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From West to East to West: A case study on Japanese wine manga translated in French

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Wine is translation. Or rather, translation remains a necessary constituent at every life stage of any given wine, whether it is in antiquity or within the context of the modern wine industry. Wine embodies the almost holy feat of transformation and rebirth, a process through which the original ingredient—the grape—transcends itself to become something wholly different while also retaining the best qualities of the original. The winemaking process is a reflection of the people involved in every step of wine production. The viticulturalist primarily oversees the actual making of the wine, or the translation of terroir, tradition, history, and technology into a bottled product reflecting these; the wine expert has developed knowledge of the viticulturalist's trade and a palate capable of discerning the results of that trade, and works to translate the wine's qualities, the winemaker's prowess, the history of the land, the characteristics of the terroir and the vicissitudes of a given year into gustatory language; and the wine consumer translates the knowledge of the wine expert into a personal, emotional experience. The authors argue that Japanese wine manga serves as a point of unification for these acts of translation between the well-established French wine world and the burgeoning Japanese wine culture, bringing together the acts of the viticulturalist, the wine expert and the wine consumer. The wine manga series *Sommelier* and *Kami no Shizuku* [*Les Gouttes de Dieu* in French] binds together these translation acts in a complete volume, transposing onto the process a story that represents the translation of oenological knowledge into a transnational emotional experience. The characters who appear throughout these series represent a gradation of wine knowledge from the viticulturalist to the consumer, replicating the mastery of wine knowledge implicit in these levels.

Translation is the enabler. A primary function of translation at the viticulturalist's stage has been to propagate viticulture itself. A prime example of this form of translation rests in the work of Michele F. van der Merwe, in which she outlines the process through which the South African wine industry together with lexicographers collaborated to provide "information on wine terminology as well as linguistic information on the use of such terminology" in the production of a wine dictionary intended for a target audience of viticulturists and oenologists working across Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa (337). As winemaking has made the transition from craft to biological and scientific process, the suitability of literal translation through rough semantic equivalence began to lack the rigour necessary for the transmission of the ideas and concepts informing wine lexicon. As van der Merwe

states, regarding a 1973 wine dictionary, "Providing neither semantic nor grammatical information, such a dictionary at best confirms the expert's own assumptions, but laypeople and semi-experts alike will find it unsuitable for text reception and translation purposes."

While the viticulturalists are concerned with how translation can help disseminate their trade, it is the wine experts who take it upon themselves to propagate not only the trade, but also its results. The wine expert bridges the wine and wine consumer, for many of whom the first experience of a wine will come in the form of its etiquette (label)[1], which must translate the contents of the bottle into words and images with emotional magnetism. As Michel Logoz tells us, wine is "aimed only at pleasing the senses" and must "search for its clientele through an image in which the would-be buyer will find some objective information, but also the fulfilment of his (sic) dreams and fantasies" (7). Logoz continues, "[Investigating the origins of wine] will give us an idea of the challenge we have to meet, which will later have to be translated into words and images." Still, the work of the wine expert has just begun, because the content of the bottle must also be describable in a global, and thus multilingual, wine market in which the wine lexicon in the country of the producer may not have an equivalent in the consuming market. Wine experts such as Robert Parker in the United States and James Halliday in Australia develop wine guides to bring knowledge to the public. Here, translation must provide an embodiment for both the tangible and intangible. Jason Chow alludes to the challenges faced by translators in a 2013 WSJ article documenting the difficulties of preparing *Decanter* magazine for a population for which wine has become affordable, but which lacks the knowledge to talk about it: "[The editor] says he and his Chinese translators got into a two-hour argument over the word 'savory,' a term often used to describe wines like those from the Rhone Valley or well-aged Bordeaux, since the former has hints of olive and herbs, while the latter is often described as "leathery" and "meaty." The article continues, "They kept saying, 'If it's not sweet, it's automatically salty,' he recalled. But we said, 'No.' We dug out translations from other people and saw nobody really got over this barrier. What is not-sweet and not-salty? There isn't a term for that in Chinese" (9). Implicit in this battle over semiological turf is a struggle for power and dominance, the question being, who has the right to define wine and wine culture? Is a particular profile or level of expertise required for the translator? How might collaborative translation alter the terrain of this semiological turf? If the modern wine industry and wine culture are Eurocentric in nature—not just reflecting the dominance of the European wines of the old world but also the metastasis of that dominance through colonisation now reflected in new world wines—then what role does translation have to play in the acculturation of wine to a new audience and how should translation play this role?

[1] In documentation provided by the Office International de la Vigne et du Vin (International Organisation of Vine and Wine, or OIV), 'etiquette' and 'label' are used interchangeably, the latter simply being the English translation of the former. Though etymologically distinct, Hayama Kotaro states that 'etiquette' is the preferred word amongst oenophiles in Japan, though the Japanese transliteration of the English 'label' is more popularly used by 'normal people' (28). Thus, use of the French term connotes a certain level of sophistication toward wine consumption. French and English documentation for wine labelling in accordance with OIV rules can be found at: http://www.oiv.int/en/technical-standards-and-documents/products-definition-and-labelling/international-standard-labelling-wines.

Labelled a *totem drink* by the French philosopher Roland Barthes in the 1970s (74), wine has since attracted increased attention from researchers in the humanities (Lo Monaco & Guimelli), and in particular in anthropological studies of food (Demossier 2001). The study of Japanese cuisine and its political, cultural, historical, economic and social status has not been lost in such studies. For instance, Katarzyna Cwiertka in her seminal study on modern Japanese cuisine takes the reader on a tour across the changing landscape of the Japanese dinner table, from imperial to postwar Japan, concluding with an examination of how Japanese food has come to fit within the global gastronomic landscape (181). This landscape is mimicked in the language of manga through a plethora of "gourmand" manga, perhaps the most influential of which is Kariya Tetsu's and Hanasaki Akira's *Oishinbo*. While manga "databooks" such as *Kono Manga ga Sugoi* have located manga on deglutition within the larger genre of manga on mastication (Shinji 229), the former has demonstrably gained ground in both its presence amongst Japan researchers (e.g., Jeffrey Alexander's examination of Japan's microbrewery industry in *Brewed in Japan*) as well as its presence on manga bookshelves in Japan.

