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Metalepsis and the Role of Domain Experts in the Wine Manga The Drops of God

Métalepses et rôle des experts du domaine œnologique dans les mangas
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Narratologists have used the term metalepsis to signify the deliberate blurring of the boundary between fiction and reality that occurs when members of one realm cross over into the other (Genette, 1972). The Drops of God, a Japanese wine manga published in serial form between 2004 and 2014, relies heavily on metalepsis to make the fictional wine world seem less so. Real-life wine specialists enter the narrative to play versions of themselves while fictional characters step out of text and into the real world to serve as product endorsers for Japanese wine merchants. The ultimate goal of most wine professionals is to sell more bottles at higher prices and the manga helped introduce wine to an uninitiated, impressionable audience. Slipped unobtrusively into an engaging narrative, brand recommendations can be remarkably persuasive. But when wine merchants hit upon the idea of using scenes and characters from the story in advertisements, they not only boosted their own wine sales but also the manga’s readership. In this way, the interconnection of fiction and reality offered commercial benefits to both sides.

This paper focuses on the metaleptic role of two prominent real-life Japanese specialists: Atsushi Honma, a senior sommelier and employee at the wine and beverage company Mottox, who becomes the fictional Chosuke Honma (we note how the authors retain the real-life character’s surname for his fictional alter ego), transformed into an Italian wine champion and the hero’s assistant; and Koji Nakata, a Japanese-born winemaker active in Burgundy who appears as himself in the fictional narrative. The inclusion of Honma and Nakata in the manga enhances verisimilitude, as pronouncements on wine made by real people with professional qualifications carry more weight than those made by fictional characters. The collaboration of real-life
domain experts lifted the manga out of the realm of fantasy and gave it an authority akin to that of a professional wine magazine. While trade publications such as Wine Spectator and Wine Advocate rely on detailed tasting comments and scores to sway consumers, the authors of The Drops of God fit their recommendations into a compelling narrative. Storytelling, combined with the professional legitimization of wine valuations by domain experts, helped turn readers into wine buyers. FASP researchers have noted that while the majority of specialized fiction authors are domain specialists, some—including the authors of The Drops of God—rely on personal experience or research for insight into the area of specialization (Petit, 1999).

Following an overview of FASP and Japanese manga, this paper looks at how the authors of the manga manipulate wine language, known as winespeak, in a contradictory but highly effective manner. While the manga goes to great lengths to reassure novice drinkers that a lack of knowledge of wine is not an obstacle to enjoying it, it nevertheless relies on numerous domain experts to give informed opinions on wine, thereby educating interested readers while giving the manga wine world a professional sheen. We then turn to an examination of wine advertising in The Drops of God, showing that the use of metalepsis legitimizes wine pronouncements made by the fictional characters and that this in turn helped The Drops of God to become a major influencer in the international wine market.

Introduction

Connecting FASP, the Enhancement of Verisimilitude and Manga

Fiction à substrat professionnel, or FASP, a fiction genre characterized by its highly specialized narrative, was identified, defined and codified in 1999 by French linguist and ESP specialist, Michel Petit. In the seminal article, he posits that the substantial volume of works based on specialized fictional narrative in the 1980s warranted its status as a genre per se, whose characteristics he defined in terms of four main generic features:

1. Popular, contemporary literature or genre fiction;
2. A sub-genre of the thriller genre;
3. The eponymous “substrat professionnel”, i.e., the professional or otherwise specialized fictional environment which defines the characters, the plot and the denouement;
4. The status of the author who is, in the majority of cases, a professional-cum-author, or a professional-turned-author.

FASP specialized narrative spans multiple disciplines (legal FASP, medical FASP, police procedural FASP, forensics FASP, art FASP, etc.) and all media supports, ranging from the classic novel and movie, to TV series, graphic novels—and hence, mangas—, and even video games.

Although The Drops of God is not a thriller and its authors are not wine specialists, and in the framework of the latitude accorded by Isani’s notion of “differing degrees of FASPness” (2004: 34), the overwhelming presence of the specialized language, discourse and culture of wine which underpins and suffuses the fictional narrative endows it with a bona fide substrat professionnel which makes this wine manga a legitimate object of study in the perspective of FASP studies.
The need for a true professional author to make a story more compelling has been noted by FASP researchers and this is part of a time-honored literary practice. Writers of fiction employ any and all techniques to get readers to suspend their disbelief and engage with the text. Samuel Richardson used the epistolary method in *Pamela* (1740) to, at least partially, convince readers that they were not enjoying a novel, but the secret, illicit letters written by the titular character—an act that everyone knows to be morally wrong, but thrilling nonetheless. Joseph Conrad often employed storytellers who address a group of listeners in his novels, creating the illusion that we, as readers, are overhearing something told to others. The story of Kurtz in *Heart of Darkness* (1899) is therefore not a product of the author's imagination, but something spoken and real and we are part of Marlowe's audience, rather than Conrad's. And, to take one more example, James Joyce tested the limits of stream-of-consciousness, recording thoughts as they might occur inside the brain without the benefit of punctuation or self-editing. As such, *Ulysses* (1920) does not make for easy reading, but it seems real in the way that its sudden changes of direction mimic those of the mind. These and other literary devices are employed by writers to try to get readers to believe in the truth of stories they know to be fiction. It is of particular interest that in 1999, when Petit noted the presence of domain professionals as an essential component in specialized thrillers and pot-boilers (1999: 2), he recognized that domain professionals can operate both inside and outside the narrative, which is relevant to the subsequent discussion of metalepsis.

The authors of *The Drops of God* and their iconoclastic hero, Shizuku Kanzaki, are often gleefully disdainful of wine language, as we shall see, but the manga would not have attained such a degree of popularity and influence in Japanese wine circles without the sanction of real-life domain specialists for whom language is of great importance. Kenneth Hyland reminds us that the members of academic communities “learn to communicate and to interpret each other’s talk, gradually acquiring the specialized discourse competencies.” Within the community, identities are forged through language choices (2018: paragraph 10). While there are some who oppose the use of jargon and specialized language on the grounds that it excludes those who do not possess such knowledge, Van der Yeught counters that the oversimplification of a specialized language can damage a community’s infrastructure. Linguistic change can only be initiated by specialists who understand the norms and have the respect of the community (Van der Yeught, 2020: 31). The wine community in *The Drops of God* is also defined by language use. The villain Issei Tomine, the sommelier-in-training Miyabi Shinohara, and wine bar owner Shiro Fujieda are (fictional) specialists whose opinions are deemed valid. To say that all opinions are equal and winespeak is nothing more than jargon would seriously compromise their authority. Therefore, the authors introduced another expert, Chosuke Honma, whose character is based on a well-known and respected real-life senior sommelier, to occupy the middle ground between the iconoclastic hero Shizuku and the wine professionals.

