

# **Femininity, Self-harm and Eating Disorders in Japan**

Navigating contradiction in narrative  
and visual culture

**Gitte Marianne Hansen**

# Contents

<i>List of figures</i>	x
<i>Preface</i>	xi
<i>Acknowledgements</i>	xiii
<b>1 Introduction: women and mixed messages</b>	<b>1</b>
<i>Analytical framework: mapping storylines across genre and cultural hierarchy</i>	<i>6</i>
<i>Female characters: becoming a being</i>	<i>9</i>
<i>Narrative and visual culture as produced works</i>	<i>13</i>
<i>Analysis proposal: inviting characters to speak for themselves</i>	<i>14</i>
<b>PART I</b>	
<b>Normativity</b>	<b>25</b>
<b>2 Defining normativity: femininity with a long leash</b>	<b>27</b>
<i>Categorising sex, attaching gender: performance, dis-integration and positioning</i>	<i>28</i>
<i>Consciousness and display of the game</i>	<i>31</i>
<i>Kairi-kei shakai: multiplicity, extendability and transformativity</i>	<i>34</i>
<i>Contradictive femininity as terminology: paradox and housewife feminism</i>	<i>36</i>
<i>Character-construction techniques: several selves and the doppelgänger motif</i>	<i>40</i>
<i>Conclusions: theory as practice</i>	<i>43</i>

<b>3</b>	<b>Teaming up: 'double and multiple characters'</b>	<b>51</b>
	<i>Two named the same: Yazawa Ai's manga NANA</i>	52
	<i>One alter ego saves the world from destruction: Kon Satoshi's anime Papurika</i>	57
	<i>Three friends and an izakaya: TV drama Araundo</i>	40 –
	<i>chūmon no ōi onna-tachi</i>	59
	<i>Conclusions: just add another</i>	62
<b>4</b>	<b>(De)subjectifying her: 'extended characters'</b>	<b>66</b>
	<i>Midori breaks her silence: Kawakami Mieko's Chichi to ran and Higuchi Ichiyō's Takekurabe</i>	68
	<i>Attempted escape from the dunes: Otsuichi's 'Mukashi yūhi no kōen de' and Abe Kōbō's Suna no onna</i>	73
	<i>No one-way ticket to love and equality: TV spots for Shinkansen Home-town and Xmas Express</i>	77
	<i>Conclusions: tied down by tradition</i>	80
<b>5</b>	<b>Doing it all: 'transforming characters'</b>	<b>86</b>
	<i>A real woman's fantastic dignity: Bandō Mariko's how-to-book Josei no hinkaku</i>	87
	<i>Switch on, switch off: Anno Moyoco's manga Hataraki-man</i>	90
	<i>Mother on the runway: TV drama Bara iro no seisen</i>	97
	<i>Awoken nightmare: Murakami Haruki's 'Nemuri'</i>	101
	<i>Sweaty ambassadors for the nation: the national football team, Nadeshiko-Japan</i>	106
	<i>Conclusions: managing hybrid selves</i>	108
<b>PART II</b>		
	<b>Self-directed violence</b>	<b>113</b>
<b>6</b>	<b>Repairing fragmented selves: self-harm and eating disorders</b>	<b>115</b>
	<i>The Japanese context</i>	117
	<i>Appetite control and slimness</i>	119
	<i>Self-reproach and pain tolerance</i>	123
	<i>Historical roots and contemporary incarnations:</i>	
	<i>Onna daigaku and 'Meshi kuwanu onna'</i>	125
	<i>Between the normal and the sick: behavioural grey zones</i>	128
	<i>Theorising practice: being both victimiser and victim</i>	131
	<i>Conclusions: performance strategy and contemporary lifestyle</i>	133

<b>7 Consuming the war in the body: developing analytical markers</b>	<b>139</b>
<i>Thematising eating disorders and self-harm: from documentary and literature to manga and art 140</i>	
<i>Onset 148</i>	
<i>Feeling dirty 149</i>	
<i>Over-performance 150</i>	
<i>Escape 151</i>	
<i>The alien invader 152</i>	
<i>Conclusions: private struggles as public discourse and entertainment 154</i>	
 <b>8 Exposing embedded storylines: battling appetite, desire and a harmless monster</b>	 <b>158</b>
<i>Purifying a starving self in a self-constructed world:</i>	
<i>Miyazaki Hayao's Sen to Chihiro no kamikakushi 159</i>	
<i>Carving a feminist self into conformity: Murakami Haruki's 'Midori-iro no kemono' 167</i>	
<i>Disguised by the fantastic: re-considering Miyazaki's and Murakami's construction of female 172</i>	
<i>Conclusions: heroic strategy or cultural critique 175</i>	
 <b>9 Conclusions: contradictory-femininity-as-doppelgänger motif</b>	 <b>179</b>
 <i>Glossary</i>	 <b>189</b>
<i>Appendix: notes on authors, producers and works</i>	<b>191</b>
<i>Index</i>	<b>204</b>