

Herbivore Man in *Shoujo-Manga*: Deconstruction of Japanese Traditional Masculinity

(Pria Herbivora dalam *Shoujo-Manga*: Dekonstruksi Maskulinitas Tradisional Jepang)

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mendeskripsikan *soushokukei danshi*, pria herbivora yang merepresentasikan nilai maskulinitas baru dalam komik serial cantik (*shoujo-manga*) di Jepang. Disebut pria herbivora atau pemakan tumbuhan karena pada umumnya karakteristik mereka tidak dominan sebagaimana citra *nikushoku* atau pemakan daging yang biasa melekat pada pria Jepang tradisional dalam budaya patriarki. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan dua data utama *shoujo-manga* berjudul *Sakura chan and Amane kun* karya Asazuki Norito dan *Monthly Girls' Nozaki-kun* karya Izumi Tsubaki. Melalui analisis maskulinitas berdasarkan 20 item standar teori Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI), dapat diketahui bahwa karakteristik pria herbivora bisa ditemukan pada banyak karakter pria feminin dalam *shoujo-manga* (komik anak perempuan), antara lain tidak agresif, lembut, menyukai hal yang biasanya identik dengan perempuan seperti berdandan, memasak, dan menyukai makanan manis. Kecenderungan sosok pria feminin semacam ini, bahkan banyak sekali dijadikan sebagai karakter utama *shoujo-manga* dan dalam perkembangannya memengaruhi gaya busana serta penampilan anak muda sehari-hari. Berdasarkan analisis dan pembahasan yang dilakukan, dapat disimpulkan bahwa pria herbivora merupakan dekonstruksi dari maskulinitas hegemonik tradisional Jepang ala *salary-man* yang mengedepankan dominasi, kejantanan, dan kekuatan finansial. Pria herbivora ternyata melahirkan nilai maskulinitas baru, sekaligus memunculkan celah pasar ekonomi baru di bidang kosmetik dan pernak-pernik pria.

Keywords: BSRI, Jepang, maskulinitas, pria herbivora *shoujo-manga*

Abstract

This study aims to describe *soushokukei danshi*, herbivorous men who represent the value of new masculinity in the girl comic series (*shoujo-manga*) in Japan. They are called herbivores or plant eaters because in general, their characteristics are not as dominant as the image of *nikushoku* or meat-eaters that is usually attached to traditional Japanese men in a patriarchal culture. To pursue the objective of this research, qualitative descriptive method and Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI)



theory were used with two main data from *Sakura chan and Amane kun* by Asazuki Norito and *Monthly Girls' Nozaki-kun* by Izumi Tsubaki. Through masculinity analysis using 20 standard items of the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) theory, it can be seen that the characteristics of herbivorous men can be found in many feminine male characters in *shoujo-manga* (girl comics), including not being aggressive, gentle, liking things usually synonymous with women such as dressing up, cooking, and liking sweet foods. The tendency of this kind of feminine male figure is even used as the main character of *shoujo-manga*. Its development even affects the fashion style and appearance of young people in daily life. In short, the herbivorous man can be considered as a deconstruction of the traditional Japanese salary-man hegemonic masculinity that emphasizes dominance, virility, and financial strength. Herbivorous men even gave birth to new masculinity values, as well as creating a new economic market chance in men's cosmetics and goods.

Keywords: BSRI, herbivore man, Japan, masculinity, *shoujo-manga*

INTRODUCTION

In 2008-2009, Japan was shocked by the term *soushokukei danshi*, or herbivorous men, to describe men who are passive, not ambitious in their career, and gentle (Morioka 2013). The name for a man who is opposite to this trait is *nikushoku danshi*, or carnivorous man. From this mention, we can already imagine that the herbivores that eat grass are tame and could not be more aggressive than the carnivores that eat meat. Because of this, herbivorous men are not attractive in initiating romantic relationships with women. Even the existence of this herbivorous man has been scapegoated as one of the factors contributing to the low birth rate that triggered Japan to become a super-aging society (BBC News 2012).

