

## A Semiotic Analysis of Iconicity in Japanese Manner Posters

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### **Abstract:**

This capstone 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 capstone reveals how Japanese manner posters serve as communicative vehicles for commuters to follow rhetorical directives in public transportation sites. The purpose of this capstone is to reveal coded communication within the four posters that 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.

### **Article:**

"Design can be summed up with the following definition: a plan to improve living and society by applying the creative and imaginative powers of mankind as tools of betterment."

-Hideya Kawakita

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 capstone study 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 during my rural appointment as an English teacher. 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."

Japanese manner posters are defined in this capstone as commissioned artworks that include brief, textual lines of how to behave in crowded, public contexts. Japanese manner posters are commissioned by artists to promote culturally consented ways of nonverbally communicating with strangers who coexist in public transportation contexts. This capstone seeks to unpack a

cultural and semiotic code behind four selected Japanese manner posters from 1976 to 1982 commissioned by Japanese artist, Hideya Kawakita. Kawakita's work is specifically under scholarly attention because of his radically non-traditional way of creating posters as persuasion. When Japanese manner posters are analyzed diachronically, Kawakita's commissioned posters stand out as following a motivated semiotic code that infuses history, context, and culture.

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 capstone 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 capstone 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 capstone 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 artfully and rhetorically used as central signifiers 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.

Public transportation contexts are rich sites for communication analysis by the nature of fleeting people coming and going. Communication scholar Tim Simpson (2008) describes these transportation sites as non-places. He argues that "non-place" refers to an "in between" space where people often and temporarily transition through. It is precisely within such overlooked commonplaces or non-places where we discover a genuine reflection of a culture's connotation of politeness and rudeness. This capstone argues how the public may come to understand everyday colorful, entertaining, or bizarre texts as implicated in a more strategically motivated sign system.

Since this capstone 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. Specifically, the effects of a Western influence upon Japan described by Japanese artist and art theorist Takashi Murakami (2005) are brought to attention. Additionally, this capstone 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.

### *Historical Exigency*

Like the aforementioned research, it is important to identify the historical components that affected the Kawakita texts. Contemporary artist and art theorist, Takashi Murakami's (2005) argument behind the artistic and materialistic transitions from a post World War II Japan indicates why Japanese material culture looks a particular way. Murakami contends that the 1946 Peace Constitution influenced Japanese art and overall mindset. This Peace Constitution, or Peace Treaty, was a tangible result of World War II. Although the 1945 Peace Constitution was written on Japanese grounds, a contributing writer to Article 9 of the constitution was the American General Douglas MacArthur (Maraini, 1976; Murakami, 2005). In specific observations that Maraini (1976), Italian cultural anthropologist, took of General MacArthur, the American general is described as a tall, blue-eyed, swiftly moving and healing figure from the West who brought peace to the Japanese people at a time when they were positioned to need

such assistance. World War II history is critically important since Murakami (2005) theorizes that the sequence of events leading to the Peace Treaty had positioned Japan in an infantile or vulnerable state. This vulnerability affected Japan psychologically, economically, and physically. Such an infantile state of mind (Maraini, 1976; Murakami, 2005) provides insight into why Japan appropriated and readily accepted material culture from the West after World War II.

World War II and its immediate aftermath is the pivotal historical point where the content of Japanese material culture became more global. Although this transitional point became a symbolic gateway for global culture to make its way to Japan, modern day Japan continues to value the preservation of traditional Japanese arts. For example, a few of the arts that are traditional to Japan are *Noh* theatre, *kabuki* puppet shows, *sumi-e* brush painting, *ukiyo-e* wood block printing, and *ikebana* flower arranging. The sentiment by Murakami (2005) is that the rhetoric of Article 9, The Renunciation of War, which was the disarming of weaponry for the Japanese nation, had recognizable effects on the artistic forms in the country. Moreover, Murakami and Maraini's accounts help to shape a perspective of Japanese history. Such historic detail becomes critical when we start to question: Why are we seeing Western icons pop up in everyday Japanese 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.

