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Special Feature

The Affordances of Omaké in Gotouge Koyoharu's *Kimetsu no Yaiba*

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Manga tankōbon, or paperbacks, are a publishing format that collects manga installments serialized in a manga magazine and resells them. They can also be used creatively by mangaka and publishers to advertise, supplement, and document the original work. Collectively, this paratextual content in the paperback is referred to as omaké, or exclusive "extras." In this short essay, I'd like to examine the affordances of the omaké in Gotouge Koyoharu's *Kimetsu no Yaiba* (henceforth *Kimetsu*) as they reveal properties of manga paperbacks for storytelling and world-building distinct from manga magazines. *Kimetsu's* tankōbon omaké possess affordances that reframe and reinterpret aspects of the manga's story and world, while simultaneously reshaping that world for other media texts and contexts.

Omaké is a term whose meaning changes based on the media in question. For TV shows, omaké can mean bloopers or outtakes to the main program, while in video games they can refer to soundtracks or plastic figures. Analysis of omaké in Japanese popular culture often focuses on toys or material products. In his book on anime's media mix, Marc Steinberg has a sustained engagement with the history and affordances of omaké as they pertain to character merchandising. In tracing the movement of Astro Boy from the static manga panel to the limited animation interval to the character sticker, Steinberg shows how the anime tied the manga character to licensed merchandising, with Meiji Seika chocolate balls becoming "packages" for character stickers.[1] In this conception, the affordances of the chocolate ball wrapper shift with the addition of the omaké content, moving from a container that sells candy to a package that sells content. Otsuka Eiji has similarly shown how Bikkuriman chocolates inspired a craze for character stickers featuring small narratives packaged inside. In Otsuka's observation, children were not interested in the ostensible product being purchase – the chocolate – but rather the tiny narrative fragment written on the back of the sticker which hinted at a larger story world. The affordance of the chocolate package was to grant access to this dispersed omaké narrative

in a process Otsuka has referred to as "narrative consumption."[2]

Both Steinberg and Otsuka look at omaké as premiums packaged with other consumables. This is characteristic of most omaké analysis, such as that featured in Kitahara Teruhisa's history of omaké. Kitahara, though, does analyze manga content and particularly manga magazines, detailing the practice of magazine to include furoku, or "supplements" constructed of paper and attached to the magazine. Kitahara states that such supplements were quite common in boys' manga magazines in the 1960s when publication was on a monthly basis, but upon switching to weekly publication, the supplements became fewer and fewer as sales grew steadily even without including them.[3] In contrast, shōjo manga continued to package furoku in magazines to this day, and these furoku were designed by the mangaka themselves. Jennifer Prough has extensively detailed the types of furoku that were available to young female readers – letter sets, files, cards, bags, paper constructions – much of which is designed by the mangaka.[4] But in shōnen media, as furoku became less popular, the word omaké often came to refer to additional pencil sketch illustrations, trivia, or commentary only available inside the tankōbon, taking its cues from toy culture. For popular works, this material can be collected into a "fanbook" that features nothing but illustrations and trivia for avid readers of the given work.

It is not uncommon for most manga tankōbon to have a handful of character omaké in addition to the manga text, but *Kimetsu's* tankōbon typically have between ten to fifteen original sketches that provide a wide variety of content. *Kimetsu's* omaké, in addition to engaging in all of the aforementioned paratextual affordances, also possess furoku affordances in their "gifting" of additional content though the tankōbon. They exhibit a wide variety of generic affordances that have drawn attention to the work via various media channels. This additional content even became a point of promotion for the manga's tankōbon, with the band of the final tankōbon volume stating that the paperback contained "14 pages of additional epilogue drawings and a juicy 25 pages of omaké, for a gorgeous total of 39 pages of drawings."[5] Needless to say, omaké provide an incentive to readers who have read the manga in the magazine to purchase paperbacks to consume additional "official" content that can possibly create new commentary or meaning to the manga text.