The term *soushokukei danshi* or herbivorous man was first introduced in 2006 by Maki Fukusawa in an article entitled "Herbivore Man" in an online magazine called *U35 Danshi Māketingu Zukan* or "U35 Men Marketing-An Illustrated Guide" (Neil 2009). In 2008, Ushikubo then published a book entitled *Soushokukei Danshi 'Ojouman' ga Nihon wo Kaeru* or *The Herbivorous 'Ladylike Men' are Changing Japan*. The word *ojouman* comes from the kanji *ojou* which means lady or girl and katakana *man* which means man. Thus, the word *ojouman* means a man who has characteristics like a woman.

Not only the terms *ojouman* and *soushokukei danshi*, but in Japan several similar terms refer to feminine men, such as *bishounen* and *otokonoko*. The term *bishounen* refers to a man who has a beautiful face. The word *bishounen* has the kanji *utsukushii* which means beautiful, and *shounen* which means young boy. *Bishounen* can be defined as a male character who has beauty like a woman. Meanwhile, the term *otokonoko* has two kanji elements, namely the *otoko* kanji which means man, and the *musume* kanji or *ko* which means girl. The term *otokonoko* with a combination of those two kanji refers to a boy who has the appearance of a girl (Kinsella 2019).

The emergence of terms such as *bishounen* (beautiful youth (boy)), *otokonoko* (male daughter), *ojouman* (lady like), and especially *soushokukei danshi* (herbivore men), indicates a shift in the image of the male figure and its masculinity values. These masculinity values can be found in various comics and anime with gender-bender characters, such as men with the appearance of women, or women and men who exchange souls, and so on. In other words, gender bender is a comic genre with a characteristic gender blur or unclear distribution of sex roles. There are many comics with the gender blur genre, especially the *shoujo-manga* series, which is a comic for girls where most of the male characters are described as very beautiful (not handsome), almost similar to

female characters. These *shoujo-manga* include *Sakura-chan to Amane-kun*, *Otonari Complex*, *Kanojo no Hi*, *Monthly Girls' Nozaki-kun*, and many more.

With the above background, the researcher is interested in digging further about the existence of herbivorous men and the male characters in *shoujo-manga* which are depicted tend to be against the stereotypes of masculinity in general. In this study, the formulation of the problem to be discussed is “How is the depiction of herbivorous male masculinity in *shoujo-manga* seen from the stereotype of traditional Japanese masculinity?” This study aims to describe herbivorous males in *shoujo-manga* and how their masculinity is constructed.

METHOD

This research used a descriptive qualitative approach. In data collection, researchers selected two examples of *shoujo-manga* with gender-bender characters in them. The two *shoujo-manga* are *Sakura-chan to Amane-kun* by Asazuki Norito and *Monthly Girls' Nozaki-kun* by Izumi Tsubaki. These two *shoujo-manga* were chosen as the main objects of research because they show many variations in the depiction of gender in male and female characters, both traditional masculine and feminine stereotypes, the deconstruction of both, and gender blur. The storyline in this manga also focuses on the dynamics of these characters.

The primary data from this research are words, scenes, and dialogues in the comics *Monthly Girls' Nozaki-kun* and *Sakura-chan to Amane-kun*. The data analysis technique was carried out in three stages. The first is to select, sort, and classify scenes containing language, signs, or things that are identified as representations of herbivorous male masculinity in *shoujo-manga*. Second, after the data was collected, data analysis was carried out using a literature review of related articles, mainly 20 standard items of the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) theory. Finally, the last stage is making conclusions based on the formulation of the research question that has been made.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Masculine Stereotypes and Japanese *Otokorashisa*

The term “masculine” comes from French which means manhood or shows male characteristics. In general, traditional masculinity values male strength, fortitude, action, control, solidarity, and work. Among those that are looked down upon are interpersonal relationships, verbal abilities, domestic life, tenderness, femininity, and children. There is also an opinion that says that men will be very “manly” with identical cigarettes, alcohol, and violence.

