

I Failed at Cooking Again: Representation of Womanhood and Motherhood in the Action-comedy Anime *SPYxFAMILY*

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Abstract

This paper examines the portrayal of mother and wife identities in the action-comedy anime *SPYxFAMILY* (Akifumi, 2022; 2023), using the frameworks of stylization and positioning (Davies and Harré, 1990). I focus on a main female character, Yor Forger, and how she is positioned in select episodes where these roles are foregrounded for her. In the anime, characters adopt various social identities to achieve certain social practices. Findings reveal that Yor's identities as mother and wife are both reflexively and interactively positioned, where she consciously embraces both roles despite her non-normative profession (i.e., an assassin); Yor maintains her speech style and her consistent efforts to become a better wife and mother to Loid and Anya. Yor's characterization also aligns with the societal norms of what is expected of a wife and mother, despite the flaws which are presented to the audience. These expectations in turn reflect the social practice of how women and femininity are portrayed and expressed in the frame of the fictional world in which the anime is set in and how that still has to resonate with what the consumers of anime know about gender expectations in Japanese society.

Key words: positioning, anime, motherhood, womanhood, performativity

1 Introduction

This paper examines how the identities of mother and wife in the action-comedy anime *SPYxFAMILY* (Akifumi, 2022; 2023) are portrayed via stylization and positioning (Davies & Harré, 1990). I focus on one of the main female characters, Yor Forger, in select episodes where Yor's role as wife and/or mother in the show is foregrounded. The anime was very well-received when it first aired in 2022 and its popularity can be attributed to the characters in the show. Apart from being a wife and a mother, Yor also has an additional hidden identity (an assassin) and therefore is also able to fight. However, Yor's identity as an assassin is not known to the other characters (except the audience and another character who is a telepath). In the episodes, Yor is mostly seen performing the duties of wife and mother and occasionally her tasks as an assassin. However, Yor also utilizes her speed and agility as an assassin to her advantage when she is in a pinch when completing her wife or mother duties. By analyzing Yor's interactions with other characters and how she is positioned as mother/wife in different episodes and scenes, I hope to shed light on how femininity and women are portrayed in a fictional world that resonates with a general audience.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Women, Motherhood and Childrearing in Japanese Society

The traditional ideology of *ryōsai kenbo* (good wife, wise mother), which appeared in the second half of the 19th century, was used to justify why men were tasked with the responsibility of taking

up jobs while women were tasked with staying at home to take care of children and the household (Koyama, 2012). This ideology is still present in postwar Japan and has similar qualities which resonate with modern western societies (Sakamoto, 2014). The Japanese society is still heavily patriarchal, where highly gendered practices in the workplace and at home are still in place (Yu and Kuo, 2018). In other words, once a woman gets married, pressure is placed on her to conceive and she will become a stay-home mother in order to care for her child. If she is currently employed, it will be difficult for her to split her time between providing ample care for her child and her job, so mothers will eventually give up on their careers (Tendo & Takahashi, 2021). This is still a decision made by many women despite the fact that most large firms in Japan have parental leave policies in place (Mun and Brinton, 2015). Yet, many women end up not utilizing that parental leave and instead leave the workforce entirely after their firstborn. As such, gender inequality becomes more prominent in both the marriage and family spheres in Japan - more so than in western countries (Yu & Kuo, 2018).

As such, it is of no surprise that the default narrative in childcare and childrearing places emphasis on the child, as well as the mother's role in nurturing the child within the private sphere (Tendo & Takahashi, 2021). Tendo and Takahashi (2021) discussed the discourse behind parenting magazines, where the most popular magazines in the second half of the 1900s emphasized specific knowledge explained by health professions. In the 1990s, there was a shift from specific to more generic, commonsense knowledge which focused on the emotional sides to being a mother. This trajectory continued until the early 2000s, where discourse shifted once again to focus on the role of fathers within the childrearing sphere and on topics such as family education, child development and family leisure (Tendo & Takahashi, 2021, p. 6).

In a more recent study, Yu and Kuo (2018) investigate data from a sample of young and mature adults in Japan, using a fixed-effects model method to examine attitudes and opinions on marriage and children and whether having a daughter or a son is associated with changes in attitudes towards gender and family issues in Japan. Their findings suggest that women are more accepting of divorce after having a daughter, as well as become less supportive of traditional gender roles as the number of children they have increases. On the other hand, the findings reveal that with an increase of the number of children, men have less positive views about the value of jobs for women and more negative views about a child's impact on the couple's relationship after adding a son into the equation. By using the fixed-effects model in their study, Yu and Kuo's findings are different from prior research where women and a portion of men adopt more traditional gender attitudes with an increase in the number of children. Yu and Kuo's findings contribute to the larger discourse on womanhood, where there seems to be a resistance to simply accepting what has been the normative narratives of the roles and expectations of men and women in Japan. Similarly, in *SPYxFAMILY*, Yor's character is presented to the audience as stumbling along her path to become a better wife and mother, but at the same time able to utilize her 'superpowers' which come in the form of her training as an assassin to help her achieve her goals of being a better wife and mother in the episodes. This is not a reflection of reality – humans are not equipped with the ability to jump from one building to another and in the real world, perhaps assassins are less visible to the general public, even if they do exist. Nonetheless, Yor's characterization can be seen as a social commentary on the various expectations that Japanese society has on women, on how it is humanly impossible to meet those expectations.

