

Yaoi vs. Bara Notes

- Sections
 - Disclaimers
 - (Set the mood)
 - Not going to really focus on yaoi so much as bara since so many already know what that genre is
 - What is yaoi?
 - Very Basic Overview
 - ‘Made for women by women’
 - Of course, other grps. of ppl. can enjoy it, but let’s keep it simple ^.^;
 - Features male/male relationships
 - Usually in a romantic light
 - Oh, the doujin
 - Shonen ai/yaoi
 - Shonen ai originally used to associated with pederasty in Japan but early 1970s to the late 1980s was used to describe the rising subgenre of shojou, primarily by the Year 24 Group, about ‘beautiful boys in love’
 - Began as doujin in doujinshi markets in Japan in the late 1970s/early 1980s
 - In the beginning, whereas Shonen ai were original works, yaoi was doujin of shonen anime/manga
 - Very basic overview of yaoi genre tendencies
 - Effeminate guys
 - Usually, not always
 - Usually more on the fanservicey side with the portrayal of couples
 - i.e., since hot guys are awesome, hot guys with other hot guys is even more awesome
 - 1 guy, okay; 2 guyz, hellz yeah!
 - (More often than not) unrealistic portrayals of homosexual couples
 - Don’t even get me started on the “rape as love” aspect so many yaoi have as proof of this
 - Typically, porn with plot
 - Stories often melodramatic
 - Uke/semi dynamic

- With the shy, reluctant uke & the domineering, aggressive seme
- Also: shipping
- Escapist nature
 - Most settings tend to be in places/'idealized world' where homosexuality isn't necessarily frowned upon
- Similarly, yaoi manga shows portrays a more idealized version of gay male couples from a women's perspective
- Criticisms
 - Japanese critics have viewed boys' love as a genre that permits their audience to avoid adult female sexuality by distancing sex from their own gender
 - create fluidity in perceptions of gender and sexuality and rejects "socially mandated" gender roles as a "first step toward feminism"
 - Kazuko Suzuki, for example, believes that the audience's aversion to or contempt for masculine heterosexism (hatred for heterosexuals) is something which has consciously emerged as a result of the genre's popularity
 - i.e., hetero bashing
 - Often manifests in the tendency of some yaoi fans to consciously only support & push for male/male relationships in any medium (live-action movie, actors, famous ppl, videogame characters, manga, anime, etc.)
- What is bara?
 - Basic Overview
 - 'Made for gay/bisexual men for gay/bisexual men'
 - Also called 'gei comi'
 - Mostly Japanese phenomenon
 - Although is starting to spill over more in Western audiences due to the proliferation of certain social media sites
 - As far as what's been officially published, has had limited exposure to the Western audience
 - *Legend of the Blue Wolves* (OVA) & with maybe a couple more works
 - Has had difficulty with attaining Western publishers
 - Can vary in style/plot but features mostly masculine men with varying degrees of muscle, body fat, & hair

- Has more autobiographical themes & storylines
 - Sexual abuse, gang rape, etc. with more realistic tones
- Considered a subgenre of seijin (men's erotica) & resembles comics that target an older male audience (seinen) vs shojou/josei
 - Hence the lack of stereotypical bishonen
- Popular creators
 - Granted, popular doesn't mean they're the only bara creators
- Gengoroh Tagame
 - Most influential to date
 - Most of his work first appeared in gay magazines and usually features sexual abuse, including rape, torture, and BDSM.
 - His illustrations of muscular, hairy men have been cited as a catalyst for a shift in fashion among gay men in Tokyo after the launch of *G-men* in 1995
 - Namely, away from the clean-shaven and slender styles influenced by yaoi and towards a tendency for masculinity and chubbiness
 - His work has been criticized by notable gay manga writer Susumu Hirosegawa as being merely "SM theatre", because of its violence and lack of complex storylines
 - Susumu Hirosegawa's early works were yaoi, but later Hirosegawa moved into gay manga
 - works sometimes contain no sex at all, with greater focus on plot, but when sex is present it is often in the form of sadomasochism or rape, in which the victim learns to enjoy the experience
 - *Manga (in English) on [Amazon](#): The Passion of Gengoroh Tagame: Master of Gay Erotic Manga
 - (Have pics of his art)
- Takeshi Matsu
 - (Have pics of his art)
 - Some of his Manga
 - Oyaji Ana No Mujina
 - Four Seasons
- Inaki Matsumoto

