

## A Semiotic Analysis of Iconicity in Japanese Manner Posters

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### Abstract

This paper conducts a synchronic textual analysis on four Japanese manner posters from the 1970s to 1980s. Manner posters have historically played a significant role in public behavior in Japanese cities since 1974. This paper reveals how Japanese manner posters display connections between an emerging Japan and the West. These posters serve as communicative vehicles for commuters to follow rhetorical directives in public transportation sites. This paper also reveals how coded communication within the four posters might be taken for granted by the passive viewer. Moreover, crowded Japanese contexts are ones that highly rely on nonverbal communication for civil cooperation. Several internationally iconic figures in Japanese manner posters are mainly under focus, as these icons serve as metaphors for people in everyday society. Japanese manner posters are defined in this paper as commissioned artworks that include brief, textual lines of how to behave in crowded, public contexts. This paper seeks to unpack a cultural and semiotic code commissioned by Japanese artist, Hideya Kawakita. Kawakita's work is under scholarly attention because of his radically non-traditional way of creating posters as signifiers to globalization and intersectionality of cultures. When Japanese manner posters are analyzed diachronically, Kawakita's commissioned work stands out as following a motivated semiotic code that infuses history, context, and culture between Japan and the West.

*Keywords:* Japanese manner posters, civil cooperation, public transportation sites, iconicity, semiotics

From public announcements in France about the circus (Collins, 1985), to “unfit” posters of French dancers such as Ilka de Mynn (Carter, 2010), and artistic reminders to mind your manners in public transportation contexts (Kawakita, 2008), posters have served in unique ways to communicate to the public throughout history. My paper brings scholarly attention to a specific type of poster board persuasion in Japan that art designer and art theorist, Hideya Kawakita (2008), describes as *Japanese manner posters*. My first encounter with a Japanese manner poster was in Tokyo, Japan, 2009. It was my first time venturing to the biggest city in Japan. I was excited about the well-known Tokyo crowds and pace of people in the train stations. While waiting patiently in the neatly formed line of train passengers on the platform, I looked to my left and found a cartoon-like poster hanging on the wall that told me to “Not rush into the train car.”

The four posters under textual analysis are *The Seat Monopolizer* (1976), *Mary is Tired* (1977), *Time for No Smoking* (1982), and *Clearly Show Your Train Pass* (1978). These four posters are selected because of their incorporation of iconic signifiers. Iconic signifiers, as American semiotician Charles Peirce (1931) argues, resemble particular realities more closely and function at a more evocative level than other symbolic modalities. Furthermore, this paper addresses how cultural values and history, semiotic theory, and rhetorical directions intersect to create the analytical framework for the discussion of Japanese manner posters.

As French anthropologist Claude Levi Strauss (1978) put it, “cracking a code” behind material culture is the focus for this paper on Japanese manner posters. The long-term intention for this study is to create a model that can be applied to analyze other manner posters in other countries. Since this paper analyzes posters from a specific cultural context, the definition of *material culture* is adopted from Ian Woodward (2001). As Woodward explains, material culture constitutes as objects that we surround ourselves with that have greater value than strict

functional utility. Manner posters are commonly found in Japanese trains, subways, and stations.

I contend that internationally recognized icons are rhetorically used as central signifiers of connection between Japan and Western cultures in the four selected manner posters. An icon is defined as a type of sign that fulfills the main function of representation (Chandler, 2007). Furthermore, Jakobson (1963) adds how a symbolic icon can be appropriately regarded as a stylized image rather than a pure portrait of a person. This kind of iconicity persuasively succeeds in securing a split second of attention from everyday commuters on Japanese trains, busses, subways, and stations. Moreover, Japanese manner posters reveal the intertextuality, or interconnection of codes that presently lack scholarly attention.

