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RESEARCH ON ILLUSTRATION TECHNIQUES OF JAPANESE COMIC

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Bachelor of Applied Arts with Honours in Design Technology
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Declaration

No portion of the work referred to in this report has been submitted in support of an application for another degree of qualification of this or any other university or institution of higher learning.

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Abstract

This is a research on illustration techniques of Japanese comic. I am investigating the types of illustration techniques that are preferable by most comic readers. From the questionnaire and interview analysis, majority of the people preferred comic drawn by pen and ink and computer graphic effects. Therefore, e-comic and its promotions based on pen and ink with computer graphic modification are introduced. As a conclusion, the illustration techniques used has produced a good result of e-comic and its promotional mediums. This is due to combination of two illustration techniques can overcome the limitations posed by single illustration technique. Thus, using combination of two illustration techniques (pen and ink and computer graphic) can produce a more satisfactory result compare to using single illustration technique alone.

Abstrak

Ini adalah kajian tentang teknik-teknik ilustrasi bagi komik Jepun. Saya ingin menyelidik jenis teknik-teknik ilustrasi yang digemari oleh orang ramai. Daripada analisa soal selidik dan temuduga, kebanyakan orang mengemari komik yang dilukis dengan menggunakan pen dan dakwat bersama kesan grafik komputer. Oleh demikian, e-komik dan iklannya yang berdasarkan pen dan dakwat bersama kesan grafik komputer diperkenalkan. Secara kesimpulan, teknik-teknik ilustrasi telah menghasilkan e-komik dan media periklanan yang baik. Ini disebabkan gabungan dua teknik ilustrasi dapat mengatasi kekurangan salah satu teknik ilustrasi. Oleh itu, gabungan dua teknik ilustrasi (pen dan dakwat dan grafik komputer) dapat mencapai keputusan yang lebih memuaskan berbanding dengan penggunaan satu teknik ilustrasi sahaja.

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 History of Japanese comic

What is comic? Comic tells a story through pictures and words. Examples of some famous comics are Batman, Spiderman, Superman, Dragon Ball, and Doraemon. Among these comics, Japanese comic has gain recognition as one of the best comic in the world. This is followed by the comment of Go Tchiei (1998), author of "A history of Manga" article. In Japan, comic is called manga. According to a Japanese dictionary Daijirin, "manga is caricature, a story made of pictures, or pictures and words, pictures that one draws freely and a text consisting of pictures and words" (cited in Kumiko Sato, 1999, p.2). Besides, manga also means any printed cartoon from Japan.

Manga was started in between the 6th and 7th centuries. Liana Sharer observes that, "the first examples of what might be called "manga" were picture scrolls created during the 6th and 7th centuries by Buddhist monks. The scrolls ran continually, using common symbols such as cherry blossoms and red leaves to indicate the passage of time" (2000, p.1). The most famous of these works is Choujuugiga, meaning "animal scrolls", a work that depicted animals behaving like humans and satirized Buddhist priests.

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Around the beginning of the 13th century pictures began to be drawn on temple walls, depicting images of the afterlife and of animals. These pictures were crude and deliberately exaggerated representations, and bear a remarkable similarity to modern manga. This phenomenon continued over hundreds of years, branching out to include numerous other subjects, although the style remained the same.

Beginning of the 1600s, the word manga was first used to describe the artistic style. They were not drawn on temple walls but on wood blocks and these were known as Edo, and the subject was less religious, often graphically erotic, although they branched out once again to include various other subjects, particularly buildings and satire. The pictures were by now generally composed in monochrome, with simple outlines and rudimentary blocks of colour which forewent shading.

In 1702, Shumboko Ono was an early celebrity manga artist, made a book out of prints of these pictures with captions, although it was a collection of pictures rather than a progressive story. This method developed over the next hundred years, in books which combined stories with ink-brush illustrations blurred distinctions between text and picture for every paragraph, allowing the art to be just as sequential as the narrative and the narrative to be more frenetic and pacy. The tradition of Toba-e, as these comics were called, grew over the next century, until they were the main form of literature for most of Japanese society. The most popular ones were called Ukiyo-e, portraits of the "floating world". These illustrations were generally salacious images of scenes from the red-light district, though they also depicted the age's pleasures, such as the latest outfits and the most popular places to visit.