Wine manga has performed the tasks of importing the language of wine from its old world power center of France, and bringing French wine culture and knowledge into Japan through the act of translation. This very act has allowed for a shift in power—and thus the potential to represent the wine world—from France to Japan (Pitte). We will show in this paper that there is an interplay between French and Japanese media, producing a cultural space bridged through the wine lexicon used in two series of manga recently translated into French: *Sommelier*, published in French in 2004 and *Les Gouttes de Dieu*, in 2008. We selected these two series not only because they have been translated into French but, as we shall discuss below, because they represent two dramatic alterations to representations of wine and the wine world in Japanese manga, as well as other forms of media including television and video games.

Our method for conducting this analysis begins with a comparative analysis of the Japanese source text with the French target text, highlighting metaphors used in wine culture. Through an analysis of these metaphors and where they rest along the spectrum of textual reliability (i.e. where the level of equivalence, accuracy and fluency converge), we will posit that not only has the wine lexicon been embraced within the Japanese language, but also that it has done so in a manner that brings fluency to the French translation, with very few instances of literalism and foreignism. In other words, the language of wine has been so successfully imported into Japan that the traditional wine world hierarchy has been turned on its head, with Japanese-French translations of wine language allowing a new way for the French to see their culture through a lens provided by the Japanese sommelier. This importation is mirrored in Japanese texts on wine and in the knowledge expected of wine experts and sommelier. The Japanese Sommelier Association exam, for instance, not only requires test takers to memorize the French names for varietals and wine regions, but also designates French (alongside English) as one of the languages through which test takers must answer questions on wine appreciation and expression, dedicating an entire chapter to the effort and providing lists of descriptors in French,

from "arômes primaires" to "pipi de chat" (Yano 269-284). Japanese wine manga employs the knowledge of the sommelier and wine expert in the form of a graphic narrative, thereby making such knowledge available and accessible to the non-expert.

1. A specific Language for a Symbolic Product

In his hallmark book *Mythologies*, Barthes includes wine in his essays on French popular culture. He thus contributed to the recognition of wine not only as a French "cultural icon" (Lo Monaco & Guimelli 238), but also as a critical topic for scholars across disciplines (linguistics, geography, sociology, and anthropology), as well as oenologists and wine experts. Wine has long been considered in France an integral part of national identity due to its collective dimension in terms of production and consumption (Garrier; Gautier). Scholars consider that wine is the only natural product to have generated so much literature, exegesis and lexicon (Casamayor), a phenomenon particularly obvious in French wine culture. For centuries, writings on wine were either linked to poetry, with a focus on its symbolism, or dealt with practical aspects such as ranking of varieties. The description of wine and feelings related to tasting is a modern genre, which did not emerge until in the late 19th century. Coutier's *Dictionnaire de la langue du vin* is based on the first recorded occurrence of a word used to describe wine, and thus provides a chronological approach evidencing evolutions and changes across centuries. A constant trend in wine lexicon is the use of anthropomorphism as a base of metaphors used in wine language. Coutier's dictionary demonstrates that since antiquity, human attributes have been applied to wine's properties. Wine is given the human qualities of being able to lucidly express itself (being for example talkative – *bavard* – or mute – *muet*), demonstrating complex attitudes (being severe or sincere), and can be described with social characteristics (noble or rustic). Spatial and temporal metaphors are also common (angular, massive, round, young, mature), as well as expressions related to textile (drapery, velvet, silky).

While origins of wine language can be traced back to antiquity, Greek and Roman authors who were writing on wine started to establish rankings between wine varieties and regions, without giving any details on the wine itself. The lexicon at that time was very limited and vocabulary started to be expanded by Middle Age writers. According to the vocabulary in use during the 13th century, young and pure wines were preferred to the mature or mixed beverages favoured during antiquity. Wine description was then influenced by courtly literature from the 14th century (*amoureux*- in love- and *gracieux* - amiable - being synonymous with delicious and delectable wine). During the 15th century, tactile connotations were introduced. This category of descriptors was particularly useful to accommodate a major shift in wine appreciation from the 16th century, when mature wine progressively became more popular and valuable. During the 15th and the 16th century, a limited lexicon was developed by the people in charge of evaluating the quality of food and wine. They began to establish a specific lexicon, mainly based on color and aroma. Various aromas were increasingly distinguished from the 18th century onward, with the appearance of bubbly wine in Champagne, and glass bottles as new containers. Rabelais (1483-1553) then contributed to the celebration of wine in

Renaissance literature by creating a poetic lexicon, concentrating on effects produced by tasting, instead of describing the product itself (Casamayor).

Diversification and complexification of wine production at the end of the 17th century finally triggered a shift in wine culture in France. Mere drinking was gradually replaced by tasting, a process requiring a precise lexicon to justify why and how one wine could taste "better" than another. During the first half of the 18th century, references to social status were reinforced, with an emphasis on what were then seen as masculine qualities (solid, vigorous, ardent) as indicators of superiority. From the late 18th century, wine growing and production significantly improved, leading to the necessity of professional tasting for commercial purposes. This movement started in the Bordeaux area, where wine brokers were meeting to judge wines to be exported toward England (Coutier 664). In 1822, a book listing current famous vineyards included for the first time a series of sixty terms devoted to wine description (Coutier). Over two centuries, several major events contributed to changes in French wine history and culture. The French revolutionary period was marked by the destruction of numerous vineyards and the dismantlement of famous estates. Wine blight caused by phylloxera following political turmoil highly contributed to the ruin of French wine, but also triggered increasing research to reconstruct French wine heritage. In the early 1900s, the concepts of wine tasting and taster finally emerged, sustained by the development of gastronomy. The taster has progressively gained an official status, based on his knowledge expressed through erudite and "pompous" lexicon. Erotic connotations became frequent in the first half of the 20th century (with nouns such as "thigh" and "bodice" or adjectives including "charming" and "voluptuous"). This trend ceased immediately after the Second World War with the growing influence of technical discourse.