Since this paper focuses on iconicity as a dominant theme in Japanese manner posters, it is necessary to review literature on how posters are studied as forms of rhetorical direction by other scholars. In addition to manner posters as rhetoric, the literature review also examines historical exigency, cultural values, face negotiation, and semiotic theory in order to frame this analysis. Additionally, this paper will analyze how everyday posters might create reality, or the reality of how a certain world makes up a culture's decisions about signs and signifiers in a Whorfian (1956) sense.

## Literature Review

### Posters as Persuasion

Posters can be traced back to many countries as forms of rhetorical communication that serve the culture's immediate contextual and historical needs. Several scholars have chosen posters to analyze for their visually persuasive functions. Sociologist Victoria Bonnell (1997) identifies themes in posters during Soviet Russia's Stalin and Lenin eras. Specifically, she identifies how peasant women were called to join the collective farm as comrades through poster art in public places. Moreover, in London, England during the 1940s war context, posters were used to warn the public of engaging in safe commuting behavior. Such behavioral messages embedded in London railway posters were "to wear white" during nightly blackouts as well as to seek subway transportation in case of German attacks (Bownes & Green, 2008). London Transport Museum curators David Bownes and Oliver Green conducted analysis on British posters that alluded to safety themes during a war context.

In addition to the British messages communicated through poster art, the United States used posters during the Depression era in American history under the Roosevelt administration. The Works Progress Administration (WPA) commissioned the publication of many posters for encouraging specific rebuilding and job structure (Carter, 2008). The messages among American WPA posters, which may now seem obvious to a 2012 audience, are to "Protect your hands! You work with them," or to safeguard one's home against daily appliances such as the iron.

The central role of iconicity is not new to public poster art; icons were introduced in early nineteenth century France. Similar to Kawakita's commission for manner posters in Japan, Henri Toulouse Lautrec incorporated icons in commissioned French posters in the 1800s. Lautrec's work, however, commonly featured popular female singers, notably found in his Moulin Rouge cabaret advertisements. These female icons were utilized to encourage a female readership of French journals such as *La Revue Blanche*, or *The White Review* (Dalbello & Shaw, 2011). It is important to establish the historical time periods of these posters in order to fully understand how and why they function for a macro-level culture.

### Cultural Values

The explosion of art forms in a post-war Japan intersects with the cultural value of happiness that is embedded and expressed through material culture. Doh and Inoguchi (2009) address happiness as a cultural value in Confucian societies in their longitudinal studies of East

Asian countries including Japan, China, and South Korea. Granted, Japan is a progressive nation with a plethora of religious beliefs in practice. However, Japanese manner posters must be approached through the cultural value orientation of the country's older religions, such as Buddhism and Shintoism. Doh and Inoguchi (2009) contend that there is a difference between simply feeling happy and being happy, that is, the connotation of happiness constitutes the "whole life quality" of a person. While the value of happiness changes according to the country and context, Doh and Inoguchi's (2009) findings on happiness suggest why such uniquely crafted manner posters are found more in Japan than other countries.

Inevitably, the United States and other countries have their unique forms of communicating appropriate or frowned upon behavior on busses and trains. However, the messages embedded within Japanese manner posters are specific and contextual to preserving the notion of happiness. Happiness, a cultural value in Japan, is conveyed through the creative medium of hanging street posters. The speech act of writing suggestions for manners on posters is indicative of a "whole life quality" approach found in Japan. Even within the proximity of strangers on one's daily commute to work, people are encouraged to remember the happiness of others in the smallest of nonverbal details.

The artful reminders of manners are also embedded in the cultural value of maintaining positive face for the smoother functioning of society, or *tatemaie*. Communication researchers John Oetzel and Stella Ting-Toomey (2003) explain how face negotiation theory (FNT) helps explain how face is an important mechanism for conflict management styles in different cultural groups or countries. Moreover, *face* has been defined as the representation of an individual's claimed sense of positive images in the context of social interaction (Oetzel & Ting-Toomey, 2003). FNT's claim, that certain cultural groups manage conflict as a means of preserving different sides of face, adds a layer of intertextuality in Japanese manner posters. The rationale behind producing such manner posters is inherently supported by FNT, since posters function to protect the public's perception of a fellow, everyday bus or train rider's positive and friendly face. Without any posters hanging on the walls in public places, the positive perception of one another is further at stake. The absence of posters hanging in subways and train stations would create more possibility for negative impressions among groups of quickly passing strangers.

