

The History of Hentai Manga

An Expressionist
Examination of
Eromanga



Kimi Rito

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Preface

The contents of this book are not exactly the usual manga-oriented representation theory material one would see in a book about eromanga. One could call it an unusual look into the genre, using material that looks into expressions influenced by the medium as well as its expansion, evolution, and its variations from the times of their invention and discovery forward through the vehicle of manga. As a result, this book has turned into more of an attempt to look at its semiotics, into the symbols (something that someone can look at and naturally understand in an instant, that also has shared common meaning or generalizations applied to it) that have stuck within the genre of eromanga.

At the same time, it's also a document that contains a multilateral investigation into the creators and situations that helped shape those expressions, while directly looking at other elements that have given those expressions their meaning, and questioning the circumstances that birthed them.

Nevertheless, let me declare my refusal to the statement that in the end this book is merely consideration and research of the visual aspects and perception of the expressions that lie at the heart of eromanga. Nor is it one that also looks at the plots and characters of what has been allowed to develop within the genre.

If we are to think that eromanga as a genre is but a series of stories serving as the crossbeams to construct our masturbation media, then I believe it would be correct to say that we are looking at but only one of its many facets. To the reader, the most important thing when it comes to the genre may lie in its usefulness and practicality. It is also the place where creators within the genre are able to execute their implementation of these varied expressions, as well.

It is a genre where the exploration of both genders' sexualities, as well as the act itself, serves as the lynchpin to these stories. Complementing that, this genre is a place where the sky's the limit when it comes to content. Historically, eromanga has been the vanguard of progressive values, overflowing with innovative expressions, as it has been a testing ground for both of these things in the past.

Hiroya Oku, the author of **GANTZ** (Shueisha/Dark Horse) and **Inuyashiki** (Kodansha/Kodansha Comics USA), once put forth the idea that when a breast shakes, the nipple is like a headlight in the dark as the locus of a picture with the idea of the “nipple afterimage.”

There is also the concept of the “cross-section view”—a view at the moment of insertion during intercourse where, because anatomical drawings or MRI-like realistic imaging on behalf of the artist can't be fully achieved, the artist instead tries to make those inner workings visible to the audience. Few people know that the cross-section view as a visual expression is a holdover from the *shunga* (lit. “spring pictures”) art of the Edo period.

The seed of the expression that once shocked the world from that same time period of the *ukiyo-e* master Hokusai has fully blossomed into modern gekiga master Toshio Maeda's **Legend of the Overfiend** (*Urot-*

sukidouji, Wanimagazine/FAKKU); that is to say, the expression of a girl being assaulted, having her every hole, both inside and out, mentally and physically filled by tentacles.

The illustrated sound effects of sweat, semen, and other bodily fluids become continuously entangled within the story in a visually fresh and vibrant manner. The sound of the vagina opening, “kupaa,” from the art of Akazawa RED has shown itself to be a classic example of this particular form of expression. The loss of words the moment she reaches orgasm known as “*misakura-go*” (Misakura-speak) comes from the works of Nankotsu Misakura. Misakura managed to distill that sound into a single “movement” on the page.

All of the above examples are but just a small offering within the genre, but they are excellent examples of expressions that had they not been within the purview of eromanga, they would’ve most likely never become what they are today. They were invented, copied, improved, and finally, codified within manga history. After that they were polished and condensed, becoming the symbols they are today.

If we are to say that the “encoding” process of manga expressions is a rough one, then we are, broadly speaking, talking about the process of distortion, deformation, economization, abridgment, and compression. Examples of this process that readily come to mind are that moment when a character is so surprised that their eyes seem to just fly open wide, or when they’re so angry that the anger seems to ripple throughout every muscle in their body, or when they’re befuddled, the drop of sweat that slides down their forehead, or when they’re surprised, the mark that appears near the top of their head, and so forth. All of those are examples of the encoding process.

Another example is the moment in a romantic-comedy genre work when a male character sees a female character naked and subsequently gets aroused, and as a result, has a nosebleed. This is an example of what we call abridgment within the scene as a whole, because the reader, by seeing those signs, can put two and two together as to what is going on

inside of the male character's head. Without explicitly explaining what is happening inside of that character's mind in that moment step by step, the story is becoming compressed and abridged into something easy to understand.

When we speak of deformation and distortion, it would be not entirely inappropriate to look at it as exaggeration, a department well within eromanga's purview. No, perhaps it would be better to say that it is a bluff that goes past exaggeration.

A female character's breasts that are so large they seemingly extend beyond the panels—no, the pages themselves. Semen that seems to gush and fill every square inch of the insides of the human body. The moment when a female character orgasms and it seems to go beyond that to a state of pleasurable madness and anguish.

Apparently, when deformation approaches that degree, there are some readers out there that seem to think that process becomes a killjoy of sorts. But when the deformation goes beyond mere exaggeration and into foolishness, it is precisely at that point where a new expression for the genre is born; one that will allow the reader to experience a level of passion to that degree depending on how clever and creative the author can be with it. How much can they increase the female character's cuteness, but also show that she's "enjoying herself so much that she [seems to be] tormented by it"? How much more realistic can they have those sensations play out, and have that get across to the reader as such?

Within the domain of being so eccentric that the possibility of the author's message not getting across to the audience, there is also within the realm of expression evolution the power of those expressions that increase the audience's literacy (as it relates to eromanga). More specifically, it is the power to make the impossible possible, and make it charming. It is also because the audience can directly confront the author, and the lower halves of those bodies they draw, that one can add that exaggeration into the mix during the encoding process. It is precisely within this realm of things that can only be drawn within eromanga that this

reality exists. It is the realm where the audience can easily take all of these expressions in, and it is also the realm where the artists who draw these expressions can mix and influence each other.

All of these things make up the encoding process.

Depending on the encoding process and how it differs with each new expression, the inventors and discoverers of those new symbols that may have similar processes are no different (or perhaps greater) than each other when it comes to the importance of the mechanism of the transmission of said expressions.

But within that transmission process, it is also important to note that just as an earthquake radiates from an epicenter, that still does not mean that the process itself as it radiates from the origin of the expression will be a linear one. There are complex waves, which at times will jump over areas vacant of these ideas, seemingly easily leaping over time itself to create their own periods, which at that point, will continue to spread out.