Major changes that occurred mainly after the Second World War were mainly due to significant technical and scientific developments, and to emerging competition with "New World" wines. A diploma in oenology was created in France in 1955, and wine as a social phenomenon started to attract rising attention in sociological research from the late 1980s. In addition to traditional professionals and amateur wine lovers, a new profile of wine expert emerged. From that period onward, they actively contributed to the definition and codification of a new terminology required by developments in the food and wine industries. Wine expertise was popularised through the flourishing publication of books and journals dedicated to wine that included glossaries and technical explanations (Coutier). *Le Goût du vin*, the hallmark work published in 1980 by the most famous French oenologist, Émile Peynaud, is representative of this trend. He was one of the first to outline current deficiencies in the vocabulary used to translate emotions evoked from wine tasting. He reported that fewer than one hundred words related to wine were available in 18th-century literature. According to his research, approximately 5,000 words were available in the 1980s to describe perceptions of wine in the French, Spanish, Portuguese, Italian and English languages combined. In French itself, Peynaud's in-depth analysis of vocabulary resulted in a total of 1,310 words, including 128 for visual description, 504 for olfactory description, and 144 for gustatory description, the rest being used for technical and "hedonic" appreciation. To confirm his hypothesis of lexical deficiency in wine evaluation, he submitted to 300 French and foreign

experts a list of the 128 words commonly used in wine tasting, and requested that they evaluate their own frequency of use. According to this survey, only 81 words were said to be frequently used, with 13 words never being used.

The most significant contribution of Peynaud's book was to share with a large audience previous cutting-edge research on wine appreciation. He provided a comprehensive explanation of visual models established by wine experts to reinforce a scientific approach toward wine as a product of particular importance in the agro-food industry. A new framework labelled "wine sensory analysis (*analyse sensorielle*)" has been promoted in France by agro-food companies, and is now also popular amongst wine experts and amateurs, in particular during wine competitions. Simplified and codified language has been adopted by experts and oenologists in order to provide standardised ways to always match the same word with the same feeling (Casamayor 12). Using a series of professional wine tasting reports as her source, Coutier conducted a linguistic analysis of lexical tropes and metaphors related to the human body and spatial relations, these metaphors serving as the basis of a very specific, "physical" variety of wine tasting discourse. She concluded that gaps in the lexicon are currently addressed by the transformation of terms from a lyrical register (images and analogies) into structured references that combine cognitive with poetic function. For Casamayor, modern descriptions of wine include three types of lexicon: popular culture (i.e. colourful expressions), literary and poetry vocabulary (metaphors, pomposity), and scientific terminology providing a comprehensive approach of wine based on visual, olfactory and gustatory features. He also outlined a distinction between scientific and literary texts on wine, the latter including a wider range of analogies related to human features, physical as well as moral. Lexicon on male and female appearances and qualities are widely borrowed, leading to a significant personification of wine.

2. France as the Pinnacle of Wine Culture

Supported by research conducted in France (e.g. Demossier 2010), the supremacy of France in the wine world is generally assumed by some of the most influential wine experts, including R. Parker Jr who states that "Bordeaux is irrefutably the epicenter for high wine quality and wine education" (Parker xvi). Meanwhile, the late Professor Peynaud dared to write in the foreword of his hallmark book:

> If you are French, you may be a quantitative record-man […], but you are statistically not a qualitative consumer, a connoisseur. Think about the fact that 60% of our best French wines are exported. In the wine industry, everyone says so: French people lack more of knowledge than money (xi).

Therein lies a perplexing paradox. As stated by Dion, wine is undoubtedly a crucial part of French history, geography, sociology and economy. Therefore, French people can be perceived, or can even perceive themselves as natural inheritors of a long and rich culture linked to vine growing and wine production. However, when undisputed French experts like Peynaud highlight the role of

knowledge in wine appreciation (*dégustation* in French being a more complex notion than *tasting* in English), they are challenging a common assumption amongst people living in countries long reputed for their wine production and consumption. In other words, it is not because you are French (or Italian, or Spanish) that you have a natural predisposition to judge the quality of a wine. Conversely, being Japanese or Chinese does not impede one from becoming a connoisseur of wine, since efforts to become educated in this field prevail over any patrimony linked to birthplace. This can explain why Japanese wine manga have not only reached a large audience in France, but have also been very well received by wine experts and enthusiasts.

Nonetheless, historical, geographical, and economic data all confirm that France can be legitimately considered the core of wine culture. The conclusion provided by Dion to summarize his historical analysis first published in 1959, is that ancient archives as well as contemporary texts unanimously demonstrate that France is a country where the history of vine and wine enlightens and illuminates the history of its citizens. According to his research, France has for centuries been a country where all these conditions were plentifully met, thereby allowing wine to become an integral part of the national culture. For J. R. Pitte, a famous French geographer, wine is also a cultural artefact of primary importance for dialogue across civilizations. Beyond national terroir, viticulture has developed across continents through the rising domination of Western countries, leading to an extended passion for wine all over the world. Although consumption of alcoholic beverages is generally restricted or forbidden in nations such as Morocco and Tunisia, Pitte outlines that these countries still produce wines of good repute. Wine has become a real industry, for example with an increasing competition between "new" and "old" world wines, and the booming of wine bars in Asia.