### **Semiotic Theory**

In addition to an examination of historical exigence and cultural values, semiotic theory provides the larger communication framework for analyzing and explaining Japanese manner posters. Cultural sociologist Ian Woodward (2001) defines material culture as objects that we surround ourselves with that have greater value than strict functional utility. This definition comes from a conceptualization of everyday objects as signifiers in a socially constructed and intentional space. Woodward's concept of an object existing with a greater value than consumption or commodity supports the analysis of Japanese manner posters as material culture. That is, posters are multi-layered objects with structured functions that promote smooth social behavior and relations in public.

When myths circulate in a society, they are able to resurface in other cultures or countries. The aftermath of World War II resulted in dissemination of visually appropriated images and texts to Japan from a larger global network. Appropriation, as described by American anthropologist Judith Benson (2010), occurs when objects that are valued in a community as non-excludable become non-competitive to outsiders and are, therefore, given access. When people often hear the word *appropriation*, they might think that it refers to a negative process. However, the appropriation processes in manner posters do not exploit worldly material culture in an offensive or competitive way. Since appropriation tests an audience's prior knowledge with the intended signified meanings of the object or text, we move closer to how objects become intertextual. British semiotician Daniel Chandler (2007) further contends that intertextuality is understood as an interaction or interplay between codes and warns that codes should be studied

in relation to other codes.

A recovering Japanese economy as well as heightened interest in tourism in Japan in the 1970s enabled the access of manner posters by both Japanese audiences and non-Japanese audiences. Such multicultural readership is partially understood through polysemy (Hebdige, 1979), when each text/poster is seen to generate a potentially infinite range of meanings. While it might be assumed that only a Japanese audience encountered Japanese vintage manner posters, different nationalities of audiences also rode trains and buses during the time of poster manufacture, which was from the 1970s to 1980s. This internationally traveling audience of tourists and businesspeople could have developed multiple, different meanings about the posters. French semiotician Roland Barthes (1988) also theorizes the concept of polysemy, warning readers that an object may develop a chain of signifiers that multiply in many ways, rather than developing one, static meaning. The presence of iconic characters in public posters that achieve multiple emotional meanings for different audiences is indicative of its polysemous nature.

Iconicity is central to the analysis of manner posters as part of a continuous code of four chosen artworks. This paper adopts the Peircean conceptualization of iconicity, described as a mere resemblance, or something represented by its similarity or likeness (Peirce, 1931). Similarly, Leeds-Hurwitz (1993) supports the concept of an icon as any sign displaying a similarity between the present and the absent components.

The implementation of global icons in everyday, public texts reminds audiences in Japan to mind their manners during their commutes to work. In observing Figures 1.1 through 1.8 (see Appendix), characters on trains communicate various annoying behaviors as metaphors for what real society members should come to realize not to do. The protagonist versus antagonist relationship found in the posters communicates a clear message of how *not* to behave when in close proximity with fellow train or bus riders. However, one might ask: Why does a Japanese artist choose to incorporate the global icons in commissioned texts to promote a system of manners?

Barthes' (1974) concept of readerly and writerly texts expands the interpretation of manner posters. A readerly text is regarded as a static, prescribed message. A writerly text, on the other hand, is a more fluid process of making meaning that is produced by the reader (Barthes, 1974). The concept of readerly texts applies to Japanese manner posters as forms of social advice or even friendly versions of social control. Moreover, readerly texts help us understand how posters that suggest mundane, taken for granted public actions actually function to preserve safety and overall happiness of a culture's speech community.