As this material is consistently located in the margins of *Kimetsu's* tankōbon, this practice of omaké inclusion as a type of visual annotation is akin to writing footnotes, endnotes, and other types of added commentary. Remi Kalir and Antero Garcia, in their framework of social annotation, state that notes "mediate the relationship between reading and writing."[6] Gérard Genette, in defining notes, calls attention to how they are "connected to a more or less definite segment of text and either placed opposite to or keyed to this segment."[7] In terms of reading, then, the note must then be approximate to the text that it is in reference to, giving the note a local quality to the text itself. Moreover,

appearing within the text, they also break the linear flow of reading in the book, or what Genette has referred to as the note's discursive nature that "unavoidably marks a break in the enunciative regime."[8] While there are no linguistic footnotes or endnotes in the *Kimetsu* tankōbon, sketched illustrations and small narratives appear at the end of each chapter, underneath dust jackets, and are included at the end of the books. These sketches uniquely often refer to the concluded chapter, giving them a more localized quality than typical illustrations that appear between chapters in the book. The function of these sketches mirrors what Genette has termed "postfaces," or notes from the author that "expatiate on his subject knowing that both sides were fully informed."[9] Given the postface's location in the book and discursive function, they can "only hope to fulfill a curative or corrective function."[10] Thus, due to their placement in the book following a concluded manga chapter, these paratextual sketches – or "parasketches" – provide visual annotation to the original text, clarifying or correcting an element of the associated material through various illustrative means.

I've organized the various affordances of these parasketches in the *Kimetsu* tankōbon into the following categories to illuminate the multiple ways in which the tankōbon "cures" or "corrects" content for readers within the paperback interstices:

1. Self-Representations (Corrective): Expressions of gratitude or apologia of manga errors.
2. Illustrations (Reflective): Illustrations that thematically reflect a chapter or volume
3. Parodies (Palliative): Humorous cutting room (botsu) appearances or scenes
4. Narrations (Curative): Short world-building tales (*Taisho koso koso uwasa banashi*)
5. Alternate Worlds (Restorative): Sketches and stories that depict an alternate world, time, or reality

I have structured these categories in terms of narrative complexity as the parasketches move from the merely corrective to the transformative. These categories aren't mutually exclusive and often overlap with one another, but there is some distinction between them with regard to their core affordance. For example, the affordance of the first category, self-representation, is to represent the mangaka in some way in order to "correct" an error in the original manga. While these omaké might include character illustrations, their purpose is to communicate the wishes and thoughts of the mangaka, which in this case vacillates between extreme gratitude towards readers for buying the manga and apologies for a drawing or dialogue error in the magazine that was "repaired" in the tankōbon. These sketches have an authoring affordance similar to the dust jacket and Q&A, though they serve to further distinguish the mangaka from the publisher through handwritten

lines accompanied by Gotouge's crocodile avatar, adding humor and cuteness to sincere expressions of appreciation or regret.

These reflexive sketches represent a larger pattern in *Kimetsu's* omaké, which are unusual not just in their number and variety, but in how they work to reduce tension and optimistically recast or reframe aspects of the original manga's dark story and world. I'd like to use the cover of one of the volumes to illustrate this "reflective" aspect in some detail. As described by Genette, covers and dust jackets have a preview affordance for the content within, but, as Katherine McHugh argues in her analysis of postfeminist television title sequences, covers and openings can also be "used to 'decode' the programs they introduce."[11] Manga dust jackets and covers similarly can anticipate and comment upon narrative or thematic moments within their material forms. For example, Jaqueline Berndt has shown how the dust jacket for Kouno Fumiyo's *In this Corner of the World* "anticipates unobtrusively the narrative climax" of the manga through illustrating the protagonist's arm across the jacket's inner flap, causing it to be "cut off" from the reader of the cover.[12] In this way, the reader's active opening of the book and reading across and between the dust jacket is what connects the meaning of the dust jacket to the narrative, which features a young girl who loses her arm in a delayed bomb explosion.

