



Universiteit
Leiden
The Netherlands

"Normal" Feelings in "Abnormal" Worlds: On the Political Uses of Emotion in Science Fiction Manga

Li, C.K.

Citation

Li, C. K. (2015, June 30). "Normal" Feelings in "Abnormal" Worlds: On the Political Uses of Emotion in Science Fiction Manga. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/33236>

Version: Corrected Publisher's Version

License: [Licence agreement concerning inclusion of doctoral thesis in the Institutional Repository of the University of Leiden](#)

Downloaded from: <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/33236>

Note: To cite this publication please use the final published version (if applicable).

Cover Page



Universiteit Leiden



The handle <http://hdl.handle.net/1887/33236> holds various files of this Leiden University dissertation

Author: Li, Carl Ka-hei

Title: “Normal” feelings in “abnormal” worlds : on the political uses of emotion in science fiction manga

Issue Date: 2015-06-30

“NORMAL” FEELINGS IN “ABNORMAL” WORLDS

On the Political Uses of Emotion
in Science Fiction Manga

Proefschrift

ter verkrijging van
de graad van Doctor aan de Universiteit Leiden,
op gezag van Rector Magnificus prof. mr. C.J.J.M. Stolker,
volgens besluit van het College voor Promoties

te verdedigen op woensdag 30 juni 2015
klokke 15.00 uur

door
Carl Ka-hei Li
geboren te New York, NY
in 1984

Promotiecommissie

Promotores

Prof. dr. Chris Goto-Jones (Leiden University)

Co-promotor

Dr. Florian Schneider (Leiden University)

Overige leden

Dr. Tom Looser (New York University)

Dr. Sharon Kinsella (Manchester University)

Prof. dr. Ivo Smits (Leiden University)

This thesis was made possible by the financial support of
the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO)
and the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies.

© Carl K. Li, 2015

Book and cover design by Kate Renner

Printed by CPI – Koninklijke Wöhrmann, Zutphen

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements	•	viii
Author's Note	•	x
Terms and Abbreviations	•	xii
Table of Figures	•	xiii
Chapter 1: Introduction	•	2
Chapter 2: "Logical" Science Fiction and "Emotional" Manga	•	12
2.1: The Limits of "Science" Fiction	•	12
2.2: Manga and Emotion	•	22
2.3: Manga and Japanese Science Fiction	•	36
2.4: Conclusion: Towards a Comprehensive Understanding of Science Fiction Manga	•	41
Chapter 3: Science Fictional Emotions	•	43
3.1: The Evolution of Cognitive Estrangement	•	43
3.2: The Cognitive Process of Character Interpretation	•	47
3.3: Emotion as Alternative Perspectives	•	51
3.4: Emotion as "Potential Logic": the Emotional Novum	•	57
3.5: Conclusion: From Function to Expression	•	64
Chapter 4: Visual Expression in Science Fiction Manga	•	67
4.1: The Problems with Comics Essentialism and "Manga as Cinema"	•	68
4.2: The "Flow" of Manga	•	76
4.3: Flow in Other Visual Aspects of Manga	•	90
4.4: Physical and Abstract Emotional Expressions	•	98
4.5: Conclusion: The Progression of Visual Emotions	•	105
Chapter 5: <i>7 Billion Needles</i> and Emotion as SF Catalyst	•	107
5.1: The Emotional Context of the Protagonist	•	108

5.2: Close Encounter of the Emotional Kind	•	116
5.3: Emotion as “Novum”	•	121
5.4: Visualization of Alien Transformation	•	126
5.5: Complexity of the Emotional Novum	•	131
5.6: Spaces of Conflict and Resolution	•	138
5.7: Conclusion: <i>7 Billion Needles</i> and Change	•	143
Chapter 6: <i>Zettai Karen Children</i> and the Political Everyday	•	146
6.1: <i>Zettai Karen Children</i> and the Concept of the Esper	•	147
6.2: Outward Emotion in <i>Zettai Karen Children</i>	•	150
6.3: Everyday Alienation	•	154
6.4: The Meaning of “Normality”	•	161
6.5: “Natural Normality” vs. “Social Normality”	•	171
6.6: Hybrid Normality	•	178
6.7: Conclusion: Everyday Life as Political Strategy	•	180
Chapter 7: <i>Coppelion</i> and “Internal” Conflict	•	182
7.1: Criticism of Nuclear Power	•	183
7.2: How <i>Coppelion</i> Becomes “About Coppelions”	•	196
7.3: Genetic Engineering as Extension of Nuclear Criticism	•	206
7.4: A Hybrid Approach to Emotional Focus	•	218
7.5: Conclusion: Contradiction and Cognition	•	226
Chapter 8: Conclusion	•	229
Bibliography	•	239
Summary in Dutch	•	249
Curriculum Vitae	•	252
Propositions	•	253