Nor does it mean that there is only one epicenter during the encoding process. Waves from other hypocenters will interfere with each other, bump into each other and against each other, and will simultaneously, cause even more complex waves to transmit themselves. Those more complex waves will swallow everything in their path and change, then evolve, and at times will even alter those expressions' meanings (but also sometimes unintentionally, as the audience misinterprets these expressions and is mistaken about them). That particular process can cause a mutation of that expression as well.

To borrow from one of the few research books on the topic of eromanga, *Erotic Comics in Japan* (*Eromanga Studies*; Kauro Nagayama, 2006 East Press/Amsterdam Univ. Press), if there are indeed cultural genes that are the same as memes, then perhaps we can safely say that even as one of these genes has small changes and mutations, and there are many hands involved during that process, that if the many hands that share this content rapidly begin to support it for as long as it lasts, then it is also safe to say that the content that is culled and forgotten completely also can quickly disappear for good.

And yet within that process, it would be incorrect to compare the fight for a meme's life with the biological fight for existence. Mostly due to the fact there are other factors in play when it comes to how to compare a meme's lifecycle, including reasons relating to societal issues, technological issues, and sometimes, just plain old happenstance has its place in these factors and reasons.

As someone who is writing a treatise on these expressions, I can't very well ignore some of these reasons and factors altogether. I feel that it is my duty to painstakingly collect data on all of these factors involved for the themes of this book.

When it comes to the encoding process within the manga medium, there has been a great deal of prior research already done. However, when it comes to eromanga as a genre, there has been almost no research done whatsoever.

If compared to a long time ago, the non-fiction genre of manga research has become ridiculously popular. Manga research scooped up large fiction genres like *shonen* (boys' comics) and *shojo* (girls' comics) manga and examined them from all sides. Manga panels, speech bubbles, hand-drawn lettering, sound effects, onomatopoeias, as well as the approach an author takes when drawing their characters have been topics for research in the past. The way the plot of manga has changed throughout various eras, as well as the system of values we read, take in, and assign things, has been thoroughly examined in sociological circles.

Manga is connected to many other forms of media, and as a medium one can approach it from nearly any school of thought or subject for research, as it is a medium that we become quite familiar with from an early age onward (the author sure has). Perhaps it would be better to say that because it is a medium with which we are all, as Japanese citizens, familiar from an early age on, and we are in a time where that relationship does have such value, that it has become quite the attractive candidate for research in general.

However, it should be said that even within the bulk of academic manga research and study, eromanga as a genre is not unlike black matter residing in space.

That is to say, it is nearly entirely invisible to the human eye.

I realized this when I began my research on *bishojo* manga (manga that focuses on young women, often as sex symbols) in 2008. No, to be honest, it's something I had always known, deep down. So perhaps it would be better to say that I had always known but it wasn't until I started to actually do the research that I really noticed. Any prior work I found was small in number, and the number of specialized experts on the topic weren't even worth counting at all there had been so few.

But the biggest issue had been about gathering data, as many academic archives had no material regarding eromanga in their libraries at all. And of course, there weren't really any academics or researchers within the field, either. While I understood that all of these things meant that information about the field would be hard to come by, I also understood that "erotic" part of manga, in a way, was being protected, and should not be overly disturbed.

Eromanga authors and artists weren't exactly being called to appear on those "behind-the-scenes" TV documentaries about how they ply their trade. When someone put out a call for a generic manga artist in their hometown, the only artist excluded from the search was one who had drawn erotic content. When the Cool Japan soft power initiative was announced by the Japanese government in 2010 (to be implemented in 2013), the only manga artists that were actively excluded were those who had drawn erotic content, it seemed, by intentional design.

It seemed it was a genre beyond redemption with regard to research, and even experts seemed to feel and understand that this was the norm.

Is eromanga as a genre, itself, the exception? No, that doesn't seem to be the case.

The amount of eromanga that started out as *bishojo* comics aren't very few in number. So I chased that feeling knowing that the eromanga

artists that can discuss the topic say that the concept of “eromanga” itself isn’t something that is seen in other genres and that birthed the freedom for them to draw “whatever they wanted, as long as they made it erotic.” That breeding ground was very fertile, becoming the reason why the eromanga genre is as varied as it is in terms of the content of the works within it.

Therefore, while the genre is one that shows both content about sex and sexuality, it also speaks of human desire, fate, and despair, usually using the character’s physical bodies as the vehicle to do so. The artist is able to tell us these stories, putting their hearts down on paper (or increasingly, on tablets). Occasionally that erotic content can be funny, but even that element has a righteous and valid power to it, and in the end, it can emerge as a persuasive element in storytelling.

Just as we cannot unravel the mystery of the construction of the universe without also analyzing dark matter, one cannot understand manga without taking a tour through the expressions of eromanga. New expressions are continuously being born and are disappearing, leaving behind only the expressions that have been validated by their readers in each era. These expressions of eromanga flow hot and passionately like magma under the dark and enigmatic earth’s crust and mantle.

In recent years, we have figured out the potential of Japan’s eromanga as a genre as countries overseas have appraised works in its canon (to the point of affecting this document in question). This has been done by looking at the unique expressions of eromanga as the amount of material that has been published worldwide has been enough to attest to as examples. I firmly believe that looking at the visual expressions of the genre via research is the main way to understand manga expressions as a whole.

While I progressed through my research of bishojo comics, I discovered that a lot of adult manga authors were quite enamored with editors and other fans of the eromanga genre. This was later collected into a self-published book called *Eromanga no Genba*, which I researched and contains content from 2011 to 2015. In 2016 it was republished in Japan

in trade paperback form as a compilation of eromanga author interviews by Sansai Books. As someone who is a big fan of the eromanga genre, I thought that I knew enough on the subject and with that in mind I started to compile data and write this book.

But as I started to speak with people involved with the genre, on the other side of those conversations I found the passionate thoughts of those people, which I used as nails to drive things home within this book. In the spirit of providing my readers entertainment, along with wishing to enchant with the cute and the erotic, this book was forged into existence.

In the past, there was an age when it was thought that there was little point in comparing eromanga to regular manga, and that the artists working in eromanga had no choice but to do so. Perhaps it would be better to say that there are probably still those cool-headed rookies that think that unconsciously when they enter the industry.

However, I think it would be safe to say that from a creator's point of view, there isn't really anyone who thinks that out there creating eromanga right now. Rather, I would say that because they have the freedom to create eromanga, that's why we're constantly seeing a rejuvenation of the industry and new products are continuously being pushed out as well. Because those products are being pushed out, we're seeing a continuous birthing of new expressions. These new works are becoming broadcasting platforms, in a way, when it comes to constantly creating new expressions. People who work those hints into their creations, and as a result, we are seeing a gathering of artists putting out these works with what might be called greed, are standing on the cutting edge of eromanga expressions.