While *Kimetsu* does not do anything particularly unusual with its dust jacket, the mangaka includes additional illustrations on the manga's cover underneath which can occasionally reflect the themes of the volume. Most manga simply reuse the dust jacket illustration in a monochromatic color template for the cover, or use a placeholder image for all volumes, but *Kimetsu* features an additional illustration for each volume, a pleasure in which only readers of the print paperback can indulge. Volume 8 is a notable example, as the manga features a dust jacket illustration of a character named Rengoku with a cover underneath featuring his mother (Figure 1). This material layering of mother and child is a comment on the special relationship Rengoku has with his mother, who loved and raised him, but died when Rengoku was very young and exists now only as a memory buried within him. The excavation of memories forms the story for the "Mugen Train" story arc of the manga that is featured in this particular tankōbon. One of the themes explored in this arc is the idea that surface appearances are a mask for deep pains and traumas not apparent to the outside world, but can be revealed in dream states.

A close reading of this cover and its meaning to the narrative reveals how this parasketch reflects and expands upon themes in the narrative. The dust jacket features Rengoku staring forward, directly toward the reader, his hands perched atop a sword as red and orange flames burn behind him. The cover underneath features a black and white sketch of Rengoku's mother, tears welling at her eyes, though in a similar forward gaze. This mirroring of gazes means that the characters are gazing outwards at the reader, but

Figure 1. On the left: volume 8 dust jacket featuring Rengoku. On the right: volume 8 cover featuring Rengoku's mother. Consequently, this omaké does not appear to be available to consumers of the digital or translated versions of the manga.[13]

also inwards at one another. Her presence on the cover underneath the dust jacket reinforces the arc's theme, signifying that her memory resides within his subconscious. She is rendered in less defined line as well and, contrasted with the vibrantly colored dust jacket, also suggests that she is "separate" from the ordered line of the manga's world as a spectral presence watching over him, a motif that is repeated with many of the characters throughout the manga. This idea is reinforced on page 8 of chapter 66, when Rengoku's mother appears in a spiritual form before Rengoku's death. Rengoku smiles as his life expires on page 10, and we are not privy to what he sees, but the cover provides us with an answer: a mother welcoming her son in the afterlife. This moving scene, moreover, is not revealed to the outside, "living" world. Neither the other demon slayers in the manga's world nor the casual consumer of the manga tankōbon is privy to this information; it is something only Rengoku can recall and see in his moment of death. Like the demon slayers whose dreams are excavated to reveal their traumas, readers must investigate the character beyond his material surface, connecting meanings across different physical and spectral spaces from the cover to the pages within.

This is but one example of how the illustrations can reflect and comment upon meanings within the narrative, though is by no means the sole form of illustrative engagement. In later volumes as the series intensifies with long battles of life and death, illustrations more typically feature gag manga or idealized interactions between characters

that offer a "palliative" affordance to the tension of the developing narrative. Such parodic character illustrations litter the interstices of the tankōbon, frequently offering glimpses of lighter, comical realities that have been removed from the purview of the manga's grim environment. Part of this lightness in touch comes from the quality of the designs themselves, which are rendered in pencil strokes and not the G-pen, "a device that has shaped the appearance of graphic narratives for young men (gekiga, seinen manga)."[14] The use of pencil is a practical one, particularly with the amount of omaké in the manga, but also a stylistic one, as the pencil sketches mimic moments of heavy deformity in the manga used for comical situations.[15] These sketches thus convey both a lightness in content and form, bringing levity to sequences of conflict and tension. This is evident in the interstices of early volumes of the manga, for example, which show both botsu (rejected designs) and cosplay designs of the sibling protagonists Tanjiro and Nezuko illustrated in-between chapters. These illustrated fragments of Tanjiro in a tuxedo or Nezuko eating a bowl of udon in Volume 2 contrast starkly with the opening tragic chapters of the story, where Tanjiro's family members are massacred and Nezuko is turned into a flesh-eating demon. Such designs foreshadow more elaborate derivation of characters later in the manga which focus on parallel universes and alternate realities.