The preceding literature review leads to a purpose for this synchronic analysis of four selected Japanese manner posters. The pervasive, everyday messages in Japanese manner posters need attention because they are important cultural artifacts that are under-studied. The following research questions guide this paper:

RQ1: What semiotic code can be determined from a textual analysis of Japanese manner posters from 1976-1982?

RQ2: What communication function do the Japanese manner posters serve?

## Method

During my observations as a train rider in Tokyo of 2010, I first encountered manner posters on the walls of the crowded train platforms. It was in Tokyo where I decided that these instructive or directives were different from any others I have seen before. When noticing how suggestive behavior is written in American public contexts, I often experience a more direct, colorless language. For example, in the United States, we often find standard disclaiming messages for "No Smoking," "No Pets," or "No Food." While manner posters and warnings are

salient in both American and Japanese public contexts, from what I have observed, Japanese manner posters succeed in rhetorically grabbing the attention and harmoniously facilitating a quickly moving audience. Furthermore, these public texts are indicative of cultural values and deeply held norms for proper behavior in public.

From the extensive publication of manner posters, four posters from the 1970s to 1980s were chosen. The artist of the chosen posters from the 1970s to 1980s is Hideya Kawakita, who was commissioned by the Tokyo Transit Authority Railroad Company to think of creative ways to promote manners. A synchronic analysis of the four posters was conducted using semiotic, cultural, and historical criteria. Replicas of the four Japanese manner posters were obtained from the book, *Original! Japanese Manner Posters* (Kawakita, 2008). The Japanese and English subtitles created by Kawakita are interpreted in this communication analysis for an English speaking audience. Hideya Kawakita is the chosen artist for this capstone because his bold artistic choices are unlike any other manner posters I have observed in Japan. According to the Tokyo Metro Corporation (2012) public records, manner posters have been publicly displayed in Japan since September of 1974, starting in Tokyo. What is noteworthy about these selected artifacts is that the artist intentionally uses global icons in everyday, mundane, situations of minor conflict. Kawakita is a prolific graphic artist, author, and professor at Tokyo University since 2003. While Kawakita is a talented artist and professor in Tokyo, I am not under the impression that Kawakita is well known to the average Japanese citizen.

Synchronicity is a vital methodological choice in this study. There are countless forms and themes of Japanese manner posters that have developed from the 1970s to the present day. However, the earlier posters are important to isolate and analyze because their design and signifiers achieve a status that is vastly different than present day Japanese manner posters. The time period between the 1970s and 1980s indicates global influence and emerging connections to the West in ways that current manner posters do not indicate.

## Analysis

### The Seat Monopolizer

As mentioned above, manner posters in Japan officially became public in Tokyo railways in September of 1974. By 1988, manner posters were disseminated throughout other Japanese cities. Before identifying the art of Hideya Kawakita, it is important to understand how the material excess of the bubble economy was assumed to have created arrogance and “forgetful” manners (Kawakita, 2008). Subsequently, The Tokyo Transit Authority decided to combat potential bad behavior with the radical graphic designer, Hideya Kawakita. In 1976, he created the title and concept of the manner poster, *The Seat Monopolizer*, for the busy Tokyo public. The social advice embedded in *The Seat Monopolizer*, displayed in Figure 1.1 (see Appendix), shows a “bad way” for passengers to behave on trains. The signified meaning behind this poster is for passengers to be mindful about the amount of physical space one’s body and belongings take up while riding public transportation. The readerly text (Barthes, 1974) of *The Seat Monopolizer* is linked with a cultural value of simply being aware of how your body could disturb or affect other people’s proxemic zones of comfort.

Furthermore, the positioning of iconic characters in *The Seat Monopolizer* are additional layers of text that can be peeled away by a quickly moving public. As displayed in Figure 1.2 (see Appendix), the appropriation of *The Seat Monopolizer* (1976) is intentionally taken from the internationally recognized movie, *The Great Dictator* (1940). As communication theorist Wendy Leeds-Hurwitz (1993) argues, appropriation occurs “when a sign is used by one culture for use in another culture, thus giving it new meaning in the process” (p. 168). Importantly, Kawakita’s choice in appropriating material culture from the movie poster, *The Great Dictator*, is not done spitefully or with negative intentions towards a non-Japanese culture. This kind of

popular culture appropriation that Kawakita engages is for the sake of creatively gaining attention to etiquette and manners in an urban Japanese context.

