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Anime and intertextualities

Hegemonic identities in *Cowboy Bebop*

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Cowboy Bebop, a popular anime series set in the year 2071 onboard the spaceship *Bebop*, chronicles the bohemian adventures of a group of bounty hunters. This paper presents how the imaginary characters and their voices are conventionalized to fit hegemonic norms. The social semiotic of desire depicted in *Cowboy Bebop* caters to a general heterosexual market in which hero and babe characters represent the anime archetypes of heterosexual normativity. Scripted speech used in the anime functions as a role language which indexes common ideological attributes associated with a character's demeanor. This study focuses on how ideas, including heterosexual normativity and culture-specific practices, are reproduced in media texts in order to negotiate the intertextual distances that link the characters and audience.

Keywords: anime, Japanese, intertextuality, role language, indexicality, naturalization

1. Introduction: Media intertextuality

Modernity has seen a widespread implementation of the institutionalization of standard language and discourse, although in reality varieties of language and discourse are able to coexist, if in a somewhat disorderly manner. In Foucault's (1980) terms, the semiotic construction of discourse practices depends on general rules that characterize the discursive formation to which they belong. The semiotic notion of intertextuality introduced by Kristeva (1980) refers to connections between a text and other previous or synchronic texts across time and space. When characters are created in media, discourse practices are strategically assigned to such characters in order to assign them to their given roles (see Lazar and Wahl this issue) by utilizing existing concepts and conventions. Thus, even the creation of a new personality is not entirely new as its attributes are constructed through intertextual discursive practices based on preexisting social norms.

Park (2009:548) states that media is one of the most influential of the institutions that connect disparate groups into an imagined community (Anderson 1983). When imaginary characters are created, their language use reflects the social ideologies that the creators wish to use or convey. Also, the creators may take a variety of stances toward these social/linguistic hierarchies and expectations. Gal and Irvine (1995) and Gal (1998) discuss the construction of ideologies through the semiotic processes of iconization and erasure (also see Wee 2006). Iconization refers to the idea that "linguistic differences that index social contrasts are reinterpreted as *icons* of the social contrasts" such that "the ideological representation fuses some quality of the linguistic feature and a supposedly parallel quality of the social group and understands one as the cause or the inherent, essential, explanation of the other" (Gal 1998:328, italics in original). Gal (1995) also notes how language relates to power by pointing out the fact that certain linguistic variants are more highly valued than others in a culture. Simultaneously, resistance to the dominant culture occurs in linguistic practices and some people purposely choose to use devalued linguistic variants. "These devalued practices often propose or embody alternate models of the social world" (Gal 1995:175) and both valued and devalued linguistic variants become sources of social power. Ideologies may be iconized or involve iconization; moreover, they may also be the vehicles of indexical relations between language and the social. Hill's (2005:114) discussion of Mock Spanish exemplifies this concept of iconization. She states that Mock Spanish entails inferences that are a reduction and production of negative racist stereotypes of Spanish speakers, and that its use implicates all members of historically Spanish-speaking people to be

> lazy, dirty, unintelligent, sexually loose, and politically corrupt, as persons who speak a language that is not only disorderly and somewhat primitive but also easy and well suited to insincerity, and talk suited to sloth, filth, licentiousness, and the like (Hill 2005:114).

The notion of erasure refers to a process "in which ideology, in simplifying the field of linguistic practices, renders some persons or activities or sociolinguistic phenomena invisible" (Gal and Irvine 1995:974). Within Japanese society, Standard Japanese (SJ) is widely recognized as a special register of linguistic resource. In the media, it is socially expected of and thus assigned to a limited group of people who are considered to be stereotypically normative Japanese people. The SJ linguistic ideology endows speakers of this register with sophisticated qualities, at least superficially in regimented, or centralized, media discourse. Examining Japanese women's language (JWL) in SJ, Inoue (2003) writes that certain linguistic resources such as sentence final particles including *wa, wayo, noyo, dawa,* and *kashira*, mark softness, uncertainty, and other 'weak' affects which project normative femininity.

These particles function as markers of normative femaleness when used by Japanese speakers; therefore, the particles function as "the socially-accepted and culturally-constituted gendered demeanor" in Japanese (Inoue 2003: 319). Her argument is based on Ochs's notion of indexicality as summarized in Table 1:

Table 1. Indexing gender in Japanese, adopted from Ochs (1992: 342)

Linguistic form	Direct index	Indirect index
ze, zo, daze, dana, kayo, etc.	coarse intensity	male 'voice'
wa, wayo, noyo, none, kashira, etc.	delicate intensity	female 'voice'

Inoue (2003) investigates the use of JWL and SJ in the novel *Sekiryô Kôya* 'Solitude Point' written by Yoshimeki in 1993. The female protagonist of the story, a 64-year-old Japanese woman named Yukie, is supposedly from a non-SJ speaking region in western Japan and grew up in a working class family. However, in the story, not only does she speak flawless SJ but she also uses prototypical JWL including the particles shown in Table 1 above. Realistically, it is highly unlikely that a woman of Yukie's background would speak either SJ or JWL. Her speech style thus demonstrates the aforementioned process of erasure, as it "reasserts the unity and homogeneity of Japanese language and, thereby, that of women's language" (Inoue 2003: 325) by overshadowing Yukie's real identity as an uneducated regional-dialect-speaker from a rural area.