American anthropologist, Ruth Benedict, comprehensively studied the cultural value of happiness in Japan. Benedict was hired by the United States government to analyze Japan during a war period. She is most known for her analysis on Japan at a distance as a means of depicting patterns within the culture. This analysis is an important layer for cracking the code behind manner posters because she offers an explanation to words such as *haji* (shame). In Benedict's

1946 book, *The Chrysanthemum and the Sword*, she explains a certain ideology called *haji no bunka*. This concept translates to culture of shame. *Haji no bunka* is criticized by Japanese scholars such as Takeo Doi (1973) for sounding inferior. However, *haji no bunka* is an integral way to understand perceived differences between Japan and the United States in a World War II context.

The idea of shame is brought to scholarly attention in this capstone because it addresses a perspective on the ideological differences in how different cultures might adjust or accommodate when around strangers. For instance, one may adjust or discipline one's self due to how he or she feels about the people within close proximity. Put a different way, the person holds an embedded value for caring about how other people might feel or think. In contrast to this way of thinking, a person may adjust or self discipline public behavior due to a self-fulfilling expectation. This means that a person will not act out in a rude or obnoxious way because this would violate one's own ethical code. The violation of one's own ethical code is described as an ideology of guilt culture (Benedict, 1946). The guilt culture conceptualization is I-centered, or perceives how "acting out on a train is not something I would do because it is not *my* character." Conversely, a "shame culture" conceptualization, or *haji no bunka*, is framed as other-centered, warranting that acting rudely on a train shouldn't be done because *other* people would notice and be affected.

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.

The reality that material culture is multi-layered from varied motivations leads to a question of how these objects are coded. French cultural anthropologist Claude Levi-Strauss described in his book, *Myth and Meaning: Cracking the Code of Culture* (1978), how a certain culture or speech community produces myths. Levi-Strauss (1978) and Roland Barthes (1957) both examine everyday objects and the myths those objects represent. In fact, Barthes conducts a detailed analysis of Japanese material culture in his book *Empire of Signs* (1982). The language propelling such cultural myths can be traced back to the people who use the objects. As semioticians Levi-Strauss and Barthes argue, cultural objects are embedded in codes.

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, it is important to note that this kind of appropriation, the East creatively signifying meanings with images from the West, is not out of maliciousness or manipulation. In other words, 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. Intertextuality, as Bulgarian-French semiotic theorist, Julia Kristeva (1980) argues, is a matter of understanding the process of structuration behind a text, rather than one single structure of a text. Kristeva further contends that every text and discourse depends on other prior codes and discourses. Therefore, in order to fully interpret the historical meanings behind manner posters, the readers must know at least some degree of background coding behind what kinds of people the characters in the posters are. 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?

Iconic people from the West are clearly visible in the texts of Japanese manner posters. However, in order to holistically understand the incorporation of western icons in Japanese manner posters, World War II must be acknowledged as a pivotal historical event. As contemporary artist and art theorist Takashi Murakami (2005) argues, the condition of Japan's cultural psyche had undergone a transition from a pre World War II to post-war context. Before World War II, Japanese art and subculture were fairly separated from the rest of the world. This kind of geographical isolation was preserved by Japan's political choice to withdraw from the League of Nations in the early 1930s. What becomes less acknowledged is how the period of withdrawal from the League of Nations had served a positive role for the country by preserving the traditional Japanese customs and art on the island.

While many traditional cultural values are still found in present-day Japan, it must be addressed how closed texts are important in maintaining such traditional cultural values. Italian semiotician Umberto Eco (1981) argues how a text functions as either *open* or *closed*, depending on how interpretable the text is to an audience. Open texts invite larger audiences to participate in multiple, free interpretations, while closed texts signify to select audiences who have a niche or exclusive knowledge with the intended meaning. Since Japanese commuters and international tourists read Japanese manner posters, they maintain a dual functionality of *closed* and *open* texts. For instance, a non-Japanese audience may look at manner posters as simply flashy, colorful pieces of artwork seen in Tokyo Metro transportation sites featuring movie stars from the West. In this regard, the texts fulfill an *open* status, since they are highly interpretable. The posters function as *closed* text when read by a typical Japanese commuter.

When considering how different audiences perceive manner posters as closed or open, it is necessary to consult other, native Japanese people who have encountered Japanese manner posters on the trains. In a Skype interview with Tomoyuki Sugano, a native from Osaka, Japan, he argued that manner posters are necessary for the "idiots" or "troublemakers" (2011, personal communication) who break the social code of being respectful passengers. Sugano's disclosure about the purpose of Japanese manner posters supports the idea that manner posters are *closed* texts for certain audiences. In other words, not everyone who rides public transportation in Japan is a "trouble maker" or "idiot."