These interstices depicting characters in parodic appearances and situations are illustrated in the blank pages in between chapters, briefly interrupting the reading progression and dramatic tension of consecutive chapters in the tankōbon. In some ways, these scenes mimic the format of the magazine, which includes news and advertisements about manga series and products in between chapters. In these cases, interruptions transition the reader from one manga series to another through the transmedial flows incorporated by the magazine. The omaké in the tankōbon similarly take advantage of their not being part of the manga's continuity to show humorous character interactions occurring in offscreen or fictional spaces. An example of this can be seen in Volume 4 during the Mt. Natagumo arc where the manga focuses on the battles of demon slayers Tanjiro and Inosuke with the Natagumo family. Four omaké in the volume comically display Zenitsu, their comrade whom they left behind, frantically searching for them in Mt. Natagumo. The scenes do not necessarily add anything to the manga besides briefly and humorously accounting for Zenitsu's whereabouts during the manga's battle sequences, echoing manic comic interludes that occur in periods of post-battle recovery. Divorced from the narrative, these scenes resemble non-diegetic transitionary devices, such as eye catches that segment television broadcasts, rather than the sort of diegetic relief of tension that follows the building of cinematic suspense. The omaké thus provide a liminal quality to manga chapters that can otherwise be difficult to replicate outside of the manga magazine, breaking up chapters with comic asides that comment upon and de-escalate the preceding action.

One of the strengths of reading manga in a tankōbon versus a magazine format is the ability to better understand complex narratives due to chapter continuity, a lack of temporal distance between serialized chapters, and the ability to reread between chapters. While these parodic parasketches interrupt this function, they become less common as the manga develops. In their place are short, hand-written stories or trivia that in some way elaborate upon the concluded chapter. These tiny narratives, called *Taisho koso koso uwasa-banashi* ("Whispered rumors from the Taisho-era") or *Sengoku koso koso banashi* ("Warring States whisper tales") typically contain a character sketch accompanied by a short bit of trivia of the character. In the beginning of the manga, many of these narratives have a similar comical affordance to the one-page gag scenes, but become more complex and varied further into the manga's serialization. Towards the end of the manga, some narratives dispense with character illustrations entirely and are stretched across multiple interstices, to the point that there is a text-based serial narrative running alongside the main text commenting on and contextualizing it. Most of these "whisper tales" act as a coda or epilogue to the concluded chapter. In doing so, they provide a "curative" affordance to the manga narrative, resolving unresolved plotlines or revealing aspects of characters that remained hidden in the manga through the addition of an alternate perspective.

Take, for example, the case of Himejima, the pious, blind warrior who is always crying. Chapter 135 in Volume 16 revolves around Himejima's training of Tanjiro, whom he comes to respect for his honesty. During a break in their training, Himejima recounts a tragedy from his past when he ran a temple for foster children. One night, a rogue demon slaughtered all but one child under his care named Sayo, who he managed to protect from harm. When asked by the authorities who murdered the children, however, the terrified girl told them "it was him, that monster." Based on this accusation, the authorities arrested and jailed Himejima, who resolved never to trust another human being, notably children who are "weak, lie, commit cruelties easily, and are balls of selfishness." While Himejima subdues his inner demons by accepting Tanjiro, he does so based on Tanjiro's difference from the children who betrayed him in the past. The children in the manga *are* cruel and dishonest, and the chapter ends with this unpleasant fact intact. An omaké titled "Sayo's Story," however, follows this chapter in the tankōbon and offers a coda to this story. Sayo, it turns out, did not accuse Himejima of killing the children; the "monster" she referred to was the rogue demon who had disappeared, but in her state of trauma she could not clarify her thoughts properly to absolve him of the charges. The narrative reduces the harshness of the manga's world – or at least its human victims – through Sayo's perspective, borne not of malice but of fear and confusion. In doing so, it encourages the reader to empathize with Sayo and the manga's many child victims, and not, like Himejima, pity and resent them.