In opposition to this growing worldwide popularity of wine, French consumption has dramatically dropped since the 1960s. Yet, France has maintained its supremacy in production, and, for several decades, French exported wines have been amongst the most expensive in the world. Therefore, some economists consider wine as important a product for France as oil is for Middle East nations. The quantity of wine produced and consumed in Japan pales in comparison to the top three countries (France, Italy and Spain). From data collected by the French ministry of Agriculture, Japan represented only 4% of the total volume of exported French wine in 2015, and 6% of its total value. In sum, people in Japan are drinking ten times less than French "recordmen", but they tend to select wine of good quality (cost performance being generally considered a warrant of quality). In this context, the enthusiastic reception of Japanese wine manga by French experts as well as novices signals an ability for the Japanese to challenge the French in wine culture and industry, despite dramatically lower numbers in terms of production and consumption.

In this way, France's position within the world wine hierarchy is not necessarily reflective of the position of the French wine consumer. Even the French consumer can stand at a loss when having to choose between a 1994 bottle of Lafite and a 2013 bottle of Penfolds Petit Syrah. If we consider that even the French consumer does not know much about wine, it should come as no surprise that

wine manga should find popularity amongst consumers in France, Japan, South Korea and China, as these consumers face the same challenge of answering a plethora of questions with no easy answers: What do we choose? How do we choose it? What is the cost performance of the wine? As Philippe Bourguignon—renowned wine expert—states in his foreword (Agi & Okimoto, *Les Gouttes de Dieu*-2 8): *Les Gouttes de Dieu* is a fascinating work, which without pretending to be serious gives you a very good introduction to an often much too hermetic wine world.

3. Wine in Japan

Though the market for wine in Japan remains a nascent one, it does not hold that wine has had little impact. Perhaps it is precisely because wine has only recently begun to earn a regular spot on the dinner table, and is not taken for granted, that its development in Japan has become the focus of wine narratives. While viticulture has had a presence in Japan from the Edo Period (1603-1867), grape cultivation was not synonymous with grape fermentation for wine production. It wouldn't be until the Meiji Restoration (1868-1912) that Japan would play host to a budding wine industry. Asai Shougo divides wine's presence in Japan into three periods (523). The first one is the period between the start of the Meiji Restoration and 1896. During that period, government policies began to actively promote the transplantation and cultivation of grape vines for the purpose of winemaking. During the second period, between 1896 and the middle of Japan's Showa Era in 1962, sweet wines began to gain popularity amongst consumers leading to an expansion of the industry. From 1962 onward, the presence of wine in Japan has been defined through a series of electrocardiogram-like peaks, during which Japan's economic rise, symbolized by the 1964 Tokyo Olympics and the 1970 World's Fair, served as a catalyst in increasing Japanese exposure to French wine. This exposure has become so commonplace that Japanese wine now occasionally adorns the tables of the Iikura Guest House of Japan's Ministry of Foreign Affairs (Nishikawa 6).

Researchers have argued that these booms come not solely as the result of economic growth, but also as a product of globalization in combination with what may be perceived as the idiosyncrasies of the Japanese consumer. This is what Miyake Ayano means when she locates the Japanese fascination with Beaujolais Nouveau—the crux of Japan's fourth wine boom starting just as the country's economic miracle was coming to an end—as the result of a very specific, purposely-induced business strategy, weaving together: 1) A global market in which access to wine has been greatly ameliorated; 2) The characteristics of Beaujolais Nouveau wine, including its "drinkability", cost performance, TPO suitability[2], high levels of resveratrol, and the application of biodynamic agricultural techniques for grape and wine cultivation; and 3) A Japanese populace that remains especially susceptible to seasonal, "for-a-limited-time-only" goods and has a soft spot for celebratory events, ceremonial events, and festivals. This proclivity to gravitate toward goods with limited availability has nurtured a competitive instinct informed by the mindset of "competition with the West"—a characteristic nurtured in Japan's Meji era—and a sensitivity toward matters of health, as

[2] "TPO" is an initialism for "time, place, occasion" and in this instance refers to the flexibility of a particular wine to be had on various occasions.

illustrated by the sheer quantity of "kenko shokuhin," or functional foods providing nutrition to a population long known as the world's longest-living.

The result is that the third Thursday of November—a date established by French law as the official release date for the season's new wine—has become permanently etched on Japanese calendars, while in the preceding weeks, convenience stores, wine shops and department stores are adorned with posters and promotional material urging consumers to pre-order their Beaujolais Nouveau. The fervor preceding the yearly public release of Beaujolais Nouveau, the economic conditions that gave rise to its popularity as well as the precariousness of fulfilling an unforgivingly time-sensitive endeavor are all given faithful representation in a limited-print Beaujolais Nouveau issue of Araki Joh's *Sommelier* in 2004. Not to be outdone, four years later *Kami no Shizuku* authors Agi Tadashi and illustrator Okimoto Shuu were commissioned to produce a special label for the 2008 Albert Bichot Beaujolais Nouveau. Codified in wine manga are the conglomeration of globalization and the particularities of a given wine and what may be seen as characteristics informing booms in Japan, represented by *Sommelier* and *Kami no Shizuku*.

While in many regards English may remain the lingua franca, France remains the point of embarkation for those looking to gain knowledge on viticulture and vinification. The Japanese Sommelier Association guide includes French. Those wishing to be officially recognised as sommelier, wine experts or wine advisors in Japan must pass the J.S.A. exam and study such wine guides as those produced by the Académie du Vin, a French wine school first established in Paris (Yano 340). Japanese wine manga employs several strategies in assisting its readers toward gaining access to French lexicon, from the unabashed footnote, to the affixing of French pronunciation approximations to kanji characters (characters that indicate meaning, in stark contrast to phonograms). For instance, while 仏料理店 is normally given the Japanese pronunciation of "futsuryouriten," it can be written as 仏料理店（フレンチ・レストラン）, with floating text (ruby) serving as a pronunciation guide for readers and informing them to pronounce the characters as "furenchiresutoran" or "French restaurant" (Agi 55). Context heavily informs when the French pronunciation will be given preference over the Japanese pronunciation. For instance, a scene in which Shizuku receives tutelage using a wine aroma kit (ibid. 121) becomes a teaching moment during which both Shizuku and the readers are taught to pronounce 香り (kaori) as アロマ (aroma) and 熟成香 (jukuseikou) as ブーケ (bouquet). The audience is thus presented with an opportunity to gain lexical knowledge alongside Shizuku, while the graphical elements of manga work to expedite the process.