As explained by Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003), the success of a dominant ideology depends on its ability to convince people that it is not a matter of ideology, but simply natural, the way things are (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003: 43). They refer to this process as naturalization, the construction of a social norm based on the general consensus of what needs no explanation because people believe it is how things are: baby gift colors should be pink for girls and blue for boys, uneducated people should speak with a Tôhoku accent while educated city-dwellers should speak SJ. Naturalization means more or less the same thing as the idea of iconization discussed above. This paper aims to investigate iconization/naturalization as concerns both normative and non-normative characters in the popular anime, *Cowboy Bebop* (*CB*), which won the approval of international viewers, by investigating correlations between the type of language used and the normative/non-normative traits associated with the characters in the show. The results of the study suggest that the crucial role of scripted speech in *CB* is to construct a language ideology that is far from a realistic portrayal of the speech of everyday practitioners of language. Consider Agha's (2005: 38) discussion of enregisterment, the "processes whereby distinct forms of speech come to be socially recognized (or enregistered) as indexical of speaker attributes by a population of language users." The media employ such enregisterment as a method for simplifying complicated

discursive practice. It is quite common for Japanese media discourse practice to not make use of the realities of the distribution of both regional and social Japanese dialects, e.g. representing characters that in real life would speak in a regional or social dialect, with a standard variety. Media characters that belong to certain subgroups are bound by specific sociolinguistic expectations (e.g. according to age, gender, socioeconomic status, regional affiliation, personal traits) to project stereotypical roles that they are assigned to. Thus, institutions such as media promote simplified interactions typified by linguistic enregisterment, thereby reproducing language and power relationships through intertextual discursive practices (Agha 2005). An example of the regimentation of language concerning imaginary speakers of Japanese can be seen in Kinsui's (2003, 2007) work on 'role language.' He lists linguistic features used by imaginary characters in novels, dramas, anime, translations, etc., and calls them *yakuwarigo* 'role language.' This assignment of linguistic registers is based on the semiotic process of iconization and erasure, as it helps audiences identify stereotypical images related to imaginary characters' roles. Yukie from *Sekiryô Kôya* in Inoue's (2003) analysis, mentioned earlier, provides an example: her countryside working class family origins have been erased by JWL, as her given identity in the novel was a stereotypical 'Japanese woman' in her senior years. Yukie gets jealous because people label her as 'a war bride' whereas her daughter-in-law is depicted as 'a bride of an international marriage.' Even in the situations where Yukie reveals her jealousy of her young, educated, city-born daughter-in-law, Yukie's introspections are in JWL, her 'role language' in the story. *Yakuwarigo* is a facet of the regimentation of the Japanese language which correlates specific linguistic registers' pragmatic and semantic meanings with characters that embody expected roles. Kinsui (2003) also claims that SJ is usually reserved for protagonists while some social or regional dialects (or even pseudo dialects) are used by side characters with specific attributes. For example, the Ôsaka dialect is assigned to money-oriented, funny characters, while the Tôhoku dialect is for uneducated, unsophisticated characters; similarly, American Southern slave characters in translations of novels such as *Gone with the Wind* or *Uncle Tom's Cabin* speak a pseudo dialect that resembles the use of Tôhoku dialect in the Japanese context (see Gaubatz 2007; Hiramoto 2009). Similarly, Lippi-Green's (1997) work shows how accents and dialects are associated with fictional characters in media, suggesting that these language propagations promote the inequalities between the mainstream and socially subordinate languages.

A number of researchers have reported on issues of language, gender, and sexuality and their link to issues of power and ideology. This study also observes the ways in which a medium of Japanese pop culture like anime constructs hegemonic heterosexuality (as well as hegemonic masculinity), and the ways in which these are made identifiable to the audience. Kiesling (e.g. 2002/2006, 2005)

investigates how a group of fraternity house members at a North American university emphasizes heterosexual male dominance, while female and homosexual male subordination is highlighted by the members' construction of gender ideologies via language use. He demonstrates "how language is used by the men to reproduce a hegemonic heterosexuality which is embedded in the larger context of hegemonic masculinity" (Kiesling 2002/2006:129). The examples include the members' use of address terms toward other males, and their stories of drinking and their sexual exploits with women. These data demonstrate constructions and reproductions of heterosexual male dominance by the members in order to claim power in a same-sex social group. He also notes:

> What we see here is that heterosexual identities and ideologies are being created in a much more complex way: there is really no separated group of heterosexuals in the dominant culture. This group, like men a few decades ago, is considered the norm, and is indeed hardly a coherent group. But we have seen here that we can identify heterosexuality as part of these men's socially constructed identity.
>
> (Kiesling 2002/2006:129)

The idea of hegemonic masculinity or normative sexuality is well reflected and represented in mainstream media discourse including scripted speech used in pop culture such as movies, comics, games, and anime. The ideas of a conventional popularity, the conventional ideas of what it means to be a popular person within a particular social group, support associations of normative males and females with the language of power, e.g. standard or gender-appropriate varieties (Lippi-Green 1997). The linguistic conformity associated with the normative ideology of gender and sexuality is easily attainable through performance if one wishes to show compliance with the hegemonic hetero-normative ideology (e.g. Hall 1995) and this is straightforwardly done in media discourse. As pointed out by Inoue (2003), highly idealized JWL has became the property of imagined characters like Minnie Mouse or Barbie, while hardly any Japanese women would speak in that way in reality. Likewise, in what follows I will demonstrate how idealized language is assigned to fictional characters in the anime in order to appeal to a specific semiotics of desire that is assumed to be the norm of today's society.

2.   Data and methodology

CB, originally released in Japan in 1998, was used as data for this study. Susan Napier, the author of *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation*, writes, "[*CB*] gained an intense following both in America and Japan precisely because it took certain conventions of masculinity and explored them on a deep and emotionally satisfying level" (Napier 2005:xiii).

