members of their respective identity groups until later on in their lives, leaving them without social identities, as Others, early on in their individual and social development (Howard, 2000: 380). This is evident from participant accounts revealing that attending conventions acted as a catalyst for social recognition and belonging, even beyond their identities as *manga* fans. Dolton remembers thinking to himself that he had “*a really small interest*” and that there would only be a “*small, niche group of people*” to “*talk to,*” but after attending his first convention, he stood corrected (Dolton). For Isakson, only once he “*started*

reading manga" did he "[discover] how much of the world... enjoys manga," ultimately coming to "feel part of... a massive community" (Isakson).

From Wentworth's point of view, "manga was created" so that people could "have a way to... connect" to "other people that feel the same way" (Wentworth). Conventions and societies are places where "people can come together" (Imogen), particularly "the same blend of people" who, largely, have "all experienced the same experiences" of Otherness (Oxson). Oxson's comment in particular alludes to the fact that many *manga* readers are individuals who have been subjected Otherness. Oxson elaborates on having "[bonded] with someone" prior to the interview, "about [their] experiences with [their] sexualities" (Oxson); specifically experiences of ostracism and the devaluation of their identities. Dorothy adds to this, revealing that during a period in her life when she was being bullied and experiencing depression, "there wasn't anyone around that [she] could talk to about [it], until [she] started going to conventions" (Dorothy), which she was abruptly dragged to by her best friend. Dorothy has since dedicated her own comic book series towards addressing themes including "mental... physical... sexual abuse, manipulation, bank culture, abandonment, race, inequality, segregation, mental health, depression, self-harm, suicide," things experienced by convention-goers she has met (Dorothy).

Conventions are places where *manga* readers, who appear to inherently be Others in some way, "don't have to feel isolated," where "[they're] no longer an outsider," because they are able to interact with a large "group of people that can understand you, and you can understand them" (Wentworth). Jacqueline explains that "everyone goes" to conventions, because they share "an interest" in *manga*, but this interest "opens a door to other interests" (Jacqueline), and evidently to shared experiences. Dorothy believes that conventions are places where individuals are able to overcome their struggles "by helping each other out" (Dorothy).

Stevenson lost his job the week before attending *London MCM* and felt that "everything was kinda crumbling down" (Stevenson). Stevenson had started feeling

"*melancholic,*" and felt there was nothing around that "*would really make [him]... happy,*" nothing that "*was exciting to [him] anymore*" (Stevenson). At one point, Stevenson was considering "*[cancelling] the trip altogether,*" having convinced himself that going to the convention was a mistake (Stevenson). However, he went anyway and upon arriving, was overwhelmed with "*the energy and the positivity*" of the people there, remembering how "*happy and excited*" he felt "*all the time*" (Stevenson). Engaging with people around him who shared the same identity and passion as him - a passion so strong he tattooed emblems of his favourite *manga* onto his arm- gave him "*a new sunny disposition to life*" (Stevenson).

Being around people like him, in an environment where he was able to express himself and where his self-expressions were appreciated "*made [him] feel a lot better*" about himself (Stevenson). Agatha is equally fond of conventions, but for completely different reasons; Agatha has Asperger's Syndrome and as a direct result, she sometimes feels "*like everyone else knows something that [she] should know, but [she doesn't], so they leave [her out]*" (Agatha). Being a *manga* fan means that if Agatha goes to a convention, she can "*start to talk about anime and manga with anybody and it's fine*" (Agatha); she no longer has to worry about "*how to talk*" to people; she no longer has to worry about upsetting anyone, or if her opinions are "*what they wanted to hear*" (Agatha). Agatha has *manga* in common with everyone around her, so she can forget about her Asperger's Syndrome and she could forget about missing social cues, just as Stevenson could forget about his unemployment.

Participation in *anime* and *manga* societies is an equally "*helpful medium for that*" (Frankson). Frankson recalls being "*forced into groups and [interactions] with other people vastly more than he would have,*" noting it helped "*a lot with [his] self-confidence,*" both "*in social situations and emotional ones*" (Frankson). It gave Ophelia the opportunity to "*[make] a lot of friends*" and provided Oxson with an environment where his sexuality and his Jewish heritage were irrelevant and where

he was able to develop friendships, particularly with *"international"* individuals (Oxson). With the sole exception of Henrietta, membership to *anime* and *manga* societies left interviewees feeling like they were provided with an opportunity to put their struggles of non-belonging and isolation behind them. Frankson commented that many of the people he has met through such societies, actively go out of their way to *"spread the faith,"* or in other words *"get [people] more into [manga]... so that [they] can then in the future, share"* a common interest (Frankson).

Understanding the significance of such societies on the social identities of children, Ophelia established her own *anime* and *manga* society at a school for *"year 7- year 9"* pupils, ranging *"between the ages of 11 and 14"* (Ophelia). Ophelia, a teacher, believes children who are slightly *"awkward,"* who are slightly *"weird"* and who *"don't have the many friends"* are drawn together (Ophelia). Societies provide them with an *"environment where they can talk about manga"* when they normally might have been unable to; they provide a sense of community that many *manga* readers are devoid of in their youths (Scheer, 1994). According to Gibson (2007), *manga* readers should be able to form social identities in relation to a community of readers, insofar as the *manga* community is a subculture. From Ophelia's perspective, *anime* and *manga* societies facilitate such a *"community of reading manga"* and she further contends that it *"[brings] out an Other in [the kids],"* whilst simultaneously allowing them to *"blossom... in this environment"* (Ophelia).