Japan's next wine boom would provide the material for the construction of the prototypical Japanese wine expert as well as the extension of the popular gurume manga (gourmand or gourmet manga) genre—perhaps the most popular of which remains Kariya Tetsu's *Oishinbo*—into wine. In 1995, Tasaki Shinya became the first Japanese wine expert to win the Concours [competition] A.S.I. De Meilleur Sommelier du Monde, sponsored every three years by the Association de la Sommellerie Internationale [A.S.I.]. Tasaki has served the wine world in numerous capacities, including hotel waiter,

restaurant chef, wine lecturer, wine school and wine bar proprietor, and hotel consultant (164). It should come as no surprise, however, that Tasaki's name is most often correlated with his work as a sommelier, as it was his victory at the international wine contest that brought public knowledge and recognition to the title of sommelier and no Japanese sommelier since Shinya has ranked first in the contest.[3]

In his biographical work, *Somerie Sekai-ichi no Himitsu: Tasaki Shinya Monogatari* [*Shinya Tasaki Story*], Shigekane Atsuyuki provides us with the only available detailed view of Tasaki's life, from birth until his victory at the Concours A.S.I. 37 years later. As a child, Tasaki developed an interest in entomology that would be further spurred when his parents gave him an illustrated book on insects for his 9th birthday. According to Shigekane, Tasaki possessed an insatiable urge to find in real life the insects that he discovered in his book (15), taking notes on the particular characteristics of each insect. Shigekane also notes that during his trips to a nearby forest, Tasaki gained knowledge of the fauna surrounding him, including wild strawberries, chocolate vines and mulberries. The story that Shigekane sets forth, then, is one in which Tasaki gains at least some of his wine-tasting prowess though a childhood penchant for categorization of knowledge and his coincidentally living near a forest with a multitude of insects and plant matter to pique his curiosity. At the age of 19, Tasaki embarked on his first trip to France with his second to follow only one year later. During his Paris years, he worked at a Japanese restaurant to make ends meet, eventually being placed in charge of many aspects of the restaurant, all the while encountering not only Japanese patrons, but French patrons as well. His time at the restaurant became a period of existential crisis, as it was there that he began to seriously question himself, the meaning of food and the potential for cuisine to permeate our perceptions of nationality. As Shigekane quotes Tasaki: "Even if I drink wine, eat cheese and nibble on a baguette, at the end of the day, can I escape my being Japanese? When you go to a restaurant, the French children are drinking wine thinned with water. To the French, wine is synonymous with life and culture" (86). This soul searching would result in Tasaki's enrolling in British wine merchant Steven Spurrier's now ubiquitously well-known Académie du Vin in France. While the experience of tasting wines and sharing tasting notes with other students proved intimidating in his days as a novice, Tasaki eventually learned to talk about wine through imitating the other students, thereby developing his wine lexicon (87).

However, in a letter to his father written in 1979, Tasaki would admit that in order to make progress in the wine world, there would be no other route than through French language and culture:

> From September, I plan on taking an authentic sommelier course. Most of the famous sommeliers at Parisian restaurants have gone through this course, given at the school I'm currently attending. The professor is also a Tour d'Argent sommelier and one of the top five in Paris! But, in order to take this course, [knowledge of] French history and chemical analysis

[3] French sommeliers have won six of the 14 contests thus far. A list of winners can be found at the Association de la Sommellerie Internationale website: http://www.sommellerie-internationale.com/en/asi_winners/

> are necessary, so it's going to be an issue of how much French I know. I've got a lot of studying to do between now and September… (94)

Tasaki would eventually weave together his experiences in Paris and Japan as well as his philosophies toward wine and cuisine in his many books, such as *Unagi de Wain ga Nomemasu ka?* [*Can You Drink Wine with Eel?*], in which he expounds on the possibility of a specifically Japanese manner of wine enjoyment and appreciation. Instead of relocating to France after his winning the Concours A.S.I., Tasaki began looking toward Japan: "Until now, I've always considered my work to be to get information from the center [of wine culture], France, and pass it on to the Japanese populace. But from this point, I would like to stand on the side of developing and then passing on that information" (Muranaka 165).

In the life of one Japanese sommelier, we can locate two crucial turning points in the history of wine's reception in Japan and establish correlations between these turning points and the development of wine manga. The first turning point is marked by Tasaki's becoming the world's top sommelier. The victory itself begs the question of how the victor gained his proficiency, thus allowing for the development of a mythology of the wine expert, who unwittingly develops or inherits capacities for classification and gustatory acuteness that eventually form the foundation of the genius sommelier, much as the deglutition of wine by French children precludes what may be seen as a French aptitude toward wine tasting.[4] Tasaki's victory in 1995 combined with the emerging news of the "French Paradox" after Japanese news outlets reported, in 1991, on a story originally aired on the American news show *60 Minutes*, featuring a four-minute segment on the health benefits of red wine. "Paradox" referred to the French diet itself, in which people consumed foods high in fat, but enjoyed dramatically lower rates of coronary heart disease than Americans. The catalyst for healthier arteries in France despite this high-fat diet was argued to be the consumption of red wine, purported to prevent the accumulation of arterial plaque. In Japan, one author had attributed to wine the very specific effects of protecting one from illnesses that often result from ageing, strengthening the brain's arteries, allowing the ingestion of vitamins effective against a variety of illnesses and diseases from the common cold to cancer, and promoting stress reduction (Arikawa 22; 52; 86; 107). The result is that wine earned itself a spot on the Japanese dinner table, moving closer toward becoming a mainstay of cuisine in Japan rather than being relegated to the limited interests of Francophiles and oenophiles.