**An Introduction to Japanese Manga**

*The Drops of God* is a manga, the term used for Japanese comics. The genre has evolved from an unsophisticated means of pacifying children into a complex and vibrant source of entertainment for people of all ages, much like *la bande dessinée* (graphic novels) in France. With Japan economically devastated after World War II, a system of rental comics (*kashi-hon*) developed, enabling children to borrow thin, cheaply made manga.
for a fee. The popularity of Osamu Tezuka’s two hundred-page New Treasure Island, which sold over 400,000 copies in 1947, ushered in a new era dominated by gekiga (story-driven) manga. Gekiga were marked by their depth of detail, and targeted a more advanced, adolescent readership (Alt, 2020: 47–51). The success of another Tezuka manga, Astro Boy (1963), led to an important innovation in the manga entertainment industry with relevance to The Drops of God. Astro Boy was the first manga to spawn an animated television spinoff, with its characters and story commoditized through merchandising. This is sometimes referred to as a “media-mix” (Hernandez-Perez, 2019: 6). After capturing a large readership among male low-income workers and impoverished students in search of diversion (Alt, 2020: 62), publishers turned their attention in the 1950s and 1960s to the dreams and desires of female readers, coming up with a new genre known as shojo (young girl or woman) manga. One of the most popular shojo mangas was Sailor Moon (1991 to 1997), which also became a television series. Its success led publishers to specifically tailor science-fiction and fantasy stories for young female readers (Hemmann, 2020: 148).

Another sub-genre that emerged in the 1980s is kyoyo (academic or educational) manga, which fall somewhere between self-improvement and empty escapism. They focus on topics readers might otherwise learn about from instructional books and magazines, such as history, foreign travel and cooking. The world depicted in kyoyo manga is closer to reality than fantasy, but the story moves quickly, details and complexities are glossed over and entertainment is prioritized. (Norris, 2009: 256). With the explicit goal of initiating readers into the world of wine, The Drops of God fits the kyoyo manga description, though it might also be called a “working manga.” The principal characteristic of this sub-genre is the relaying of practical information about a professional milieu as, for example, in the food manga Oishinbo (Matsumoto, 2021: 3).

An Overview of the Success of The Drops of God

As the previous references to media-mixing and Atom Boy suggest, the manga industry has long been tied to “collaborative transmedia corporations” that target readers with products related to or derived from mangas and/or anime [animated television or film] (Grennan, 2018: 322). One such example is the Gundam phenomenon. Launched as an animated television series featuring robots in 1979, Gundam toys and other merchandise appeared next before it became a manga. Like Gundam, The Drops of God has achieved “anglophone domestication,” with success in Asia leading to the production of English language versions for Western consumption (Grennan, 2018: 333). The commercial potential of The Drops of God must have been more difficult to foresee than that of Gundam or Atom Boy, since the manga’s readers are primarily adults and the commodity is wine. And yet within a year of its serialization in Weekly Morning magazine in 2004, wine sales in Japan increased by 130 percent. The arrival of translations in Taiwan, China and Korea boosted sales in those countries by an estimated 150 percent (Joe, 2010), with the manga selling over two million copies in South Korea alone in 2008 (Normand-Marconnet, 2016: 167). When a spinoff television dramatization aired in 2009, the final episode was viewed by seven million people in Japan (Laurenson, 2010). With French wine portrayed in The Drops of God as the gold standard, Asian demand for Bordeaux and Burgundy exploded, with reports of fans of the series entering restaurants carrying copies of the manga and buying up, for example, Château Palmer, Château Lafleur and Marc Colin’s Montrachet—bottles that
cost hundreds of euros—in the same vintages featured in the story (Jenkins, 2016). By 2014, when the forty-fourth and final volume of the manga was published, its Asian readership stood at three hundred million (Wilson, 2019) and it had singlehandedly boosted the financial fortunes of numerous low and mid-level wines, such as Colli di Conegliano Rosso Contrada di Concenigo from Italy, which sells today for roughly 2000 yen (15.8 euro) in Japan. After defeating a French wine in a fictitious blind tasting competition featured in the manga, this wine experienced a sales bump of thirty percent (Hughes, 2008).

Following the manga’s publication in French in 2008, the brother and sister team of authors, Shin and Yuko Kibayashi, were recognized for their contribution to wine culture with the Ordre du Mérite Agricole in 2011 and L’Ordre des Arts et des Lettres in 2018 (Kibayashi, 2020). In spite of making it to the New York Times bestseller list in 2011 (Salkowitz, 2019), English versions have been slower to emerge. The release of volumes 12 to 22 in English was recently announced, as Japanese publisher Kodansha is now collaborating with Amazon to make digital versions of the manga available (Zylberberg, 2020). In conjunction with the release of more volumes in English, the Kibayashis announced the creation of an interactive wine club led by a Taiwanese, Peter Chiang, the owner of the Napa Valley winery, Kanpai Wines. For a quarterly fee of three hundred dollars, members receive six bottles of wine, food pairing recommendations, access to a blind tasting application and a wine game based on The Drops of God (McCoy, 2019). In 2021, the commoditization of The Drops of God seems to be gearing up, rather than slowing down.

1. The Drops of God and Winespeak

1.1. The Plot of The Drops of God

One of the reasons for the popularity of the manga is its focus on an improbable David and Goliath wine competition that encouraged wine novices to dream of the impossible. The story begins with the death of the world-famous (fictional) wine critic Yutaka Kanzaki, and the announcement that his priceless wine collection will be given to the winner of an extended tasting contest. The contestants are his estranged birth son Shizuku, an employee at Taiyo Beer who has no interest in wine, and the most famous living Japanese wine critic, Issei Tomine, who is revealed to be Kanzaki’s adopted son. Since nothing is improbable in a manga, a beer-drinker without any knowledge of wine then does battle in a blind tasting competition with the world’s leading expert, and acquits himself well. Forty-four volumes later the contest ends in a draw.

Before looking at how wine language is treated in the series itself, the symbolism in both the series name “The Drops of God” and the twelve “apostle” wines requires explication for non-Japanese language readers. The first kanji character, or pictograph, in the name Kanzaki (read as both “kan” and “kami”) means “god” while the hero’s first name, “shizuku,” translates to “drop(s)” of liquid. When the title, “the drops of god,” is applied to Shizuku Kanzaki, it suggests he has inherited the seeds of genius from his father. Indeed, both Yutaka and Shizuku possess keen olfactory gifts and heightened poetic sensitivity. But natural ability alone does not guarantee Shizuku victory in the race to identify twelve of the world’s greatest wines—all of which are part of the father’s collection—and the manga follows Shizuku’s (often hapless) efforts, guided by
his more experienced friends and colleagues and the abstract notes left in Yutaka’s will. In the second volume Shizuku is transferred to Taiyo Beer’s newly created wine division and joined in his quest by two co-workers: a young woman training to become a sommelier, Miyabi Shinohara, and a passionate, hot-tempered defender of Italian wine, Chosuke Honma. Only half of the forty-four volumes were available in English at the time of writing and, for the sake of consistency, this paper refers to the original Japanese editions of Kami no Shizuku. Textual translations are the author’s own.