The story is set largely on the futuristic spaceship *Bebop* in the year 2071, and follows the adventures of a group of bounty hunters (two male and two female): ex-triad member Spike Spiegel, ex-cop Jet Black, sexy con-artist Faye Valentine, and child computer hacker Radical Edward. The show became extremely successful internationally and remains one of the most popular anime outside Japan today. The anime movie version was released in 2003 and a live action version is in production in Hollywood. *CB*'s target audience is young adults, not children. The show was selected for this study because of its stereotypical portrayal of hegemonic ideology based on heterosexual norms represented in a "social semiotic of desire" as explained by Cameron and Kulick (2003: 140):

> [I]t is important to acknowledge that desire is materialized and conveyed through semiotic resources that are variably distributed among members of the societies in which they are used. As Penelope Eckert (2002) has observed, there will be structured variation in people's use of what we have called the 'social semiotic of desire,' because different kinds of people are socialized to desire different things, and/or to express their desires in different ways. (Cameron and Kulick 2003: 140)

The point here, however, is that the social semiotic of desire depicted in *CB* caters to a general heterosexual market. Hero and babe characters represent anime archetypes of heterosexual normativity, as, in Eckert and McConnell-Ginet's words (2003: 35), they are modeled after universally quintessential men and women: such as Superman and Scarlett O'Hara. The heterosexual norms in *CB* are established

Figure 1. Main male characters, Jet and Spike
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Figure 2. Main female characters, Faye and Ed
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through semiotic resources such as body image and language use. Images of the main characters of *CB* are shown in Figures 1 and 2.

Spike and Jet are both mentally and physically skilled, although both have prosthetic body parts due to previous battle injuries. Spike is a master of Bruce Lee's Jeet Kune Do and an excellent gunman while Jet is an experienced mechanic and capable programmer who loves bonsai gardening. Additionally, not only do Spike and Jet speak idealized, rough men's language throughout the series, including the masculine sentence final particles shown in Table 1, they are excellent fighters and extraordinary pilots. Faye's seemingly aggressive background as a bounty-hunter and a con-artist is conveyed quite clearly through her addiction to gambling and penchant for street fighting, but she also consciously maintains her beauty. In her work on *Sailor Moon* (Toei Animation 1992/2002, original by Naoko Takeuchi), Allison (2000: 269) reports that one of the fans she interviewed, a 9-year-old girl, said she likes *Sailor Moon* because the title character has a great figure (*sutairu ga ii*) and not because she is powerful. Allison (2000: 269) goes on to say that this is the reason why some older men like the show — the character is viewed as a 'sex icon' and is an example of the infantilized female sex object, the idolization of which has become a general trend in Japan (see also Cornog and Perper 2005). Faye from *CB* is also definitely objectified; a magazine reviewer describes her as "a standard anime cutie with perky grapefruit-shaped boobs and tiny pert mouth" (Maio 2003: 95) and says that he suspects teen boy viewers enjoy watching a particular segment where Faye is abducted and ends up bound and disheveled on the

floor (Maio 2003:95). As the babe character, Faye generally shows strong JWL characteristics. These three main characters, as portrayed by the art work and their language, are aligned with hegemonic gender and linguistic ideology. However, the other female main character, Ed, remains an oddball throughout the series as her name, looks, and language use obscure her femininity.

For this study, all 26 episodes of *CB* were transcribed; each episode runs about 23 minutes. Stories are structured with largely self-contained plots, and feature different guest protagonists, side characters, and villains. The total data covers about 600 minutes of audiovisual recording, excluding opening and closing credits and previews. The American English translations used in this paper are based on the dubbing of the *CB*, not on the subtitles.

3.   Masculine and feminine voices

Japanese is known to have gender exclusive expressions, and the features of JWL, including sentence final particles, pronouns, lexical items, and discourse styles have been studied extensively (e.g. Ide 1982; Reynolds 1985; Shibamoto 1985; McGloin 1990; Okamoto 1995). Regarding first person pronouns, *watashi* is considered gender-neutral, while *ore* and *boku* are masculine and *atashi* and *atakushi* are feminine; there are many other forms available depending on speakers' social status and age as well as the current conversational context. Within the gender-exclusive pronominal categories, different pronouns carry different connotations. Within the masculine category, *boku* is considered casual, *ore* is rough. Another first person pronoun, *washi*, can be interpreted in two different ways: as a marker of a provincial accent or of an elderly male authority's voice. In some regions (e.g. Hiroshima, Nagano, or Aichi prefectures), *washi* is used by both male and female speakers.

Table 2. First person pronouns

Masculine (Colloquial)			Neutral (Formal)		Feminine (Colloquial)	
Casual	Rough	Old	Formal	Neutral	Formal	Casual
boku	*ore*	*washi*	*watakushi*	*watashi*	*atakushi*	*atashi*

As mentioned, the normative main characters were assigned with expected normative SJ. The bounty hunter heroes sound like tough men and the sexy female sounds quite feminine. Normative guest characters were also assigned with SJ, and similarly spoke in a manner indicating their conformity to gendered speech norms. Example 1 demonstrates normative characters' male and female voices heard in guest protagonists' speech:

(1) Rhint and Alisa, Episode 10: *Ganymede Elegy*
     After Alisa's boyfriend, Rhint, accidentally kills a loan shark who was after
     Alisa, they plan to run away together.
     Rhint: *<u>Ore</u> o saguri ni kitan da… Kusô, shôkin o kakerareteru noka… Mô*
             dame da…! Mô dame da…!
             He's after me… I have a bounty on my head… It's all over…!
     Alisa: *<u>Anata</u> wa warukunai <u>wa</u>… <u>Atashi</u> ga anna yatsu kara okane o karita*
             kara… <u>atashi</u> o mamotte kuretan janai…
             It's not your fault… It's because I borrowed money from a crook
             like him. I should've never let you get mixed up in this.
     Rhint: *Tsukamattara mô tasukaranê, <u>ore</u> wa koroshichimattan da <u>ze</u>…*
             If I get caught, nothing can save me… nothing. I killed him.
     Alisa: *Nigemashô… Nigeru <u>noyo</u>, futari de!*
             Let's go. We've gotta run, right now!