This is just one example of how the narrative omaké "cure," or at least optimistically reframe, the manga's harsh world through the presentation of alternative perspectives. This reframing comes to a head in the manga's final chapter, which playfully recasts the protagonists' descendants and reincarnations a hundred years into the future as characters in a school manga. The ending is bizarre, as it concludes a story that was grounded in Japan's Taisho Era, even if the story displays a fluid border between physical reality and a spiritual afterlife where the ghosts of deceased characters visit and speak to the living. Readers of the tankōbon, however, would instantly recognize this as the culmination of the longest and most detailed omaké titled "Kimetsu Gakuen" (Kimetsu School). This paratext features several characters illustrated in school uniforms and accompanied by a setting that matches their character's personality. Tanjiro and Nezuko are reimagined as students wearing school uniforms, and Nezuko's bamboo muzzle is replaced with a baguette. This at first seems like merely another palliative parody, though moves into narrative-building through its continued application to other characters. Since each installment creates a new setting for a character, a parallel universe school manga is established with the protagonists occupying various student, teacher, and staff roles by the end of the final volume.[16]

The manga's final chapter, to be clear, does not use the exact same settings from "Kimetsu Gakuen"; some characters reappear in a reincarnated form, while other characters are replaced by their descendants. But the chapter utilizes a similar approach in "restoring" characters who are injured or deceased through the creation of an alternate reality that revolves around a contemporary school setting. This practice of re-using characters in alternate worlds and settings is common to dōjinshi, or fan-produced derivative novels, manga, and games based on existing anime or manga works. Fan-fiction is obviously not unique to manga or Japan, and readers have long created original works of pop cultural forms to, as Jonathan Gray puts it, "engage more closely with the psyches, motivations, and specificities of multiple characters than they might be able to with the [fiction] itself."[17] Dōjinshi adaptations of shōnen manga, though, have a particularly long history, and a number of scholars have mapped how female fans have created dōjinshi to explore shōnen settings. Otsuka Eiji, for example, has shown how young female fans of Takahashi Yoichi's *Captain Tsubasa* "brought their own creativity to bear in making their own variations," many of which stressed and exaggerated the relationships between the male characters.[18] Other scholars, meanwhile, have looked at the various character pairings and gender dynamics of *Naruto* dōjinshi to reveal the desires and biases of the manga's readers.[19] The attraction for readers of these derivative stories resides in knowledge of the original manga and the creative abilities of the authors to cast the same characters in situations or environments that provide pleasures absent from the manga's world. Parallel

universes, alternate realities, and parodic settings are quite common for dōjinshi, where fans can contribute their own interpretation of a given work that reflects their own preferences and desires. Such practices are also not uncommon even for the publisher, which might commission an artist or mangaka to create a spin-off work. What is unusual, in this case, is for the mangaka to indulge in this particular practice of their own work and within the same device that delivers the manga itself.

This idea of "restoration," moreover, is not only a metaphorical one. The final volume also adds omaké pages of manga that were not included in the original manga's magazine serialization. The first set of pages are inserted into the second to last chapter of the manga, elaborating on the postwar recovery and subsequent peace that Tanjiro and his friends celebrate upon vanquishing their enemies. The second set of pages are inserted into the beginning of the final chapter of the manga and detail the reflections of a descendent of Tanjiro. Both of the omaké content complement the chapters in their focus on the everyday lives of the characters through monologues of their everyday lives. These monologues call back to the first chapter, which begins with Tanjiro's monologue about his life with his family, and these omaké monologues frame this everyday life through the inner thoughts of Tanjiro and his great-grandson. A third set of pages follows the end of the final chapter, providing additional contemporary settings for the reincarnated characters and a final coda that features the main characters providing words of encouragement. The square-shaped speech boxes in these panels are curiously the same used for inner monologues and dialogues. This suggests that the dialogue is subsumed under an omniscient narration that is directed towards the reader. The decision to merge dialogue and monologue gives the words of encouragement an additional meaning for the reader during the stress of a global pandemic, conjoining the thoughts of character and author. This sense of gratitude and encouragement is reinforced in the final two omaké pages and a message on the dust jacket where Gotouge thanks readers for their support during periods of "suffering," to not give in to this suffering, and to "take things at their own pace."