In 1815, the term manga was created by the artist Hokusai. As Matt Thorn mentions, "the word itself was coined by the famous wood block print artist Hokusai. He combined two Chinese characters—the first meaning "in spite of oneself" or "lax" and the second meaning "picture"—to describe the comical doodles he drew in addition to his exquisite people-scopes" (2004, p.1).

Under European influence, Japanese started making humor magazines similar to "Punch" (an European magazine). The most famous Japanese's humor magazine was Marumaru Chimbun in 1877. The images of Japanese comic evolution started from 6th to 19th century can be found at Appendix A.1.

During the World War II, Japanese's cartoonists would produce three basic types of strips: single-panel strips about Japan's enemies, family comic strips that portrayed home life during a war, and propaganda. After World War II, cartoons flourished. Tezuka Osamu was recognized as a famous "red books" artist. His most popular creation Mighty Atom, was famous around the world; a 1960s animated version was broadcast in the United States as Astro Boy.

In the 1950's and early 60's, Japanese artists started drew shounen manga (boys' manga) and shoujo manga (girl's manga). In 1950s, Tezuka Osamu had introduced a new technique called cinematic techniques. "I manipulated close-ups, and angles, and tried using many panels or many pages to faithfully capture movements and facial expressions that previously would have been a single panel. So I ended up with works more than 1,000 pages in length. The potential of manga was more than humor; using themes of tears, sorrow, anger and hatred, I made stories that did not always have happy endings" (Tezuka Osamu cited in Liana sharer, 2000, p.3). He was able to incorporate the techniques of the new genre known as geki-ga as it emerged in the 1960s without completely assimilating to it. According to Go Tchiei (1998), the

"geki" of "geki-ga" encompasses the two meanings of "dramatic" and "action-filled", so that one might best translate the term as "action comics" (p.7). The images of Japanese comic for 20th and 21st centuries can be found at Appendices A.2, A.3, A.4, and A.5.

Today, there are five common illustration techniques used by Japanese artists to draw their comic such as pen and ink, water colour, marker rendering, computer graphic, and airbrush.

1.2 Current Types/Themes of Japanese comic

Nowadays, Japanese comic can be categorized by genre and age. It can be divided into five types/themes: kodomo manga, shounen manga, shoujo manga, josei manga, and seinen manga.

First, kodomo manga is a children's comic. The bulk of kodomo-manga is simple and unpretentious, aimed at 6 to 11 years old. Stories with robots and fantasy settings are popular; there can sometimes be unusual levels of violence, by Western standards. Successful kodomo-mangas are almost always made into anime and merchandised to the hilt. The really popular kodomo-mangas, such as Doraemon, retain readers well into adulthood.

Second, shounen manga is a boy's comic for boy or youth. The main themes of shounen manga include stories of exams, sport, school life, university life and adventure. Recently, the famous shounen manga are One Piece, Dragon Ball and Naruto.

Third, shoujo manga is a girl's comic for female readers between 6 and 18 years old. The themes of Shoujo Manga normally are romance, fantasy, magic, science fiction, horror, and adventurous. The characteristics of shoujo-manga are as followed:

1. Emphasizes emotions, atmosphere and mood, rather than action.

2. Uses less literal ("A then B then C") storytelling, and more impressionism and montage.

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3. Rarely depicts "ugliness", unless heavily stylized.

4. Shows considerable attention to details of costume and dress.

5. Is rarely made into anime such as "Sailor Moon" by Takeuchi Naoka.

Fourth, Josei Manga is a lady's comic for housewife and office ladies. The themes of this genre deal with sexual pleasure without hesitation. The protagonist is usually a married woman, who is tired of her marriage, her husband, or of taking care of children.