In addition to Eco's (1981) concept of *open* and *closed* texts, 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 capstone:

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 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). To boldly counteract such social slips in behavior, 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. Since *The Seat Monopolizer* alludes to an already constructed, past tense meaning that society members should follow, this poster functions as what semiotician Roland Barthes (1974) argues as a readerly text. In other words, *The Seat Monopolizer* was not created for the open interpretation or the open writing from society members. The readerly text 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). While appropriation often assumes negative connotations with taking another culture’s signs, 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.

Bizarre humor is displayed in this poster as Adenoid Hynkel spreads his legs widely open, in a traditionally masculine pose, sending a clear message by taking up the majority of the poster. Hynkel's boots and uniform are also menacing. Conversely, the Jewish Barber character from *The Great Dictator* sits next to Adenoid Hynkel in a crossed legged, restricted, traditionally feminine pose. The Jewish Barber is in a little suit and bowtie and nearly cut off in the poster by Hynkel (Hitler) from the right and left.

In addition to historically bizarre jokes, another signifier is the presence of bold color. A red background grabs the attention of a quickly moving audience in similar ways that vintage movie posters did in the 1940s. The redness in this poster is a direct visual reference to the printing style of film posters from the 1930s and 1940s. Additionally, red was also the color used in Nazi flags in the 1940s. Vintage movie posters commonly used swaths of red, yellow, or blue by a silkscreen printing technique employed by The National Screen Service (NSS) from 1940 to 1984. During the time period of *The Great Dictator*, the NSS was the main trailer and movie making company in the United States (Street, 2009).

Kawakita provokes a powerful metaphor in a direct popular-culture reference for how people should not act in everyday public transportation contexts in Japan. The metaphor communicated in this poster relates to the everyday human characteristics of power hunger, selfishness, and needless invasion personified in Adolf Hitler's face. Hideya Kawakita's motivation is that there are everyday Adolf Hitlers, or those who unnecessarily opt to invade larger amounts of space on trains and busses in Japan. This kind of referencing to Hitler's invasion of neighboring space through the appropriation of *The Great Dictator* serves as a reminder of the time when dictatorial powers in Germany invaded a neighboring Poland, among other cultures. The iconicity of a notorious German dictator fulfills the evocative purpose of resembling a certain reality more closely (Peirce, 1931). The reality of triggering a semantic memory of Hitler without using a real photograph achieves a highly stylistic choice by the artist. The representation of Hitler in the form of a movie poster is stronger than a genuine photograph of Hitler. A real photograph of Adolf Hitler would have not been acceptable as a public poster even in Japan.

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).

The intertextuality of signifiers in this poster leads the audience of passengers in Japan to a curious question: Is showing a character that looks like Adolf Hitler appropriate? Or, would the representation of Adolf Hitler in *The Seat Monopolizer* be going "too far" for everyday bus and train riders? The degree of going "too far" depends on the audience's contextual relationship with the textual characters displayed. The meaning of *The Seat Monopolizer* may resonate different emotions for different audiences. Different emotional responses allude to the polysemous quality of this poster.

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.

While multiple emotions are evoked when looking at this poster, facework is largely at play. The emotions of who is powerful and who is un-powerful are displayed through the poster character's facial expressions. In everyday commuting contexts, passengers rely on reading the faces of other commuters in order to decipher if a seat is open or closed. In fact, finding a seat on a bus or train constitutes an everyday source of conflict for people who commute to and from work. As Oetzel and Ting-Toomey (2003) mention, facework is a way to avoid conflicts in certain cultures. The ability to non-verbally communicate with fellow passengers in public transportation contexts further contributes to a whole life quality (Doh & Inoguchi, 2009) of a person in East Asian cultures. Nonverbal communication through manner posters helps preserve graceful face among passengers by not having to verbally disturb or ask questions to anyone such as: "Excuse me, could you move your shopping bags so I can sit down?"