In addition to the direct popular culture appropriation from a movie poster to train poster, there are several signifiers that enable the intertextuality of *The Seat Monopolizer*. One signifying element in this poster is the degree of face work involved between the characters in this poster. Communication researchers John Oetzel and Stella Ting-Toomey (2003) discuss how negotiations of the face occur when there is a perceived incompatibility of values between two parties. In *The Seat Monopolizer*, train passengers are reminded how the simplicity of claiming space is an everyday source of public conflict. The facial expressions passed between Adenoid Hynkel (an Adolf Hitler-looking character), and the Jewish Barber (a Charlie Chaplain-looking character), suggest the confrontational feelings of annoyance, dominance, and rudeness.

The rhetorical decision by Kawakita to incorporate iconicity strengthens the opportunity for a Japanese audience to make historical connections and relationships while riding a train. *The Great Dictator* was an important film seen in movie theatres across the world; Kawakita makes the judgment that the average Japanese person saw the film and understands the historical relationships. Since the decoding of this poster depends on whether or not the commuting audience has a specific knowledge of what kind of person Adolf Hitler was, it functions as a closed text (Eco, 1981).

As Hebdige (1979) discusses in his studies of British punk culture, a polysemous text has the capacity to achieve a range of meanings. The polysemous nature of the image in *The Seat Monopolizer* must not be overlooked because it is possible that a non-Japanese audience as well as Japanese audience used the Tokyo public transportation system in 1976. Put a different way, Japanese people are not the only ones who use Japanese public transportation. In the 1970s and 1980s, it is possible that tourists and business people from German, Jewish, African American, or Italian heritage had also encountered *The Seat Monopolizer*. Therefore, audience members who had family that suffered under Adolf Hitler will be reminded of disturbing memories. For non-Japanese audience members that had such familial connections and negative associations with *The Seat Monopolizer*, the poster takes on a new meaning that might differ from the meaning held by Japanese passengers. The seemingly simple message of minding manners on a train may be overlooked due to an overwhelming appeal of pathos. Polysemy in *The Seat Monopolizer* functions in nearly inappropriate ways as different emotional meanings depend heavily on the demographics of the viewer/passenger.

### **Mary is Tired**

Kawakita was commissioned to create *Mary is Tired* in 1977, as displayed in Figure 1.3 (see Appendix). The main characters in this manner poster are a universal pair of mother and child. However, the woman holding a baby is not just any ordinary mother. The two photographed models in *Mary is Tired* signify a holy pair of people, The Blessed Virgin Mary and baby Jesus. Figure 1.3 (see Appendix) resembles a non-dominant choice in Christian iconography, as the artist claims to choose these models to evoke pathos from a cute looking Asian baby (Kawakita, 2008).

Another signifier in this poster is Kawakita's use of global knowledge. Kawakita uses the preeminence of Mary and Jesus to make his own, newly rearranged message for *Mary is Tired* in 1977. The appropriation of *Mary is Tired* is taken from Raphael's original 1505 painting of *Madonna dell'Granduca*, as shown in Figure 1.4 (see Appendix). In the appropriation, the artist uses micro-signifiers by including Asian models, the iconic clothing worn by the models, and the gaze from the mother figure. Conversely, as the original painting by Raphael in Figure 1.4 (see Appendix) shows, a muted pallet of colors and no sign of stained glass are in the classical painting.