Fifth, the seinen manga is for young man. Nearly all seinen manga is aimed primarily at 18 to 25 years old male, though many readers continue to follow seinen manga into their 30s and 40s. Seinen manga features even more graphic sex and violence, but tends to be less comic or outlandish in its depiction. Dramas and stories with political or corporate themes are especially popular, though there are a few fantasy seinen mangas.

As a conclusion, there are several types/themes of Japanese comic to fulfill different genres' demands. The types/themes are always related to their jobs, environments, age, hobbies, favorites, education, and religion background.

1.3 Problem Statements

There is a lack of study on which type of illustration techniques of Japanese comic suits to the production of e-comic and its promotions based on local theme of Sarawak culture.

1.3 Objectives

The objectives of this research is to find out which type of illustration techniques of Japanese comic is preferable by most readers, and apply it on the production of e-comic and its promotional mediums.

1.4 Scope of Research

The scope of this research is to produce and to promote an e-comic using the combination of most preferable illustration techniques by public.

Chapter 2

Methodology

2.1 Literature Reviews

In this section, we will discuss the illustration techniques used by Japanese artists, mainly pen and ink (Section 2.1.1), and computer graphic (Section 2.1.2).

2.1.1 Tone Techniques and Amazing Effects for Pen and Ink

Most pen techniques are derived from two basic elements: *line* and *dot*. Pen techniques currently in use for Japanese comic are tone techniques. What is a tone? According to Rio Sugiyama and Shunji Haraguchi (2003), "a tone is a transparent film with various patterns printed in black ink. Black ink is used to make sure it comes out well in the final printing. Tone is an essential tool in modern manga production. It can be used to create various expressions not only through application alone, but also through scraping or stacking. There is a special adhesive on the back of the film" (p. 1).

Why does everyone use tones? Actually, there is nothing wrong with using a black marker or black water colour. Sugiyama and Shunji Haraguchi have stated that, "it would be a problem when used a black mixed with another colour, such as with grey. That is because all black and white manga are printed exclusively in black ink. Colours other than black will never show up

properly in printing. In that limited medium, tone is the tool used to express various differences in colour. All of the various tone patterns are completely made up of black beta and black dots, so they always maintain the appearance of the original" (2003, p. 1).

What is the basic knowledge of a tone? Sugiyama and Shunji Haraguchi pointed out that, "most tones are made based on a single rule. That is the line count and density. The line count is the number of lines per inch, and is indicated by the number before the "L" in the figure (25L). The density is the total percentage of black area measured as if all the lines were grouped together. Thus 0% would be completely white, and 100% would be completely black. As the line count decreases, the dots appear rougher. Additionally, if the line count remains constant but the density changes, this reflects a difference in the dots size without changing the dot count" (2003, p.2).

There are actually a wide variety of screen tones such as dot tones, multiple line tones, gradient tones, sand tones, cross-hatching tones, and three types of pattern tones. First, *dot tones* and *multiple line* tones are used to express darker and lighter areas using dots and lines. They also can be used for a variety of purposes such as characters and backgrounds. Second, *gradient tones* are mainly used to express shadow. Third, *sand tones* are made up of dots, but unlike in dot tones, the dots are not lined up or organized. These tones are often used to express the side of a building or sand. Fourth, *cross-hatching* tones are mainly used for clothing or background. Fifth, *pattern tones for decorations* mainly used to accent the background. Sixth, *pattern tones for effects* used to express an explosion or feeling of speed in the story. Finally, *pattern tones for background* are ready-made background to be applied as is. Examples of pattern tones for

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background are sky, cityscapes, ocean, school, and jungle. All the images for those screen tones are shown in Appendix B.1.