I firmly believe, and this is not an exaggeration, that out of all of the genres of manga out there, eromanga is the genre that has perhaps the most power when it comes to being able to birth these new expressions the most.

I'm not sure when it was when I started feverishly researching eromanga. It was as if I'd been sucked into the world of these creators,

feeling their pride as well. When I began to write this book but before I'd started unraveling the mysteries of these expressions and researching them, I now find myself standing on the front lines alongside these creators who taught me about their passion and their work, and perhaps that in itself was its own motive.

I believe this book may be the first to compile many of the expressions of eromanga thus far. I'm sorry to say that as far as a history of manga expressions, this is pretty limited in scope. However even in this limited scope, I did want to write about these expressions' deep history, as well as reveal the origins of its main structures and the incidents tied to them, which are both very deeply intertwined. I hope that throughout this book I have managed to capture the charm of eromanga as a genre.

Though at the same time, I find myself at the foot of the mountain of as-yet untouched eromanga research, earnestly hoping that its vistas will finally stretch out before me. 🌸

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The History of Hentai Manga

CHAPTER ONE

How Breast Expressions Have Changed over Time

Breast Expressions Are the Barometers of the Times

Even though this is a chapter on the history of breasts in eromanga, I would say it isn't an exaggeration to say that "how they are expressed" has a history of its own apart from eromanga.

According to many mangaka, the creation, development, problem-solving, and expansion of these symbols continue to take place across the industry. Anyone can weaponize their own dreams and delusions when they draw breasts. And depending on how those breasts get drawn, it becomes akin to hoisting one's flag, inviting an investigation of your work by others.

To draw breasts, it isn't enough to simply be an artist in pursuit of the shape of the body. It instead calls for a look at what men are looking for when it comes to women; both their ideals and dreams about them, against the backdrop of the current societal norms of their eras. It also calls for a look into how women perplex men in regard to their sex appeal as well as the secrets about women they have buried deep down within them and women's awareness of both of those things. Therefore, it would not be an exaggeration to say that in those ways, the expressions of breasts in manga are the barometers of the times.

The creators that help birth and advance these expressions put their desires and complex internalized relationships with women into their work. At times, they also confront their betrayals, failures, and frustrations as well during the artistic process, and in doing so, they try to draw the greatest breasts of their time.

Breasts, chest, bust, titties...are mounds of attraction that nearly become swollen with hidden meaning, and thus, are parables unto themselves. These are the ways that women's breasts are referred to by these artists. For the sake of this book, I'd like to simply call them "breasts."

Though perhaps the word "breasts" isn't the most ideal word given the

kindness of the secrets wrapped deep within them, how they burst with elasticity on the outside, and pose, facing front, with apparent dignity. When the word “breasts” first came about, one could feel the hopes and dreams it held within it...at least, that’s what I would like to assert.

Within the realm of the history of breast expressions, there’s one simply indispensable topic to handle regarding breasts that is so important that I need to address it first. Which is to say, I’d like to look at how they’re drawn, and from there on, how they have evolved as symbols in Japanese comics.

If we are to look at and trace the origins behind the way breasts are drawn, we also must consider when they were drawn, for that is connected to the eromanga genre itself. Even now, *kyounyu* (big breasts), *bakunyu* (enormous breasts), *chonyu* (hyper breasts), *kinyuu* (freakish breasts), *binyuu* (flat-chested), *hinnyu* (small breasts), and *binyu* (well-shaped breasts) are all connected to some sort of feeling or emotion individually that happened when they were named.

Perhaps it’s better to say that since the dawn of manga itself, those emotions that became expressions of breasts have always existed, just in a far murkier form.

When researching breasts in manga, there’s also something quite unexpected that we can learn. In old shonen magazines, we can see that works depicting magnificent breasts that wouldn’t hide their nipples started to appear more frequently around thirty years ago. They became something of a fad for people who found it hard to otherwise proclaim they loved huge breasts. These people pushed back when others claimed that big breasts were a sign of being a *mothercon* (having an Oedipal complex). When we circle back around to current times, we can see that the current image of (big) breasts is completely different.

Indeed, it is safe to say that the system of values and common sense when it comes to breasts has undergone a rather drastic change over the years. The oppression of the system of values centered around big breasts, as well as conjecture around those values have helped unleash

what some have called a “big boobification” within the genre. It has also helped mold a new concept of those huge breasts into something more solid by its own volition.

It can be said that breasts and their expressions are sex-sensitive symbols. They can also be targets, and along with the time they were drawn in, can be reactions to those symbols/targets. And those reactions can be just as sensitive as the material in question they’re reacting to in themselves.

From the position of looking at the history of these expressions within this book, we can look at expressions that emerged in the 1980s. Such expressions emerged representations depicted within *lolicon* (Lolita complex) magazines, *bishojo* comics, and the like. We can also see how these representations and the axis on which they were drawn have changed and compare them to other genres (in this case, I specifically mean shonen magazines). As it influenced other genres, people began to investigate the origins of these influences. And in that way, I think, that’s how these expressions began to extend their reach into manga as a whole.

But as a practical matter, breasts and their expressions existed in all of the manga genres at the time, including content in children’s magazines, shonen magazines, *seinen* (young adult comics) magazines, and shojo magazines. The only things amongst all the manga genres that differed were representation, usage, messages, and philosophy regarding how the breasts were expressed.

Now, as we consider that expressions of breasts exist in all of these genres, the theme of breasts seemed to widen as the sea stretches out over the earth. As it widened, the deeper the subject became. And as such, I must admit that it has become such a topic that I cannot possibly completely cover in this one book.

So, I would like to admit that this one chapter on these specific expressions within eromanga will be limited to one of my wheelhouses, which is bishojo comics.

That being said, I’d like to move on to “the theory of breasts.” It’s possibly one of the most exciting areas within manga as a whole. I believe that

everyone has their own separate theory of breasts, including you, dear reader. I do believe you'll compare your theory to mine, but as long as you would continue to read it, I'd be happy regardless.

In terms of visual expressions of breasts, there has been prior research done on the subject and in no small numbers. Some of this research includes works like the *Tits Art Museum* (Chibusa Bijitsukan, Gin Shiro, 1999, Kyoto Shoin), *The Cultural Theory of Breasts* (Chibusa Bunkaron, Chibusa Kenkyuukai, 2014, Tankousha), *A History of the Breast* (Marilyn Yalom, 1997, Knopf), *Erotic Comics in Japan*. All of these are a great place to start on the subject.