1.2. Breaching Winespeak Boundaries

For the same reason that legal thrillers and hospital dramas rely on authentic specialized terminology, in the manga, the use of correct wine language—commonly known as winespeak—was essential in creating a convincing story. Simply put, readers (or viewers) are more likely to appreciate the fictional narrative if the language sounds appropriately professional and “right.” At the same time, the authors of The Drops of God clearly prioritize entertainment, relegating complex wine information to the appendices at the end of each volume, which readers can ignore without missing anything. The Kibayashis also show concern for wine novices insecure in their lack of knowledge with frequent exhortations to break the rules of wine appreciation, create their own wine vocabulary and, incidentally, drink far more than is good for them. Since boundaries cannot be breached if they go unrecognized, readers need to be made aware of them. Fiction writers know how the real world differs from our imagination, and it is because readers do too that experimental blurring makes for interesting reading. In The Drops of God a pattern recurs: fictional domain specialists—winemakers, sommeliers, professional critics and collectors—analyze wine using correct terminology, until the charismatic hero arrives on the scene to learn a little but also to break the rules. For the record, winespeak is relatively circumscribed and the terminology is agreed upon by most experts. In spite of differences in points of emphasis, domain specialists are consistent in their use of wine terminology, as a study of over 70,000 wine reviews by thirteen professional reviewers found (Croijmans et al., 2019). In the world of wine, language matters. But telling the uninitiated and overwhelmed—as most wine textbooks do—that winespeak makes sense does not help them to feel any better. The Drops of God has an advantage over such texts since the manga world possesses a curious form of sanctioned duality. It is an escapist world in which dreams come true and readers are able to “mak[e] sense of things and [see] the potential future in them” (Kukkonen, 2013: 125). The Drops of God tells readers to gulp, disdain spittoons, and say whatever they think instead of following tasting etiquette or memorizing and regurgitating officially approved terminology.

To legitimize the manga in Japanese wine circles, the authors enlisted the help of real-life domain specialists like Atsushi Honma and Koji Nakata, whose metaleptic crossing of boundaries will be discussed shortly. But first it would be helpful to look more closely at the winetasting philosophy espoused by Shin and Yuko Kibayashi, the authors of the manga. It is not unlike Charles Ryder’s method in Evelyn Waugh’s novel Brideshead Revisited. Charles explains:

Sebastian had found a book on wine-tasting, and we followed its instructions in detail. We warmed the glass slightly at a candle, filled a third of it, swirled the wine round, nursed it in our hands, held it to the light, breathed it, sipped it, filled our
motions with it and rolled it over the tongue, ringing it on the palate like a coin on a counter, tilted our heads back and let it trickle down the throat. (1944: 92)

17 As tasting metamorphoses into drinking, the textbook is forgotten and the metaphors used to describe the wines become fanciful:

—“... It is a little, shy wine like a gazelle.”
—“Like a leprechaun.”
—“Dappled, in a tapestry meadow.”
—“Like a flute by still water.”
—“... And this is a wise old wine.”
—“A prophet in a cave.”
—“... And this is a necklace of pearls on a white neck.”
—“Like a swan.”
—“Like the last unicorn.” (Waugh, 1944: 92–3)

18 In The Drops of God, the hero Shizuku is keen to learn about wine, but not to make the requisite effort to retain his lessons and, more often than not, tasting sessions become drinking marathons. Even though he is frequently scolded by the sommelier-in-training, Miyabi Shinohara, and Chosuke Honma for being a poor student, he is universally praised for relying on his instincts in judging wine and for indulging in poetic flights of fancy. By their own estimate, at the height of the manga’s popularity the authors were tasting thirty thousand wines per year (Laurenson, 2010), and the ones that impressed them made it into the text. Similarly, Shizuku gains most of his knowledge simply by drinking widely and recording his impressions without worrying about what the experts might think of his choice of words, thereby creating a kinship with readers who are wine novices. There is also a certain thrill in knowingly breaking the rules, particularly in relation to the consumption of alcohol, as Leishman points out in a discussion of the tug-of-war between transgression and acceptability regarding Buckfast Tonic Wine (2014). In the world of fine wine there are plenty of rules to break. When Shizuku relays his tasting impressions, he sounds like the authors at a home tasting. “While we are drinking wine,” says Yuko Kibayashi, “we play a kind of game to try to find an unusual phrase that sums up the experience, not using the sort of language a sommelier would use, but using images to make it sound more delicious. For example, is it a male or female wine?” (Hughes, 2008). The game is recreated in the manga’s pages with Shizuku the primary player. To aficionados and domain experts, Shizuku’s wine descriptions (like those found in Brideshead Revisited) often sound like attempts to mask ignorance through pseudo-cultural sophistication. His metaphoric comparisons to classics in art, cinema and music include:

19 - a forty-year-old bottle of Bordeaux likened to the ceiling decorations in the Louvre Museum (44: 68);
- a vintage Romanée Saint Vivant Burgundy that conjures a rainy cobblestone street in the movie “The Umbrellas of Cherbourg” (42: 74);
- a Châteauneuf du Pape white wine compared to a music box rendition of a Brahms lullaby (10: 169).

20 These are metaphors that convey nothing about the wines’ inherent properties. As evaluative tasting comments, they are on par with grunts, groans and nods of the head. But they make intimidated readers feel that the understanding and correct application of wine language and technical jargon are not prerequisites for appreciation. If the loftiness of the wine is matched by the cultural reference, your tasting comments might even be applauded, as Shizuku’s are when he likens three Bordeaux 1st growths...
to Rachmaninoff’s 2nd symphony, Cleopatra and a German castle (6: 146). For less exalted wines, he typically conjures humbler scenes, such as a field of butterflies, a Parisian flea market or a smoke-filled New Orleans jazz bar. All of this flowery language means little, and yet it helps to encourage a “secret fantasy” that the Kibayashis believe everyone has “of being the most knowledgeable wine guru in the room. The Drops of God allowed people to gain this knowledge while simultaneously being entertained” (Kibayashi & Kibayashi, 2020).

1.3. The Inclusion of Domain Experts

A wine manga devoid of domain experts where all of the characters flaunt the rules of winespeak would have had limited impact on the professional wine world, but the inclusion of real-life sommeliers and winemakers both in the narrative and appendix of The Drops of God adds an air of professionalism and legitimacy to the otherwise improbable plot. How, one wonders, could a novice hold his own in a tasting contest with an internationally acclaimed critic? Wine appreciation being an acquired skill, the accurate expression of the essence of many wines is left to the villain, Issei Tomine, an entirely fictitious world-renowned wine critic. According to the authors, the easy-going, approachable Shizuku was intended as the embodiment of Bordeaux wine while the moody but mercurial Issei was drawn from the profile of Burgundy. His character developed by way of response to requests from female readers, says Shin Kibayashi, who “love these lonely characters” (Hughes, 2008), another reminder of The Drops of God’s ability to appeal to readers of shojo (girls’ or women’s) manga, which are marked by their emphasis on psychology and romance (Kitamura, 2015: 749). Issei is the Japanese equivalent of Robert Parker, Jr., with the brooding sex appeal and self-destructiveness of James Dean or Jim Morrison. He offers textbook wine evaluations, though, and occasionally throws in a fanciful metaphor as the story progresses, like Shizuku. Thus, when he introduces a “bloodlike” wine called Rosso Miani from Friuli in Italy he can explain the effect of rigorous vine pruning on taste, something that Shizuku cannot do (1:177).