Physical locations like conventions and societies, where readers can interact with others who share their identities and passions, are sites where communities are created and expanded. *Manga* readers are provided with identity recognition, a sense of acceptance, value and ultimately, belonging. Within these communities, readers are encouraged to engage in *"fan talk, drawing manga, gaming... Cosplay"* and more (Tsai, 2015: 231). Such activities are participatory practices, and further facilitate the formation of collective identities (Lunning, 2011), allowing readers to *"enunciate their real-life identities"* and enact *"their ideal identities"* (Tsai, 2015: 79).

Such practices provide readers with the opportunity to establish “social [networks] where members support each other’s interest in manga” (2015: 230).

Participatory practices are very common among what Jenkins (2009) refers to as participatory cultures and they revolve around the self-expression of members. The main features of a participatory culture include the strong level of support by members for the creation and sharing of other members’ creations; the belief by members that their contribution to the community has value; and the presence of social bonds between members, who will undoubtedly care about the opinions, contributions and experiences of one another. Imogen is testament to this, as she has decorated her home with artwork bought at conventions, made by another *manga* reader, whom she has become “good friends” with (Imogen).

The capacity to express their identities as *manga* fans was a trend among participants. Commonly written-about participatory practices in academic literature include *scanlation* (Douglass et al., 2011; Lee, 2012; Terpstra, 2012) and *Cosplay* (Winge, 2006; Gin, 2011; Lunning, 2011). However, Bautista (2019) also reveals that by reading the *manga* series *Rurouni Kenshin* (1999) Filipino youths were motivated to pick up Kendo. Among participants themselves, practices often included *manga*-related content production, such as artistry, voice-acting, fan-fiction, learning Japanese, content tourism (Yamamura & Seaton, 2020), and *Cosplay*.

Seven participants have become artists in their own right, either as authors of their own comic book series, or creators of hand-drawn fan-art, championing their favourite *manga* series, that they would then sell at conventions. Gustafson and Dorothy were influenced to such an extent by their experiences as the Other in society, that they both dedicated their own series to addressing Otherness themes, by way of Othered protagonists. A further seven participants started learning Japanese as a response to their enjoyment of the Japanese cultural odour they identified in their favourite series. Engrossed by the mannerisms, the customs and the behaviours of characters, participants wanted to feel closer to what they were

consuming. Some, like Henrietta were compelled to move to Japan, so they “*could experience this stuff more*” (Henrietta), whereas others like Tilda, have engaged in content tourism (Yamamura & Seaton, 2020), who notes that “*certain manga set in certain countries have sent [her] all around the world travelling*” (Tilda).

Participatory practices give readers the freedom to express themselves and in doing so, they are provided with “a sense of recognition” and “acceptance” (Tsai, 2015: 230). However, it should also be noted that participatory practices give readers a renewed empowerment and control over their identities and how they wish to be perceived; not as Others, but as *manga* fans. One of the more accessible participatory practices is Cosplay. Coined in 1984 by Nobuyuki Takahashi, who was present at the *1984 World Science Fiction Convention* in Los Angeles, Cosplay is a term that merges the words ‘costume’ and ‘play’. It refers to the practice of dressing up in costumes to resemble characters from various types of visual media.

According to Taylor, Cosplay is “an expressive realm to show passion for a fandom” (2019). However, Taylor also goes on to say that Cosplayers “step into the narratives of the characters that they dress up as” (2019). In doing so, she alludes to the fact that Cosplayers can become the very characters who have thus far inspired them to resist social norms, to resist conformity and to embrace their Othered identities. Given how many participants discussed being inspired to self-improve, who discussed seeing role models in *manga* characters, the possibility arises that by Cosplaying these characters, *manga* fans are able to discard any internal sense of Otherness, by adopting traits of the characters they emulate.

Ophelia explains Cosplay is about dressing “*as a character that [is] nothing like you... in real life,*” but who “*you really like*” (Ophelia); they have traits the Cosplayer admires and therefore, the Cosplayer wants to adopt said persona. Lawson explains how he would “*look at [himself]*” to find out “*what part of [him] is similar*” to the character, asking how he could “*bring that out*” (Lawson). In doing so, these attributes the Cosplayer admires are being unearthed from within the

Cosplayers themselves. Lawson mentions how "*phenomenal*" it feels to be "*a character in a public place*" that "*people recognise*" (Lawson). When they then "*come up to [him]*" it gives him a sense of achievement and inevitably, recognition. Ulfson, who was praised for his representation of Luffy from *One Piece*, agreed, adding that Cosplaying takes a lot of effort, particularly when taken to "*a competitive level*" (Imogen). Imogen, who has been Cosplaying for 6 years, covering 20 outfits, has taken part in competitive events in the past, but mentioned that the level of commitment required to attend these events eventually takes its toll.

Imogen explains that she used to start the day at 03:00, arrive at conventions for 13:30 and spend hours there until the event was over. Then there were travel costs, costume costs and baggage transportation that have to be factored in as well. Lawson, who never went competitive, remembers having to "*[wake] up at the crack of dawn*" to get his train (Lawson). One particular convention, meant he had to take "*three trains and a tube, then another train,*" whilst "*carrying around [his] spare clothes,*" only to then have to carry "*[his] Cosplay*" outfit on the way back (Lawson). It requires a lot of planning and preparation, so for most people, the lifestyle is not viable, but there are even those for whom Cosplaying is a profession. Despite the various constraints that can come with Cosplaying, Lawson believes Cosplaying in any form is worth it, and not just for the Cosplayers themselves either.