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This PhD is one part of the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) VICI project *Beyond Utopia: New Politics, the Politics of Knowledge, and the Science Fictional Field of Japan*, headed by my promoter and supervisor Prof. dr. Chris Goto-Jones. In presenting this dissertation I must express my deepest gratitude to all who have supported my research these past four years. First and foremost, I thank Chris for his invaluable guidance, for continually challenging me to overcome my inexperience as a researcher and to further build my strengths, and for being in my view a preeminent example of what a scholar should be. I also thank my secondary supervisor, Dr. Florian Schneider, whose feedback was always insightful and whose willingness to cross over disciplinary boundaries is an inspiration.

As stated above, this research would not have been possible without the financial support of the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research, but just as important is the institutional support that I have received from the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies at Leiden University. I thank the LIAS and Prof. dr. Maghiel van Crevel for giving me both the literal and metaphorical space to do my research, as its flexibility as a department has allowed my unorthodox topic to find a home.

I thank my colleagues on the *Beyond Utopia* project these past four years, Dr. Martin Roth and Nakamura Mari, whose areas of expertise differ from mine and have thus provided me with unique perspectives on my work that helped me to refine my ideas. I also thank the project manager Drs. Esther Truijen and managing assistant Roxy van Beek for *Beyond Utopia*, for their aid on the technical aspects of the PhD and for helping me adjust to life at Leiden University.

I also extend my thanks to Ed Chavez, whose professional experience with and personal passion for manga provided me with insights into manga as an art form and industry, and to my writing and presentation tutor Jenny de Sonnevile for helping me to find the core of my overall argument and bring it to the sur-

face. I am also grateful to Arita Chie, for helping me to obtain research material I would have been unable to access otherwise, and Rik Spanjers, for teaching me where to look for manga resources in the Netherlands and for helping with translation between English and Dutch.

I have presented pieces of my dissertation across various conferences and have received a great deal of support and feedback for them. In this regard, I would like to thank Dr. Jaqueline Berndt, Dr. Frenchy Lunning, Dr. John A. Lent, and Wendy Goldberg. Additionally, I give thanks to the members of the *Futurities* project at Leiden University, Prof. dr. Peter Pels, Dr. Bart Barendregt, Dr. Marianne Maeckelbergh, Dr. Dorien Zandbergen, and Zane Kripe, for our joint sessions discussing our projects.

Finally, I thank my family—notably my mother Monica and my father Andrew, my brothers Kevin and Kenny, and my late uncle Yui Chuen (Simon)—for supporting me from afar, as well as my friends, whether they are back home or ones I have made here in the Netherlands. I am especially grateful to Kate Renner for not only providing moral support, helping me to organize my thoughts as I worked on this dissertation, and designing this book, but also for believing in me and encouraging me to come to Leiden University and begin my PhD in the first place.

AUTHOR'S NOTE

This dissertation uses the 16th Edition of the Chicago Manual of Style as the basis for its citations, with some minor changes made for clarity and readability. Citations are written in full author-title format upon first appearing in a chapter, with subsequent mentions listing only the author, an abbreviated title, and page number, provided that information is available. For the reader's convenience, full citations are repeated initially in every chapter. All publication dates listed are for the edition used: in the case of books that are translated from other languages, this means that the dates refer to the English-language version, and for manga this means the publication year of the collected volume used, as opposed to the date of serialization or the original edition. In order to date the works, years of original publication are included in the main text. Life spans for authors are not included in this dissertation, so any start or end dates of manga should not be confused as such.

Because this study uses manga and other Japanese sources, there are often multiple titles for a given work, especially if they have been licensed in English. This dissertation uses official English titles taken directly from translated adaptations where available, while sources with only Japanese titles are written out in a modified Hepburn style followed by a translation in English. All words in a Japanese title that are either written in English or use the *katakana* script for an English word are written in English and capitalized, such as "*Realism*" instead of "*riarizumu*." Additionally, if a certain Japanese word in a title is a part of the work's identity when un-translated, it is kept in Japanese, such as "*Shūkan shōnen Sunday* [Weekly shōnen Sunday]." If a source has only been published in Japanese but has a prominent English-language title that can be found directly in the source, that title is used instead and capitalized in the same manner as an English title (*Coppelion* instead of *Kopperion*).