1.4. Wine Education and the Carrot-and-Stick Approach

While domain expertise is essential in any work on wine, the central problem encountered by the Kibayashis is the same one that authors of introductory wine appreciation texts must overcome. The average reader’s excitement at the prospect of drinking diminishes when he/she is forced to memorize complex information and specialized vocabulary. When an enjoyable activity—wine appreciation—has suddenly become a chore, many readers are likely to close the text and put it away on a shelf to collect dust. Still, the research shows that in wine production, advertising and sales, expert knowledge is disseminated through an agreed-upon vocabulary (Croijmans et al., 2019). The correct manipulation of this vocabulary may be essential for domain specialists to communicate with each other, but to novices it sounds like a code invented for the express purpose of confusing and excluding them, as discussed in an essay on wine language (Isani, 2017). The Drops of God, as previously mentioned, plays both sides: the authors indulge the novice’s fear of winespeak while fostering respect for professional knowledge. This is the carrot-and-stick approach adopted by the authors of many introductory wine appreciation texts. First, novices are coddled and...
told that wine is fun. Anyone can learn the basics and all opinions are equally valid. But as the lessons progress, the information about varietals, regions, vinification methods and vintages becomes more complex. Just when the novice reader is beginning to feel overwhelmed and (perhaps) tricked—wine appreciation isn’t easy at all!—the author will remind him or her to take it easy. Relax and have a drink. After all, it’s just wine. In this way the cycle continues until the end of the text.¹

2. Advertising and *The Drops of God*

2.1. The Search for Wines that Outperform Their Price Tags

The path traced by the Kibayashis in becoming a force in the Japanese wine world is apparent in a relatively minor scene at the end of the first volume, and it offers an excellent example of their ambivalence about winespeak. Shizuku arrives at the wine bar where the apprentice sommelier Miyabi Shinohara is employed, and tastes wine for the first time. He tries Château Mont-Perat, an entry level Bordeaux selling for two thousand yen (15.8 euro). Novice wine drinkers will feel an immediate kinship with Shizuku, who enjoys the wine but lacks the requisite knowledge and vocabulary to convey his opinions. Falling back on a musical comparison, he declares that the wine “is just like the sweet, husky vocals of the singer, the thick guitar and heavy drums that envelope you. It almost feels classical but modern at the same time. This wine is like Queen” (1: 103). To our surprise, the sommelier present, Shiro Fujieda, agrees. Mont-Perat is just like the British rock group Queen. Next Shizuku tastes a California cult wine, Opus One, that costs ten times more than Mont-Perat and he expresses a preference for the latter. The sommelier counters that, if price is an indication of quality, Opus One is far superior, adding that this particular vintage received a higher score from a German wine magazine than the famed Château Margaux from Bordeaux. And yet, the sommelier warns, expensive wines are not always the best ones. The scene concludes with Shizuku asking for another glass of Mont-Perat, a wine that would receive plugs later in the series.² The scene just described becomes a pattern adhered to in each of the forty-four volumes, as the authors would recommend at least one or two modestly priced wines that outperform their price tags. In 2021 Japanese wine merchants are still using the manga for advertising, as we see below:
The majority of the wines that benefit from manga plugs are moderately-priced table wines, known in Japan as “daily wines”, costing less than 2000 yen (15.8 euro). Pictured below on the immediate right is Evodia, a Spanish wine selling for 1300 yen (10.5 euro) in a convenience store on the southwest island of Okinawa with the manga title in large letters (神の雫). The placard to the left of the bottle reads: “Evodia: receiving the highest praise in the popular wine manga *The Drops of God.*” The picture on the far right shows six manga wines prominently displayed in the chain liquor shop Kakuyasu in Tokyo. They range from an Italian Spumante at 1250 yen (10 euro) to the Bordeaux wine Poupille at 4700 yen (37 euro). Note the ubiquitous Evodia lurking on the far right. (Photographs by author.)

When Shizuku and his cohorts extoll the virtues of particular wines, objective, professional support for their opinions helps. In the first volume, this role is fulfilled by the fictional sommelier Shiro Fujieda, who lauds and legitimizes Shizuku’s metaphoric comparison of Mont-Perat to Queen. He also gives the reader background information on the real-life winery that the novice Shizuku cannot. Fujieda says that famed French wine consultant Michel Rolland, who has worked with exclusive wineries like Château Le Pin, served in an advisory capacity for Mont-Perat. The 2002 vintage is available in online wine shops and, he warns, selling fast (1: 110). Though Fujieda would continue to appear in many subsequent volumes, dispensing advice and recommendations, from the second volume the role of authenticator of wine judgments is assumed by Chosuke Honma, the fictional version of the Mottox senior sommelier. At the end of the second volume Shizuku celebrates his victory in the battle for the first of the twelve apostles with a Montepulciano d’Abruzzo wine called Jorio recommended by Honma, who scowls and tells him, in the scanned page below, not to sneer at a wine because it costs less than 1500 yen (12 euro). He calls the winemaker of the famed Italian producer Umani Ronchi a genius, and praises Jorio as being good value.
Atop the sales page for Jorio on the Japanese wine shop Tuscany is the caption: “given the highest praise as a great value-for-money wine in the manga The Drops of God.” Online searches for other Italian wines recommended in the manga often lead to advertisements and sales pages with scanned manga scenes and the fictional Chosuke’s cut-out figure with a thumbs up or a photograph of the real-life model, Atsushi Honma. (See Fig. 3).

2.2. *The Drops of God* and Trophy Wines

Although dozens of the finest, most sought-after wines appear in the manga, Japanese wine sellers rarely turn to the manga for advertising help with these collector’s items. The twelve “apostles” that make up the inheritance battle are notable exceptions. At the time of writing, online advertisements referencing the manga could still be found for eleven of the twelve wines, which suggests that some manga fans with deep pockets continue to retrace the heroes’ footsteps. The lowest priced apostle is the ninth, Poggio di Sotto Brunello di Montalcino, available for 21,000 yen (166 euro); the highest is the third, Domaine du Pegau Cuvee Da Capo Châteauneuf du Pape, priced at 210,000 yen (1666 euro). The only apostle for which a manga plug could not be found was the eighth, Exquise Jacques Selosse champagne, which ranges from 40,000 to 55,000 yen (317 to 436 euro). However, in reviews on one wine shop’s page, a customer stated that he had purchased the wine after reading the manga.