When Cosplaying has been done properly, it is about "*[being] the characters*" (Ulfson), and it is about "*making someone else's day*" (Lawson). Lawson likens it to being a Disney Princess; Cosplayers represents a symbol to fans and thus the aim is to maintain the fan's "*idea of the character*" (Lawson). The joy of Cosplaying comes from actively engaging with the community and giving fans the chance to "*see the character [they] love*" (Lawson). Cosplay also gives the Cosplayer access to a community beyond merely the *manga* community; and it gives them a sense of pride when the Cosplay is successful. For Lawson, Cosplaying helped him "*improve everything about [his] personality*" (Lawson). For Ulfson, it helped him combat his

social anxiety, even though the idea of Cosplaying at first *"was slowly starting to pressure [him]"* (Ulfson). Given that Ulfson has been Cosplaying for 4 years, it has been effective in doing so. Alternatively, for Ophelia, Cosplaying is a way to escape, like at Halloween, when the person beneath the outfit no longer matters.

Imogen believes that *"fun"* is the fundamental *"reality of what Cosplay is,"* or of what Cosplay is *"supposed to be"* (Imogen). For Imogen, Cosplay is about engaging with *"other Cosplayers that are the same series"* and *"collaborating"* with them; it is about sharing the combined efforts with the community and bringing people together (Imogen). Imogen recalls how people representing the same *manga* series would come together to *"[take] photos together"* and this was often how *"you get big meets of people all in one place"* (Imogen). However, even within the Cosplay community there are *"people who are elitist"* (Imogen). Imogen explains that while the community in general is inclusive, *"it also has its exclusive sections"* (Imogen). *"Nine times out of ten you'll have a great experience,"* but there is always the possibility that you will be confronted by that one negative experience *"that ends up putting the whole thing down"* (Imogen). These experiences remind the Cosplayer of the sense of Otherness they thought they had been able to put behind them, when they became members of the *manga* community.

Cosplayers representing *"the same series"* might actively *"ignore"* each other (Imogen). While Imogen acknowledges that this might be *"because they're shy,"* she believes that often it is caused by their inherent belief that they and their Cosplay are *"better than you"* (Imogen). There are also those who criticize, exclude, or ignore *"if there's anything inaccurate about your costume"* (Imogen), which often causes those who are insecure about their costumes to begin with, to feel as though they are being Othered, on the basis of outfits they have spent hours making, which is a perpetuation of the cycle of Otherness, where the efforts and feelings of the Cosplayer are disregarded. According to Imogen, the worst experiences for Cosplayers are when fans have actively *"overlooked [someone] entirely,"* when

taking pictures (Imogen). Understanding what it feels like, Imogen and her friends “always try to get the entire group in the photo” (Imogen), because Cosplay is ultimately about coming together to celebrate one another’s identity expression. Imogen made an apt comment about these kinds of exclusionary Cosplayers, these elitists, noting that “if they actually look at the characters they’re reading about,” they embody more the “negative traits of the [Villains],” than they do the positive attributes “of the [Heroes]” they are dressed as (Imogen).

Based on participant accounts, engaging with *manga* comes with social benefits (Tsai, 2015), including being able to establish and strengthen friendships through a shared enjoyment of *manga*. According to Winterstein (Voicu, 2011), space is an imperative component to the construction of identity groups, as it provides them with territorial identification; in other words, a site to express their identities. Readers often seek out others with similar interests and as contended by Zubernis and Larsen (2018), this tends to be at physical locations, where the object of the reader’s passion is celebrated, such as conventions and societies. Here, readers’ interests are recognized by others and as such, readers are provided with opportunities to interact socially, and to form their social identities (Heidegren, 2004). Mineva notes that “man is self-identifying and is able to be so not by being isolated from others, but by communicating with them” (2007: 37); interacting with other fans is thus imperative towards establishing identities as *manga* fans.

Although the social environment created by a community of manga readers is one where Othered individuals come together, it is not one wherein they are Othered; rather they are celebrated for their interests, which supports Gibson’s (2007) argument that readers are able to form identities in relation to a subculture. By reading *manga* they resist conformity; they struggle with their Otherness, but persevere in pursuit of recognition; when they finally locate a wider community of *manga* readers, they gain recognition of their identities as Others, among Others, whilst recognizing the identities of those around them; they embrace their

differences. As a participatory culture (Jenkins, 2009), they see value in the identities of others members; participatory practices are forms of identity expression that further facilitate recognition, acceptance and a sense of belonging in readers.

Readers can be seen to embody *manga* protagonists; alternatively, *manga* protagonists can be seen as representations of readers, both in their existence as the social Other, in resistance to social norms, and their pursuit of recognition. Cosplay in particular, is a manifestation of both entities in one body. Readers are inspired by characters, who already represent them, but they want to become these characters, adopting attributes they admire, or lack in themselves. In doing so, these attributes manifest themselves within readers. However, the process itself can be seen to Other the readers, discard possessed characteristics, in favour of idealised characteristics. Imogen noted that the Cosplay community has its exclusive sections, but pointed out that these individuals embodied the Villains more than they did the protagonists they dressed up to emulate. This further supports the idea that *manga* readers embody *manga* protagonists, because they see themselves as emulating these protagonists, particularly when they Cosplay, and this takes places at multiple levels, especially the embracing of differences, as well as the recognition of struggle within Others, which those who resort to Othering processes fail to do.

Overall, being able to access a wider community has led to positivity from within participants. Evangeline notes that during a difficult period, where her parents were unable to understand her bisexuality, "*the fandom stuff, reading fan-comics... it was always just positive things*" (Evangeline). Participants have almost unanimously praised *manga* and the *manga* community for helping them establish their identities, for giving them a way to "*connect [with]... people that feel the same way*" (Wentworth), for influencing their "*[identities], or vision of [themselves]*" in positive ways (Frankson) and lastly, for recognizing their value as individuals.