### *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).

The global, popular cultural mixing displayed in *Mary is Tired* is similarly found in Darling-Wolf's (2011) textual analysis of Japanese *Non-No* magazines. According to Shueisha Incorporated's (2012) public records, *Non-No* magazines have been in circulation in Japan since 1971. As Darling-Wolf argued, Japanese *Non-No* magazines symbolically locate Japan as a powerful player on the global popular cultural scene. *Non-No* magazines are Japanese periodicals that showcase the latest trends and fashions for teenage male and female audiences. For example, in the US, a popular magazine for women is *Vogue*. The American concept of *Vogue* magazine is comparable to the Japanese concept of a *Non-No* magazine. *Non-No* magazines commonly mix foreign fashion styles into the front covers that feature Japanese models. Similar

to *Non-No* magazines, Japanese manner posters create a position that declares a worldly presence and competence on the global playing field, both artistically and communicatively.

The female model in this poster nonverbally communicates the emotion of tiredness to the passive viewer. When an audience recognizes that this image is derived from a religious concept, the viewer encounters what Woodward (2007) defines as a chain of signifiers or a layering of signified meanings. Additionally, Kawakita employs pithy text in the brief one-liner, “Mary is Tired.” This single line of text is an indirect implication that women who take on the labor of child caring and rearing are all tired. In *Mary is Tired*, womanhood becomes a symbol that is respected in context, since the message of this poster suggests that passengers offer up their seats to pregnant-looking women or women with young children. The unstated cultural norm behind *Mary is Tired* is that passengers in Japan ought to be nonverbally astute and mindful enough to notice when legitimately tired women need seats more so than those who are not pregnant or without small children.

In the immediate context of a crowded train or bus that only has standing room available, the space becomes a place where various non-verbal communicative decisions are made. Decisions over who has the right to sit down and who doesn’t become culturally constructed expectations in Japan. The rationale behind *Mary is Tired* is that women who take on the role of mother deserve relaxation, comfort, and peace of mind more so than people who are not pregnant or without small children. The unspoken but implicated cultural value behind this Japanese manner poster alludes to a positive valence for traditional gender roles of mothers and the youthful innocence of children.

In addition to the signified messages in *Mary is Tired*, the individual signifiers must be addressed in order to understand the poster’s unique code. Almost immediately, pathos is evoked by a visual appeal to cuteness (Kawakita, 2008). While “cuteness” is decided within the eye of the beholder, it is important to realize that the East and West can have different perceptions of what is cute. Cuteness is exercised in this poster and used to gain a sympathetic appeal from everyday commuters who are passive viewers. Not only are cute babies given seats on buses and trains, cute children and women are rhetorically used in advertisements and other mass media in East Asia to circulate a desired behavior, such as purchasing a product or watching a television show (Chingching & Hairong, 2010).

Another signifier in this poster is Kawakita’s sense of humor. When the viewer first encounters the manner poster, *Mary is Tired*, she may quickly recognize the Virgin Mary as a religious icon. The artist changes the traditionally dominant representation of the *Madonna and Child* iconicity by incorporating a Japanese baby Jesus. In the classical painting, *Madonna dell Granduca*, baby Jesus is depicted as Caucasian with white-appearing skin. However, Kawakita decides to throw these historical rules away. In other words, he uses Biblical norms and the assumed global knowledge of icons to his advantage as means of coding on a vertical axis (Kristeva, 1980). Julia Kristeva discusses how a vertical axis of codes depends on the layers of different meanings found in a single sign over time. Once one meaning becomes unlocked within a sign, the viewer is able to unlock even more meanings within a single sign that exist across a diachronic stage of time. In order to get the semiotic joke in *Mary is Tired*, the audience must know background information or background coding about Christianity. The vertical axis of code is evident in *Mary is Tired* since it implies for the passive viewer to remember referents from Christian religion (Mary and Jesus). 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. One difference in Kawakita's appropriated version of Raphael's *Madonna dell'Granduca* is his choice of background. The audience experiences a pop of color from the backdrop of stained glass behind *Mary is Tired*. The bold colors that stand out in the stained glass of Figure 1.3 (see Appendix) are highly motivated choices, solidifying a connection for the audience between the icons and a worldly religious orientation (Christianity). 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.

The newly created signifiers in the appropriated version of Raphael's original painting must be addressed as layers to the coded message in *Mary is Tired*. Kawakita's postmodern style of bending the rules brings up more questions for commuters who passively view this manner poster. Who truly knows the race and ethnicity of widely known Biblical icons, such as Mary and Christ? How would someone know if he or she thought that it was known? Whether the Blessed Mother, also known as the Mother of God, or Virgin Mary was Asian, African or European, the greater message of motherhood is symbolically respected and understood around the world. Having a hanging reminder of what is right or wrong in crowded contexts might seem pedantic. However, manner posters remind people to consider taken for granted other-oriented actions, just in case they are in such a hurry and forget.