Readers of the first volume of *The Drops of God* are immediately transported to the pinnacle of the wine mountain to witness tastings of Château Margaux, Château Mouton-Rothschild and Domaine de la Romanée-Conti. For wine lovers these are bottles to dream of. Their price tags are prohibitively high, though they vary depending on the quality of the vintage, and Japanese wine merchants follow the international trend of citing hundred-point scores from notable critics and influential magazines rather than *The Drops of God*, which does not give numerical ratings. Wine merchants selling trophy wines like Opus One from California and the Burgundian Richebourg do not mention *The Drops of God* in advertisements either, preferring to play up connections to even more exalted bottles. To cite two examples, advertisers will often state on sales pages that Opus One began as a collaboration between Baron
It is also interesting to note that while some wine producers appreciate the advertising boost provided by *The Drops of God*, others have been less pleased by the attention bestowed upon them by Asian wine and manga lovers. After the 2003 Château Le Puy was promoted in the final television episode of *The Drops of God*, this winery received over 150 orders by telephone and email the next day. The owner responded by removing his wine from the market to prevent price gouging and to ensure that there would be enough stock for loyal customers (Laurenson, 2010). In contrast, the California winery Pisoni Estate announced in a blog that it was “deeply honored” to have their Pinot Noir showcased in *Marriage*, the successor to *The Drops of God* (2018, “Pisoni”). After the publication of the English edition of the volume featuring American and Australian wines, the producer of Sine Qua Non in California claimed that he had never heard of *The Drops of God*, even though his wine was the prestigious seventh apostle, while Ben Glaetzer, a producer in the Barossa Valley whose wine was featured in the same volume (24), decided to spend three weeks traveling in Asia, where he heard the manga mentioned numerous times, and happily reported an increase in requests for vineyard visits by Japanese (Colman, 2012). In sum, any link to the manga can result in an immediate and marked increase in sales. A renowned cult winery with limited production may feel that increased attention is unwanted, though most producers are glad of the publicity, as they are anxious to gain any advantage on their competitors.

### 3. Metalepsis and Domain Experts

#### 3.1. Metalepsis in *The Drops of God*

Indulging readerly fantasies is a key component in manga. It has been argued that the use of metalepsis in fantasy fiction helps readers immerse themselves in the text and access experiences that are normally unavailable (Klimek, 2011: 29). Genette defined metalepsis as “any intrusion by the extradiegetic narrator or narratee into the diegetic universe (or by the diegetic characters into a metadiegetic universe, etc.) or the inverse” (1980: 234–5) that lends a strange or fantastic element to a narrative. Which is to say that, in metaleptic narratives, authors and characters enter domains to which access is traditionally restricted, or authors lift the veil on their creative workshops. Genette provided examples from writers as varied as Cortazar, Sterne and Diderot (1980: 234–5), though he noted an increase in metaleptic intrusions in avant-garde and postmodern works that pose questions about the nature of fiction and authorship. Narratologists distinguish between ascending and descending metalepses. The former is said to have occurred when a character moves up from the fictional world into the real one, while the latter requires movement in the opposite direction, from the real into the fictional (Kukkonen, 2011: 8). Examples of ascending metalepsis are comparatively rare because of the difficulties preventing fictional characters from
entering our world, though Kukkonen cites a Woody Allen film, *The Purple Rose of Cairo*, in which Jeff Daniels’ character steps off screen into a representation of reality (2011: 17). This is a scripted breach so neither Daniels nor his character actually enters our world, though it seems so. Something similar happens when Chosuke Honma ascends from the pages of the manga to recommend products for Japanese wine merchants on the internet.

To better understand how metalepsis works in *The Drops of God* in legitimizing its wine pronouncements, let us consider a technique used in television news. While many stations hide newsroom activities from viewers, showing only the presenter at a desk with the station logo, transparent glass panels are sometimes installed behind the presenter to allow glimpses of the workplace. Dahlberg refers to this as media metalepsis. The logic seems to be that a news station with nothing to hide has greater credibility (Dahlberg, 2010: 106). In the same way, the presence of real-life wine professionals in the manga leads readers to accept the proffered opinions because the foundation upon which the story has been built appears solid. Metalepsis has something of a bad reputation for inducing a “troubling state” in the reader, likened to vertigo or anxiety (Cohn, 2012: 110). It has also been referred to as a “borderline figure” that tests the reader’s patience (Cummings, 2014: 223), particularly if there are too many intrusions and they lead to chaos or confusion. This is not the case with *The Drops of God*. Aside from Chosuke Honma, all of the central characters are fictional creations, and the authors’ purpose in using metalepsis is not to pose metaphysical questions, but to legitimize the wine world.

As previously explained, Chosuke Honma is introduced in the second volume of the manga. In addition to amusing readers through splenetic outbursts, his role is to unearth little-known Italian wines that offer better value than similarly priced French wines. He is also given leeway to lecture on the virtues of premium wines such as Barolo, Amarone, Chianti and the Super Tuscans.

*Figure 3. – The Drops of God in online advertising.*

The images to the left are from an advertisement for a set of six budget Italian wines. Shizuku, Issei and Miyabi are visible behind the bottles in the far left image while the script in the right-hand image of the two Honmas reads: “The Drops of God wine recommendations from Italian wine aficionado Chosuke Honma!” The four lines at the bottom list Atsushi Honma’s professional credentials and his status as the model for Chosuke Honma. (Image borrowed from Kinokuniya Liquor sales page on Rakuten shopping website.)
3.2. Chosuke/Atsushi Honma: a Domain Specialist Designed to Appeal to Wine Novices

The way in which metalepsis helped to make the manga a bestseller with advertising clout is perfectly captured in volumes twenty-nine and thirty, which focus on Shizuku and Chosuke’s journey to Florence in search of candidates for the ninth apostle. Upon their arrival they are greeted by a manga representation of Stefano Campatelli, the real-life director of the Consorzio del Vino Brunello di Montalcino at the time. Campatelli’s character has read all of the books written by the great wine critic Yutaka Kanzaki, who is himself a fictional character and the father of Shizuku (29: 49). In the manga Campatelli acts as the guide for his Japanese visitors. All of the wines they drink during the visit are still available on Japanese wine merchants’ sales pages, and several invoke the manga. Prices range from 1700 yen (13.5 euro) for Zardetto Extra dry Prosecco (29: 178) to 12,000 yen (95 euro) for Lisini Brunello di Montalcino (30: 180). The Japanese wine shop, Tuscany, uses manga plugs for both products, saying of the Prosecco that its popularity increased after it appeared in *The Drops of God*. For the Lisini wine, Tuscany provides a link to a 2018 interview in which the real-life sommelier Atsushi Honma discusses visiting Brunello di Montalcino and Lisini. In the interview, it is stated that the episodes and tastings in volumes 29 and 30 were drawn from Honma’s own experience.