## CONCLUSION TO CHAPTER 06

The findings throughout this chapter indicate that the UK *manga* reader constitutes the Other, largely through non-conformity. To that end, UK *manga* readers can be considered to form an Othered identity group, which supports Adamowicz' (2014: 38) hypothesis that *manga* texts could become a site whereat a new form of Otherness -namely the transcultural *manga* fan- would be created. Participants were communicated Otherness in the form of non-conforming *manga* protagonists, who were often disadvantaged at the start of their respective stories and thus, embodied the Other-as-underdog. Otherness in this way, was perceived by participants as coming hand-in-hand with the struggle for recognition, which in turn, seemed intimately linked to the *manga* protagonist's pursuit of power.

Furthermore, participants often saw reflections of themselves in *manga* protagonists, which supports Chen's argument that readers "recognize themselves as in a mirror image" (2011: 237). Through reader identification, whereby readers will "focus on particular characters and situations" depending on their real life struggles (Tsai, 2015: 51), readers are influenced by *manga* protagonists -who resist the dominant power by refusing to conform to existing social norms, by refusing to perceive themselves as Other just as their surrounding social environments do- to resist the dominant power in the same way. Such a resistance means embracing their identities, despite being Othered for them. Consequently, whether UK *manga* readers are Other prior to reading *manga*, or whether they become the Other as a result in their engagement with *manga*-as-subculture, or *manga*-as-stigmatized, UK *manga* readers, just like *manga* protagonists, become an Othered identity.

Vectors of non-conformity throughout this thesis have included racial and queer identities, the overweight, females, the hearing impaired. In many cases, the non-conformity of UK *manga* readers is not optional. Otherness has also proved to be a perpetual struggle; with social rejection, with devaluation, with self-Othering

that derives from normalized characterizations of Otherness. As such, UK *manga* readers perceive themselves as underdogs and identify *manga* protagonists who reflect that (Vandello et al, 2007). In the Other-as-underdog, therefore, readers are privy to characters who embrace their Otherness and who resist the dominant power in an attempt to prove their value as themselves, to those around them; in doing so, Othered protagonists like Naruto, who start off isolated, will develop self-esteem; their struggle for recognition ends up being a journey of self-improvement, whereby characters will amass power in ways that deviate from the norm. Watching these characters struggle toward their goals, resiliently, determinedly, without giving up, gave readers the hope that “*maybe [they would] grow as well*” (Dolton). In turn, readers adopted this attitude of *never giving up on themselves*.

Whether *manga* has functioned as a way to ease the struggles of readers, or whether reader engagement with *manga* has led readers to be Othered, readers have almost unanimously been inspired to embrace their differences, and to resist the “dominant power” (Tsai, 2015: 71). Hanson believes that *manga* authors write their stories for their readers, to let them know that “*this is for them*” (Hanson). A main issue Tezuka had with humankind was its inability to “settle [its] differences” (Fuller, 2012: ii), and as a highly influential figure on the thematic direction of future *manga* series, UK readers appear to embody the outcome of a message by such authors to try and overcome difference. Even if readers do not obtain recognition from those who are preoccupied with maintaining social norms, *manga* has influenced its readers to look beyond difference and embrace Otherness.

Any community of *manga* readers should therefore be filled with individuals who seek to overcome pre-established social hierarchies based on difference. Participant accounts, suggest that the *manga* community is comprised of Others, who have likewise been influenced by *manga*, either in terms of their attitudes towards Otherness, or their identities, is such an environment. Consequently, the *manga* community functions as a new environment in which Othered identities are

embraced. If Hanson's argument is to be considered as true, and *manga* are indeed written for Othered individuals, *manga* protagonists' function as examples for readers, showing them how to achieve recognition as Others in a society, where the dominant power will continue to reject and devalue Othered identities. To that end, the UK *manga* reader becomes Other-as-Self within an environment of Others; it achieves recognition within a subculture, as Other-as-Self; it can express its identity within said social environment, but only within that social environment. In other words, the UK *manga* reader perceives itself as the non-conforming Other, but is liberated as Other-as-Self only in an environment of other *manga* readers.

## CHAPTER 07: CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to explore how Otherness is communicated to readers within the United Kingdom, through their engagement with *shonen manga*. To achieve this, I posed several research questions investigating how readers identify, interpret and reflect upon Otherness within *manga*; whether their attitudes towards Otherness, primarily through the themes they themselves had uncovered, had been influenced in any way; and how their engagement with *manga* made them reflect upon their own identities. The research questions are as follows:

- 1) To what extent is Otherness communicated to readers through *shonen manga*?
- 2) How do readers identify and interpret Otherness in *shonen manga*?
- 3) To what extent do readers reflect upon the identified Otherness themes?
- 4) Does reader engagement with *manga* influence their attitudes towards Otherness in broader, real-world, socio-cultural contexts?
- 5) Does reader engagement with *manga* influence their identities?

In the literature review, upon evaluating works on *manga* and Otherness, I revealed a gap whereby *manga* had never been explored as a medium through which Otherness was contemplated and interpellated by the readers themselves. The closest any existing academic studies had come to doing this, were Benjamin Whaley's thesis (2007) on the representation of race in works by Osamu Tezuka; Hiroko Sasada's article (2011) textually analysing *One Piece* and how its protagonist embodies the Other and altruistically resists the dominant power; Hsiao-ping Chen's thesis (2011), which uses Lacan's concept of the Imaginary, the Symbolic and the Real to interpret how participatory practices influence the identity construction of five *manga* fans from the United States; and Yi-Shan Tsai's study (2015) on young UK readers and how they engage with *manga*. All four have proved invaluable at

certain stages of this thesis, but none have given readers the freedom to determine both the Otherness themes and the *manga* series to be used for analysis. Moreover, this step framed my research within the field of Sociology and revealed several overarching themes within Otherness literature, that were pivotal in understanding the Other. These were *exclusion*, *dehumanisation* and *othered identity*.