Wine manga serves as the nexus between Japan's wine booms and the codification of the mythology of the wine expert, the "archetype" of which is represented by the Tasaki Shinya story. Through this formalization, the narrative of the sommelier and wine expert has been packaged for consumption through stylization and graphic representation, while the didactic nature of wine manga functions as a sieve for the aforementioned individual taste.

[4] Here, perhaps it should be noted again that the *Concours A.S.I.* has been won by six French sommeliers, giving the French a 42% victory rate.

4. Wine Manga: *Sommelier* and *Kami no Shizuku*

The wine manga genre begins with the publication of Joh Araki's *Sommelier* in November 1996. Satake Joh, the protagonist of *Sommelier*, gains his wine prowess while training to be a sommelier in France. His curiosity toward wine, however, begins in Japan as a child when his French stepmother whet his palate and piqued his curiosity with a glass of wine. Joh's quest to become a sommelier is therefore entwined with a wish to reclaim a cherished childhood memory. Along the way, Joh endures the frequent slights of French natives who seek to "protect" wine as an object of cultural patrimony that no Japanese person could possibly understand. He serves as the central character throughout the series, which is divided into chapters called "vintages". While Joh often pontificates on the qualities of a given wine in an effort to make a point on the nature of life, he is just as often fighting against the "-isms" that work against him in the wine world, including racism, nationalism and ageism. From book 2, the vintages are interspersed with wine columns written by wine expert and series editor, Hori Ken-ichi. These columns provide an encyclopedic source of wine knowledge. Following the conclusion of *Sommelier*, Joh Araki released the *Shun no Wain*, *Sommelière*, *Bartender*, *Bartender à Paris* and *Bartender à Tokyo* series, all featuring protagonists who bring wine knowledge to readers.

The adventures of Satake Joh reached a new medium in 1998, when *Sommelier* was adapted as a television drama, with well-known boy-band SMAP idol Inagaki Goro playing the main protagonist. *Bartender* was also adapted for the screen, but as an animated series. Despite *Sommelière* having outspanned any of the other series, it has not been adapted as a film or television drama, leaving a gaping hole in the canon of wine narrative adaptations. This is especially true when we consider the important role that Japanese women have played toward bringing to the public knowledge concerning wine, for instance through the sommelière training procured by Japan Airlines cabin attendants (Yamada, Murakoshi, and Nii 10). Though it is beyond the scope of this paper, the lack of equal gender representation begs the question of how gender plays—or does not play—into the narrative of the wine expert.

While *Sommelier* ushered in the wine manga genre, *Kami no Shizuku*, published nine years later, was to become a phenomenon with even greater impact. The writers have since gone on to publish a regular wine blog hosted by asahi.com, the site of one of Japan's major newspapers. The blog, called *Nomurie* and written by the brother and sister team under the "Agi Tadashi" pseudonym, serves as a collection of wine- and *Kami no Shizuku*-related thoughts. The *Nomurie* title given to the blog is a coinage combining the Japanese word "nomu" (to drink) and the French "sommelier", the result being a new word that serves as a testament to the extent to which wine has gained status in Japan. As the authors write: "People who do not possess a sommelier, wine advisor or similar qualification but are head over heels about wine and see it as their purpose in life to exchange nightly sermons on wine are referred to as 'nomurie' (or so we hear)" (Agi 4). In a manga-sized collection of their first year of *Nomurie* posts titled *Kami no Shizuku no Sakusha no Nomurie Nikki*, the brother-sister authors share with readers the successes of the *Kami no Shizuku* series. Like *Sommelier*, *Kami no Shizuku* was adapted for television, the lead role of Kanzaki Shizuku being played by idol Kamenashi Kazuya of KAT-TUN

boy-band fame. Where *Kami no Shizuku* separates itself from its predecessor *Sommelier*, is in its international reach and power to influence the behavior of general wine buyers. By 2008, *Kami no Shizuku* had sold over 2,000,000 copies in South Korea. By 2009, talk of a Korean television adaptation had begun alongside talk of the Japanese television drama adaptation (ibid.: 5). Within publication of its first 10 volumes in South Korea, *Kami no Shizuku* had sold 1,000,000 copies, ushering in a new record for translated manga in the "adult" genre (ibid.: 11). The wines featured in *Kami no Shizuku* remain highly sought after, only momentarily residing on the shelves of Internet wine shops before they are sold out. The same may be said for the 2008 Albert Bichot Beaujolais Nouveau, the etiquette (reflecting Japanese usage of the French term) of which was designed by *Kami no Shizuku*'s authors and illustrator.

The author-illustrator team of Agi Tadashi and Okimoto Shuu released a new series in 2015, titled *Kaitou Luvan* [*Le Vin, gentleman cambrioleur*], recalling French author Maurice Leblanc's famed French thief, Arsène Lupin.[5] The series features a team of five wine-thief protagonists who in Mission Impossible-style seek to reclaim wine procured by abuse of privilege or power. Led by Master Haut-Brion, wine thieves Mouton, Margaux, Latour and Lafite—eponymously named after five of the classic French chateaux—utilise their gustatory acuity to surreptitiously complete their missions. Such gustatory acuity is often displayed through the spectacle of blind tasting, which serves as a mechanism through which the characters perform impressive palatal acrobatics.[6]

Perhaps therein rests the point of differentiation and the trajectory along which the wine manga sub-genre has travelled: *Sommelier*, representing an early iteration of wine manga, places a heavy emphasis on the sommelier himself as the conduit through which wine knowledge is gained. While Satake Joh represents a shift in wine knowledge and thus a transfer of power from the French (and other, primarily European, wine-producing countries) to the Japanese, that power is still enshrined inside the body of the sommelier, who then becomes the medium through which that experience is translated and transmitted. The late Japanese film historian Donald Richie may have stated it best when he recalled the work of Komatsu Hiroshi and Frances Loden, writing that the "benshi" film interpreter in the early days of film in Japan "were 'a reassuring native presence with a presumed acquaintance of the foreign object,' a necessity which might even now 'explain the Japanese affection for teachers, tour guides, sommeliers and other conduits for the acquisition of new experience'" (19). The theme of the sommelier as a master of trades remains consistent throughout Joh Araki's other

[5] This creates a streak of works with shrewd titling. The English and French translations—*Drops of God* and *Les Gouttes de Dieu*—of *Kami no Shizuku* both fail to accommodate for the double entendre that remains apparent in the Japanese title: Shizuku refers to drops of wine, but also to the name of the protagonist, Kanzaki Shizuku. In this sense, "Kami no Shizuku" refers not only to the religious, heavenly qualities of wine, but also to the idea that Shizuku himself is the embodiment of something beyond human. Kaito Luvan is a similar play on words, but this time one that is intertextual in nature, "Luvan" actually referring to the French word for wine (le vin) while almost homo-phonically recalling "Lupin", the fictional French thief.