From Ero-Gekiga to Bishojo Comics

I know I said that for this section we'd be looking at material from the 1980s forward, but since the birth of eromanga occurred before then, that possibly needs some further explanation.

The first magazine in Japan dedicated to eromanga debuted in 1973 and was called *Manga Bestseller* (KK Bestsellers). It changed its name to *Manga Erotopia* (KK Bestsellers, Wanimagazine) soon after.

Erotopia's strategy was simple: take the *gekiga* (a noir and realism art movement within manga) that had been in the magazine and was quite popular up until that point, and strengthen the presence of the sex and/or violent elements within the story. What resulted was a new genre, a fusion of the two, named *ero-gekiga*.

However, the initial *ero-gekiga* magazines took little from the methods used within the eromanga genre, and instead, focused on switching to packing their magazines full of manga as well as *gekiga*, 4-koma (four-panel comic strips), and other similar types of manga that were common back then. Gradually that petered out into its own style. By 1975, there were many *ero-gekiga* magazines, enough to cement this style into its own genre.

The circulation for these *ero-gekiga* magazines officially peaked in

1978, and when you include the special issues of those magazines into the numbers, it is believed that somewhere between eighty to one hundred different ero-gekiga magazines were actively being published annually.

The 1980s would see the rise of lolicon and bishojo magazines, which grew from otaku fan culture, and their growth would happen in inverse proportions to ero-gekiga, which started to decline in circulation.

The reason for ero-gekiga's decline was that the baby boomer readership was beginning to start families of their own, and naturally started to separate from that genre when it came to reading material. Various theories suggest that instead they migrated to seinen publications like *Young Magazine*, and when it came to masturbation aids or material, that readership was stolen by *gravure* (models who pose suggestively) and/or skin magazines.

At the dawn of the 1980s, the forces that extended in the place of ero-gekiga were so-called *lolicon* comics, and after that, *bishojo* comics, which became a genre unto itself. As ero-gekiga declined, new genres took its place; it wasn't that the ero-gekiga readership moved towards them. Instead, a brand-new readership emerged for these brand-new genres. They were different from realistic gekiga. Instead these new genres primarily employed the use of deformed characters, and anime-like motifs in the form of cute girls (for bishojo comics), and in that way, the bishojo comic genre readership (and its subsequent fans) expanded rapidly.

At the center of these new genres stood a layer of *otaku* (nerds/fans), who bought and sold *doujinshi* (self-published zines) at events like Comic Market (the world's largest zine and indie art festival). Though it would be better to say that with the arrival of the founding father of the bishojo comic genre, Hideo Azuma, the expansion of the genre began at an explosive pace.

From his early days in the '70s, Azuma utilized deformed characters in slightly naughty scenes in order to present his sci-fi and comedy stories. As those around him centered him in their movement, in 1979 he wrote a zine named *Cybele* (picture 1-1), which got mixed up with the otaku who went to events like Comic Market; as a result, he ended up kicking off the *lolicon* boom in manga altogether.

The movement of these excited otaku did not escape the notice of publishers. The first issue of *lolicon* comic magazines in Japan was a new venture called *Lemon People* (1982, AMATORIA; 1-2AB). The first issue's cover stated that it "had the monopoly on lolicon comic content in 1982," expressing the excitement over the very word *lolicon* itself.

What I would like to caution here is about the nuance of the term "lolicon"... The current term denotes, in a broad sense, "perverts who get off on little girls," with a wholly negative image stuck to this nuance from a societal level. And these days it is more or less defined as "eromanga with schoolgirls younger than middle school as the object of lust."

However, 1980s-era *lolicon* as a term wasn't as limited in scope to the one we have now, but rather something more like "the cuteness of beautiful girls, precious comrades taking co-ownership of and having experiences that can be called ephemeral and are touchingly lovely."

It should be noted, though, this definition did not divorce this "cuteness" from the sexual charm of girls of this age, but instead, if we were to put it in modern terms, it would not be incorrect to say that it was most likely something closer to the *moé* (blossoming beauty) aesthetic boom that happened in the early 2000s rather than possessing the same definition as today.

Some were literary in style, filled with intoxication over the stage of self-consciousness we experience when we go through puberty, yet at the same time, quite masochistically the otaku who consumed these comics often called themselves "sick."



1-1: *Cybele* Vol. 5 (1980, Cybele editorial)



1-2A: *Lemon People*, Feb. 1982 (AMATORIA)



1-2B: *Rasen Kairou* (Waho Konoma 1983, AMATORITA)

Bishojo comics, on the other hand, the other genre that debuted at the beginning of the '80s alongside lolicon comics, would find itself maturing as its own genre in the eromanga mainstream thereafter.

The Lolicon Outlook on Breasts

As we talk about how eromanga has changed over the ages, I'd like to turn to the expressions of breasts within the dawn of bishojo comics and how they were drawn.

But even within the lolicon genre, the age limit of these characters was very ambiguous. Just as high school girls call old men lolicon for their interest in them, in the '80s the field was cast widely with regard to age (ranging anywhere from elementary schoolers to high school-age girls, or possibly even young adults). Lolicon was not a term necessarily used to denote the age of these girls, but rather, these girls that were drawn in (cute) anime styles became the icons of the genre. Therefore, the way these girls were engaged with was accordingly divided into lolicon and bishojo comics.