This thesis adopted a qualitative approach, with the chosen method of data collection being semi-structured interviews; this was done to ensure that all readers answered the same questions, whilst retaining the expressive freedom to answer them in a manner that reflected their personal perspectives. Interviews lasted between 35 and 75 minutes each and covered 40 participants. Having understood there was no guarantee that participants would be familiar with Otherness as a sociological concept, given its complexity and its niche status outside of academia, I reduced it according to the overarching themes that appeared to embody it during the literature review: *exclusion*, *dehumanisation*, and *othered identity*. Not only are these themes vital towards understanding Otherness, but sorting the interview questions in this way allowed UK readers to easily reflect on the different aspects involved in Otherness, as well as facilitating a clear and concise understanding of how they contemplated Otherness when engaging with *manga*; as such, the data analysis chapters were structured according to these themes. In this chapter, I will present my contributions to the field; I will summarise my key findings, drawing out any implications they might have; and lastly, I will cover any limitations that arose, whilst addressing the potential for future research provided by this thesis.

## **7.1: CONTRIBUTION TO THE FIELD**

This thesis argues that the Other is interpellated by UK *manga* readers as either a threat to power hierarchies between the Self and the Other, or as a means for the Self to reinforce such hierarchies. UK *manga* readers commonly perceive Otherness as non-conformities to normalized characterizations of Self and Other

that are almost always beyond the Other's control. Otherness results in the Other's lack of recognition, which strips it of the power to threaten hierarchies. UK *manga* readers therefore perceive being the Other as a perpetual struggle for recognition, specifically the recognition for the Other's value in society. By struggling, the Other amasses the power to challenge existing hierarchies, but without overturning those hierarchies, the Other cannot gain recognition from the dominant power. As such, even if the Other can achieve recognition, this appears most likely to happen in an environment of Others, where it becomes Other-as-Self, rather than Self.

In this thesis, I reveal an intimate link between Otherness and *shonen manga* that exists not only within the narrative through *manga* protagonists, as posited by Sasada (2011) and Okabe (2019), but also at the level of the reader, as contended by Chen (2011). This finding denotes that the *shonen* demographic specifically -but not exclusively- bears a capacity for the communication of Otherness themes that transcends culture. Further findings indicate that other demographics with similar Otherness themes can be equally potent in their communication. I have shown this through statements by participants regarding the influence that *manga* has had on UK *manga* readers, especially in their attitudes towards Otherness and their reflections upon their own identities within their respective social spheres.

I have found that UK *manga* readers most often perceive Otherness to take the forms of social rejection in relation to exclusion, as well as devaluation in relation to dehumanization. The socially rejected Other is commonly depicted as a threat and portrayed as a monster, which serves as a warning by the Self not to deviate from social norms, or threaten the established power hierarchy. Conversely, the devalued Other tends to be socially disconnected and is subjected to social closure, which serves to normalize the Other as powerless, reinforcing existing power hierarchies. In both cases, the struggles of the Other are disregarded.

Participants commonly identified with characters who sought recognition and such characters tended to be *manga* protagonists, but sometimes they were

side-characters. These *manga* characters were seen to embody the Other by way of non-conformity and would often resist social norms, which expands upon Sasada's (2011) argument. These *manga* protagonists often had grand aspirations, mostly of social recognition that could only be achieved by amassing power. However, these characters would commonly start off disadvantaged in a way that was out of their control. As such, they would be forced to work extremely hard in order to achieve these aspirations; participants perceived such characters as underdogs. If their Otherness caused such characters to be perceived as threats, they would embrace that Otherness and resist the dominant power. If their Otherness was what put them at a disadvantage, such characters would put in an extraordinary amount of effort to find alternate ways of achieving their goals, which would be perceived as an act of defiance. In both cases, *manga* protagonists as underdogs, as struggling, would inspire readers to embrace their Othered identities and resist conformity.

I discovered that the lived experiences of Otherness by readers appear to influence the Otherness themes they are likely to identify, as well as the Othered characters they are likely to identify with; this was most evident throughout section 5.1, where participants would identify the Othering of identity groups by *manga*, when they themselves were members of those identity groups. However, it was also prevalent in sections 4.1, 4.3 and 6.2, where socially rejected participants, self-excluding participants, or those who perceived themselves as underdogs, would identify with *manga* characters who were socially rejected, who engaged in self-exclusive and self-Othering practices, or who were underdogs respectively.

Consequently, I argue that the vast majority of UK readers who engage with *manga* are drawn to the medium, because they have been subjected to Othering processes at some point in their lives; this either tended to be the result of their non-conforming identities, or their engagement with *manga*. Upon engaging with *manga*, UK *manga* readers tend to seek out like-minded individuals. As noted in section 6.3, they commonly turn to spaces like conventions and societies dedicated

to sharing their enjoyment of *manga*, where they can interact with a community of Othered individuals like themselves. Within this social environment comprised of Others, UK *manga* readers reported achieving a sense of recognition, belonging, and a platform for identity expression by way of participatory practices. However, despite becoming Other-as-Self within a community of Others, within a wider social environment, these UK *manga* readers remain Others. As such, this thesis argues that UK *manga* readers are an Othered identity group and that *manga* is seen by readers as a medium that empowers the Other, and encourages it to resist the dominant power and reject normalized characterizations of Otherness.

## **7.2: FINDINGS & IMPLICATIONS**

Participants commonly identified Otherness in two ways; the first pertains to how Otherness was presented and addressed within *manga* narratives; the second pertains to how *manga* employed discursive Othering processes to represent existing identity groups. Participants identified Otherness within narratives for three overarching reasons - the perception that the Other posed some form of threat to the Self; the Other's social disconnectedness from its surrounding environment; and the Other's appearance as either a manmade, or supernatural monster.