In the data, all the male characters in protagonist roles spoke normative SJ and
in a masculine way. This was true for Gren, a guest protagonist with a soft and
kindly demeanor, who is a gay saxophone player (Episodes 12 & 13: *Jupiter Jazz 1
& 2*). Gren, an openly gay character, has a mainstream male role and speaks as one
would expect a man to speak. In Example 2, Faye and Gren discuss his homosexu-
ality; Gren employs masculine speech and Faye, feminine, throughout.

(2) Faye and Gren, Episode 12: *Jupiter Jazz 1*
     [at a bar]
     Faye: *<u>Atashi</u> wa mitame hodo karui onna janai <u>wa</u>.*
             I'm not as simple as I seem, Mr. Saxophone.
     Gren: *Ainiku onna niwa kyômi ga nakute…*
             Women aren't my style. Sorry.
     Faye: *<u>Ara</u>, zannen…*
             Oh, what a pity.
     [after deciding to go to Gren's house]
     Gren: *Kantan ni shinnyôshite î <u>noka</u>?*
             And you trust me, just like that.
     Faye: *Onna niwa kyômi nain <u>desho</u>?*
             You said you weren't interested in women.

The contrast between Gren's use of the masculine particle *noka*, and Faye's use of
feminine forms such as the pronoun *atashi* and the particle *wa* (with rising into-
nation) is obvious. In addition, she uses the sentence-initial filler, *ara*, as well as
the interrogative marker *desho* with a rising intonation, also feminine. Examples 1
and 2 demonstrate that the normative register is reserved for protagonists, as one
would expect from Kinsui's (2003: 51, 70–72) observations on role language.

On the other hand, side characters are often assigned with role languages which help to iconize certain non-normative or otherwise undesirable traits. Kinsui (2003: 173) points out that men categorized as *nyû hâfu* 'cross-dresser, literally *new half*' or *okama* 'male homosexual' often speak JWL in Japanese media. In the data, the only male characters in the entire series who spoke women's language were a group of cross-dressers in Episode 12 (*Jupiter Jazz 1*). Unlike Gren, the guest protagonist, the cross-dressers, living on a womanless planet, were assigned *okama kotoba* 'JWL spoken by men,' sometimes known as *onê kotoba* 'big sisters' language.' Fushimi (1991: 21) notes that although the internalization of feminine language in *onê kotoba* is an extension of JWL, it is often realized as a grotesquely exaggerated parody (cited in Suzuki 1998: 81). In Example 3, Spike, in search of his estranged girlfriend Julia, ends up meeting a cross-dresser prostitute named Julius during his search.

(3)   Julius and Spike, Episode 12: *Jupiter Jazz 1*

Julius:	*Shitsurei ne! Juria janai <u>wa</u>, Ju-ri-a-su, Juriasu yo!*
	Sorry sailor, I'm not Julia. Ju-li-US. My name's Julius.
Spike:	*A, so…*
	My mistake.
Julius:	*A, sô da, Guren nara nanika shitteru kamo… Mae ni onna to isshodatta no, mitakoto aru <u>wa</u>.*
	Y'know, Gren's really the one who might be able to help. I've seen him with women on occasion.
J's friend:	*Ara, okyaku?*
	Oh, a customer?
Julius:	*Chigau <u>wayo</u>. Dômitemo nonke <u>desho</u>? Sa, basho kaemasho.*
	'Fraid not, darling. Can't you see he's straight? C'mon. Let's try another corner.

In Example 3, Julius, in his *onê kotoba*, uses the feminine features *wa*, *wayo*, and *desho*. His cross-dresser friend employs the feminine sentence-initial filler *ara*. This non-normative language use indexes simplistic assumptions based on superficial interpretations of the characters' sexuality. In the last line, Julius refers to Spike as *nonke*, common jargon among homosexuals to refer to a straight person (Abe 2004: 208). This interaction serves to make explicit the fact that a straight male like Spike only desires a straight female and to reinforce Spike's heterosexuality. As the cross-dresser prostitutes live on a womanless planet, and considering the comments made by other, frustrated, heterosexual male characters who reside there (see Example 4 below), it is implied that the cross-dressers' clients are not necessarily all homosexual males. Julius's sexuality is never discussed and his rather complicated gender and sexual identities are simply classified as belonging

in a 'non-normative' category; he is presented as the binary opposite of normative, woman-loving Spike.

(4)   Comments by men on the womanless planet, Episodes 12 & 13: *Jupiter Jazz 1 & 2*
      [on a street, a group of men following Faye]
      MAN: *Ojôsan, sono kakkô wa me no doku da. Soretomo sasottenno kai?*
                  Madam, your appearance is harmful to the eyes. Or are you trying to entice us?
      FAYE: *Nnn, sô nanoyo. Chotto mattete ne.*
                  Oops! You found me out! Just hold on a minute.