In a journal written by Thompson (2015) entitled “Measurement of Masculinity Ideologies: A (Critical) Review,” where the ideology of masculinity promoted by Thompson, Pleck, and Ferrera (1992) states that the idea of gender orientation and masculine ideology has two parallel perspectives but have different concepts. The first perspective views masculinity as the basis of a cultural ideology that promises men’s privileges and that some men even have more privileges than others. This first perspective is known as the trait approach, which presents masculinity as a series of symbols or attributes desired by the social community and is measured by assessing characteristics through self-concept assessments such as the Bem Sex Role Inventory theory and the Personal Attributes Questionnaire theory (Thompson, 2015).

The second perspective refers to the normative approach, which describes masculinity as ideological writing about gender relations based on culture, attitudes, and beliefs (Thompson 2015). From this perspective, what is meant by the ideology of masculinity is the property of time,

place, and group, not the individual. This perspective influences (although not fully determined) how people think, feel and behave in matters related to gender.

To identify a person's gender role tendency without depending on gender biologically, there is the Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI) which was initiated by Sandra Bem in 1974 (Bem 1974). This BSRI then classifies a person into 4 categories, namely masculine, feminine, androgynous, and undifferentiated. Masculinity itself is identified with the following tendencies: self-reliant defends own beliefs, independent, athletic, assertive, strong personality, forceful, analytical, leadership ability, willing to take risks, make decisions easily, self-sufficient, dominant, masculine, willing to take a stand, aggressive, acts as a leader, individualistic, competitive, and ambitious. Meanwhile, femininity can be measured through the tendency of yielding, cheerful, shy, affectionate, flatterable, loyal, feminine, sympathetic, sensitive to other's needs, understanding, compassionate, eager to soothe hurt feelings, soft-spoken, warm, tender, gullible, childlike, does not use harsh language, loves children, and gentle.

On the other hand, Brannon (2004) states that four stereotypical elements must exist in men and women. The four elements include No Sissy Stuff, The Big Wheel, The Sturdy Oak, and Give 'Em Hell for men, while the four elements for women are Piety, Purity, Submissiveness, and Domesticity.

From the literature above, it can be seen that most masculinities are identified with something tough, dominant, and ambitious, while femininity is synonymous with gentle, subordinate, and passive. In Japan, there is a magazine article that states there are at least 42 ideal types of men for women. Among them are having a lot of money in the bank, like exercise, being able to drink a lot of alcohol, and much more (Baseel 2019). Here are some thoughts about *otokorashisa* or masculinity in Japanese men studies.

Masculinity and Financial Power in Japan

Although it is known as a patriarchal society that elevates the position of men, Yamada Masahiro (2008) says that Japan is not a country that benefits men. According to him, apart from being based on a survey by a magazine in 2007 which stated that the life satisfaction of women was higher than that of men, in fact, men were expected to pay for dating with women, he was required to carry heavy luggage, not to cry, not to be allowed to depending on a person and various other burdensome norms and responsibilities.

Japan is a country that still adheres to a patriarchal culture, where men still get the highest position than women. Men become independent, responsible, and full of ambition. The status of a man is usually judged by his job or how successful he is. This does not only happen in traditional societies but in modern society also still holds this principle. Ushikubo (2008) emphasizes this by saying, "*Donna jidai demo, otoko wa saishi wo yashinaubeki*" ("At any time, a man must provide for his wife and children").

Ito Koto (in Yamada 2008) states that masculinity consists of three things, namely oriented to superiority, oriented to ownership/property, and oriented to power. These three characteristics are "conditions" to be responsible in the family economy. The system is to compete with others, raise a lot of money, and finally gain power in the family. Then, living independently and doing self-realization outside the scope of the family are things that can easily be considered the same as "masculinity." In short, masculinity in the form of power in a household is obtained through financial strength.

Yamada (2008) also questioned if women demand gender equality in the hope of sharing the responsibilities of childcare and other domestic work which has been stereotyped as traditional femininity, why men cannot liberate themselves from the shackles of hegemonic masculinity by sharing the responsibility of the family economy. Especially during the past bubble economy, a father was a *daikokubashira*, the breadwinner who was responsible to supported the entire family. This kind of norm standard becomes uneasy for men to bear alone in the present era when Japan is no longer at the peak of its economic glory complete with the privilege of *shuushin koyou* or lifetime employment system and *nenkoujoretsu* or seniority system.