Participants frequently pointed out specific characters -mostly protagonists, but occasionally side characters allied with the protagonists- as having "*this sense of Otherness*" (Oxson). Characters would fail to conform to social norms in some way; they would be subjected to a duality of perspectives, where they would be perceived as threats and in some cases, pose actual threats to their surrounding social environments, whilst simultaneously being perceived as incapable; they would often be vilified and they would occasionally be demonised; they would almost always be treated with some degree of contempt by those around them;

they would always be socially rejected, often ostracised, occasionally bullied – the most common example of an Othered character was Naruto from *Naruto*.

Far less commonly did participants highlight entire collectives as the Other, but when they did, as was the case for the Ghouls in *Tokyo Ghoul*, the Vessels in *Naruto*, and Villains across various *manga* series, descriptions of these collectives implied their social marginalization. Collectives identified by participants tended to exist in opposition to humankind; they tended not to challenge the ideologies of the dominant collective within their respective worlds; they would almost always be perceived as threats and would often pose actual threats; they would often be vilified and demonised; they would often engage in violent conflict with the dominant collective of their respective narrative – the most common example of an Othered collective among participants was the Ghouls from *Tokyo Ghoul*.

As noted, Othered collectives – particularly in the form of the Other-as-threat and the Other-as-monster, as seen in sections 4.2 and 5.2 respectively – identified by participants were often embroiled in conflict based on ideological differences. These ideologies often impeded on the freedoms of those they were in conflict with; paradoxically, the ideologies they opposed impeded on their own freedoms. Participants thus noted heavy themes of moral reflection that resulted from the moral ambiguity present within the narratives. Participants noted that it depended on the series as to whether characters on both sides of the conflict would engage in a dialogue with one another about the morality of their ideologies, but participants were very clear that *manga* would present readers with the perspectives of both sides of the conflict, often through the internal monologues of characters, who questioned the morality of the exclusive and dehumanizing practices employed by both sides. Lawson explains that “it’s just left to [the reader] morally” to decide what they agree with (Lawson); the implications being that *manga* actively challenge readers to reflect upon their moral values regarding Otherness and Othering practices, by reflecting upon their own employment of Othering practices.

Findings reveal similarities between *manga* and American comics in their engagement in Othering practices, (Deman, 2010: iii), which is particularly relevant, because Deman also argues that American comics have recently engaged in a “self-reflexive dialogue” with regards to the morality of their Othering practices. He notes that authors have recently started to undermine the representative processes that serve to normalize the Othering of minority identities in comics (2010: v). Deman (2010) explained that such reflection was capable of influencing reader attitudes towards American comics as a literary medium. It can be inferred then that *manga* should be capable of having a similar impact on attitudes towards Otherness.

Chen noted that American readers were “looking for a moral flexibility in life” that extended beyond the duality of good and evil (2011: 252), which they subsequently found within the medium. However, accounts by my participant suggest that UK readers only come to discover that the world is not black and white and that there exists moral ambiguity in life, once they have begun engaging with *manga*. In other words, US readers appear to approach *manga* seeking moral flexibility, whereas UK reader do not. Tsai noted in her study of young UK readers, that they too were challenged to “evaluate and test their own moral codes” upon reading *manga* (2015: 229). This supports my findings, whilst extending Tsai’s to adult UK readers; combined, this discovery alludes to a difference in worldviews between American readers and UK readers that warrants further research.

Several participants commented on how *manga* actively employs Othering processes to represent non-dominant identity groups. The practices of under-representation, stereotyping and objectification stood out, particularly in relation to racial minorities, LGBTQ characters and female characters respectively. LGBTQ participants were the only ones to discuss the representation of LGBTQ characters, and also highlighted examples of queer-coded characters. Through this discussion, it was implied that the negative portrayal of LGBTQ characters in media was preferable to their lack of representation entirely. Female characters tended to be

depicted as inert, lacking agency and subjugated by male characters, which most participants found concerning in *manga* aimed at young male readers. As *manga* are often perceived by both Eastern and Western readers as representative of themselves, the under-representation of racial minorities only pertained to darker-skinned characters. However, Jacqueline noted that darker-skinned characters tended to be stereotyped in various *manga* as they had been decades ago, which she believes is based on the lack of exposure to racial minorities in Japan.

These findings indicate that the lived experiences of UK readers appear to influence the themes of Otherness they identify and the characters they identify with. Participants largely appeared able to identify Otherness according to what they were familiar with, whether in terms of shared Otherness experiences, or, to a lesser extent, shared characteristics. Participants who identified as LGBTQ were more likely to perceive the vilification of LGBTQ characters. Female participants were more likely to highlight the objectification of females in *manga*. Participants who expressed having experienced bullying were more likely to identify bullying as an Otherness theme and empathise with characters who had been bullied.

As such, Reader Identification appears to be vital for UK readers in their ability to identify and interpret Otherness themes, because readers are guided “by their preoccupations at the time they read. Their real-life problems and needs make them focus on particular characters and situations” (Tsai, 2015: 51). Rosenblatt contends that readers will compensate “for lacks or failures through identification with a character... who makes fuller use of capacities similar to [their] own” (Rosenblatt, 1970: 41). Tsai further explains that readers are enabled to “reflect on their real-life issues from a detached position” (Tsai, 2015: 51). Participants like Anderson managed to overcome self-exclusive behaviours by watching and reflecting upon characters who faced nearly identical issues to their own.