      [at a bar, a bartender talking to Jet]
      BARTENDER: *Â, namami no onna o mitanowa hantoshi buri, gokujô no onna tte kotode ieba ninen buri da. Mimachigaeruwake nai desho.*
                  Oh yeah… It's been six months since I saw a woman in the flesh and two years since I saw a girl that good-looking. Trust me, I wouldn't make a mistake about that!
      JET: *Kono machi niwa sumitakanê na…*
                  Man, I sure wouldn't wanna live around here.

While Julius's term in Example 3, the gay term *nonke*, meaning 'a straight man,' highlights Spike's normative sexuality, it establishes Julius's own identity as an unambiguously non-straight sex-worker who caters to male clients who desire his superficially feminine appearance on the womanless planet. Through this, Spike's normativity and Julius's non-normativity are brought to the audience's attention.

Quite dissimilarly, Ed, the other main female character, hardly uses gendered expressions at all. Her name, as well as the other characters' repeated comments on the ambiguity of her gender, help to reinforce Ed's heterosexually non-normative identity.

(5)   Comments on Ed's gender
      Faye talking to Ed, Episode 9: *Jamming with Edward*
      Faye: *Ara, anta, onna no ko nano?*
                Hey, you're a girl?
      A security guard suspecting Ed's gender, Episode 23: *Brain Scratch*
      Guard: *Musumette…? Honto ni onnanoko ka?*
                She's an unusual looking child. Is she a girl?
      Ed's father meeting with Spike and Jet, Episode 24: *Hard Luck Woman*
      Father: *Ô sô ka. Musuko ga sewan natta. N? Musume datta ka?*
                Oh, that's different. Thanks for taking care of my son… Or, uh, was it my daughter?

Ed, as seen in Example 5, is portrayed as decidedly gender-neutral or ambiguous. Her non-conformity to feminine norms is not depicted by the use of masculine features, but rather by her predominant use of neutral features. In other words, interestingly, the lack of feminine features (JWL), not the use of masculine features, helps to construct Ed's non-femininity, thus, adding masculine elements to her characteristics. Ed is categorized as [-feminine] (or androgynous) because of her [-JWL] condition, and not because of her use of masculine features.

4. Standard and non-standard voices

There are several side characters in the data who speak regional dialects. Kinsui (2003) notes that certain regional dialects function as role language to assign stereotypical traits to imaginary characters: Ôsaka or generally Kansai dialect-speaking characters' in popular media such as manga, anime, and plays tend to be loquacious, funny, frugal, food-loving, unsophisticated, etc. (Kinsui 2003: 81–101). In one episode of *CB*, a male side character named Otto, a freight ship driver, speaks with Hiroshima dialect. Some grammatical characteristics of Hiroshima dialect are presented in the following table.

Table 3. Hiroshima dialect

Grammar	Hiroshima dialect	SJ
Copula	*-ja*	*-da*
Sentence final particle	*-no, -wa/-ya*	*-ne, -yo*
Modal 'must/ have to'	*-nyâ*	*-naito/-neba*
Modal 'to give' (derogatory)	*-yoru*	*-yagaru*

In Example 6, Otto speaks to a fellow pilot, a guest female protagonist, V.T., about his hit-and-run accident.

(6) V.T. and Otto, Episode 7: *Heavy Metal Queen*
  V.T.: *Ah, Ottô, dôshita no?*
      Hey, Otto. What's up?
  Otto: *Atenige saretan <u>ja</u>. … Gêto no iriguchi de ikinari warikonde kite, butsukete <u>ikiyotta</u>. Kusô, benshô sase<u>nyâ</u> ki ga suman <u>wa</u>! Mikaketara oshiete kurê <u>ya</u>.*
      Eh, I got into a hit-and-run. … The guy cuts into line at the gate, rams me, and then jets off! Shit! I gotta make him pay for repairs, at least. So tell me if you see the weasel!
  V.T.: *Tokuchô wa?*

So how do I spot him?

Otto: *Soryâ <u>nô</u>, nantoka yû… Tôyô no megami san no e ga…*
          Uh, lemme think. Yeah, there was this giant Asian goddess painted
          on his ship.

While V.T. and Otto are both blue-collar truckers, V.T. is a protagonist while Otto is a side character. V.T. is assigned SJ, while Otto is given Hiroshima dialect. The two different Japanese dialects function to project different characteristics — V.T. is normative and Otto is not. Most likely this harks back to the popular 1970s movie series *Torakku Yarô 'Trucker Buddy'* (Toei Video 2002–2009); the story was based in Hiroshima and the protagonist, Bunta Sugawara, acted in fluent Hiroshima dialect despite being from the Tôhoku region (see Figure 3).

Subsequently, both Sugawara and long-distance truckers became iconic images of Hiroshima dialect speakers especially in dramas and movies.

Hiroshima dialect belongs to a subgroup of western Japanese dialects distinct from SJ, which is itself a subdialect of eastern Japanese. Kinsui (2003) observed the language use of imaginary scientists/wise men from various films including Dr. Ochanomizu from *Astro Boy*, Dr. Agasa from *Meitantei Conan 'Case Closed'*, Dr. Ôkido from *Pokémon*, Professor Dumbledore of *Harry Potter*, and Master Yoda from *Star Wars* (in Japanese translations), and suggests that they are assigned a role language which he classifies as *hakasego* 'doctor/scientist language.' Kinsui (2003) also notes that *hakasego* contains many generic western Japanese characteristics.