Japanese names are written in the Japanese order (family name first) using Modified Hepburn Romanization. The main exceptions are if an English-language publication uses a specific spelling for the author's name (Yaginuma

Kou instead of Yaginuma Kō), or if a name is a mix of English and Japanese, in which case given name is listed first. In order to make finding the source material easier, "adapted" spellings are used in the citation, while the Hepburn spellings are used in the main text. If Japanese publishers have an established English spelling for their companies, then it is used instead of the Japanese Romanization. Additionally, all relevant Japanese terms are written in italics and then followed by a translation in English or vice-versa. Both Japanese terms and English translations are used throughout this dissertation according to what is appropriate in a given situation, though English is generally preferred. Notable exceptions are "manga" and "anime." All quotes that are originally in Japanese in the material referenced are translated by me unless otherwise stated.

This dissertation uses some e-books, omitting page numbers due to the inconsistencies across e-book readers. To compensate, chapter titles are given, as well as subchapter titles where available. These subchapter titles are listed towards the end of the citation, where the page number normally would be. Though not an e-book, this format of citation also applies to the manga *Coppelion*, which has neither page numbers nor full consistency in chapter titles.

All figures that are pages from manga are read and ordered from right to left, unless otherwise noted. This includes manga pages that are not directly connected, as well as images taken from completely different works. The images taken from manga for this dissertation are solely for the purpose of academic analysis and comply with fair use. While commonly only individual panels are used in most analyses of comics, this dissertation emphasizes the importance of looking at the entire page, which necessitates the inclusion of full pages.

Among these images, some are taken from Japanese-language sources, so translations have been provided. The translations by themselves do not specify which character is making which statement, making it necessary to cross-reference them with the actual images. Different symbols are also used to indicate the purpose of various types of text as listed below.

"Speech."

("Thoughts.")

<Narration.>

[actions and sound effects]

/Signage/

TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

3.11 The Tohoku Earthquake and Tsunami on March 11, 2001

7BN *7 Billion Needles*, a manga about symbiotic aliens

anime Japanese animation

flow (*nagare*) The emphasis on movement from one panel to the next in manga in order to create a smooth reading experience

kyara The qualities of a character design that give the character a sense of “life”

otaku A hardcore fan, typically associated with an obsession with anime and manga

panel layout (*komawari*) How panels are laid out onto the manga page as a whole

manga Japanese comics

manga, *josei* Manga officially published for a demographic of adult women

manga, *seinen* Manga officially published for a demographic of adult men

manga, *shōnen* Manga officially published for a demographic of young to adolescent boys

manga, *shōjo* Manga officially published for a demographic of young to adolescent girls

novum The “scientific novelty” of a science fictional narrative

sekai-kei Stories that link the outcome of the world to the relationship between characters, often a boy and a girl

SF Science fiction

TEN *Through the Eye of a Needle*, sequel to the SF novel *Needle*

YA Young adult fiction

ZKC *Zettai Karen Children*, a manga about girls with psychic abilities

TABLE OF FIGURES

- Figure 2.1.** An example of strong kyara • 24
- Figure 2.2.** A transition from “real” to “performed” emotions shows the degree to which emotions are prominently displayed (part 1) • 27
- Figure 2.3.** A transition from “real” to “performed” emotions shows the degree to which emotions are prominently displayed (part 2) • 28
- Figure 2.4.** A transition from “real” to “performed” emotions shows the degree to which emotions are prominently displayed (part 3) • 29
- Figure 2.5.** Intense emotion makes clear the significance of the character’s loss • 30
- Figure 2.6.** The expression of shock by the other characters clearly indicate the unorthodox nature of the heroine’s action • 31
- Figure 3.1.** A visualization of the view that cognitive estrangement has lost significance in science fiction • 44
- Figure 3.2.** The growth of cognitive estrangement • 46
- Figure 4.1.** A comparison between manga pages with different gutters • 80
- Figure 4.2.** A sense of flow draws the eyes smoothly throughout the page • 82
- Figure 4.3.** The visual elements dictate a specific reading order • 83
- Figure 4.4.** Prominent visual elements are highlighted for clarity in order to show the flow of manga pages • 84
- Figure 4.5.** The evolution of flow in the works of Yokoyama Mitsuteru shows its importance in manga’s development • 86
- Figure 4.6.** An example of incongruous flow. • 88
- Figure 4.7.** The panel sequence builds up to a single image in order to highlight its emotional impact on its characters (part 1) • 91
- Figure 4.8.** The panel sequence builds up to a single image in order to highlight its emotional impact on its characters (part 2) • 91
- Figure 4.9.** A single panel deflates the tension of the previous page (part 1) • 92
- Figure 4.10.** A single panel deflates the tension of the previous page (part 2) • 93
- Figure 4.11.** Black and white figures prominently into the page composition • 95