Cumulatively, the findings indicate that there are many confounding factors influencing the extent to which readers reflect upon Otherness, but it is almost

unanimous that they do. Furthermore, the manner in which readers reflect upon Otherness is also almost unanimously related to their own sense of Othered identity; their self-perception, their self-confidence, their sense self-acceptance, or in some circumstances, their self-esteem. Feelings of low self-esteem in participants were strongly tied to the sub-theme of self-exclusion. Participants who self-excluded were particularly likely to discuss characters who also self-excluded. In doing so, these participants reflected upon their reasons for self-excluding and the rationality behind it, which was provoked by being able to perceive their Otherness “from a detached position” (Tsai, 2015: 51), epitomising Rosenblatt’s reader identification theory (1970). Beyond self-exclusion, the capacity and manner of reader reflection depends on the series the reader is consuming; on the Othered character the reader identifies with; the ways in which these characters experience Otherness; the extent to which the reader empathises with the character; the way the *manga* addresses Otherness within its narratives; whether it poses questions of the morality of Otherness; whether the *manga* series actively encourages reflection.

Othered characters and Othered collectives identified by participants often experienced struggle; this struggle was almost always a result of their Otherness. Participants recalled following Othered characters -mostly *manga* protagonists- along their journeys, witnessing the struggles they were forced to undergo as Others; namely the struggle for recognition, the struggle to be valued. Because such characters were at a disadvantage insofar as achieving recognition and value was concerned, participants view these characters as underdogs, and related with these characters on the basis of similar struggles for recognition and value.

This thesis argues that *manga* protagonists as underdogs encourage readers to embrace their differences, to be defiant and resist conforming to social norms, as well as to reject normalized characterizations of Self and Other. Participants suggested that *shonen manga* instils within readers notions of *resilience* and of *never giving up*, and it does this through protagonists who will actively struggle for

recognition, without sacrificing what sets them apart from the social norm. A prime example of this is Naruto, who learns to embrace his own Otherness and by doing so, is able to save the world; he becomes revered in the process by the very same social environment that once dehumanised him. Naruto was always defiant and never gave up on his dreams of recognition, both as an individual and as a great Ninja. Without his Otherness, the world around him would have been doomed and Naruto would never have achieved his dream. By addressing Otherness this way, the reader is taught that an individual's Otherness makes them unique.

The same thing applies to Asta from *Black Clover*; his Otherness is that he has no magic in a world of magic. Asta never gives up, embraces that fact that he is the Other and trains his body to empower himself, so that he might be able to stand as equal with the Self. Characters like Naruto and Asta motivate readers in their struggles for recognition, to persevere, to never give up, and to never compromise their identities, regardless of how Other they might be. This finding extends Tsai's hypothesis that young readers are provided with "renewed hope... and insights to face potential challenges... in their lives" to adult UK readers (Tsai, 2015: ii).

Participants also commented that *manga* protagonists would often stand up to the active practice of Othering. In cases of exclusion, characters would actively help and accept the ostracised, or they would actively stand up against bullies, with Wentworth noting how "no matter what you're reading, there's a scene where there's a group of bullies that get owned" (Wentworth). In cases of dehumanisation, characters would openly criticise, or find disgust in such acts; this is particularly evident in participant accounts of manmade freaks in section 5.2, in the example of Edward Elric from *Fullmetal Alchemist*, reacting to Shou Tucker's creation of a chimera, by sacrificing his own daughter. Such reactions from characters reveal to readers how the Other can be less monstrous and threatening than the Self, which in turn causes readers to reconsider how they might perceive Otherness; in other

words, it instils within readers the belief that being the Other is better than being the Self, if being Self means willingly participating in Othering practices.

These findings develop upon Chen's theory, who posits that *manga* readers in the United States bear a "desire for recognition" and "seek to resist mainstream values" through their engagement with *manga* (2011: 236). However, Chen also argues that readers do this by seeking alternate identities to those of their social environment, and that *manga* facilitates this. Chen states that this recognition comes through their participatory practices, particularly Cosplay, where by dressing up as *manga* characters and hiding their true selves, they can finally be "attractive in the eyes of others" (2011: 267). However, my participants have demonstrated in many cases that they did not seek out *manga* in order to resist social norms, rather their engagement with *manga* encouraged them to embrace their differences, their Othered identities, which consequently led them to resist social conformity. Among my participants, the struggle for recognition does not come at the expense of their Otherness, rather it is to be recognized without compromising that Otherness, because that Otherness is an intimate, inherent component of their identities.

I found that by embracing their Othered identities, not just as members of minority identity groups, but also as *manga* readers, UK *manga* readers sought out other like-minded individuals, many of whom were reported as being members of minority identity groups, as well as *manga* readers. As such, participants commonly credit the social aspect of *manga*, in other words, the *manga* community, as proving influential in instilling them with a sense of belonging. The findings indicate that reader engagement with the *manga* community -specifically attending conventions and societies- as well as reader participation in fandom culture -participatory practices such as *manga*-related content production and Cosplay- provides reader with a social environment comprised of Others, wherein they are able to express their identities and achieve recognition. According to participants, the *manga* community is comprised of those who "*wanna spread the faith*" (Frankson), who

welcome those who share a passion for *manga* and attempt to embrace Otherness, because many of them, as the trend suggests, appear to have been Othered in some way themselves. Consequently, within the *manga* community, as smaller social environment wherein the Other occupies the role of Other-as-Self, UK *manga* readers are encouraged to embrace and express their identities; the same identities they had and will continued to be Othered for, by the dominant power.

This finding, coupled with statements by participants, shows that the attitudes of UK *manga* readers towards Otherness -by way of reader identification and exposure to multiple perspectives- tends to change in the sense that readers would actively try to consider the perspectives of Others; this was most evident in the case of Bethany, in section 4.2.2, who explained a long-standing ideological clash with her father over veganism. It was only after engaging with *manga* that she one day decided to consider his perspective, without rejecting it outright. The few participants who did not feel this way actually noted no change whatsoever, as opposed to any negative attitudinal changes. Furthermore, the extent to which participant attitudes were influenced by *manga* varied from reader to reader, and the factors upon which this depended were similar to those that influenced how they reflected. Based on participant responses, engaging with *manga* is likely to leave the reader more patient, less judgemental, more understanding and more aware of the perspectives and worldviews of those around them. Their attitudes appear to be influenced by their reflections upon their own identities as Others, which in turn facilitates a social environment of Others, where Otherness is embraced.