Figure 3. *Torakku Yarô*, Bunta Sugawara on the right
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Table 4. Hakasego 'doctor/scientist language' and SJ (adapted from Kinsui 2003: 5)

Grammar	*Hakasego* **'doctor/scientist language'**	SJ
Copula	*-ja and its variants*	*-da and its variants*
Negation marker	*-n/-nu*	*-nai*
Existential marker	*oru*	*iru*
Gerundive	*-tteoru/toru*	*-tteiru/iru*

Table 5. Generic characteristics of western and eastern Japanese (adapted from Kinsui 2003: 5)

Grammar	**Western Japanese**	**Eastern Japanese**
Copula	*-ja/-ya and their variants*	*-da and its variants*
Negation marker	*-n/-hen*	*-nai/-nê*
Existential marker	*oru*	*iru*
Gerundive	*-tteoru/toru*	*-tteiru/iru*

CB as well contains its share of *hakasego*-speaking characters; in the following ex-ample, the chess master Hex, a brilliant, yet senile, scientist, converses with three other old men. In Example 7, Hex is talking about his new exciting chess mate.

(7) Hex and three old men, Episode 14: *Bohemian Rhapsody*
    Carlos: *Omaesan o tekozuraseru kurai ja yoppodo no yatsu <u>jana</u>!*
             He must be some player to pin you down!
    Hex: *Soreyori hirumeshi wa mada ka <u>no</u>?*
             I don't know. Let's have lunch first!
    Antonio: *Nani yû<u>toru</u>? Sakki kûta <u>jarôga</u>!*
             You ate lunch a few minutes ago, blast it!
    Hex: *Hô<u>jatta</u> ka <u>no</u>?*
             Really? Did I like it?
    Jobin: *Boke<u>toru</u>n janai ka?*
             You leave your brain somewhere?

Notice that it is not only Hex, but also the other old men who speak *hakasego*. Kinsui (2003: 9) notes that old men speak just like doctors/scientists in manga or anime, and categorizes their speech as *rôjingo* 'old men's language'; he further notes that *hakasego* 'doctor/scientist language' is a subset of *rôjingo*, as only aged characters are assigned *hakasego*. Of note is the fact that young scientist charac-ters in *CB* did not use *hakasego*. However, we occasionally meet knowledgeable old men who do not speak either *rôjingo* 'old men's language' or *hakasego* 'doc-tor/scientist language' — namely elderly villains in the series. Wang Long, Ping Long, and Sou Long are 120-year-old triplets and bosses of the Red Dragon triad.

In Example 8, the elders are judging Vicious, the series' young main villain, who has betrayed the triad. They all speak SJ with formulaic expressions, highlighted with underlining in Example 8, which are not usually used in colloquial speech. Their speech sounds quite formal.

(8)   The villains, Episode 25: *The Real Folk Blues 1*

  Wang Long: *Tonda dôke o yarakashita mono da. <u>Uranaishi ga kôitta. Akai tsuki no ban, hebi ga sono dokuga o furuô to osoroshiku hayaku hashiru to</u>.*

  What a foolish thing this is that you have done. <u>A fortune-teller warned us: On the night of the red moon, the snake will slither and strike, bearing its venomous fangs.</u>

  Ping Long: *<u>Aware</u> ni mieru zo, Bishasu.*

  You look so <u>pitiful</u>, Vicious. And you are.

  Sou Long: *Omae wa kôkeishaniwa narenai to <u>wareware</u> no kettei wa tsutaeta hazu da.*

  <u>We</u> have already informed you of our final decision. You cannot succeed us as a leader of this clan.

  Vicious: *Tatakaukotono dekinai <u>shikabane</u> nado, soshikini wa hitsuyô nai.*

  The syndicate doesn't need <u>corpses</u> that can't fight, who've lost their taste for blood.

In *CB*, most of the villains speak in formal SJ as seen in Example 8. The triad elders, as iconic villains, align with normative villains rather than old men characters, despite the fact that they are 120 years old. In other words, their age is overshadowed by the iconization of their 'bad guy' traits. The formulaic speech used by the villains here is not idiosyncratic to *CB*; this kind of speech is often assigned to villains in other anime series. For example, in the first season of *Sailor Moon*, while most of the main female characters used JWL (including Sailor Moon and the Sailor Scouts), the ultimate enemy of Sailor Moon and the Scouts, Queen Beryl of the Negaverse, used this formal speech style more than any other character. Kristeva (1980: 69) refers to texts in terms of two axes — a horizontal axis connects the author and reader of a text whereas a vertical axis links the text to other texts across time and space. In the same way that Otto the truck driver's language is intertextually linked to that of *Trucker Buddy*'s, the formal formulaic speech of the villains in *CB* is linked to other prior meanings. Satake (2003) states that while some types of role language are associated with prejudice and discrimination, another negative byproduct of role language is the reinforcement of normative language use or linguistic ideology, e.g. "what the correct Japanese language is" or "how should women and men speak" (Satake 2003: 55).

5. Foreigners' voices

We saw above that the *hakasego* or *rôjingo* characterization was withheld from certain otherwise eligible characters in favor of highlighting a different set of traits, namely their status as villains. This technique was further employed throughout the series, with the selection of aspects of various characters' personalities based on their ease of iconizability. One of the characters in the series, Laughing Bull, an aged Native American medicine man who consults Spike and Jet, also speaks very formulaic SJ, despite fitting both the age and wisdom criteria for *rôjingo/hakasego*.