## Time for No Smoking

Similar to *Mary is Tired*, the manner poster, *Time for No Smoking*, greets a commuting audience by grabbing attention with an icon from the West. As shown in Figure 1.5 (see Appendix), *Time for No Smoking* showcases one zoomed in portrait of a famous actor from the United States named Marion Mitchell Morrison, commonly known as John Wayne. The signified meaning behind this brief one-lined message and cowboy John Wayne is to be mindful of smoking tobacco only during the designated times in train stations in Japan. This poster supports a cultural rule, stating that in between the times of 7:00 a.m. and 9:30 p.m., to avoid smoking. Non-smoking times start again from 5:00 a.m. to 7:00 p.m. on the public train platforms. Rules such as the directions of allocated hours to smoke tobacco, are strategically written in aesthetic mediums provided by commissioned manner poster art and iconicity.

The appropriation of *Time for No Smoking* is taken from a 1965 LIFE magazine cover that features John Wayne's battle with cancer (see Figure 1.6). The original title of the LIFE magazine was *After a Bout with Cancer*. The signifiers from the LIFE magazine cover are used in similar, but adapted ways in Figure 1.5 (see Appendix), *Time for No Smoking*. This poster highlights universally known signifiers, such as a cowboy hat and gun. As displayed in Figure 1.6 (see Appendix), the LIFE magazine cover, *After a Bout with Cancer*, highlights John Wayne with stomach cancer in the latter portion of his Hollywood career. Quickly moving commuters could identify John Wayne's easily recognizable, American cowboy face in 1982 after some time from his death in 1979.

The main goal of this poster is to communicate that smoking around crowds of people is inappropriate. Kawakita employs a lesson in a brief line of text, to refrain from smoking during rush hours in Japan. Rather than simply writing a warning such as "No Smoking," the artist uses bold color and creative humor to encourage commuters to put out their cigarettes during "Nonsmoking" times in Japan. When taking both Figures 1.5 and 1.6 (see Appendix) into consideration, there are noticeable differences in the colors of the appropriated image by Kawakita. The artist involves red as an attention-grabbing color on the border and the handkerchief of John Wayne. Additionally, a background of mountains and dessert-like terrain is portrayed in Figure 1.5 (see Appendix), giving *Time for No Smoking* a more holistic "cowboy" context.

The disciplining of one's own behavior for the sake of not bothering those in proximity supports the idea of a holistic happiness orientation in Japan. Doh and Inoguchi (2008) describe happiness as "having certain things that give one passive pleasure" (p.408). The peace of mind granted that one can stand in line for the train without inhaling second hand smoke is a form of passive pleasure for non-smoking commuters.

## Clearly Show Your Train Pass

The brief and catchy textual line of advice offered in Figure 1.7 (see Appendix), *Clearly Show Your Train Pass*, follows a pattern that is created in all four posters. The message structure of the "one-liner" succeeds in its effectiveness, reminding commuters to comply without being overly intrusive. Since there is not a police officer or train attendant verbally enforcing the suggested social behavior depicted in *Clearly Show Your Train Pass*, the poster succeeds in being non-intrusive. The Tokyo Metro Authority's motivation to hire Hideya Kawakita from the 1970s to 1980s was for the purpose of representing perceived, albeit less critical, social problems in Japan. These social problems are, moreover, decided by a cultural consensus in Japan. In *Clearly Show your Train Pass*, the seemingly simple compliance of showing a train or bus ticket clearly to a train station attendant might be taken for granted. The signified meaning in *Clearly Show Your Train Pass* is to be alert and ready to show one's train-pass clearly and effectively to the train station attendant. The rationale behind the message is that the annoyance of waiting in long lines

due to other people's mindlessness is a social problem or source of everyday conflict that is worthy of attention.