It is an interesting coincidence to discuss the deconstruction of old masculinity values through the presence of herbivorous men in the situation of the unstable Japanese economy in 2008 which was quite shaken by the Lehman shock. Traditional masculinity standards in Japan in physical appearance, and behavior, may not be too different from the stereotype of masculinity in many countries in the world, but the emphasis on economic responsibility becomes a differentiator of Japanese masculinity from other societies. I agree with Chen's (2012) opinion that Japanese masculinity is closely related to economic strength because so far salary-man has been a symbol of masculinity in Japanese society after the Samurai era.

The emergence of discussions about herbivorous men in the real world, not just in the world of comics and animation, prompts me to ask further, which came first; the herbivorous man in the real world who later becomes the inspiration for the male characters in *shoujo-manga*? Or, on the other hand, herbivore men appear confidently in the real world inspired by the characteristics of the male characters in *shoujo-manga* who are mostly depicted as gentle and kind heart feminine men as expected by the female readership market? It could also be that the two of them inspire each other. In this study, I will limit the scope of descriptions of herbivore men to *shoujo-manga* and literature studies.

Herbivorous Male and Feminine Characteristics of *Shoujo-Manga* Men

Japan can be said to be a country full of contradictions because we can find comics and anime of any genre even though in reality Japanese society is still opposed to the issues. For example, although the people are still quite adamant about the values of traditional masculinity and femininity, there are lots of LGBTQ-themed manga and anime or gender blur with their respective readership segments. Even when Japanese society was still struggling with the issue of women's liberation and gender minority discrimination, comics with the genre *yaoi* or Boy's Love (homoerotic relationships between male characters) have been published in Japan since the 1970s. Every genre of manga and anime in Japan has loyal supporters, and they don't just collect their favorite character goods or merchandise as a hobby, some of them even really adopt the way of dress and the way of life of their idol characters.

In some parts of the world, it is might not common to accept a man with pink clothes and accessories all over his body, but this is easy to find in Japan. Gay cross-dressers who wear women's clothes such as Matsuko Deluxe, or Ryuucheru whose styles are genderless-kei, and Ogi mama, a pedagogy expert who is graceful even though he is a straight heterosexual man, are some examples of TV personalities that show a deconstruction of hegemonic masculinity in terms of physical or appearance as it is deeply rooted in society.

In *shoujo-manga*, there are many characters with different personalities. In terms of themes, of course, the main theme is teenage love stories. However, historical, political, entertainment, sports, and artistic settings also color many *shoujo-manga* stories. What all *shoujo-manga* theme has

in common is that it always focus on the female protagonist's journey. In the 1980s, the *shoujo-manga* titled *Candy-Candy* (first published in 1975) had become very popular. It becomes a formula that many other *shoujo-manga* artists imitate, with a reckless female protagonist who doesn't stand out from a beauty or intelligence perspective but wins the love of a handsome male protagonist who is the center of attention. Cinderella Complex Syndrome-themed stories are very easy to find in *shoujo-manga* at the time. All male characters in the comic are also depicted with beautiful faces, slender, graceful, and feminine. Although physically the male characters are portrayed as more feminine than the reality in society, there is no gender blur issue in the *Candy-candy* so that the gender roles contained in it are still male vs female dualism, dominant vs submissive.

The issue of gender blur in famous comics in the 1980s was the character Oscar in *The Rose of Versailles* (first published in 1972) and Ranma in the comic entitled *Ranma ½* (first published in 1987). This means that since more than 40 years ago *shoujo-manga* not only represents men with feminine features but also brings the issue of a cross-dresser and the exchange of gender roles in one character. It's just that, the gender roles performed by these figures still rely heavily on stereotypes of traditional masculinity and femininity. Just look at the Oscar character in *The Rose of Versailles*, when she became a lady she could be very gentle and elegant, so she attracted the hearts of the male characters in the comic. On the other hand, when Oscar becomes a warrior leader, even though he has a beautiful appearance, he can be very masculine and assertive so that the female characters in the comic cheer him on. Likewise, with *Ranma ½*, he can become very feminine when he is showered with cold water and turns into a girl, while when he becomes a boy due to hot water he can become very masculine according to the masculine standards of that era.