[6] Wine writers such as Kakuno Fumihiko, however, would be quick to remind us that blind tasting is actually much more difficult in real life than it appears in manga (30).

graphic novels as well.

In contrast, while *Kami no Shizuku* also relies on wine experts, the narrative takes place primarily through the perspective of the wines themselves. Just as a bottle of wine must play through its own story once it has been opened, and just as that same bottle will reveal an entirely new narrative when decanted, it is the wine in *Kami no Shizuku* that tells the story of the protagonist Shizuku and antagonist Issei Tomine. The double entendre of the Japanese title—meaning both "drops of God" and "Shizuku the almighty"—stands as a reflection of this interplay between the characters and the wines themselves. Whereas we encounter Satake Joh after he has already become one of the world's most renown sommeliers and the hardships of gaining wine knowledge occur in flashback-like episodes, we encounter Shizuku prior to his ascension into a deity and before he has acquired a pedestal from atop which to preach. We thus depend on the wine itself to tell both its story as well as Shizuku's. The authors of *Kami no Shizuku* have themselves stated: "By the way, in this work, the human relationships as well as the various incidents all center around wine. To be differentiated from sommelier manga, this is wine manga and wine is the protagonist" (Agi 11). Rather than a human drama unfolding the wine, it is the wine that unfolds the human drama. Rather than the humans talking about the wine, the wine talks about itself and with that, we learn about the surrounding humans.

The result of this shift in narrative perspective is twofold: a "democratization" of wine knowledge and—particularly noteworthy for our translation purposes here—an increased use of wine lexicon. By "democratization" here, we refer simply to a process by which wine knowledge has been removed from sole proprietorship of the wine world's upper echelons—the viticulturalist, winemaker, wine expert, sommelier etc.—and becomes accessible to the general wine enthusiast or modest wine consumer. We needn't ask the sommelier what he thinks of the wine when the wine is capable of telling its own story.

Herein rests the problem of translation: If *Kami no Shizuku* has indeed been authored in such a manner that it is not the sommelier or wine expert describing the wine but the wines describing themselves through the interpretations and experiences of the authors, how might these be translated into a French language with a pre-established, widely accepted lexicon? Is the traditionalist and exclusionary prescriptivism of wine culture displaced by a popularised, descriptive movement toward wine erudition?

5. Comparative Text Analysis: Wine Language in *Sommelier* and *Kami no Shizuku*

While the French version of *Kami no Shizuku* has been published in a form similar to the Japanese original, *Sommelier* has been published in French in a more condensed version, mimicking the Japanese publishing norm of printing older works in a small book format rather than the larger one reserved for recently-released graphic novels. With this change in format comes differences in pagination. For this reason, and in order to ensure consistency in our analysis, we decided to focus on the first 16 chapters of the two series (i.e. the equivalent of the first two volumes in Japanese). From a close

analysis of the Japanese and French texts, all segments related to wine were extracted, and discussed in English (the language that both authors of this paper have in common). Salient themes were finally organised into different categories. Following the methodology used in wine tasting, we first grouped extracted segments in traditional clusters of visual, olfactory, and gustatory description. Without surprise, text analysis of these two manga revealed a much richer and more complex and stylistic approach toward wine description, with complexity and style increasing between the publication of *Sommelier* and the release of *Kami no Shizuku*. Having identified a propensity for analogy and metaphor usage in describing wine, we isolated all references to wine using such analogies and metaphors to translate emotions provoked by wine, including a sub-section on "personification of wine." A significant number of occurrences having been found in both series, we also added two specific categories, that will become the subject of a future, further in-depth analysis: under the label of "power", we gathered selected segments that refer to knowledge, training, and heritage. Mirroring a common phenomenon in wine culture, these manga clearly highlight the specific status of people who possess a certain "capital" (as per the Bourdieu definition), here interpreted as genuine expertise in wine accumulated either from personal extensive training, or passed on by family or, even better, from a combination of both. The final category related to "religion" is more self-explanatory, representing an important part of wine culture, with a multitude of expressions evocating the sacred nature of this particular beverage.

Preliminary analysis of each series showed a larger number of occurrences related to wine in *Kami no Shizuku* than in *Sommelier* (respectively 194 and 105 identified segments). Further examination of segments extracted from source and target texts confirmed that the French translations closely followed the Japanese originals. Despite some alterations and barring any major omissions, translators had—despite the limited confines of text speech bubbles—produced a literal translation of the Japanese source text. This translation, in turn, correlates with the French wine lexicon. In other words, the level to which the French wine lexicon has permeated Japanese has allowed for the production of a Japanese text primed for translation. There are points of variation in the source and target texts. For instance, while the Japanese version might describe a wine as being expensive to connote quality, the French version simply refers to the wine as being "good". Similarly, while the Japanese source text might state that a wine is "feminine", the French target text tells us instead that a wine is well-liked amongst women. Such translations may serve to tell us that for Japanese readers, there exists a correlation between price and quality that does not exist for the French. A more developed corpus of wine descriptors might allow us to discern patterns in how gender is attached to wine in Japanese and French texts.