(9) Laughing Bull to Jet, Episode 26: *The Real Folk Blues 2*
Bull: *Hashiru iwa yo. Yatsu no hoshi wa nagareyôto shiteiru. Shi o osoreru na. Shi wa itsumo sobani iru. Osore o miseta totan, sore wa hikariyorimo hayaku tobikakatte kurudarô. Osorenakereba, sore wa tada yasashiku mimamotteiru dake da.*
You, Running Rock. His star is about to fall. I have dreamed it. Do not fear death. Death is always at our side. When we show fear, it jumps at us faster than light. But if we do not show fear, it casts its eye upon us gently and then guides us into infinity.

The differences between the villains' language and Laughing Bull's is in the latter's rather long and complicated poetic expressions. Laughing Bull's lines are so abstract and metaphorical that they sound almost like the reciting of maxims rather than conversation. Meek (2006) discusses imaginary Native American characters' speech in the US and points out such clichés as the greeting 'how' accompanied by a raised hand, Indian calls or battle cries, and formulaic speech. In Japanese, stereotypical Native Americans often say things like *indian uso tsukanai* 'Indian no lie' or overuse formulaic names and metaphorical expressions, telltale signs of the influence of Hollywood movie translations. These expressions are equivalent to Kinsui's role language applied to Native Americans. In the case of Laughing Bull, his foreignness (as a Native American Indian) is more highlighted than his age or wisdom; therefore, the assignment of the stereotypical Native American expressions works to erase his other characteristics.

Other examples of role language assigned to obviously foreign characters include the speech of Chinese and Caucasian characters. Kinsui's descriptions of Chinese role language (2003: 176–181; 2007: 203–207) include omissions of case markers, as seen in the underlined sections of the following examples. The underlined parts are missing case markers; in line 1, *ninjin heisui (wa/de) genki (ga) jûbun yo* 'lit. ginseng tonic contains enough energy,' and line 2, *Isshûkan (wa) motsu* 'lit. it will last you a week.' These sentences would sound more native-Japanese when completed with the appropriate case markers.

(10)   Bartender and Hakim, Episode 2: *Stray Dog Strut*
   Bartender: *Nî-rai-rai. Okyaku-san, ninjin **heisui** genki jûbun yo.*
          *Isshûkan motsu yo! Tsukareten nara satôkibi **heisui** yo!*
          *Tabesugi dattara, painappuru **heisui** yo!*
          Ni lai lai, if you feel rundown try some ginseng heisui. It'll
          keep you up for a week. Out of whack, try some sugar cane
          heisui. Ate too much? Have some pineapple heisui.
   Abdul Hakim: *Raochû da.*
          Gimme some lao-chu.
   Bartender: ***Shei shei.** Hai yo!*
          Thank you. Here you go.

Other than the case marker omissions, the overused sentence final particle *yo* as well as terms adopted from Chinese language (marked in boldface) aid in the indexing of the bartender in this example as a stereotypical Chinese character. The examples *nî-rai-rai* 'Mandarin, *ni lai lai*, lit. you come come,' *shei shei* 'Mandarin *xie xie*, lit. thank you,' and *heisui* 'Cantonese, soda/tonic, lit. gas water' are all quite obviously non-Japanese.

 Japanese media also reserve a particular register of role language for Caucasian characters. The guest protagonist in one of the episodes, Andy von de Oniyate, is the heir to the wealthy Oniyate Ranch, but he chooses to be a bounty hunter because he believes it fits his cowboy-like cool nature. He has blond hair, blue eyes, and a penchant for cowboy fashion, appearing (if only superficially) as a typical Caucasian protagonist in a western movie. In her discussion of Caucasians' role language, Yoda (2007: 175–176) notes that use of interjections like *oh* or *ah*, as well as mixed English-Japanese expressions are stereotypical features of *seiyôjingo* 'westerners' language.' In Example 11, English words are inserted extensively into Andy's speech.

(11)   Andy, Episode 22: *Cowboy Funk*
   [at a crime scene, suspecting Spike to be a culprit]
   ANDY: *Kyô kokoni bakudan o shikakeruto yuukoto wa, <u>you</u> no hanzai shûki*
      o keisansureba, <u>me</u> niwa kantan ni wakarukoto da.
      I figured that you'd plant an explosive here today. It wasn't difficult
      after I studied your crime patterns and profiled your criminal mind.
   [at a crime scene, being unsuspicious of a real culprit]
   ANDY: ***Kare** wa <u>gâdoman</u> janai ka!*
      Yeah right, that old security guard.
   [justifying an entrance of his horse to a party]
   ANDY: <u>*Oh, my*</u> *aiba, Onikisu wa, tada no uma dewa nai!*
      Oh ho! But my Onyx is no ordinary steed!
   [at a party, boasting his cowboy qualities to Faye]

> ANDY: *Sô! Watashi wa sonna koto ki ni shinai! Kore to kimetara, hoka wa <u>nothing</u>, mienai no sa.*
> Ma'am, I can't worry about that. When my mind is set, well I'm wearin' blinders. Nothing else matters!
> [at a crime scene, questioning a culprit]
> ANDY: *Omae wa dare da? <u>Who are you</u>?!*
> What do you want? Who are you?!

The expression seen in the 2nd excerpt, *kare* 'he,' while a Japanese word, sounds like a direct translation from English and adds qualitative non-nativeness. In Example 12, another Caucasian character, Judy, again exemplifies *seiyôjingo* features such as English vocabulary mixing and the unnatural use of pronouns.

(12)   Judy, Episode 12: *Jupiter Jazz 1*
> Judy: *Ûn! <u>Good news</u> wa, shôkin ga odoroki no, happakumantte koto ne! … **Kare**tteba tôttemo suteki nanoyo!*
> Mmm, and the good news is he's worth a whopping eight million woolongs! …What a handsome guy!