Looking at the development of *shoujo-manga* in the 2010s and above, the theme of gender blur and cross-dresser has become commonplace and the characters practice flexible gender roles in everyday life. Compared with the character Oscar who became a cross-dresser and engaged in a kind of love affair with her protégée Rosalie Lamorlière in *The Rose of Versailles*, they have to borrow the 18th century and the French revolution as a setting for time and place. Or *Ranma ½* which has a "curse" background so that it is easy in the minds of ordinary people that it is one hundred percent fictitious because someone cannot be condemned to be half male and half female. In the 2010s era, *shoujo-manga* with the issue of gender blur did not need to bother using the time, place, and event set which confirmed that the story being carried was fictional and could not possibly happen in reality.

The development of the story in *shoujo-manga* confirms that the issue of gender blur is getting closer to the daily life of Japanese people. For example, the manga *Monthly Girls' Nozaki-kun* (published in 2014) and *Sakura-chan to Amane-kun* (published online in 2017) are set in the lives of high school teenagers today. *Monthly Girls' Nozaki-kun* tells the story of a high school girl who likes a boy from her schoolmate who turns out to be a writer of her favorite *shoujo-manga*. The story flows where the heroine becomes the drawing assistant for the hero who is surrounded by friends with blurred gender. While the *Sakura-chan to Amane-kun* manga tells the story of a boy named Sakura and a girl named Amane who both have a cross-dresser hobby.

From the 7 main characters of *Monthly Girls' Nozaki-kun*, Chiyo Sakura the heroine is a type of female character with a Cinderella complex like any *shoujo-manga* in general. Two other female characters, Yuzuki Seo and Kashima Yuu, are the most obvious anti-gender stereotypes. Yuzuki Seo is a masculine woman who is very tomboyish, athletic, and very good at sports. She is also an

obvious, thick-skinned person whom Nozaki nicknamed as “KY” *Kuuki o Yomanai* or cannot read the mood of a situation. Meanwhile, Kashima Yuu is an androgyny figure, a very handsome woman, good at seducing women, and is nicknamed the prince at school. These two figures are a deconstruction of traditional femininity values that depict women as gentle, sensitive, and submissive.

In contrast to the characteristics of the female characters above, the four male characters in *Monthly Girls' Nozaki-kun* are depicted as being far from masculinity values as found on the 20 scales of The Bem Sex-Role Inventory (BSRI). The four male characters are as follows.

1. Umetaro Nozaki (main male character). He is a *mangaka* (comic artist) who writes romantic comics but in reality, he is far from being romantic. He was once a basketball captain at school but prefers to focus on drawing comics by hiding his identity behind a pen name. When viewed from masculinity standards, men who are good at exercising are more popular among young women. Nozaki and Sakura are in a very close relationship and know that they like each other, but there is never any commitment. As the trend of herbivorous men, Nozaki is not aggressive when it comes to romance with women.

In one episode, Nozaki is depicted wearing a rabbit headband and giving a banquet to Mikoshihba, his assistant. Nozaki plays the role of a girl to help Mikoshihba in *gokon* practice (a meeting between boys and girls for a date together). Nozaki's cooking skills proved far above Sakura the heroine because the dishes Sakura made were no better than those made by Nozaki. Sakura also acknowledged and praised that Nozaki had high femininity skills (*joshiryoku takai*).