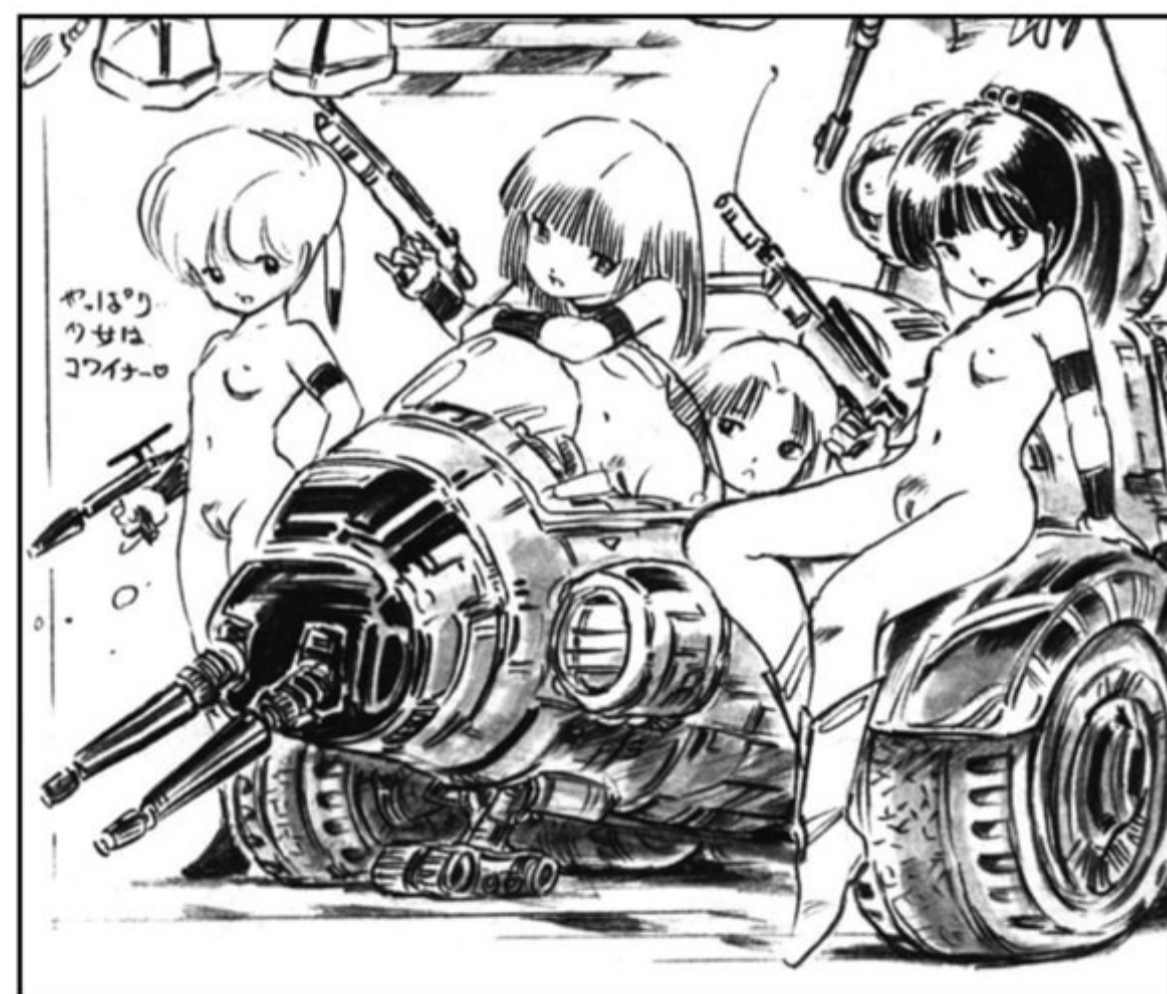
The pretty girls that appeared in lolicon comics at the time had, in most cases, what was undoubtedly the secondary sex characteristics that appeared only within the realm of 2D, with tender buds swelling from chests. The “big-breasted loli” trope was rarely seen in work at that point in time.

As for lolicon as a semiotic symbol, one could not even say that their breasts were depicted as swellings from their chests, but instead we are focused more on the characters’ innocent, pure existence according to the feeling readers got at the time from the ideals of the artists that worked within this genre.

Within Hideo Azuma’s works, in a narrow sense we see him refusing to define the stereotypical age range for lolicon, and instead we have him projecting his ideals in his work, drawing comparatively plump breasts on many of his characters (1-3). In the so-called *diaper manga* produced by the famous Aki Uchiyama, the female characters of his work were drawn to look as if they had no breasts at all so that they could be kept to a visually specific age (1-4). In Senno Knife’s work, the dainty characters are drawn with a coldness that is bewitchingly reminiscent of dolls with unassertive breasts and without panties (1-5). Rei Aran was a pioneer of blending beautiful girls and *mecha* (robotics; 1-6); as was Moriwo Chimi (1-7). The breasts they drew tended to be, once again, just one part of a girl’s body, and stopped at that when it came to drawing the expressions of them.



1-3: **Futari to 5-nin**, Vol. 1 (Hideo Azuma 1974, Akita Shoten)



1-4: **Kawaii GIRL no Kaki-kata Kyoshitsu** (Aki Uchiyama 1983, AMATORIA)

All of these different artists had different ways of drawing breasts, to the point where I would like to say that there's as much individuality in their work as what you would find in eromanga today.

However, actual depictions of sex were few and far between. In shonen magazines, they couldn't show the lower half of a girl's body, so it might be correct to say that to certain readers who wished to read works featuring sex acts, lolicon comic magazines had the advantage there. In that sense, by suggesting the girls' innocent pubic hair, crevices, and veins (within lolicon material) might have stolen readers' hearts with that strategy.

An artist who would later make it big in the bishojo comic world, Giyugun (1-8), explained his work and how he draws by saying, "Within the revolution that is bishojo comics, there wasn't the ability to make sexual depictions a reality, even in eromanga, up until now. After this, you won't be able to miss the tendency towards private part-oriented material!"

This does not mean "genitals that have been drawn without modification," but is more like, "when using the super-deformed style, instead of drawing realistic genitals, the modification to the drawings were more dilute in nature."

When it came to drawing the expressions of breasts within manga, back then it meant that bishojo comics fully waded into a pool of ideas reflecting female genitalia for the first time. In this way, Giyugun watched bishojo comics pioneering these expressions within the genre, making his words testimony to that event.

Of course, breasts, and without peer, the expressions of breasts, were not making light of



1-5: **Kuchu Rokaku no Majitsushi** (Senno Knife 1982, AMATORIA)



1-6: **Iczer One** (*Tatakae!! Ikusa 1*; Rei Aran 1983, AMATORIA)

the actual body parts. Within the early days of bishojo comics, each expression itself had differences in size to the next. However, it was thought that shonen magazines generally did not have too many differences within their expressions. Nonetheless, to conclude that shonen magazines had little difference within their expressions, does not resolve or explain the circumstances behind that lack of difference of expressions. In reality, the representations of breasts within shonen magazines from the '70s on had exploded compared to the previous era, and those expressions entered the age of “breast inflation.”

So, let’s get into why expressions of breasts in both shonen and children’s magazines suddenly exploded, shall we?