Both Andy and Judy's *seiyôjingo*, which is highlighted in Examples 11 and 12, helps to construct a sense of foreignness, which is not the same as the foreignness projected by the Native American or Chinese characters presented above as each of them indexes different types of foreignerness — the Native American, Chinese, and Caucasian.

6.   Conclusions: Hegemonic normativity, iconization, and naturalization

Based on the observations of the Japanese language in *CB*, I argue that both normative and non-normative characters are constructed to conform with hegemonic ideals of gender, sexuality, occupation, age, and race. Normative characters are represented as possessing most or all ideal traits, both visually and linguistically, as the artwork and speech of both heroes and babes reflect. At the same time, characters that do not conform to desirable sexual, visual, national, or age norms are rendered less than attractive and are assigned linguistic features that deviate from colloquial SJ. Of the four main characters, Spike, Jet, and Faye have speech styles which serve to perpetuate the generic ideals of hegemonic normativity. The good guys' tough language (tougher even than their enemies) and near-invincibility successfully iconize the heroes' expected attributes while the babes, although occasionally lapsing into unladylike expressions and behaviors, otherwise maintain a speech style indexing their femininity. Additionally, normative guest protagonists demonstrate their heroic attributes and, despite their tendency to die at the end,

prove nearly invincible until the very end of the show. All episodes are based on dominant ideology and are predictable, appealing to a wide range of audiences both Japanese and non-Japanese. As mentioned earlier, the widespread acceptance of a dominant ideology owes its success to its ability to convince people that it is not a matter of ideology, but simply natural, the way things are (Eckert and McConnell-Ginet 2003: 43). This process of naturalization presents normativity as something that needs no explanation. Naturalized ideas like 'it is just natural for men to be macho and women to be babes,' are rampant in pop culture. Of course, anime is patently fiction with overly exaggerated characters and it is not a direct reflection of the way things are in reality. Anime, like many other pop culture consumables such as comics and cartoons, seems to belong to a genre that lends itself to irony and reflexivity. Nonetheless, as discussed by Satake (2003), writing on gendered language use in children's anime programs, anime as a genre does influence reinforcement of hegemonic norms, leading to prejudice, discrimination, and linguistic prescriptivism. For example, an oversimplified iconization process drew international attention to a particular anime program in 2008. The popular anime show *Jojo no Kimyô na Bôken* '*Jojo's Bizarre Adventure*' (Studio A.P.P.P. 1993/2001, Original by Hirohiko Araki), was criticized for including an anti-Muslim innuendo when one of the story's villains, while reading the Koran in front of a mosque-like structure, orders his subordinates to murder the protagonists; international Muslim communities attacked the show for propagating a crude equation between the Koran and the 'bad guys' (Japan Times 2008). Yet this kind of iconization does get disseminated easily across cultures via popular media such as anime. At the same time, the global acceptance of the hegemonically naturalized norms may contribute to the success of anime, a medium which tends to convey rather stereotypical and simplistic stories in naturalized terms.

In her summary of gendered speech styles, Cameron (1997: 49) mentions that "[w]hereas sociolinguistics traditionally assumes that people talk the way they do because of who they (already) are, the postmodernist approach suggests that people are who they are because of (among other things) the way they talk." Pennycook (2003: 528) mirrors this line of thought, referring to performativity and pre-existing identities, and states that "[i]t is not that people use language varieties because of who they are, but rather that we perform who we are by (amongst other things) using varieties of language." The *CB* characters, as with all scripted characters, are created with preconceived identities and appearances, and this determines their language use. As all of the characters share futuristic bohemian backgrounds, their individual particulars, such as ethnicity and language, are kept vague throughout the show. It is the language that projects their fictional identities. The default viewers being Japanese at the time of production, the protagonists do not fail to speak SJ and have culture-specific knowledge of Japan regardless of

their apparently non-Japanese names and appearances; however, detailed ethnicities or language backgrounds are not mentioned. The mainstream characters are just assumed to be aligned to a default 'normative Japanese' category. There are more than a few episodes in which the main characters behave as if they were Japanese natives by demonstrating their understanding of traditional information such as traditional stories, cuisine, maxims, cultural values, etc. Additionally, even though as the series progresses, it is revealed that Faye Valentine is actually Singaporean, her native Japanese fluency does not betray any such foreignness, unlike the case of other supposedly non-Japanese characters such as the Chinese bartender, the Native American medicine man, or the American cowboy. Her 'pre-existing identity' as the show's central female character dictates that she will have the iconic language which is expected for her role. The SJ, as well as the JWL, that she manipulates natively, indexes her mainstream position throughout the series. The same can be said of any incongruities regarding other characters in the show. The obvious foreigners are saddled with non-SJ or non-native Japanese fluency which iconize their foreign roles. In short, pre-existing identities are paired with the appropriate role language to reinforce the stratification of linguistic registers.

Blommaert (2003: 611) writes that there is a "worldwide lingua-cultural homogenization" taking place, with western norms becoming global norms, manifested in such ways as the modern Japanese language's frequent use of English as well as adaptations of western cultures. Referring to this phenomenon as '*McDonaldization*,' Blommaert (2003: 611) states that it "allows language users opportunities to represent cultural, social, and historical conditions of being." The rapid penetration of anime into the global market, in contrast, may well be observed as the Japanese counterpart to this McDonaldization: a Japanese pop culture commodity absorbed into a transnational culture and being appropriated as a part of a hegemonic norm.

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DVD

Cowboy Bebop: Complete Session Collection. 2003. [video] Directed by Shinichiro Watanabe. USA: Pioneer Video. [6 videodiscs (10hr., 50 min.)]

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