Figure 1. Nozaki, a man with high femininity skills

2. Masayuki Hori. He is a member of the drama club, is short in stature, and is Nozaki's assistant for background work. He is temperamental, but it turns out that he likes the figure of Kashima Yuu, a handsome androgyny woman whom he often scolds. She was once carried like a princess by “prince” Kashima, who misunderstood that Hori wanted to be treated like a heroine in *shoujo-manga*. While doing drama practice, Hori, who was still sleepy, kicked the box Kashima was stepping on, causing Kashima to fall. After that, Hori fell unconscious due to severe drowsiness. His drama club friend suggested taking Hori to the school infirmary. Kashima saw this as an opportunity to prove her masculinity and then picked Hori up and brought her to the school infirmary.



Figure 2. Hori carried by Kashima, a “handsome prince” woman

Hori, a man whose emotions often ignite like a woman with hormonal problems during Pre-Menstruation Syndrome (PMS), admitted that he fell in love with Kashima Yuu, a macho androgyny woman who is known as a prince at school. Kashima is a gentlemanly “handsome prince,” so Hori feels that she is an ideal masculine figure that is not in him. Although Kashima is not clearly stated to respond to Hori’s feelings, in this relationship it can be seen that the two of them exchange gender roles, the man who is supposed to protect, instead asks for protection from women.

3. Mikoto Mikoshiba. He is Nozaki’s assistant who is in charge of drawing flowers and others for the comic background. He pretends to be a playboy but is a shy and gentle character. Despite being a man, Mikoto's characteristics are more feminine than the heroine Sakura. Even because she is too feminine, she is the source of inspiration for the heroine characters in the manga by Nozaki.
4. Hirotaka Wakamatsu. He is a young boy who is innocent, naive, and easily trusts others, so he is often bullied by Yuzuki Seo, the athletic and tough masculine woman. Due to being bullied by Seo too often, Wakamatsu suffers from insomnia. Ironically, he could sleep and be free from insomnia when he heard Lorelei's song, which was actually Seo's voice. Wakamatsu here is described as a submissive man and does not like conflict. He is also the inspiration for a female character named Waka in the comic by Nozaki.

The four main male characters in the comic *Monthly Girls' Nozaki-kun* above depict men as figures who are not aggressive in romance, have high femininity skills (for example cooking), like women who are more masculine than themselves, are shy, gentle, and don't like conflict. These traits are very close to the characteristics of herbivorous males as described by Ushikubo (2008) and Morioka (2013).

Another example in the comic *Sakura-chan to Amane-kun*, we can find a male main character who is not only feminine in behavior, but also physical appearance because the main character has a hobby as a cross-dresser. Sakura Souta, the main character who is a young boy in a high school is described as the following figure.

1. Loves something cute (*kawaii*). Sakura is a student who likes dolls and things related to *kawaii*. In his room, Sakura has several adorable dolls. Even the things he brings to school also have *kawaii* value such as sticky memos with cats on them and so on. This was emphasized from the start in the monologue of the introduction of the main character, “*Boku no namae wa Sakura Souta. Dokonidemoiru futsuu no danshi koukousei. Otoko ni shite wa mukashi kara kawaii mono ga suki dattadake...*” (“My name is Sakura Souta. Seen from anywhere, I’m just an ordinary high school student. Even though it’s a boy, I’ve always liked *kawaii* things...”). This is very different from the 20 items of BSRI masculinity standard and also one of the four elements of the male sex role (Brannon 2004), namely “no sissy stuff,” which demands that men not keep cute things because they seem effeminate.

2. Likes to dress up and pay attention to appearance. In one episode, Sakura received a used uniform from Rumi-Nee, Sakura's neighbor and playmate since childhood. After getting them, Sakura bought a wig and long socks to complete the look. Sakura started making new hairstyles for his wigs, such as braids, ponytails, and so on. Like a herbivorous man, Sakura is very fond of dressing up and paying attention to her appearance. According to traditional masculinity values, men who like to dress are considered not masculine because basically dressing up is a woman's activity. In another episode, Sakura who is a cross-dresser happily wears a pink dress and bright blue outer, a shoulder bag, and a straight braid hairstyle. He not only pays attention to his appearance but also the appearance of other people, including when he finds clothes that seem very suitable for Amane to wear. As fellow cross-dressers, Sakura and Amane often change appearances. Not all herbivorous men are cross-dressers, but being very strict about their appearance and style of dress and accessories is one of the preferences of herbivorous men.
3. Loves sweets. Sakura Souta admitted that he was very nervous when he entered the dessert shop in front of the station full of girls. As the herbivorous man described by Ushikobo (2008), a figure who likes sweet foods such as pudding, cakes, chocolate, and so on, so does Sakura towards sweet foods. In Japan, men who consume sweet foods will get oblique responses from the surrounding environment. Spicy food is considered to be the right image for a man. In "Men, Meat, and Marriage: Models of Masculinity," Sobal (2005) explains that foods that are considered masculine include meat (especially steak), hamburgers, potatoes, and beer, while foods that are considered feminine such as salads, pasta, yogurt, fruit, and chocolate. By linking gender to certain foods, masculine or feminine foods become semiotic.
4. Love to cook and bake.