The appropriation of Kawakita's *Clearly Show Your Train Pass* originates from an 1812 painting by Jacques-Louis David entitled *Napoleon Bonaparte in His Study at the Tuileries*. The signifiers in this newly appropriated poster consist of Napoleon Bonaparte's "hidden hand" that rests halfway inside his jacket. In addition, the background coding of Japanese language as displayed in Figure 1.7 (see Appendix) translates to "Have the ticket clearly visible." The strategic borrowing from one culture for a new use in another culture (Leeds-Hurwitz, 1993) is an obvious process when observing Bonaparte's hand in *Clearly Show Your Train Pass*. In addition to a bolder color pallet used in *Clearly Show Your Train Pass*, a background layer of Japanese text is discursively present. Notably, one of Napoleon Bonaparte's famous quotations is "The word *impossible* is not in my dictionary." The background of Figure 1.7 (see Appendix) is intentionally layered by Kawakita to resemble a page from a dictionary. The text direction in Japanese is vertical, and displayed realistically in the manner poster. In the dictionary-resembling background Japanese text of *Clearly Show Your Train Pass*, the brief line of "ていきけん「定期券」はつきり見せること." (Kawakita, 2008) translates to "clearly show your train pass." The implication of intertwining a cultural norm and dictionary page is that clearly showing one's train pass should be as respected as any rule you might find in a dictionary.

The intention behind *Clearly Show Your Train Pass* is to decrease the possibility of people standing or waiting for other passengers to locate their tickets for the train attendant. What is also socially implicated in this poster is that people should not take their time when in public because there is a risk that other people will be inconvenienced. While the message of this poster remains entirely simple, the social implications of organized and prepared passengers support a greater cultural value for other-orientation in Japan.

## Discussion and Conclusions

Research question one asks what semiotic code can be determined from a textual analysis of Japanese manner posters from 1976-1982. After extracting the history and cultural values embedded in the posters, several factors can be addressed when determining a common code. While each poster presents its own unique story, all four artifacts share a universal display of global membership in an increasingly competitive, 1970s to 1980s Japanese economy by using iconicity. Common elements of the code at work in the four manner posters are the presence of iconicity, signified suggestions of public manner etiquette, and the appropriations of earlier art forms. Additionally, these posters show the evidence of a bizarre sense of humor, strategic use of bold colors, and pithy text.

Research question two asks what communication function Japanese manner posters serve. Given the code behind Japanese manner posters, these artifacts help a traveling audience gauge why signs work to create certain realities (Whorf, 1956). A sign does not simply refer to a thing hanging on a wall, but rather anything that stands for something else (Chandler, 2007). *Mary is Tired* promotes a reading of people in crowded, public contexts.

The specific time period of these posters significantly affects how the audience encounters the images. The four chosen iconic posters have a greater impact during an increasingly improving Japanese economy during the 1970s to 1980s. Today, if one were to travel to Japan and ride the Tokyo public transportation, manner posters would still be visible. However, today's Japanese manner posters would appear differently in comparison to Kawakita's line of work from the 1970s and 1980s. While today's manner posters do not employ international connections of iconicity in ways that vintage manner posters did, the messages about cultural values remain salient.



While the posters successfully fulfilled the function of maintaining social order by appealing to iconic, rhetorical devices during the 1970s and 1980s, questions of appropriateness in Kawakita's artistic choices still remain unanswered. One culture may regard manner posters as normal while another culture may see manner posters as too strict, comical, or plainly offensive. Undoubtedly, the concept of *manners* enters an equivocal space as it lies heavily in the eyes of the mannered or unmannered beholder.

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## Appendix



Fig 1 "The Seat Monopolizer"



Fig 2 "The Great Dictator 1940"



Fig 3 “Mary is Tired”

Fig 4 “Madonna dell Granduca”

1505 by R. Sanzio da Urbino.



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Fig 5 “Time for no smoking” Fig 6 “After a Bout with Cancer”



Fig7 “Clearly show your train pass”

Fig 8 “Napoleon Bonaparte, Study at the Tuileries”

1812 by Jacques-Louis David

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Figure 1,3,5 from Kawakita, H. (2008). *Original! Japanese manner posters*. Tokyo, Japan: Graphicsha Company.

Figure 2 Roy Export by Graphicsha Company. S.A.S.

Figure 1.6 1965 *Life Magazine*.

