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Final Project Reflection

In Jasmine Sloan's debut manga, "Your Everyday Shojo Manga" she utilizes the character and plot tropes often found in shojo manga and satirizes them by combining them in exaggerated and nonsensical ways. While the idea itself is not entirely new and was partly inspired by comedy mangas like *Gekkan Shojo Nozaki-kun* and *SKET-dance*, the way in which it combined numerous tropes for an unpredictable outcome was quite original.

For example, the female protagonist running to school with toast in her mouth and then bumping into a love interest, is a trope that is now almost solely used in a way to poke fun at the ridiculous situation. Examples of ways this situation is used comedically is the male protagonist will run around with the toast in his mouth and bump into the female love interest or a girl will run to school with toast in her mouth hoping to run into her crush, which doesn't happen. With knowledge of how this trope has been used in other manga's (both seriously and for comedic effect), Sloan combined it with another trope in order to led to a more unexpected outcome. The trope this is paired with is when the protagonist loses an item of great importance to them, and the love interest finds it and returns it to them. In this situation, the lost item of great importance was the toast the heroine dropped on the way to school. Many shojo manga tropes revolve around a romanticized idea of fate. The love interest happens to bump into the protagonist, or they happen to have come across the lost item, but when these chance encounters are added one onto another in becomes a totally ridiculous fantasy.

In this manga there was also a special attention paid to the balance of art and text. The visual language of shojo manga is part of what sets it apart from other demographics like josei or shonen. This manga utilizes the traditional shojo imagery, of flowers, sparkles, large eyes, and skinny bodies to truly capture the feeling of a shojo manga. A great amount of detail was put into the art of the manga, ranging from the creating complex and engaging panel layouts, to adding various backgrounds and effects that correspond to each character. This attention to quality of artwork is contrasted by the narration and dialogues, which are meant to evoke ridicule or laughter through their ridiculousness and convivence of the storyline (for example a character being included just to make the heroine look better). This combination of shojo visual imagery with comedic use of shojo tropes, is something not typically done in most comedy mangas. Instead, they adapt the tropes to a more simplified style, like the yonkoma. By using the yonkoma style, which is typically used for comedy manga, there is less of a disconnect when reading—we know we are reading a comedy about shojo manga, not a shojo manga. However, in this manga there is a sense of confusion as the images resemble shojo manga and some of the tropes are utilized, but the way the story unfolds is nothing like typical shojo manga.

Most of the humor in this manga stems from the disconnect between the image that is presented and the thoughts and dialogue that accompany it; however, there are some spots where the dialogue, although attempting to be nonsensical, could be better written. Better written, meaning doing a better job to characterize the speaker and more clearly indicating the trope that they fall under, which would allow the text to have even more of an impact. In the manga, it also sometimes feels as though the images and text do not flow well together, in the way that there is not much comedy or substance in certain parts of the work, which just feel like out of place filler.

While the idea of making fun of shojo tropes, by using them in ridiculous ways is not a new idea, the way this manga approached it was unique. By using the typical style of shojo (and in some ways overdoing it) there is a sense of confusion between the art style and the situation that it depicts, which adds to the comedic effect of the already ridiculous combination of events. There will be certain elements of humor found in the small details of the work that may not be picked up by those who do not read much shojo manga, but there will still be other elements they enjoy (hopefully!).