In these final chapters as they appear in the tankōbon, the mangaka's text (manga) and paratext (dōjinshi) converge. That is, the conclusion of *Kimetsu no yaiba* is informed by the ideas of "Kimetsu Gakuen," imagining a contemporary alternate world with the same characters that "corrects" the harsh reality of the manga's temporality and environment. Similar to dōjinshi of shōnen manga, the focus is less on the spectacle and action of the original manga, and more on the personalities and interpersonal relationships between the characters. The manga's ending is thus not simply an alternate reality of the characters, but one that incorporates a long-running paratext which laid the groundwork for readers to be conditioned to the potential and possibility of alternate worlds, relationships, and desires. The epilogue of the manga, far from being out of place, reflects the

ethos of the *Kimetsu* omaké, which are designed to blunt the manga's grim post-feudal world and inject a feeling of levity and optimism into the reader. This is especially important considering the status of the young protagonists as marginalized outcasts who are forced to defend a society that has cast them aside, an allusion to the continued burden placed on young people in a rapidly aging Japan. The manga's conjoining of text and paratext thus provides a utopic alternative to the characters' violent circumstances and environment.

This restoration of characters and world to a living, reproductive state also has implications for the media environment of *Kimetsu*, which has been adapted into several different media including television, cinema, stage performances, net animation, and digital games. The television adaptation of *Kimetsu* is particularly interesting, as many of the paratextual omaké in the books have been incorporated into various paratextual aspects of the anime (Figure 2). From cover designs used for promotional art to title page illustrations used as eye catches to bracket commercial breaks, these omaké texts often serve a paratextual affordance in the anime by prepping viewers for transitionary moments. The "whisper tales" are the most conspicuous, as they not only come at the end of the television episode as a post-credit "postface," but are presented by Tanjiro and Nezuko as they reflexively discuss the episode's content. The background for this discussion, moreover, are pages from the adapted manga chapters, drawing attention to the material origins of the anime and signifying the presence of the metacognitive reader/viewer. And while some interstices are woven into the fabric of the anime's episode, others – such as "Kimetsu Gakuen" – are spun off into net-based anime shorts that stream on YouTube. These, too, are treated with a cartoonish touch that emphasize the characters' personalities and play upon exaggerations for comical effect. These derivations are consumed as

Figure 2. Images from the manga tankōbon that are remediated into transitionary functions in the anime broadcast. On the left: an "eye catch" lifted from a tankōbon title page transitions viewers from the broadcast to a commercial break.[20] On the right: characters transition viewers into the next episode while panels from the manga form their background.[21]

assorted symptoms of the existing *Kimetsu* context, though this is to be expected. The manga's tankōbon, in its frequent juxtaposition of assorted visual and narrative modes, primes us for slipperiness between the manga's form, content, and media.

In her analysis of the paratexts of a particular fan-created work, Marie Lindgren Leavenworth argues that fan fiction is an "intermediary form between print literature and narratives which to a greater extent make use of the multimodal hypertext format, and this in-between position enables a sustained exploration of both limitations and affordances."[22] It is questionable if fan fiction, at least in Japan, has this kind of direct mediating relationship between printed material and other forms of mediatization, since fan-created derivative works are produced at the same time as media companies' official adaptations. But it is instructive to view the *Kimetsu* media phenomenon through the "intermediary form" of the manga tankōbon, as its various paratextual "limitations and affordances" mediate publisher, fan, and transmedial expressions and desires. Due to the sheer overproduction and overload of paratextual narrative in the tankōbon, it is tempting to read each of the *Kimetsu* texts – manga, TV series, film, 2.5 musical, net anime – as a liminal paratext that shuttles consumers from one media text to another, much like the record-breaking film, *Kimetsu no Yaiba: Mugen Ressha-hen* (2020), transitions viewers of the 2019 television series cour to the upcoming 2021 television cour. The film, translated as "Infinite Train," was "omakéfied" through a cycle of different limited-edition products attached to viewings every couple of weeks. This campaign helped prolong the film's popularity among spectators who viewed the film several times in order to acquire the various limited-edition omaké, sparking viral discussion of these campaigns on social media platforms. The ethos of the production and consumption of *Kimetsu*, then, could be considered one of constant omaké, each tying into and expanding upon one another in a long chain of extended mediality. Beyond simply adapting chapters of the manga that bridge the two story arcs, the Mugen Train in this formulation becomes a liminal vehicle transporting us along what is likely to be a near "infinite" track of *Kimetsu* texts and paratexts, content and consumption.