A superficial reading of the two series may leave the reader with the impression that the two narratives are very similar; they are after all, "sommelier manga". A closer reading, however, delivers the reader to a wholly different conclusion: The main character of each series is different by nature. In *Sommelier*, as obviously highlighted by the title, the focus has been placed on a human-being character along a continuum of different stories. On the contrary, in *Kami no Shizuku*, the plot is

organised around wine, not only as a product, but as representing an ideal quest toward perfection. We thus hypothesised that to some extent, the latter series would have drawn on the previous one in order to provide the reader with a more in-depth knowledge of wine. We also suspected that the content of the two series somehow reflected the authors' profiles: a manga writer collaborating with a Japanese oenologist in *Sommelier*, and a brother-sister couple passionate about wine in *Kami no Shizuku*. Findings from our close analysis confirmed this hypothesis.

For traditional descriptive categories of wine (i.e. visual, olfactory and gustatory), differences between the two manga are of more a qualitative nature than a quantitative one. In *Sommelier*, wine appearance, fragrance and aroma are described with terms and expressions traditionally used by professionals or the "educated amateur". Classical references to precious stones, fruits, flowers, etc. are given to depict features of wine, mirroring what normally occurs in real wine tasting. The *Kami no Shizuku* authors go beyond professional technique by resorting to innovative ways in assessing the qualities of wine. For this purpose, they introduce a significant proportion of analogies to convey emotions emerging from a glass of wine (42 identified segments). In both series, specific vintages are said to be as perfect as very specific fine art paintings (Joh, Shinobu, & Kenichi 1 276; Agi & Okimoto 1 87, 89), or as precious as a treasure or cultural symbol (Joh, Shinobu, & Kenichi 2 65, 67). More original are the comparisons in *Kami no Shizuku,* where emotions triggered by wine are described as being similar to those felt listening to Freddie Mercury's voice in a Queen song (Agi & Okimoto 1 109), a place like a wonderful garden (ibid.: 206), a carrousel (2 195), or a specific moment like the beginning of a journey (1 90).

The authors of *Kami no Shizuku* admit that their descriptions of wine are based on very subjective, personal experience—an approach that has opened them up to the criticism of particularly protective wine experts. For instance, in employing the imagery of Jean-François Millet's 19th century painting, *The Angelus* (*L'Angelus*) in describing a bottle of 1984 Château Mouton Rothschild (Agi & Okimoto, 1 81-84), the authors invoke memories of their own childhood, in which due to their mother's being an artist, they were surrounded by art books and collected works of paintings (Agi 26-28). One can thus conclude that while *Kami no Shizuku* teaches Japanese readers traditional wine terminology, its translation into French is "value-added" with a high cost performance, as what has been translated is not merely what the French already know. It does not just replicate encyclopaedic knowledge or reproduce the aroma wheel, but introduces metaphors through which the reader can not only *taste* wine, but *experience* it. It is one thing to state that a wine from Domaine de la Romanée-Conti (D.R.C.) comes "very close to the perfect equilibrium of fruit and wood" and boasts "a structure and softness" faithful to the images of their terroirs as André Dominé does (195). It is another to equate a D.R.C. wine with a Village People concert.[7] While the former might provide a dearth of information and context for the experienced wine consumer, the latter allows those who have never tasted a sip of wine to imagine the excitement with which a D.R.C. wine might be greeted by the palate.

[7] Though this, too, would be problematic for reasons that rest beyond the scope of this paper.

The personification of wine is an area where both series clearly diverge. In *Sommelier,* most of the identified segments (36 in total) reproduce the common tendency to assign human traits to wine. This resorting to anthropomorphism is particularly obvious in *Sommelier*, where human physical and psychological attributes, both positive and negative, are assigned to wine. It can be judged as "robust" and "graceful" (1 68), "boisterous" (2 20), "generous" (2 21), or on the contrary "ugly" and "aggressive" (1 235). In *Kami no Shizuku,* the process of personification is more sophisticated. Wine features are also compared with human characteristics, such as appearance ("stylish", 2 176) or age (e.g. a "young" wine – 1 86 – or a "mature" wine – 2 151). But most of all, some vintages are totally assimilated to the human being. One vintage is said to be like a ten-year-old child (2 150), and the wine from a bottle opened too early becomes an "assassinated new-born" (2 136). However, the most frequent association of wine in this manga is with women, either feminine popular figures such as Nabokov's *Lolita* (1 147) and the biblical Salome (1:182), or anonymous others. A young woman disappearing in the mist (1 172-174), a cherished daughter (2 15), a memory of Shizuku's mother (2 108), a "roundish coquette" (2 151), and the "combination of one perfectly shaped top-model with a pleasant Japanese young woman" (2 204) are the most significant analogies used in the first two volumes of *Kami no Shizuku.*

From our analysis, it can be said that *Sommelier* offers an objective approach for describing wine and related feelings or emotions. Textual content extracted from this series shows that authors have largely borrowed language traditionally used in wine guides, in an effort to promote knowledge of wine in an entertaining way. The authors of *Kami no Shizuku* have chosen another register. Their iconoclast approach toward wine culture, nevertheless enthusiastically supported by a number of French experts, brings emotion in addition to knowledge. This opposition, or rather complementarity, of "heart" and "brain" reasoning is perfectly embodied by the two main characters, Shizuku who feels the wine, and Issei Tomine, who analyses it.

Overall, *Sommelier* and Kami no Shizuku [*Les Gouttes de Dieu*] demonstrate that the appropriation of French traditional wine culture by Japanese wine lovers is not only feasible, but also that wine expertise combined with manga's ability to transmit elaborate knowledge in a visual wrapper results in a successful process of popularization, duly acknowledged by renowned French experts. Despite different approaches, both manga successfully contribute to a new way for the French to see their culture through a lens provided by the Japanese sommelier, wine expert, and wine consumer, informed by Japan's particular relationship with wine. By creating a bridge between two cultures *Sommelier* and *Kami no Shizuku* are brilliant examples of a literary genre traversing East-West boundaries.

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