

### Critique of Loren Hinton and Xin Wang's Project

The first ten pages of the series were able to accomplish the stated goal of the authors, which are to establish the stereotypes of the various colleges and to entertain the readers. The series presents the Claremont Colleges in a light-hearted manner, placing them in a competitive game that also points out the stereotypes of genres of manga. In these first ten pages, the authors were able to establish the stereotypes that were associated with each Claremont College and poked fun at it while pointing out the falseness of these perceptions on several occasions. As a series using characters from other series, it was able to incorporate scenes and lines that were easily understood by fans of the other series, successfully creating scenes that bring out the reader's laughter without much background. As an entertainment piece, it was largely successful, though it did have some pitfalls.

The series was able to successfully establish the stereotypes of the various colleges in the first ten pages. This was accomplished by using pre-existing characters from other popular manga series that exemplify the stereotypes of each of the Claremont Colleges. Since these characters were already displaying the stereotypes, there was no need to waste time or space to characterize the participants of the game. The stereotypes of the manga genres were also introduced in a similar method, with the most prevalent tropes presented as challenges that the participants must compete in. By dividing the character along the line of the sports teams in the Claremont Colleges, the connection between the characters and colleges are again solidified.

At the same time that the authors were setting up the stereotypes, they were also breaking them down by poking fun at them. The authors parodied familiar tropes by playing with the reader's expectations, by depicting events that rarely shown in these situations. For example, in the love confession scene, the first panel set up a romantic atmosphere, but this was upended when the following panels in which the girl was harshly rejected. The love confession scene is a trope of shojo, yet few series depicts a scenario where the girl is harshly rejected. The authors also did the same for the stereotypes of the college students. Although Melvin, who represents Harvey Mudd, is supposedly a nerd who cannot get a girlfriend, he was the only one in work

shown to be in a relationship. Scenes such as these reject the notion that the stereotypes fit the students of the college.

As a piece of work using characters from other series, the work did a great job of alluding to those series as a shout-out for readers that are familiar with them. For example, in the strip called “Dance with Me,” Mai’s dialogue was an actual line from the series. This adds to the humor of the scene for the reader who knows the original context the line was used in. The piece also incorporated the activities of the fan base of these series. In scenes where Osaka rescues Light, who represents Pomona, there were members of a fan club next to Light. People who do not understand the culture of the fans would not understand that these “fangirls” were fantasizing Light in a relationship with L, Light’s arch-rival. This scene will be richer for the reader who understands this connection and know that the fan club is actually there as a form of mental “torture” for Light.

Although the incorporation of these characters into the story is one of the strong points of the story, it is also one of the pitfalls for the work. By using these characters, the author inevitably brings in all aspects of the characters’ personalities into the story, even the ones that the author may not have intended to associate with the college students. For example, by having Light representing Pomona, the authors probably did not intend to suggest that Pomona students are sociopaths who are bent on taking over the world like Light is. This however, may be perceived by readers initially, especially if they are only familiar with Light but not the Pomona students.

The choice of the colleges and/or the series is another weakness of the work. Readers not familiar with Claremont Colleges or the manga series the characters are from would not be able to enjoy the series as much as readers who do. In choosing these topics, the authors severely limited the number of readers who would fully enjoy the work. However, this is the case with anything that chooses to focus on a specific subject and is unavoidable.

The short length of the work creates an overall larger weakness in terms of the storyline. As there is only ten pages, the authors did not spend any time setting up the storyline or

explaining for the challenges. The authors did include a “note to reader” at the beginning of the work that explained the storyline. However, if a reader immediately read the manga without the preface, he or she would be completely lost as the reader would be unsure of the story’s context. The confusion would distract the reader from the humor of the pieces, rendering it ineffective in terms of humor and plotline per the authors’ intent.

Another shortcoming of the piece is lack of consistency in some of the scenes. For example, in the first scene, Light changed clothes in between two consecutive panels. Although it may not appear to be a big deal, it is actually quite jarring to the reader. The change in clothing would cue the reader to deduce that enough time has passed in between the panels for Light to change clothing. This disrupts the comprehension of the storyline and interferes with the enjoyment of the piece. Another artistic shortcoming of the series is the change in the style of the depiction of the characters, which is also distracting, though to a lesser degree. Characters may be drawn differently in between scenes, leading to confusion. As the artist was an amateur however, this inconsistency in depiction is understandable. On the other hand, the instances when the artist changed style intentionally, such as the rendering of the supplementary scenes in chibi (from “little people” in Japanese), the style change added to the humor of the piece. It also makes the violent action of the characters, such as the flying kick observed in the last scene, more acceptable. As the chibi style depicts the characters as children-like figures, and children are inherently not perceived to be violent, the violence appears to be toned down and the action becomes more humorous to the reader.

While these shortcomings are present in the work, it succeeded for the most part in its goals of depicting stereotypes of Claremont College students and entertaining the readers. The light-hearted depictions of the characters, stereotypes and their actions were able to draw laughter from me on multiple occasions. The incorporation of the characters from other series added another layer to the story, allowing those that are familiar with those series to read into a different layer of humor. Although an introduction and explanation of the storyline and consistency in art

style is needed, the piece can be considered as a fairly successful piece of work that managed to accomplish the goals that its authors intend to reach.