1-7: **Hades Project Zeorymer** (*Purojekuto Zeoraima*, Moriwo Chimi 1984, AMATORIA)



1-8: **Joyful Koshinaka & “Eiken” Gang** (*Eiken no Koshinaka-kun*; Giyugun 1987, Shoubunkan)

Shonen Magazines Were Treasure Troves of Breasts!

Though this cannot be said for all manga, most of the content in shonen, ero, and seinen magazines throughout the second half of 1970s were for diehards of the gekiga comics. One could say the tide turned in a major way where most magazines went from carrying gekiga to manga mostly featuring carefree playboys and ladies' men, cute erotic comedies, and just generally erotic content.

A number also featured content that had the protagonist going up against a giant evil force or an extraordinarily strong rival before eventually knocking them down. There were also stories about sports teams giving it their all.

Others focused on characters that didn't want stoic lives but rather wished for a fun school experience with their female companions; those that wanted to live a carefree life; and some who had delusions they shared with the audience, too, and so on.

Did the young men that read these magazines suddenly have a change of heart in terms of what they wanted from them? I ask because shonen magazines were now actively bringing heroines to the forefront of these stories. These new comics would feature love stories, slapstick comedies, and slightly erotic content about youth and one's school days, all of which became quite popular.

And then there were the anime adaptations of stories like Rumiko Takahashi's *Urusei Yatsura* (1978, Shogakukan/Viz Media), Fujihiko Hosono's *Sasuga no Sarutobi* (1980, Shogakukan), Hisashi Eguchi's *Stop!! Hibari-kun!* (1981, Shueisha), and many others. I suppose one could make the argument that these works accelerated how the genre started to spread.

Up until that point, even shonen magazines would have their share of panty shots, breasts, and nudity drawn as *fan service* (sexually alluring scenes). But within the school life genre, all of these scenes could be

collected in a single comic for the first time, as they tended to cluster together naturally within the flow of a story. And, of course, the stories with fan service were very popular with younger male readers.

Imagine you go diving only to miraculously see a pair of beautiful breasts exposed to you by some lucky turn of fate. This is an example of the beauty of form for this genre, the “lucky pervert” trope that flourished within it starting in the 1980s.

The heroine of Tatsuo Kanai’s *Izumi-chan Graffiti* (1980, Shueisha; 1-9) Izumi Tamura; Yoshie, the heroine of Yasuhiro Nakanishi’s *Oh! Tohmei Ningen* (1982, Kodansha; 1-10); and Izumi Harada from Hikaru Tooyama’s *Heart ♥ Catch Izumi-chan* (1982, Kodansha; 1-11)...are girls in the same grade as the male protagonist for each of their series. They are a little perverted but still quite pure, and compared to the late-bloomer male



1-9: *Izumi-chan Graffiti*, Vol. 1 (Tatsuo Kanai 1981, Shueisha)

protagonist, they are often forward and positive about things. And all of whom expose their nude forms to these protagonists at their convenience.

Whether it would be better to say that in this genre at this time, it was all about the plot twists happening between the protagonist and heroine. Or was it the goal of the readers to see the heroine’s breasts and/or underwear? Or for them to be able to touch/fondle them or see them strip nude? Either way, it is safe to say that it would be difficult for shonen magazines to show any more than that back then.



1-10: *Oh! Tohmei Ningen*, Vol. 3 (Yasuhiro Nakanishi 1983, Kodansha)



1-11: **Heart ♥ Catch Izumi-chan**, Vol. 6
(Hikaru Tooyama 1986, Kodansha)

And going along with that, whatever plot twist was needed to get to that payoff was important, to say the least. The size, shape, and softness of the breasts was not something people got overly into, as is evidenced by the fact that most artists drew breasts of the average size in these series. Though I can say that among the three previously mentioned artists, Nakanishi almost always drew nipples on his breasts.

In the shonen magazines of this era, most stories within them were allowed to draw nipples on their breasts. Outside of the other option of spilling shadows

over the breast to tease the reader, there was no other intentional, unnatural censorship done before publication. While it varied from magazine to magazine, most shonen publications only started to enforce what was later called the “Nipple Code” (banning the direct portrayal of nipples) as a tacit, self-inflicted agreement after 1980.

But it wasn’t only in shonen publications where that was happening. The early waves of breasts within publishing also began crashing upon the shores of children’s magazines as well. However, it’s important to say that the meaning of “breasts” and their representation here is different from what was appearing in shonen properties.

Compared to the “accidental” phenomenon happening in shonen, expressions in children’s manga were drawn more in the spirit of skirt flipping, practical jokes, and children’s games in general. The heroine in Takeshi Ebihara’s *Miss Machiko* (*Maichingu Machiko-sensei* 1980, Gakken; 1-12), Miss Machiko, has a trick played on her by a student and her punishment is to allow him to touch her breasts. While this is sexual harassment, *Miss Machiko* is largely about a mischievous, playful, shy teacher who plays tricks on others.

Well, the heroine, Kodama Yamano, is an elementary schooler and she has large breasts. It is almost as if the expressions were the artist's inheritance from his time with Go Nagai (a legendary artist known for his own scandalous shonen series). On top of that, those breasts have nipples very clearly and visibly drawn on them.



1-14: *Paradise Gakuen*, Vol.1 (Masatoshi Kawahara 1985, Kodansha)

By the end of the decade, the karate manga *Shura no Mon* (1989, Kodansha) by Masatoshi Kawahara had become famous. But before that, in 1985, Kawahara launched the bishojo title *Paradise Gakuen* (1985, Kodansha; 1-14). Shinobu Hiromori, also known as Lolicon Maker, debuted in a shonen magazine under the pen name Nonki Miyasu with *Yarukkya Nnight* (1987, Shueisha; 1-15), a bishojo comic. Sumiko Kamimura launched *Ikenai! Luna-sensei* (1986, Kodansha; 1-16), the first real comic

of the genre to come under fire for its eros was also launched at this time. All of these titles, serialized in shonen publications, were popular, cheerful and sexy school life comedies, proving that particular story formula was gold for drawing in readers.



1-15: *Yarukkya Nnight*, Vol.1 (Nonki Miyasu 1985, Shueisha)

Manga breasts from the beginning of the 1980s to its midpoint were, and this is a rather abrupt summary, on the whole, rather large and soft in shape and texture, though readers weren't yet seized with thoughts of jiggle physics as of quite yet. The dynamics of how the unseen would become seen was

of great importance to readers. So, when the unseen was finally visible, the character (and the readers) would be thanking their lucky stars and varying representations of such would be also just as important to readers as they spread like wildfire throughout the genre by 1985.