The Brunello di Montalcino volumes show how *The Drops of God* was able to go beyond the introduction of occasional metaleptic ascensions and descensions to enhance verisimilitude and achieve a seamless blend of fact and fantasy. In reality Yutaka Kanzaki does not exist, but praise for his writings by Campatelli, the head of the wine association, helps to legitimize the manga. Tourism research suggests that celebrity endorsements work best when the images projected by the celebrity, the destination and the tourist align (Glover, 2009: 18), and Japanese views of Italian wine generally accord with the stereotypical view presented in volume 4 that they are powerful and full-bodied but lack the delicacy of French wines (4: 138). The results of a 2012 study into Japanese wine consumer behavior confirmed this bias. When asked which country’s wine they would choose for a dinner out with important guests, 74 percent of the respondents said France, while only 14 percent opted for Italy (Bruwer & Buller, 2012: 348).

Because of this bias in favor of French wines, there is a perception that a little roughness around the edges is permissible in Italian wines, provided they are cheap. Volume 19 focuses on an Italian wine fair and a mid-range table wine that has benefited greatly from manga plugs, Farnese Casale Vecchio Montelpulciano d’Abruzzo. According to the Tuscany wine shop’s sales page, this wine has always sold well but, thanks to the manga, sales skyrocketed and ten years later they remain strong. It retails for about 2000 yen (15,60 euro) and is often included in *The Drops of God* six bottle tasting sets. In the manga, Shizuku conducts a tasting of Casale Vecchio for a group of young female admirers at the wine fair. Rather than explaining its taste and aroma, he says that the wine is reminiscent of the smell of orchids in the legendary Raffles Hotel lobby in Singapore. A metaphor that implies luxury is well-chosen, and the admirers are impressed by the affordability of such an elegant wine. By the end of the three-day wine fair 320 bottles of Casale Vecchio have been sold (19: 104). Honma’s mission is to
find reasonably priced table wines that outperform their price tags and in volume 19 he accomplishes his goal, with the help of Shizuku.

Volumes 29 and 30 are anomalies, as Brunello di Montalcino is the wrong place to look for bargains. But Honma’s visit to Italy and interactions with real-life domain specialists helped to authenticate his opinions, making him a more credible endorser. Consumer trust in celebrity endorsements is based on the celebrity’s standing at the top of his/her field, and perceptions of the individual’s goodwill and optimism (Hussain et al., 2020). Chosuke Honma is modeled on someone with professional credibility but, as we have seen, his image is carefully cultivated to appeal to intimidated novice wine drinkers. Research has shown that limitations on novices’ ability to detect nuances in taste are not only due to problems with winespeak. In many cases novices simply cannot tell the difference between good and mediocre products because they lack training, as a study conducted by Brock University in Canada concluded (Hayes & Pickering, 2011). In another study D’Alessandro and Pecotitch found that novices are unduly influenced by both price and country of origin stereotypes. In comparative taste tests the novices expressed a preference for the French wines, even when they were of inferior quality to the wines from other countries. On the other hand, the experts participating in the study relied on their palates and experience to make accurate quality assessments and were not swayed by country of origin information (2013: 293–5). It is little wonder that Chosuke Honma became a trusted endorser with the ability to influence wine sales. His opinions are always black and white and he reinforces Japanese stereotypes about Italian wine. Though he behaves like an untrained wine novice, he is modeled on a domain specialist.

3.3. Using Chosuke Honma as a Brand Ambassador

The fictional character Chosuke Honma has proven to be the perfect brand ambassador for The Drops of God. The function of celebrity ambassadors is to encourage consumers to imitate their behavior because they are known and respected. They can be famous in sports, business, politics and even animation—Mickey Mouse being a prime example (Awasthi, 2015: 216). Furthermore, in the world of sports, research shows that the public tends to view endorsements from male athletes more seriously than those from their female counterparts (Peetz, 2004: 143), which may be one of the reasons that Chosuke Honma was a more alluring brand ambassador than, for example, the sommelier-in-training, Miyabi Shinohara, who is depicted as modest and well-mannered in the narrative. There are important advantages in using celebrities to advertise goods, one of which is that they are known to the audience, unlike anonymous brand spokespeople. If the celebrity seems to have done something the consumers would like to do themselves, all the better. As Grant McCracken has argued, celebrities “‘own’ their meanings because they have created them on the public stage by dint of intense and repeated performance” (1989: 315). Manga fans know Chosuke Honma as Shizuku’s personal wine advisor, a professional who offers reliable advice on wines from Italy, Spain and the New World. His impassioned fictional performances give credence to the plugs used on internet wine merchants’ sales pages. There has also been research which shows consumers will display herd behavior in support of a particular product even if they lack sufficient evidence of the product’s superiority. This phenomenon, known as a cascade, occurs when a limited amount of data influences a target group and leads to a sudden surge in buying (Bikhchandani et al.,
An interesting example is the submission of a previously rejected academic paper to a journal. If referees for the second journal learn that it has already been turned down once, they are likely to make the same decision without giving it serious consideration, reasoning that they are unable to judge with certainty the merits of the paper another referee has already deemed unworthy of publication. As the desperate author resubmits the paper to other journals, the knowledge that it has been rejected multiple times becomes an informational cascade compromising future referees’ objectivity and swaying them towards negative evaluations (Bikhchandani et al., 1992: 994). The fictional sommelier Shiro Fujieda initiated a cascade in the first volume by touting Mont-Perat and warning readers that sales were booming. This led to the immediate increase in sales that was mentioned in advertisements. Soon customers were buying Mont-Perat not because they had tasted it and liked it, but because so many others apparently had and did. A similar cascade occurs in the promotion of the Casale Vecchio wine at the wine fair.

A final important factor in Chosuke Honma’s success as a brand ambassador is his attractive features. In celebrity endorsements, the positive traits the endorser is believed to represent are mapped onto the product, making it more desirable and stimulating sales (Schouten et al., 2019). A study of customer imitation behavior of celebrity endorsements found that attractiveness and credibility were the most important characteristics. Celebrities possessing both qualities have a better chance of persuading customers to imitate their behavior and use the same products (Awasthi et al., 2015: 230).

Chosuke Honma’s wine recommendations carry weight with fans of the manga because he is the hero’s friend and guide. Wine novices are likely to feel a bond with a domain expert who passes judgments in the same impulsive way that they do. Chosuke either loves a wine or hates it, and he has many blind spots that make his decisions questionable. We learn, for example, that after his romantic overtures were rejected by a French woman, he developed a hatred for all things French. This led him to champion Italian wines, particularly those available at low price points from lesser known regions. He is an impassioned underdog based on a real-life senior sommelier with professional experience, as readers can clearly see in the round-faced, overweight manga character’s resemblance to his model. As Van der Yeught has noted, only a specialist can initiate change within a professional community (2020: 31), so it is important that the character of Chosuke Honma be based on a sommelier, but equally important for him not to behave like one so as to endear himself to amateurs put off by the stuffiness of the wine establishment.