- Figure 4.12.** The contrast between light and dark draws attention to the character • 96
- Figure 4.13.** The use of pure black carries multiple meanings • 99
- Figure 4.14.** The character Tada is shown to be slowly overwhelmed by his own psychic empathy, as expressed through multiple panels • 102
- Figure 4.15.** Faces and abstract backgrounds communicate emotion together • 103
- Figure 5.1.** The page composition draws attention to Hikaru's emotions, and how they define her character • 110
- Figure 5.2.** A variety of visual motifs indicate Hikaru's willful isolation • 111
- Figure 5.3.** Hikaru reacts to the alien's presence primarily in terms of her desire to maintain her isolation (part 1) • 113
- Figure 5.4.** Hikaru reacts to the alien's presence primarily in terms of her desire to maintain her isolation (part 2) • 114
- Figure 5.5.** The panel flow changes between Hikaru's and Horizon's perspectives, with greater emphasis on Hikaru's emotions (part 1) • 116
- Figure 5.6.** The panel flow changes between Hikaru's and Horizon's perspectives, with greater emphasis on Hikaru's emotions (part 2) • 117
- Figure 5.7.** The science fictional act of Horizon forcing Hikaru out of her isolation is replicated to a lesser extent by two human girls • 120
- Figure 5.8.** The headphones threaten to return Hikaru to her emotional isolation • 122
- Figure 5.9.** The past Hikaru is shown with the headphones that represented her emotional isolation • 123
- Figure 5.10.** Hikaru no longer demonstrates the three visual motifs found in figure 5.2, thus showing the changes that have occurred in her as a result of her interactions with the symbionts • 124
- Figure 5.11.** Abstract visual and emotional expression of the symbionts appear in the form of word balloons • 127
- Figure 5.12.** The "human" forms of the symbionts, in contrast to their abstract word balloon representations • 129
- Figure 5.13.** The panel layout emphasizes the increasing importance of emotion in both symbionts • 130
- Figure 5.14.** Chika's similarities to Hikaru are emphasized through dialogue, character depictions, and panel layout (part 1) • 133
- Figure 5.15.** Chika's similarities to Hikaru are emphasized through dialogue, character depictions, and panel layout (part 2) • 133
- Figure 5.16.** Horizon "translates" Hikaru's emotions for the Moderator, showing how it has evolved due to Hikaru (part 1) • 136

- Figure 5.17.** Horizon “translates” Hikaru’s emotions for the Moderator, showing how it has evolved due to Hikaru (part 2) • 136
- Figure 5.18.** Horizon “translates” Hikaru’s emotions for the Moderator, showing how it has evolved due to Hikaru (part 3) • 137
- Figure 5.19.** Using a double-page spread, the act of friendship is framed within the science fictional environment • 140
- Figure 6.1.** The central characters of *ZKC*: Sannomiya Shiho (left), Akashi Kaoru (middle), Nogami Aoi (right), and Minamoto Kōichi (rear) • 148
- Figure 6.2.** Emotions are expressed through outward gestures • 151
- Figure 6.3.** Different from *ZKC*, the constant violation of the panel borders in *To Terra* render psychic powers explicitly in terms of their emotional power • 153
- Figure 6.4.** The nurse’s unconscious fear of holding Shiho’s hand, Minamoto’s active effort to do so, and Shiho’s own reactions highlight the deployment of emotion in *ZKC* • 154
- Figure 6.5.** The Children react to the varying difficulties faced by others in terms of the Esper-Normal divide • 156
- Figure 6.6.** A school-wide Esper examination highlights both the power of the Children and the potentially divisive nature of the examination (part 1) • 158
- Figure 6.7.** A school-wide Esper examination highlights both the power of the Children and the potentially divisive nature of the examination (part 2) • 159
- Figure 6.8.** A school-wide Esper examination highlights both the power of the Children and the potentially divisive nature of the examination (part 3) • 160
- Figure 6.9.** A serious moment sets up the use of anger as a sign of trust and comfort (part 1) • 164
- Figure 6.10.** A serious moment sets up the use of anger as a sign of trust and comfort (part 2) • 165
- Figure 6.11.** A younger Kaoru’s true frustration contrasts heavily with the more comedic anger depicted in figure 6.10 • 166
- Figure 6.12.** A future vision of Minamoto shooting Kaoru shows a potential loss of trust between the two (part 1) • 169
- Figure 6.13.** A future vision of Minamoto shooting Kaoru shows a potential loss of trust between the two (part 2) • 169
- Figure 6.14.** Similar imagery is used to show the loss of trust • 171
- Figure 6.15.** A mock classroom scene emphasizes the potential threat of Kaoru’s abilities • 173

