

Summary of *Fictional Minds, Social Behaviour, and Culture in Japanese-American, American, and Japanese Coming-of-Age Texts*

In my view, Alan Palmer makes a compelling argument when he claims that fictional minds comprise the central field of narratology and, as a result, should be studied extensively. In fact, other experts, as well as Palmer himself, have used the concept of fictional minds in the context of numerous case studies, but the majority of them have been of traditional literature from the British culture. Some of the narratives analysed have been American and it seems that only one has been connected to an Asian culture. Therefore, my thesis aims to fill the niche of fictional minds in texts affiliated with the American and Japanese cultures. At the same time, I try to deviate from Palmer's social approach to fictional minds, by adding a cultural angle, as I consider it original, fresh, and interesting. Lastly, I try to avoid creating or perpetuating the idea that fictional minds can only be associated with traditional literature by including a film, a manga (Japanese comic), and a video game.

In light of the above, my claim is that both main and secondary fictional characters have social behaviours consistent, as well as inconsistent, with socio-cultural patterns elaborated in the tenth volume of *The Ontario Symposium*. *The Ontario Symposium* is a collection of essays about how culture influences social behaviour in the West (North America, Europe) and the Far East (Japan, China, India etc). To match the book's cultural focus, I have selected the following texts for my thesis: *No-No Boy* by John Okada, *Name Me Nobody* by Lois-Ann Yamanaka, *Color of the Sea* by John Hamamura, *More Than This* by Patrick Ness, *The Edge of Seventeen* (film), directed by Kelly Fremon Craig, *Domestic Girlfriend* (manga) by Kei Sasuga and *Persona 4* (video game), developed by Atlus and published by SEGA. For each text, I identify different varieties of social behaviour and then classify them (according to *The Ontario Symposium*) in: the inside-out or the outside-in perspective, individualism or collectivism, self-esteem increase or face preservation, independent agency or interdependent agency, uncertainty-orientation or certainty-orientation and naïve dialecticism or the lack of naïve dialecticism.

However, before doing so, I dedicate the first chapter (Literature Review, Theoretical Framework, and Situating the Niche) to reviewing existing expert opinion and explaining the notions that have helped me in selecting the aforementioned texts, as well as the ones that are vital to their analysis. In the following two chapters (Social Behaviour in Japanese-American

and America Texts, Social Behaviour in Japanese-American and Japanese Texts), I identify how various fictional characters act in social contexts and attempt to correlate their actions to as many of the previously listed socio-cultural patterns from *The Ontario Symposium* as I am able to. Finally, in the conclusions chapter (Conclusions: Phase Two), I gather the conclusive evidence from the analysis chapters and present how it supports my claim. At the same time, I offer potential directions for further studies on fictional minds and for the employment of an approach similar to mine.

Keywords: fictional minds, social behaviour, culture, Japanese-American narratives, American narratives, Japanese narratives.

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