I don't think that the readers' obsession with how artists drew their breasts was quite there yet like it would be in later years, but then again, the conscious effort on behalf of artists to differentiate how they draw breasts wasn't quite there yet either.

After this, the breasts in shonen comics would carve out a different (evolutionary) path than the ones followed by seinen and bishojo comics, but out of the remaining two, the one to undergo drastic changes in style first would be bishojo comics.

Meanwhile, the '80s began with the founding of the lolicon genre and continued with the cultivation of that new genre. But midway through the lolicon boom, the "lolicon theory proclamation" was made.

Bishojo Comics with Newfound Freedoms

When the lolicon boom began in the 1980s, the word otaku was not yet in the general lexicon as a term for fans. Fans, who went to events like Comic Market, created a marketplace for doujinshi, and soon, started to crank out bishojo comics like no one's business.

However, while there were many monthly serialized bishojo comic magazines out there by this time, it was still a category that was centered



1-16: *Ikenai! Luna-sensei*,
Vol 1 (Sumiko Kamimura 1987,
Kodansha)

in fans' passion for the material, and not very popular yet. For these were folks who did not read your usual shonen and seinen magazines.

While still calculating the spread of this new genre, people working within it found themselves soon standing at a fork in the road in terms of which path the genre should take in order to advance and ultimately, evolve it.

The two forks were: One, about reflecting their pure love for girls, which focused on beauty rather than eros. This fork aimed to become the image of the genre for bishojo comics, or the “lolicon fundamentalism sect.” And the second, which wanted to find their desire and sense of eros in their ideal girls put to the page, or the “ero supremacy sect.”

These two sects within bishojo comics warred quite visibly in the pages of the monthly magazines, and the places where these two did not fight were reflected in magazine sales.

Bit by bit, by looking at this data, it became apparent that over time, work being published had a bias that listed in the direction towards the ero supremacy sect. It seemed that the male readers that were so passionate about these subjects were honest to their desires for eros after all. And in this way, the lolicon fundamentalism sect was destroyed in a blink of an eye. Which is why by the midpoint of the decade, there would be a proclamation made—*lolicon theory*.

But that being said, it wasn't like the proclamation went ahead and automatically hard coded everything into eromanga. Perhaps it would be better to call it the “unloliconification” of eromanga. It wasn't about taking beautiful girls and shutting them solely within the framework of lolicon concepts, either. It was more about giving the otaku their own space, so they could fully project their ideals onto these works, as well as the process of that shift.

In terms of how this movement started to gain traction and how it started to accelerate, in 1984 the debut of Tou Moriyama had a huge effect on making all of that happen. In regular, non-eromanga magazines, he worked under the name Naoki Yamamoto, a pen name (which many other artists who did/or do ero content can relate to as many have different names

used for different content). Moriyama's manga was the heralding of a new style that hadn't been seen before, up until this point in time (1-17).

It was different from the ero-gekiga and lolicon manga styles, as it was cutting-edge with a different context entirely. There were large parts of it that used bishojo designs as a base to build upon. While it was close to bishojo content, there was a mercilessness to it. There was a hard, unforgiving edge that had not been seen in any of the aforementioned genres before, ever.

It had an eros ethic along with mysterious plot twists, and it felt as if someone had set it to be *lolicon-free*, bringing about a new vision for bishojo comics to that audience.

Tou Moriyama's books flew off the shelves when they were published, creating the chance to create ever more fervent fans for the genre for the first time ever.

The magazines that took the chance to collect these brand-new bishojo comic artists who remade the genre were *Monthly Penguin Club Magazine* (1986, Tatsumi Publishing later Fujimi Publishing), and *Manga Hot Milk Magazine* (1986, Byakuya-Shobo). These two magazines would help the bishojo comic world to gain traction in publishing from this point forward, and became quite popular with their readership, drawing in new fans.

A new vision for what constituted bishojo also meant a new vision for expressions of breasts to be born. Until this point in time, when it came to the image of lolicon most fans thought of, it was bound to a framework of ideals with girls with small breasts. Soon, that image would be freed from that one particular framework.

And it was at this point in time, that big breast expressions were born.



1-17: **Rough & Ready** (Tou Moriyama 1986, Tsukasa Shobo)

The Dawn of Big Breasts

According to *lolicon fundamentalism*, it was at this time that breast expressions, which had been tightly bound since their inception along with the genre, had been set free. And there was a new freedom of possibilities as to what one could desire and project within the genre. So along with the growing popularity of Moriyama's works, it started to spread outside of its previous limits with a new vigor. In order to do that, breasts began to be drawn bigger as a way to appeal to new readers, causing yet another transfiguration within the genre.

Bishojo comics had more of an affinity to eromanga than most thought, and as they began to become *eromanga-fied*, bigger breasts were tied to sex appeal, and expressions that were thought to exercise one's sexual drive were backed in greater numbers.

It was the first step in the "big boobification" of the eromanga genre. Except this time, the driving force of this new movement within the genre definitely wasn't just resistance to lolicon fundamentalism. It didn't stay within the bounds of the manga world. It spread across Japan, bringing prosperity with it, and brought the omen of the *big breast bubble* along with it.

I should probably explain the term "big breasts" here. By the mid-1980s, the term "kyounyu," or big breasts, was another term not really in the Japanese lexicon. I will not say that it was not in the lexicon at all, as copywriters for Japanese pornography (Japanese adult-videos or JAV) used the term in summaries on packaging to get the potential watcher's attention. But it was mostly isolated to that world back then. So, in the real world, most people weren't pointing at large pairs of breasts and calling them *kyounyu*.

I think I may have said this already but to repeat myself: the year that the term *kyounyu* entered the mainstream Japanese lexicon was 1989.

Japanese porn star Kimiko Matsuzaka (1-18) debuted in 1989, and the weekly tabloid magazines that introduced her used the term *kyounyu* to describe her intense bust. After that, across most of the (male) world, use

of the term spread quite rapidly. Before then, the other term that originated from adult media used the most was “D-cup,” so that by that point terms like “boin” (the onomatopoeia for the sound of a big bust bouncing) and “dekapai” (huge titties) had already made their way into the mainstream. It is thought that the term *kyounyu* started to spread from the year 1985 onward, eventually ending up in the Japanese lexicon.