- Figure 6.16.** Reactions from the other characters indicate awareness that the Children are Espers • 174
- Figure 6.17.** Kaoru shows a legitimate sense of indignation over being ridiculed for being an Esper (part 1) • 175
- Figure 6.18.** Kaoru shows a legitimate sense of indignation over being ridiculed for being an Esper (part 2) • 176
- Figure 6.19.** Comedic anger indicates Kaoru’s confidence in her identity as an Esper • 177
- Figure 7.1.** The main characters of *Coppelion*: Fukasaku Aoi (left), Naruse Ibara (middle), Nomura Taeko (right) • 184
- Figure 7.2.** The “normal” appearance of the Coppelions contrasts with the ruined appearance of Tokyo • 186
- Figure 7.3.** The radiation suit and the contrast with Ibara visually de-humanize the survivor • 188
- Figure 7.4.** The mundane nature of the criminals’ home in Tokyo speaks to their positions as outcasts • 190
- Figure 7.5.** Emotion is combined with heavily Japanese imagery in the form of a famous Tokyo shrine (part 1) • 191
- Figure 7.6.** Emotion is combined with heavily Japanese imagery in the form of a famous Tokyo shrine (part 2) • 192
- Figure 7.7.** The makeshift graveyard hints at the survivors’ attempts to remain human (part 1) • 193
- Figure 7.8.** The makeshift graveyard hints at the survivors’ attempts to remain human (part 2) • 194
- Figure 7.9.** Aoi reacts to the implicit notion that she cannot be considered a real human being • 197
- Figure 7.10.** The backgrounds support the fantastical nature of the superhuman abilities introduced in the middle chapters of *Coppelion* (part 1) • 198
- Figure 7.11.** The backgrounds support the fantastical nature of the superhuman abilities introduced in the middle chapters of *Coppelion* (part 2) • 199
- Figure 7.12.** A confrontation between Coppelions utilizes a “battle manga” aesthetic • 200
- Figure 7.13.** A conflict in the early chapters emphasizes the condition of Tokyo and one woman’s concern over losing the life she has found within the city • 201
- Figure 7.14.** Ichikawa Meisa represents the later Coppelion design aesthetic that greatly emphasizes *kyara*, thus showing how the girls go from being visually “typical” to “atypical” • 202

- Figure 7.15.** A flashback restores a more prominent use of realistic backgrounds • 204
- Figure 7.16.** The semi-real, semi-abstract background emphasizes the Coppelions' the different emotional confrontations with the question of their own humanity as Kanon feels overwhelmed by Ibara's acceptance of her own mortality • 205
- Figure 7.17.** The radiation suits maintain the humanity of its wearers by showing their faces • 208
- Figure 7.18.** The prime minister of Japan wears an ineffectual combination of radiation mask and business suit • 209
- Figure 7.19.** A "futuristic" shelter gives less attention to the state of Tokyo in *Coppelion* • 211
- Figure 7.20.** The re-purposed Shibuya 109 highlights Aoi's desire to be normal • 212
- Figure 7.21.** The 'festival' within Shelter 109 emphasizes the survivors' roles as victims over their individual stories • 213
- Figure 7.22.** The issue of giving birth in radiation-contaminated Tokyo is used to emphasize Taeko's feelings about her humanity • 214
- Figure 7.23.** The later chapters more readily combine the use of abstract and realistic backgrounds while making its criticisms more overt • 219
- Figure 7.24.** Through its depiction and descriptions of Aoi, *Coppelion* positions her as an overtly stereotypical anime and manga heroine within the narrative itself • 221
- Figure 7.25.** *Coppelion* utilizes a blatantly battle manga-esque portrayal of conflict • 222
- Figure 7.26.** Coppelions and survivors are pitted against each other, emphasizing both groups' emotions • 225