The reading of mothers' and children's faces is important when quickly moving audiences distinguish who needs a seat or not. Face negotiation theory works discursively on buses and trains as the desire to attain a good face encourages those who are not pregnant or without small children to give up their seats to women. If passengers do not readily offer their seat to someone who is in more of a visible need, then this passenger would subsequently put his or her own face at risk. In other words, not doing the right thing when in the watchful eye of the public would be highly frowned upon. Not doing the right thing in Japanese contexts reach a different level because from my observations, people care deeply about how others think about them. The mindless passenger would be perceived as selfish and not cooperative with society at large in Japan.

This healthy negotiation of one's outside or public face, known as *tatemae* in Japanese, reinforces a cultural value of happiness in Japan. The opposite of *tatemae* is to act in purely self-interested ways. However, what is important is that the negotiation of face, or *tatemae* is what holds crowded society members together in helpful and respectful ways. The signified concept behind *Mary is Tired* works to preserve a less stressful environment for mothers. Optimistically, most passengers are universally able to empathize or at least sympathize with the role or labor of a mother. The universal symbol of the mother is recognized, respected, and therefore, naturally expected as a worthy enough figure to sit before others.

### *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. These hours are designated as rush hour times, which are the times when the largest amount of people use the public transportation systems in Japanese cities. 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*. In this poster, Kawakita uses a famous American actor and popular magazine cover, LIFE, from another culture to give this sign a new meaning in the appropriation process. 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.

Although John Wayne is speculated to have died from stomach cancer from smoking cigarettes in 1979, Wayne's famous face is used to advocate a cultural message about second hand smoke in public places. The implication behind the message in *Time for No Smoking* is that the general public is uncomfortable with second hand smoke or smoking during "unwritten" hours. *Time for No Smoking* was made street public in 1982, six years after John Wayne's last movie, *The Shootist*, in 1976. It is no coincidence that after *The Shootist*, the John Wayne in *Time for No Smoking* includes a gun in the picture as part of a motivated framework of humor in Kawakita's *Time for No Smoking*. In the original image from Figure 1.6 (see Appendix), there is no gun in the image. However, as Kawakita's appropriation shows in Figure 1.5 (see Appendix), the artist intentionally adds a gun to this manner poster. Even though the appropriated John Wayne holds a water gun to put out a cigarette butt, the passive viewer quickly sees the general shape of a gun. The combination of (the shape of) a gun, a cowboy hat, and Western male cowboy face creates a stronger image for persuasion for the Japanese viewer.

The main goal of this poster is to communicate that smoking around crowds of people is inappropriate. It encourages people to put out their cigarette butts during rush hours. As a micro-signifier, the gun sparks attention since Japan has a zero tolerance policy on the possession of guns by the lay public. However, in close observation of Figure 1.5 (see Appendix), the gun is not a real pistol. In fact, the gun in *Time for No Smoking* is a small water gun shooting out a cigarette with water. Kawakita's (2008) reoccurring bizarre choice in humor sets up a semiotic joke for an audience that is expected to be knowledgeable of foreign films from the West. The artist strategically manipulates the gun as a micro signifier to serve a newly created signifier. 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 "Non-smoking" 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 desert-like terrain is portrayed in Figure 1.5 (see Appendix), giving *Time for No Smoking* a more holistic "cowboy" context.

Public health researchers Honjo and Kawachi (2000) support the written rule in *Time for No Smoking*. Honjo and Kawachi claim that market pressure from the United States in the 1970s and 1980s caused an increased use of tobacco and sales in Japan. Furthermore, Honjo and Kawachi (2000) discuss how the 1970s and 1980s reached a prominent stage in tobacco sales due to the United States attempting to open American tobacco into the Japanese market. By 1982 in Japan, the use of tobacco as an export from the United States, as well as locally, affected smoking behavior in Japan. Therefore, the motivation behind *Time for No Smoking* creates another layer of meaning. The increase of tobacco use during the 1970s and 1980s in Japan signifies a higher motivation to stress the importance of mindful smoking habits in public areas.