Amongst *kyounyu* researchers, it is thought that the influence export of foreign gravure magazines such as *Bachelor* (Dia Press; 1-19) and *Dick* (Taiyou Shobo) was no small thing. Like Perry’s black ships that opened Japan, blonde-haired foreigners would from the land of breasts to throw open the doors like her ancestors did.

Of course, going backwards a little, the idol models that are considered the pioneer *kyounyu* idols are Ikue Sakakibara, foreign entertainment personality Agnes Lum and the new era *kyounyu* idol models are Naoko Kawai and Yoshie Kashiwabara (who did it all underground, of course).

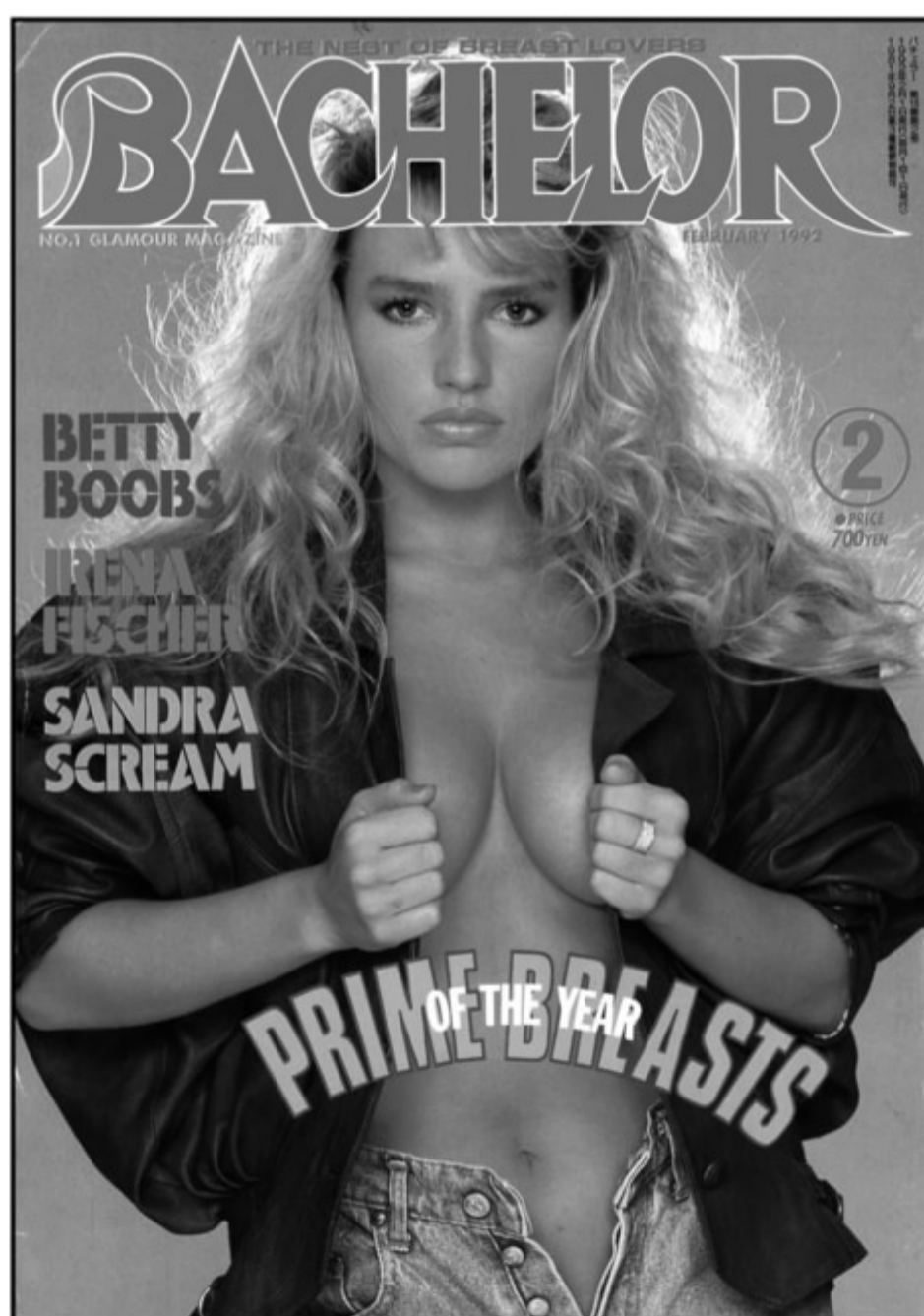
After that, the amount of porn videos that used the term D-cup as a selling point would increase. Which makes me wonder, was there something like the “long-awaited *kyounyu* theory” that existed to explain the amount of fervor generated by these fans, and how they embraced it?

But let us return to the issue of *eromanga*.

To the concepts and expressions of breasts that had been set free and newly allowed in scope and shape, the stream and path of the culture-wide big boobification became something of a tailwind to the movement as a whole, spurring it along.



1-18: **Dekka~i no Mekke!**
(Kimiko Matsuzaka 1989,
Big Man)



1-19: *Bachelor*, Feb. 1992 (Dia Press)

And that's where the debut of "baby-faced kyounyu characters" comes in.

But it wasn't just within bishojo manga that this happened. This was a brand-new idea in general to eromanga.

When we talk about early kyounyu artists, there's one

we absolutely can't remove from the rest of the list: Wataru Watanabe (1-20, 21). The breasts he drew were so overwhelming in their existence that it was hard to tear one's eyes away from them. Watanabe's breasts have a round, very plainly distinctive contour to them; as if you'd touch them and they'd ripple with an effect much like an overfilled water balloon. As semiotic symbols go, they have a very manga-like shape to them, much like those that belonged to those beautiful blonde-haired actresses that Japan became so enamored with. Many eromanga readers suddenly became obsessed with this new character type, an existence that charmed as many as it drew in. The new design was the combination of a blonde actress's body with the face of a bishojo comic character.

Wataru Watanabe had, in a magazine interview ("Chotto Ecchi na Fukubukuro, Vol. 2"; *Comptiq* 1989, Kadokawa), declared that the one character that had influenced him was Machiko from Takeshi Ebihara's *Miss Machiko*. In Watanabe's first collected work, *Dokkin ♥ Minako-sensei* (1989, Byakuya-Shobo), the main character Miss Minako had been influenced by



1-20: *Dokkin ♥ Minako-sensei* (Wataru Watanabe 1987, Byakuya-Shobo)



1-21: *Dokkin ♥ Minako-sensei*, Vol. 2 (Wataru Watanabe 1987, Byakuya-Shobo)