Endnotes

1 Marc Steinberg, "Immobile Sections and Trans-series Movement: *Astroboy* and the Emergence of Anime," *animation: an interdisciplinary journal* 1.2 (2006): 201.

2 Otsuka Eiji, "World and Variation: The Reproduction and Consumption of Narrative," *Mechademia 5* (2010): 109.

3 Kitahara Teruhisa, *"Omaké" no Hakubutsushi* (A Natural History of "Omaké") (Tokyo: PHP Kenkyujo, 2003), 199.

4 See Jennifer Prough, *Straight from the Heart: Gender, Intimacy, and the Cultural Production of Shōjo Manga* (Honolulu, University of Hawaii Press, 2013).

5 Gotouge Koyoharu, *Kimetsu no Yaiba* Vol. 23 (Tokyo: Shueisha, 2021). Incidentally, Gotouge was forced to issue a clarification when readers complained about not being able to find the 14 additional pages, which were actually pages that had been inserted into chapters of the manga.

6 Remi Kalir and Antero Garcia, *Annotation* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2021), 15.

7 Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 319.

8 Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation,* 332.

9 Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation,* 237.

10 Gérard Genette, *Paratexts: Thresholds of Interpretation,* 239.

11 Katherine McHugh, "Giving Credit to Paratexts and Parafeminism in *Top of the Lake* and *Orange is the New Black*," *Film Quarterly* 68.3 (2015): 18.

12 Jaqueline Berndt, "Conjoined by Hand: Aesthetic Materiality in Kouno Fumiyo's Manga *In This Corner of the World*," *Mechademia 12.2: Materialities Across Asia* (2020): 96-97.

13 Photo by author.

14 Jaqueline Berndt, "Conjoined by Hand: Aesthetic Materiality in Kouno Fumiyo's Manga *In This Corner of the World*," 92.

15 See Jaqueline Berndt's article in this issue: "More Mangaesque than the Manga: 'Cartooning' in the *Kimetsu no Yaiba* Anime," *Transcommunication* 8.2 (Fall 2021).

16 Antagonists, on the other hand, occupy various "ghost" roles in a parody of the *gakko no kaidan*, or "school ghost story," genre.

17 Jonathan Gray, *Show Sold Separately: Promos, Spoilers, and Other Media Paratexts* (New York: NYU Press, 2010), 144.

18 Otsuka Eiji, "World and Variation: The Reproduction and Consumption of Narrative": 113.

19 See Fujimoto Yukari, "Women in *Naruto*, Women Reading *Naruto*" and Jessica Bauwens-Sugimoto and Nora Renka, "Fanboys and *Naruto* Epics: Exploring New Ground in Fanfiction Studies" in *Manga's Cultural Crossroads*, eds. Jaqueline Berndt and Bettina Kummerling-Meibauer (New York: Routledge, 2013), 172-208.

20 *Kimetsu no yaiba*, Netflix, directed by Sotozaki Haruo (Tokyo: Aniplex/Ufotable, 2019).

21 *Kimetsu no yaiba*, Netflix, directed by Sotozaki Haruo (Tokyo: Aniplex/Ufotable, 2019).

22 Maria Lindgren Leavenworth, "The Paratext of Fan Fiction," *Narrative* 23.1 (2015): 57.