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. Some people assume that it goes without saying that passengers on public transportation would have their tickets ready to go and in clear view for the authority's check. However, such a signifier is regarded as necessary in the 1970s-1980s economic times.

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. Again, some audiences in non-Japanese cultures might find such a signified message to be common sense or already understood in one's daily commuting behavior. However, it is with motivated reason why Hideya Kawakita and The Tokyo Transit Authority make such cultural norms publicly knowable through poster art. Another reason why everyday public manners were made explicit through poster art is due to an increase in economic revenue in Japan in the 1970s and 1980s. The fear that national campaigning organizations such as AC Japan and The Tokyo Transit Authority had was that because of an upward mobility in economic activity, that people were simply forgetting their manners.

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*. The meaning of positioning the hand inside of one’s jacket is debated to be the secret sign of membership to the Freemason society. Again, the reoccurring theme of clever humor is displayed in Kawakita’s artwork for this poster. The joke in *Clearly Show Your Train Pass* is that the pose of Napoleon Bonaparte’s hand in his jacket is one of his most well known gestures that is often imitated by many people. For example, the notorious brotherhood-like fraternity of Freemason figures such as George Washington, Karl Marx, and Napoleon Bonaparte were often photographed with one hand resting inside of a jacket. While this positioning of the hand in Figure 1.8 (see Appendix) might signify a specific meaning of Freemasonry in one culture, the newly positioned hand in Figure 1.7 (see Appendix) signifies the polite and orderly preparation of showing one’s 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. In other words, commuters in Japan are expected to look out for one another and care about any minute level of possible disturbance or annoyance that is inflicted upon others.

## 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 aftermath of World War II opened a gateway for global



popular culture material to be appropriated by Japan. In the case of manner posters, global themes and icons were artistically used for the function of preserving a harmonious social order.

Considering the specific functions of individual posters, the message in *Mary is Tired* fulfills the function of enabling more polite and civil cooperation of people for the sake of revered motherhood and childhood. Conversely, in *Clearly Show Your Train Pass*, the function or signification of the poster is similar to the function of London transportation posters from the 1940s. It is critical to note that in 1978, *Clearly Show Your Train Pass*'s debut was not during a major war period in Japan. Although *Clearly Show Your Train Pass* was published in a peaceful period in Japan, The Tokyo Transit Authority still administered the message to be extra cautious when commuting through train stations in a 1978 Japan. The signification behind *Clearly Show Your Train Pass* is for the everyday passenger to be clearly organized in both mind and body to prevent other passengers from waiting. The similarity between British (London) transportation posters and Japanese (Tokyo) manner posters supports a shared notion of safety as a highly regarded cultural value of the British and Japanese people.

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, at the present date of this study, Kawakita no longer designs manner posters for the Tokyo Transit Authority. Therefore, 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 iconicity in ways that vintage manner posters did, the messages about cultural values remain salient. For example, whether an audience encounters a Japanese manner poster in 1974 or 2012, the core value laden messages such as "No smoking during rush hours," "Give your seat to mothers with children," "Be mindful of not taking up too much room on the seats," and "Have your ticket read to enter and exit" do not change.

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. Despite Japanese manner posters' powerful ability to promote polite and mindful behavior of commuters, these scripted suggestions are highly subjective. 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 manner beholder.

Since manners are nonverbally communicated in public spaces, new questions emerge for multicultural audiences. For example, if one would like to take his or her time in public while holding up a line of passengers, or occupy the spaces for four train seats of people with shopping bags, then would this be one's own autonomous choice? Another example considers if people should be "free" to eat a hamburger while talking on the phone loudly and holding up the ticket line if they choose? Similarly, if one would like to smoke freely in the direct presence of others, then shouldn't that person be able to exercise that liberty? On the other hand, this study benefits the fostering of globally minded, civilly cooperative citizens. Moreover, audiences who travel to Japan or other countries can be more keenly aware of why seemingly bizarre forms of material culture look the way they do. Specifically, knowledge about cultural norms is helpful for study abroad students or visiting scholars. One example

of how a semiotic analysis benefits study abroad students is during inevitable “cultural surprises.” For instance, surprises in Japanese public transportation sites could be avoided in the context where local Japanese passengers start offering their seats to “pregnant looking” foreign women.