Figure 3. Sakura making chocolate for Amane

The comic strip above explains that Sakura has a hobby of making cakes, and although he is a little hesitant for fear of being seen as weird, he gives his homemade chocolate to Amane on Valentine's Day. Whereas in Japan men do not need to give anything on Valentine's Day, because there is a custom that women give chocolate on Valentine's Day and men give back cake on White-Day in May. The monologue carried out by Sakura, that he gave chocolate to Amane (a female character who becomes a cross-dresser and likes to wear men's clothes), and the chocolate was not bought in a shop but made it himself, illustrating that he is changing gender roles and Sakura Souta's femininity skills are very high.

5. Do not have high self-confidence. In the comic chapter 1 page 7, there are Sakura and Amane's conversations as follows:

Amane: "Soreyori kyou wa nanika ... shizendane. Mae atta toki wa motto odoodo shiteta" (Today seems ... more natural huh. At the previous meeting you were very scared)

Sakura: "A... Amane-kun ga issho dakara.... Anshin... suru toiuka hitori dato... kinchoushichatte" ("Maybe because with Amane-kun I feel relieved... I feel nervous when I'm alone")

In the above conversation, it shows that Sakura feels safe when walking with Amane rather than alone, meaning that as a male Sakura does not protect but instead feels safe and protected when with other people. In another episode, Sakura is described as confused when surrounded by fellow men. This is shown by Sakura's stuttered way of speaking and looks unable to solve the problems that come to him. Like the herbivorous man, Sakura prefers to be silent and bury, rather than doing something that can hurt others, and they prefer to avoid conflict so as not to be hurt by others. This attitude is the very opposite of BSRI masculinity standard and hegemonic masculinity, especially the "give 'em hell" element which requires a man to be a person full of action and courage. One of the items in these two elements includes "a real man enjoys a bit of danger" (Thompson and Pleck 1986).

6. Not good at sports.



Figure 4. Sakura is not good at sports

In the scene above, we can see Sakura hit his head because he can't catch the ball. The characteristics of Sakura who are not good at sports contradict the hegemonic masculinity of Brannon's sturdy oak element. This element is an element that refers to the independence, strength of a man. The sturdy oak element has a subscale of toughness with items such as "young man should be physically tough" (young men must be physically strong). Like Sakura, herbivorous men are usually not good at sports and would rather look slim than put muscle in their bodies.

From the analysis above, it can be seen that the development of the gender roles of male characters in *shoujo-manga* has more diverse characteristics. In contrast to the *shounen-manga* genre (comic for boys) which displays more muscle to show masculinity, the male characters in *shoujo-manga* are often depicted as beautiful, gentle, insensitive to romance, not necessarily good at sports, have high femininity skills (*joshiryoku*)—such as cooking, baking, sewing—paying attention to fashion and appearance, not being dominant, and avoiding conflict. The male character depicted as feminine in the *shoujo-manga* is a deconstruction of traditional masculinity that requires men to be tough, strong, dominant, and aggressive. In other words, the male characters in the *shoujo-manga* are more depicted as *soushokukei danshi* (herbivorous men) than *nikushoku danshi* (carnivorous men).

