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Manga as a Political Battlefield: Mizuki Shigeru's Graphic Narratives of the War

Mizuki Shigeru, a renowned creator of preternatural *yōkai* manga, is also well-known for war manga based on his experience of the Asia-Pacific War. Drafted as a Japanese Imperial soldier, he fought and lost his arm during the US air raid. While Nakazawa's *Barefoot Gen* narrates the tragedy of Hiroshima from the author's six-year-old alter ego, war veteran Mizuki's manga writes of what it was like to be a "minion" of Japanese imperialism at the front-line in the South Pacific. In his "re-narration" of the past war, Mizuki interlaces his wartime memory, graphic imageries of atrocities by the Japanese forces, and cartoony depictions of soldiers and historical figures with commentary supplemented by the enhanced knowledge about the war. This paper examines the varied ways in which Mizuki re-writes the master narrative about WWII in his war manga against both the dominant narratives of victimhood and the neo-nationalist revisionism in contemporary Japan.