In addition to buffering inevitable cultural surprises, the mere existence of manner posters in Japan indicates a high level of respect for others. While the concept of manner posters is not unique to Japan, the evidence of other-orientation that is communicated through the posters indicates something specific to Japan. This kind of consciousness is positive and helps to alleviate stress in cities that experience crowding in public transportation sites. Even in public places, an overall respect for the happiness of others is discursively displayed through the messages found in Japanese manner posters. The chosen posters assist a quickly moving society in a productive form of nonverbal communication that relies on facework. Without the reading of other bodies and faces in public, passengers are not able to effectively determine who is annoyed or who needs a seat. Importantly, other orientation is a traditional cultural value in Japan revealed through a close reading of the four posters. Facework and happiness become inextricably linked to preserving a working harmony in crowded Japanese cities.

This capstone opens a conversation about less noticed forms of rhetorical directives in Japan. These commonly overlooked artifacts provide directions for everyday commuters in Japan. However, there are limitations to this study that should be addressed in the future. Questions of appropriateness by poster artist Hideya Kawakita and his choices should be addressed more explicitly. This study does not fully consider the possibility that Kawakita’s artistic choices could become highly offensive to specific demographics of people such as Jewish or Catholic audiences.

As this study demonstrates, the intersection of semiotic and intercultural communication should continue to be meaningfully fused together. This type of analysis exposes a way of extracting cultural value orientations that are embedded in everyday artifacts. Another future question for intercultural and semiotic communication researchers might ask how macro level societies other than Japan communicate their own unique value orientations through semiotically positioned objects. Posters serve as just one nonverbal form for textual analysis. Not only can this kind of communication research identify how *objects* communicate cultural values, but how these artifacts even come into ontological existence.

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APPENDIX



Figure 1.1. “The Seat Monopolizer”  
by H. Kawakita, 1976, *Original!*  
*Japanese manner posters.* © 2008  
by Graphicsha Company.



Figure 1.2. “The Great Dictator”  
1940 Copyright, THE GREAT  
DICTATOR © Roy Export  
S.A.S.

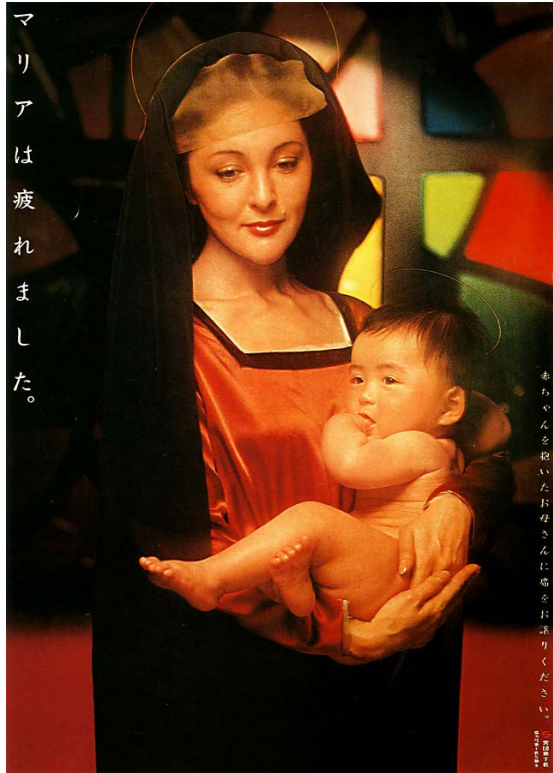


Figure 1.3. “Mary is Tired” by H. Kawakita, 1977, *Original! Japanese manner posters*. © 2008 by Graphicsha Company.



Figure 1.4. *Madonna dell'Granduca*, 1505 by R. Sanzio da Urbino.



Figure 1.5. “Time for No Smoking”  
by H. Kawakita, 1982, *Original! Japanese  
manner posters*. © 2008 by  
Graphicsha Company.



Figure 1.6. “After a Bout with Cancer”  
1965 *Life Magazine*.





Figure 1.7. “Clearly show your train pass”  
by H. Kawakita, 1978, *Original!*  
*Japanese manner posters.* © 2008 by  
Graphicsha Company.



Figure 1.8. “Napoleon Bonaparte in  
His Study at the Tuileries”  
1812 by Jacques-Louis David.