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Towards Activism of Pleasure: Possibilities of Yaoi As a Productive Queer Forum

Yaoi genre that consists of male-male homosexual comics (*manga*) and illustrated novels created by women for women in Japan has a history of nearly 40 years. My critical examination of *yaoi* starts with the premise that *yaoi* does not represent any person's reality, but rather is a battlefield where straight, lesbian, and other women's desires and political stakes clash and where representations are born. This paper will examine the complex ways in which this battlefield operates, through the representations of beautiful male characters, as a forum or community of women by showing first, how it functions as, first, a "virtual lesbian" space and, second, as an effective political arena with the potential for queer activism. In the age when *yaoi* has been spreading to many countries and transcultural communication has been increasingly happening, this paper argues for the urgency of theorizing *yaoi* as a productive queer forum.