Herbivorous Men, New Masculinity Values and a Market Economy

In "A Phenomenological Study of Herbivore Men," Morioka (2013) explains how herbivorous men became popular and shifted the meaning of masculinity in Japan. According to him, there are at least three characteristics of the herbivorous male personality, namely as follows:

1. Herbivorous men are the types of less active men, both in conversation and in action. So most of the women are in charge of their relationships.
2. Herbivorous men don't flirt and do overly romantic things like men usually do. A herbivorous man is more concerned with genuine affection and is easier to understand.
3. Herbivorous men prefer women who display the qualities of their human nature.

Morioka (2013) also describes how herbivorous men undergo romance with their partners. Herbivorous males tend to be non-aggressive towards both males and females. They do not see a woman as a mere gratification. On the other hand, herbivorous men do see women as equals to their position. A herbivore man is a type of man who hates emotional pain. They often have difficulty dealing with hurting or hurting women in the context of a romantic relationship. Therefore, herbivorous men cannot actively pursue or engage in romantic relationships with their partners because they are afraid that it will hurt themselves or others.

The analysis of male characters in the *shoujo-manga* above proves that the media has gradually shifted the old masculinity standards and gave birth to new masculinity values. As stated by Ushikubo (2008), a herbivorous man does not mean a gay or homosexual person, but rather someone who is not interested in dating, building relationships, or simply having sex with women. Some of them even have relationships with women such as boyfriends or wives. In short, herbivorous men prefer things like dressing up, cooking, and choosing things that look *kawaii* or cute over things related to violence, ambition, or power.

Apart from being considered feminine men, herbivorous men also have no ambition to work (Ushikubo 2008). Herbivorous men are not as competitive against work as men in previous generations. Herbivorous men have a cold and resigned outlook toward work. This is where the main differentiator is those herbivorous men who not only deconstruct traditional masculinity values physically, in appearance, and in behavior, but they also want to free themselves from the economic responsibility that has been imposed on men. In other words, herbivorous men who don't want to be trapped in the routine of office work, basically want to deconstruct the image of salary-man as one of the symbols of masculinity after the samurai era. This is one form of man liberation as questioned by Yamada Masahiro (2008) about gender equality when women demand to share the burden of child care and domestic work when women's liberation is echoed.

Finally, herbivorous men have been blamed for the low birth rate and lower alcohol consumption in Japan (BBC News 2012; Chen 2012). The low birth rate is a complex problem that cannot be simplified by scapegoating men who are not aggressive in fostering romantic relationships or women who became highly educated so that they achieve financial independence which makes them not interested in marriage. Meanwhile, low alcohol consumption cannot be the responsibility of herbivorous men just because they prefer sweets over alcoholic beverages. It could be that the old generation forced themselves to consume alcohol beyond their limits just because they wanted to maintain a masculine image like the demands of society at that time. On the other hand, herbivorous men also open up new potential markets with their hobbies in the fields of cosmetics, fashion, and cooking. So far, these three things have only focused on women, even though how many new markets have been born because men's cosmetics have sprung up, fashion styles are increasingly diverse, and who would have thought that men of all ages are now not ashamed to learn to cook and shop for vegetables at the supermarket. These things would have been considered *memeshii* (sissy) in Japanese society 30 years ago.

CONCLUSION

From the above analysis, it can be concluded that herbivorous men are a deconstruction of traditional Japanese hegemonic masculinity that emphasizes domination, masculinity, and financial strength. Since 40 years ago *shoujo-manga* has played a role in deconstructing standards of masculinity as well as the physical tendencies, appearance, and behavior of herbivorous men. Through *shoujo-manga* the value of old masculinity is questioned and redefined. Meanwhile, the existence of herbivorous men today not only redefines traditional masculinity in plain view but also the anti-thesis of conservative salary-men, which is a symbol of masculinity after the samurai era. This is one form of man liberation as questioned by Yamada Masahiro (2008) about gender equality when women demand to share the burden of child care and domestic work when women's liberation is echoed. Finally, herbivorous men create new masculinity values, as well as create new economic markets in the fields of cosmetics, clothing styles, cooking, and men's trinkets.

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