Summatively, this thesis argues that the UK *manga* reader commonly -but not exclusively- perceives the Other to be embodied by the *shonen manga* protagonist (Sasada, 2011); the Other does not conform to social norms (Chen, 2011); the Other is excluded by way of social rejection, both passive and active (Williams & Forgas & von Hippel, 2005); the Other is dehumanized by way of devaluation (Haslam, 2006);

the Other is disadvantaged and is thus an underdog (Vandello et al., 2007). Yet, the Other is caught in a duality of perspectives, where if it possesses power, it threatens power hierarchies between Self and Other and is thus Other-as-threat, or Other-as-monster (Kearney, 2002); but when it lacks power, its Othering reinforces the normalization of power hierarchies between Self and Other, and its struggles are disregarded entirely (Silver, 1994; Hall, 1997; Scotland-Stewart, 2007). As such, when *manga* protagonists, who embody the Other, struggle for recognition, struggle to prove their value, reject normalized characterizations of Otherness and resist the dominant power, they “prompt participants to think and apply their mistakes through a mirroring experience” (Chen, 2011: 256). Hanson, now a comic book author, believes that *manga* are the “touchstones of [...] shared experiences” between author and reader (Hanson) and most *manga* series are dedicated to readers who have undergone struggles related to Otherness. Consequently, I argue that Othered *manga* protagonists exist to help readers navigate Otherness.

### **7.3: THE POTENTIAL FOR FUTURE RESEARCH**

Several findings that were made throughout this thesis would have benefited from follow-up questions with participants, but personal issues, financial limitations, and time restrictions meant that this was not possible. In this section I will reflect on these. This thesis did not investigate how *manga* highlight and prioritise certain themes and topics over others; rather, it focused my data analysis on the themes discussed by participants. Fuller explains that historically, *shonen manga* in particular have attempted to communicate themes with readers that include struggle, suffering, conflict and overcoming difference through communication (2012: 18). This thesis noted similar themes of struggle and also noted that within *manga*, characters would contemplate communicating with the Other in order to overcome conflict. As there are some striking similarities between *manga* of old and

contemporary series, it would have been worth conducting a thematic exploration of the *shonen manga* to plot any changes in Otherness themes over the years.

A comparison could also have been made between Kaneki Ken from *Tokyo Ghoul* (2011), and Naruto from *Naruto* (1999), both of whom were in positions to engage in dialogue with the Other and actively work to overcome difference without having to resort to conflict. These characters ultimately made completely contrasting choices, and it would have been worth conducting a comparative analysis of the effects of engaging in dialogue versus resorting to conflict on the capacity for both characters to achieve their goal of overcoming difference.

In a bibliographic study conducted by Hernandez-Perez (2019), it is noted that there are many texts on *manga* in other languages, the largest proportion of which are written in Japanese. Due to my lack of Japanese knowledge, the body of literature I have access to is largely limited to English. Similarly, the body of *manga* texts I used throughout this thesis was guided by my participants, who were left to highlight whichever *manga* came to mind, regardless of their demographic, as long as the series were significant to them. This was based on my hypothesis that reader identification with a series would more likely lead to their identification of Otherness themes and their identification with characters. Several non-*shonen* series were discussed in relation to Otherness, most heavily centring around the theme of struggle. I believe it would be worth conducting an analysis of literature from different countries to learn of any varying findings relating to *manga* and Otherness and the cultural implications those findings might have. I also believe it would be worth conducting a thematic comparison of *manga* series from different demographics to learn how they each uniquely communicate Otherness.

The thesis concluded that lived experience of Otherness influenced the reader's identification of Othered characters and Otherness themes. However, it did not explore the extent to which lived experiences influenced this. One participant explained that he had never been subjected to Otherness at all. In his interview, he

focused predominantly on the *manga* community and its ability to reinvigorate, in a similar way to how *manga* instils 'renewed hope'. It would be worth exploring this in a manner that allows the researcher to measure readers with lived experiences of Otherness against those who claim to never have been Othered before.

One interviewee, who has become a comic book author, suggested that *manga* were a means to bond author to reader. He hypothesises that many of these *manga* authors "have been through the same kind of experience" as their readers and that their *manga* are a way of saying "look, this is for you" (Hanson). This thesis did not explore the influence of authors on the themes of Otherness present within *manga*. It also did not explore the experience of the author in relation to the experience of the character that was written about, or in relation to the experience of the reader. It would be valuable in exploring the extent to which authors have experienced Otherness, how this influences the Otherness themes that can be objectively drawn from their series, and that readers are able to identify.

There was an allusion to a link between *manga's* self-reflection upon its own Othering practices and the *manga* reader's subsequent self-reflection upon their Othering practices. Deman (2010) explored this in detail in relation to American comics. I question whether the impact of self-criticism by the medium influences self-criticism within the reader, and whether self-criticism by the medium influences the perspectives readers have of *manga*; it would be worth exploring.

Although this thesis reveals that adult readers are communicated Otherness through *shonen manga*, it does not explore the lasting influence these themes have. For example, I was unable to determine whether reader attitudes were influenced upon reader engagement with their first *manga*; I was unable to determine if these attitudes remained constant up to the point of their interview; I was unable to determine if constant exposure to *manga* bearing similar themes was necessary for their attitudes to remain influenced. A study exploring how exposure to Otherness

themes in *manga* over time versus in concentration alters how much influence they have on reader attitudes and how permanent these attitudinal changes are.

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