### 3.4. Koji Nakata’s Role

Koji Nakata was the first real-life wine maker to be transformed into a character in The Drops of God, but not the last or the most prominent. When Shizuku travels to Bordeaux to participate in the Medoc marathon in volume 24, he is met by Jean-Michel Cazes, the real-life owner of Château Ormes de Pez (not to mention the more esteemed Lynch-Bages). The manga representation of Cazes remembers Shizuku as a child, accompanying his esteemed father on business visits, and has heard about the inheritance battle between Issei and Shizuku (24: 18). Volumes 32 and 33 focus on Shizuku’s visit to Burgundy, where he is taken to meet another real-life figure:
Emmanuel Rouget, the nephew of the revered Henri Jayer and a legendary winemaker in his own right (33: 48). And in volume 39, the central characters become volunteer grape pickers at a real Japanese winery, Domaine Mie Ikeno, located in Yamanashi prefecture (39: 169–176). In each of the above cases, winemakers and producers become fictional versions of themselves, interacting with the manga characters and reinforcing the reality of the manga world. An unknown winemaker at the beginning of his career when he first appeared in The Drops of God, Koji Nakata has had the most to gain from the association. The manga provided him with an immediate sales boost and an enduring market for his wine in Asia, as explained below. The other real-life winemakers were successful before they stepped inside the manga’s pages, and they do not seem to have tried to take advantage of The Drops of God publicity. The guesthouse run by Château Ormes de Pez once included a summary of Cazes’ fictional meeting with Shizuku on its homepage, doubtless to lure Japanese tourists, but this link has since been taken down. As for Emmanuel Rouget, the high prices commanded by his wines attest to his skill and reputation. He has no need for further publicity, and the manga does not seem to be mentioned on his winery’s website or any Japanese wine merchants’ sales pages. Mie Ikeno’s production is small and she had already earned a cult following before the manga’s publication. Her wines are only available to visitors or on her website, and they sell out quickly. Not surprisingly, there are no references to The Drops of God on her site.

The relationship between the authors of the manga and Nakata has been mutually beneficial, as he has testified to the manga’s acceptance by the Burgundy wine community while receiving invaluable advertising in return. He is woven into the narrative as a character, interacting with fictional creations, but he also appears as himself in an appendix interview. There are also several other interviews posted on the internet in both Japanese and English in which he discusses the interest in his wine created by The Drops of God. A French scholar has made the argument that the manga was accepted by French readers because it challenged myths of the innate vinological superiority of Europeans:

(…) it is not because you are French (or Italian, or Spanish) that you have a natural predisposition to judge the quality of a wine. Conversely, being Japanese or Chinese does not impede one from becoming a connoisseur of wine, since efforts to become educated in this field prevail over any patrimony linked to birthplace. This can explain why Japanese wine manga have not only reached a large audience in France, but have also been very well received by wine experts and enthusiasts. (Normand-Marconnet, 2016: 161)

The ninth volume in the series uses Koji Nakata to confront such myths of innate French superiority. Ms. Kawamata, the least recognizable member of the Taiyo wine division team, is troubled by her daughter’s proposed marriage to Jean, whose father is a French chef opposed to intermarriage. His inflexibility even extends to wine, as he refuses to drink anything but the best French Burgundy. Even Bordeaux wines are beneath him. Shizuku and his cohorts are enlisted to gain the chef’s support for the young couple. Just as in every other volume of the manga, through a series of coincidences and fantastic occurrences, an apparently insurmountable difficulty is overcome thanks to the application of wine knowledge and the hero’s sensitive palate. It turns out that the chef is not at all a pure-blooded Frenchman convinced of his racial and cultural superiority, but someone who bears a grudge against Japan because his grandmother was Japanese and she suffered a great deal due to discrimination (9: 122).
Shizuku is able to change the chef’s mind about purity by serving him a glass of Meursault—a Burgundian wine—that he admits to liking. The chef is shocked to learn that the winemaker is not French, but the transplanted Japanese, Koji Nakata.

When this volume first appeared in serial form, the 2003 Meursault from Maison Lou Dumont sold out within three months. The story of a Japanese winemaker with a Korean wife and business partner piqued the curiosity of readers in both Asian countries concerned. Park Jae-wha received a degree in oenology from Burgundy and has publicly expressed her gratitude to the authors of The Drops of God (2008, "Mastering"). The appendix to volume 12, published in 2007, includes an interview with Koji Nakata that boosted the fortunes of both the winemaker and The Drops of God. In response to a question about whether some people in France were aware of the manga, he replied: “Not just some. People in the Burgundy wine cooperative know about it too. At the moment sales in America are slumping so there are expectations about what the manga can do to help” (author’s translation). He then summarizes his career: a year of work in a Tokyo restaurant at eighteen; the decision to go to France for language and then wine studies; and the launching of his career as a winemaker. He claims there are benefits in working as a négociant—i.e., a winemaker who purchases grapes and vinifies them—chief among them being the freedom to select grapes from vines that flourished in challenging years rather than being limited to the yields from his own vineyards. In truth, vineyard prices in Burgundy are so high that young winemakers today become négociants by default, rather than choice, as Jancis Robinson has noted (2018). The most important part of the interview with Nakata, however, comes in his reference to the legendary (now deceased) Burgundian winemaker Henri Jayer.

Nakata says that he sometimes consulted with Jayer about winemaking techniques and was advised not to model himself on others but to make the wines that he likes. After Nakata relocated his winemaking enterprises to the village of Gevrey Chambertin in 2003, Jayer paid him a visit. Thereafter, Nakata began to print wine labels featuring three Japanese kanji characters transcribed as ten (heaven), chi (earth) and hito (person) as a representation of the three elements in winemaking. While favorable weather and superior terroir are of great importance, Nakata considers the person behind the wine to be key, thus hito (person) is written in larger font. Only the wines Nakata bottles for the foreign market feature the label with the kanji characters, though this comprises almost all of his production. In 2016 the French wine guide Hachette reported that 96 percent of his wine was intended for export (430). Following up on the promotion of Maison Lou Dumont’s Meursault in volume 9, this interview announced to wine lovers across Japan and Korea the arrival of an Asian disciple of Henri Jayer. With the creation of their new wine club, the Kibayashis made an intriguing announcement of their own. The club had been organized according to the same principles adhered to in their latest wine manga, Marriage: heaven, earth, people and marriage (McCoy, 2019). Marriage refers to the pairing of wine with food, and it is also the title of the manga. It seems likely that the connections between the Kibayashis and Koji Nakata will remain strong.
The picture on the left is of a promotional display of Maison Lou Dumont’s offerings in the wine section of Yoshiya supermarket in Tokyo. Beneath the photograph of Koji Nakata at work in his cellar is the caption: “The Japanese winemaker whose skill was acknowledged by the god of wine, Henri Jayer.” This is followed by praise for Nakata’s abilities and an excellent ratio of cost to quality. The label on the right shows the three Chinese characters: in the upper left, 天 (ten; heaven); the bottom left, 地 (chi; earth); and on the right side in larger font, 人 (hito; person). (Photos taken by the author.)