There are three techniques of applying tones: *basic tones, scraping tones*, and *stacking tones*. So, how to apply basic tones in Japanese comic? According to Sugiyama and Shunji Haraguchi (2003), "first, lay down the tone where you want to apply it with the backing still on. Then, cut out an area of tone a little larger than the part you want to apply it on. Peel the backing off the tone you cut out and lightly apply it to the picture. Then, carefully cut along the line of your drawing. When finish cutting it out, place a piece of paper over the tone and rub it in with a tone-hera" (pp.16-17). Besides, he also stated that, "when you use pattern tones, be careful of the balance and quality. If you use too much clothing, your characters could look like they have no fashion sense" (2003, p.23). Therefore, using this kind of technique must careful on outline cutting. But the advantage of using this technique is that it is easier to produce the gradient effect compare to marker rendering. The images of the steps of applying tones and its related example can be found at Appendix B.2.

Just applying basic tones isn't enough. Different ways of scraping tones will bring out all sorts of effects and potential expressions. Scraping is a vital technique for tones. So, how to scrape tone in Japanese comic? Sugiyama and Shunji Haraguchi recommend that, "first, cut out and apply a section of tone larger than the area you will blur. First completely scrape the area that will be all white. Do the scraping. Then cut out and remove the cross-section to finish" (2003, p.31). Usually, scraping tones are mainly used to express background, for example expressing the surface of water, make a clouds, expressing trees, moon and else. Sometimes, Japanese comic artists do straight scraping on a dot tone to show a scene with overwhelming

emotion or use gradation tone to show the use of magic in an RPG game or fantasy setting. This technique helps us to express the background effect more easily by creating more realistic images match to the scene. The images of how to do the scraping tones and its related example are shown in Appendix B.3.

Finally, stacking tones is another tone technique by putting one tone over another. Tones appear darker depending on how they are stacked. For stacking tones, we can stack a pattern tone and a dot tone. Instead of a dot tone, we could also use a gradation tone. Thus, the effect of stacking tones is more emphasized and attractive where it brings out a more contrast view. The images for applying stacking tones and its related examples are shown in Appendix B.4.

As a conclusion, tones can be used to express various image effects through different techniques of applying tones such as basic tones, scraping tones, and stacking tones.

Amazing effects are including basic in *composition, character portrayal, voice portrayal, panel design* and the basic of *manga portrayal.*

Composition refers to the way the picture plane is composed. Anticipating the effect of perspective can create space and as a result, the character can move freely within the panel. Manga usually employs 3 types of perspective. They used 1-point perspective when the front of the subject is parallel to the picture plane. This is often used in general compositions depicting skylines or townscapes. 2-point perspective is used in drawing when a side as well as the front of the subject is to be shown at the same time, for example a house or a building. 3-point perspective is used when a high or low angle is to be added to a 2-point perspective, showing the front and side of the subject. It allows the artist to draw from a high or low angle or from bird's eye view.

"Using the eyes as a means of expression allows you to create highly dramatic scenes" (cited in Mikio Kawanishi, 1998, p.43). Generally, emotions can be expressed clearly simply by changing the shapes of the eyes and including the eyebrows. Besides, hands also as a means of expression containing subtle significance. The hands are expressive props! Mikio Kawanishi says that, "to prevent your compositions from becoming monotonous, try using long shots, medium shots, and close-up. Effective use of these composition ranges will give variety to your reader's incentive to read!" (1998, p.71). Therefore, the composition technique is an important aspect for artists to notice.

There are no physical sound effects in Japanese comic. However, they can still be expressed through voice portrayal. Mikio Kawanishi believes that, "the sound effects used are the part of speech known as onomatopoeias and, just like dialogue, are expressed in lettering. For example, when the character laughs, so does her speech balloon. When the character becomes sad, the speech balloon takes on a gloomy form" (1998, p. 95). Sound effects and speech balloons do not necessarily have to be confined within the panel's borders. If you prefer to emphasize the speech line or sound even further, extending it outside the panel will effectively accomplish this.

Normally, panels in Japanese comic are designed to read from the right page to the left page. Staggering the panels on the right and left pages will draw the reader's eye automatically along the correct flow. Mikio Kawanishi point out that, "innovative panel shapes facilitate the flow of the layout and allow for high-paced scene development. They particularly allow for action scenes with monumental impact" (1998, p.121). There are many ways of suggesting the passage of time. Of these, the most common is the establishing panel.