- (Have pics of his art)
 - Some of his Manga
 - Kyokan Hunter
 - Nakayoshi Wanko
- Mentaiko
 - (Have pics of his art)
 - Some of his Manga
 - Priapus
 - With Nii-chan
 - Personally, Mentaiko's character design/art style is very distinct
- Matsuzaki Tsukasa
 - (Have pics of his art)
 - Some of his Manga
 - Class Reunion
 - Cendrillon
- *Can find a lot of stuff for ppl. on Tumblr
- Publishers
 - Prior to early 2000s
 - *Barazoku*
 - More one-shot
 - *G-men*
 - Carried some serialized stories
 - A lot of Gengoroh's earlier work was published here
 - Some Insight~Mark McLelland- McLelland, surveying gay men's magazines from the mid to late 1990s, indicates that most manga stories were simply pornographic, with little attention to character or plot, and that even the longer, serialized stories were generally "thinly developed"
 - Early 2000s
 - *Bakudan* (quarterly)
 - *Gekidan* (bimonthly)
 - Both produced from G-men's parent company, Furukawa Shobu
 - *SM Comics Anthology*
 - BDSM themed
 - *Nikutai Ha, Oaks, & G's Comics*

- Produced from yaoi publisher Aqua (an imprint of Ookura Shuppan) to capitalize on crossover audience of gay male readers as well as females who preferred a more masculine body type
 - As of 2008, there are 4 major publishers of bara manga anthologies
 - Basic overview of bara genre tendencies
 - Men are more buff, hairy, & muscular
 - Hence, bear
 - Tend to feature darker tones & subject matters (sexual abuse, torture, BDSM, etc.) than yaoi
 - More realistic depictions of a homosexual man
 - Gay pride parades, gay marriage issues, "coming out", realistically played out sex, etc.
 - Mark McLelland (*Male Homosexuality in Modern Japan*) and others note that frequently "there is more emphasis upon sex than there is on building an enduring relationship"
 - Stories in gay men's general interest magazines from the mid to late 1990s generally present age-, status- or power-structured relationships, where the older or more senior character uses younger or subordinate characters for sexual purposes
 - Wim Lunsing (*Yaoi Ronsō: Discussing Depictions of Male Homosexuality in Japanese Girls' Comics, Gay Comics and Gay Pornography*) notes that some of the narrative annoyances that gay men express about yaoi manga, such as rape, misogyny, and an absence of a Western-style gay identity, are also present in *gei comi*
 - Aren't necessarily concerned with pairings
 - Granted, that's not saying this is always the case since it's more readily available now via the internet
 - Tend to be one-shot stories
 - Granted, due to the rising number of bara anthologies, starting to find longer, serialized stories
 - Recently, starting reversing the older top & younger bottom dynamic

- Starting to show younger, shorter, often white-collar "tops" in aggressive pursuit of older, larger, often bearded, typically blue-collar "bottoms"
 - Like in *Noda Gaku – Dangerous Relationship*
 - BDSM & non-consensual are common themes
 - But romantic themes are also starting to become more popular
 - The development of the subgenre of 'gachi muchu' (muscle-chubby)
 - Offers more masculine body types
 - More likely to have gay male authors & artists
- Compare/contrast
 - Bara tends to be darker & feature more violent tones than yaoi
 - Not that yaoi doesn't occasionally have really dark tones/undercurrents for its stories
 - *Kichiku Megane* (date sim) & *A Toy with Sadness* (manga) come to mind
 - Similar to the above mentioned point, has more autobiographical themes & storylines
 - Sexual abuse, gang rape, etc. with more realistic tones than what you may find in yaoi
 - Again, yaoi can get dark but doesn't necessarily have that shade of realism bara offers
 - Easier to find published yaoi works, whereas bara's having a hard time finding Western publishers
 - Yaoi = bishonen, effeminate features; bara = masculine, burly male figures
 - As far as the American audience is concerned, the yaoi community tends to be "more out, loud, & proud" about their enjoyment of yaoi, while the bara community is more likely to not be as expressive (namely due to bara not being as prolific as the yaoi in general)
 - Not to say a yaoi fan would wear their hobby on their sleeve, per se, but would be quicker to identify themselves as an enthusiast than a bara fan
 - Of course, general statement, doesn't apply to 100% of either community but tends to be the case relatively often
 - Bara tends to feature more bestiality than yaoi
 - Also, Bara tends to feature more furies than yaoi
 - Comes up in yaoi but I see it way more often in bara

- Yaoi tends to feature more romantic portrayals of homosexual couples than bara
- Observations on both
 - Will find men who do yaoi, don't really see women doing bara
 - Male yaoi manga-ka
 - Shin Kibayashi, creator of GetBackers, self declared yaoi fanboy
 - Shinozaki Hitoyo
 - Okane ga Nai
 - Henshin Dekinai
 - Susumu Hirosegawa
 - Earlier works
 - Due to fujoshi generally not knowing bara exists, tends to be categorized as yaoi a lot on Tumblr
 - Which drives me insane
 - Yaoi under the bara tag, bara under the yaoi tag, what's this world coming too?!
 - Goes to the general misconception the lay have about bara
 - Somewhat mentioned before, due to the proliferation of social media sites, namely Tumblr, bara's becoming more accessible to a Western audience & worldwide in general
 - Ore likely to find X-ray shots in bara
 - (pic example)
 - Bara tends to have more tentacles
 - *...Awwwww Yeeeaahhhh*