**Conclusion**

A wine battle between a rank amateur and a foremost expert hardly seems worth waging, but the one that unfolded in the pages of *The Drops of God* captured the imagination of readers around the world, inspiring novices to plunge into the world of wine and collectors to seek out coveted bottles. This paper has argued that entertainment was the Kibayashis’ primary purpose, with lessons in wine appreciation and technical information conveyed as unobtrusively as possible, in line with the principles of the genre known as *kyoyo* (education) manga. The fact that Shizuku is a poor student makes him more appealing to readers who find winespeak and discussions of vinification methods yawn-inducing. In order to give Shizuku a chance at winning the competition with Issei, just about all of the commonsense rules governing wine must be ignored or broken. Metalepsis is also a breach of the rules governing fiction, but the metaleptic intrusions in *The Drops of God* actually helped the Kibayashis to legitimize their imaginary wine world. The introduction of domain experts such as Atsushi Honma and Koji Nakata into the fiction narrative effectively authenticated the opinions on wine given by the authors. This also helps to explain how a manga could exert such a powerful influence on wine sales and the fortunes of wine producers.

Much has been written on how FASP influences the lives and habits of readers, notably with regard to career choices. Perhaps some readers pursue careers in espionage because Ian Fleming makes it so appealing, but there must be many more readers who
decided to order a martini shaken rather than stirred or a bottle of Bollinger Champagne, because that is what James Bond would have done. When the professional milieu is presented in a convincing and attractive manner—something that depends largely on language and representation—the ability to influence the lives and choices of readers increases. In contemporary parlance, fictional characters—even those in a wine manga—can become influencers. Perhaps a manga like *The Drops of God* exerts an even greater measure of control over readers because, though it can be read purely for pleasure, it is a *kyoyo* (educational) manga with the stated goal of offering guidance.

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NOTES

1. English for Specific or Specialized Purposes.
2. References are given for the volume and page number of the Japanese edition of the manga, published in forty-four volumes between 2004 and 2014.
3. We maintain the tradition of saying “1st growth” for Bordeaux and reserve the term “1er cru” in English for Burgundies.
4. Kevin Zraly’s Windows on the World: Complete Wine Course is a popular, standard text for beginners that follows the carrot-and-stick approach to wine education. “In keeping with my original philosophy,” Zraly declares, “I’ve tried to make learning about this great world of wine as fun and as simple as possible” (2009: x). The contents are so elementary, claims the author, the book proposal was initially rejected by numerous publishers on the grounds that it was too simplistic. Although Zraly’s intention is doubtless to put nervous wine novices at ease, it would be a stretch to call a book “simple” when it is packed with lengthy lists of wine regions and producers, essential vocabulary, statistics and comparative tasting drills. Furthermore, each of the ten chapters ends with a twenty-five-question quiz. Learning about wine may be fun, but mastery of the contents of this text require concerted effort.
5. In serial form, The Drops of God first appeared in 2004, but my edition of the first of the forty-four bound volumes was printed in 2013 and the appendix contains tasting notes for the 2001 Château Mont-Perat. The authors, Shin and Yuka Kibayashi, the illustrator Shu Okimoto and an unnamed editor revisited the 2001 wine which was featured in the inaugural manga. In 2004 the wine’s popularity exploded, and nine years later the manga creators were offering
complementary bottles to fifty lucky readers. Château Mont-Perat’s winemaker is introduced in the appendix to the third volume and in the fourth the wine receives another mention (37). In volume twenty-seven, one of the regular characters who offers wine recommendations, the sommelier Shiro Fujieda, recalls serving the wine to Shizuku and immediately realizing the importance of finding good wines at low prices (154).

6. One of the reasons that Campatelli agreed to participate in this volume of The Drops of God must have been the desire for positive media coverage of Brunello di Montalcino. In a 2011 interview published online, he was questioned about his “successful prosecution” in 2010 for complicity in the sale of adulterated Brunello di Montalcino. The investigation focused on the 2003 vintage, with 6.7 million liters of wine and 400 hectares of vines confiscated. By law, Brunello di Montalcino can only be made with Sangiovese grapes, but 2008 investigations of thirteen wineries found irregularities suggesting that other grapes had been used—in some cases in amounts up to twenty percent—and there were rumors of trucks from southern Italy arriving in the middle of the night bearing cheap fruit (Sonkin, 2008). In this interview, Campatelli said hopefully: “Everything is finished and I am trying to forget this matter. No kind of conspiracy to cheat was found, and the board of the Consorzio and the members of the Consorzio trust in me, otherwise I wouldn’t be here now” (“Interview”, 2011). By coincidence, the publication dates of both the manga offering praise for Brunello di Montalcino (and featuring Campatelli as a character) and the incendiary interview were the same: 23 June 2011.

ABSTRACTS

This paper claims that the authors of the Japanese wine manga The Drops of God were able to create a convincing professional world by using real-life domain experts as fictional characters. In fiction, the device known as metalepsis involves either the illusion of a character entering our world or the introduction of real people into the narrative. The Drops of God features metaleptic movements in both directions. This paper builds upon previous FASP research which has shown that specialized genre fiction is marked by the use of distinct, specialized vocabulary and knowledge, and the presence of domain experts. These features make the professional world that is depicted seem real, thereby enhancing readerly satisfaction. While the experts in The Drops of God use wine language and terminology correctly, the hero of the manga is not a domain specialist but an iconoclast who breaks most of the rules governing the correct use of winespeak and wine appreciation. It is argued in the paper that the metaleptic incursions by real-life domain experts and fictional characters, along with the complex, contradictory attitudes expressed about domain expertise—particularly winespeak—combined to make the manga a powerful tool for wine advertising.

Cet article affirme que les auteurs des Gouttes de Dieu, un manga japonais sur le vin, ont réussi à créer un monde professionnel convaincant en utilisant comme personnages de fiction des experts du domaine existant dans la vie réelle. Dans la fiction, le dispositif connu sous le nom de métalepsis implique soit l’incursion d’un personnage fictif dans notre monde, soit l’introduction de personnes réelles dans le récit. Le manga Les Gouttes de Dieu présente des mouvements métaleptiques dans les deux sens. Cet article s’appuie sur des recherches antérieures concernant la FASP ayant montré que le genre des fictions spécialisées est marqué par l’utilisation d’un vocabulaire et de connaissances distincts et spécifiques, ainsi que par la présence d’experts du
domaine. Ces caractéristiques donnent l'impression que le monde professionnel dépeint est réel, ce qui accroît le plaisir du lecteur. Alors que les experts, dans Les Gouttes de Dieu, utilisent correctement la langue et la terminologie du vin, le héros du manga n'est pas un spécialiste du domaine, mais un iconoclaste qui enfreint la plupart des règles régissant l'utilisation correcte de la langue du vin et de son appréciation. L'article soutient que les incursions métaleptiques d'experts réels et de personnages fictifs, ainsi que les attitudes complexes et contradictoires exprimées au sujet de l'expertise du domaine (en particulier la langue du vin), ont contribué à faire de ce manga un puissant outil de publicité pour le vin.

INDEX

**Keywords:** FASP, metalepsis, wine language, manga, wine advertising, wine marketing, Japanese wine culture

**Mots-clés:** FASP, métalepse, langue du vin, manga, publicité du vin, commercialisation du vin, culture œnologique japonaise

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