2.2 Portrayal of female characters in anime

The term *anime* (i.e., Japanese animation) has been around since the late 1980s (Ruh, 2014). Anime has often been studied as a global phenomenon for its *mukokuseki* (i.e., nationlessness) element. Many anime series have characters that do not look Japanese despite the fact that the setting is in Japan, or the fact that the characters speak fluent Japanese and may have Japanese names. The original artist of the series has control over the visual appearance of the characters they create, whereby “the characters look nationless and are drawn as representations of the human body that can be more or less abstracted” (Ruh, 2014, p. 167). It is not too much of a stretch to say that the *mukokuseki* factor is what allows anime to be palatable to a transnational audience, with the audience being aware that this is still an art form that is tied to Japan’s culture and language.

One common recurring theme in academia is the study and analysis of how female characters are portrayed in anime. Non-Japanese female characters, in particular, characters who have supposed American nationality, are often visually sexualized in anime on top of being assigned marked features of Japanese compared to other foreign nationalities shown in anime (Ito & Bisila, 2020). Female characters also often possess a sweet voice quality that accentuates and authenticates their character’s femininity (Starr, 2015). Apart from potential depictions as either 1) cute, 2) strong and independent, or 3) sexualized, female characters can also be seen taking on the mother role, where this role is seen as indispensable to a household (Choo, 2008).

3 Methodology

The data for this paper is taken from the action-comedy anime adaptation of the manga SPYxFAMILY, written and illustrated by Tatsuya Endo in 2019, which is still in serialization. The anime was released in 2022 and is shown through a multiple-perspective narrative style of the three main characters: Loid Forger, Yor Forger and Anya Forger. Currently, the anime is complete with one season (25 episodes) with a second season in the works and a movie adaptation with a tentative release date set at the end of 2023. SPYxFAMILY has been well-received internationally, with episodes streaming on sites such as Netflix and Crunchyroll. Despite its title, the storyline focuses on the family dynamics between the main characters, which makes it both palatable and relatable to a large audience. The anime also won the Best Comedy award amongst others at the 2023 Crunchyroll Anime Awards (Crunchyroll, 2023).

Select scenes from the episodes are transcribed from the anime with a four-tier transcription in the order of:

- Original line in Japanese orthography
- Romanized version of the original lines
- Morpheme-by-morpheme gloss
- Idiomatic English translation**

The utterances are then labeled with the names of the characters. When there is an internal dialog being verbalized, it will be marked with (I) behind the character’s names and the idiomatic English translation is also italicized. Additionally, I chose not to use the English subtitles provided by the official platform (i.e., Crunchyroll) where I watched the episodes for the idiomatic gloss, as I did not think that the subtitles captured the full nuance of the original Japanese lines. Therefore, I provide my own interpretation of the original lines with the closest idiomatic translation possible.

The storyline of the anime starts when a spy (Loid) has to build a makeshift family in order to carry out his latest mission. He adopts a child (Anya) from an orphanage, who happens to be a telepath. Following the adoption, Loid goes on a quest to find a wife and ends up meeting Yor in a tailor shop when he brings Anya to get a fitting for some new clothes. Yor happens to be an extremely skilled assassin, but fears that her being single is seen by the government as a possibility that she is a spy. In an attempt to maintain her secret as an assassin, Yor and Loid enter a contractual marriage. However, there is a catch: Loid and Yor are unaware of each other's real identities (i.e., spy and assassin respectively) and are also unaware that Anya can read minds. Anya is aware of their spy and assassin identities given her ability to read minds, but she does not divulge this fact. The cover for Loid's spy and Yor's assassin identities are that Loid works as a doctor in a hospital while Yor is an employee at the City Hall.

The anime storyline revolves around Loid's spy mission throughout the entire first season, where Loid is trying to complete his mission while trying to keep up the facade of his role as the perfect husband to Yor and father to Anya, while the same can be said for Anya trying to play the role of a normal child and for Yor trying to be the perfect wife to Loid and mother to Anya. Loid and Anya appear in the very first episode of the anime, while Yor first appears in the second episode.

For the purposes of this paper, I will focus on select scenes that focus on Yor and her interactions with the other characters. Through the lens of stylization and positioning theory, I analyze how womanhood and motherhood are depicted via Yor's characterization in the anime series. The definition of positioning as defined by Davies and Harré (1990) is:

“the discursive process whereby selves are located in conversations as observably and subjectively coherent participants in jointly produced storylines. There can be interactive positioning in which what one person says positions another, and there can be reflexive positioning in which one positions oneself.” (p. 48)

In the anime, characters take on various social identities wherever relevant in order to achieve certain social practices. By analyzing Yor's interaction with other characters, one can shed light on the discursive practices that come with the expectations that these female characters with non-normative jobs have regarding the roles of wife and mother. These expectations in turn reflect the social practice of how women and femininity are portrayed and expressed in the frame of the fictional world in which the anime is set in and how that still has to resonate with what the consumers of anime know about gender expectations in Japanese society.

4 Data Analysis

Anime allows access to a lot of speech data from multiple voice actors, who might be voicing different characters within the same anime (Starr, 2015). Additionally, anime has “the ability to create a character from one's imagination to fit a predetermined mold or idea” (Ito & Bisila, 2020, p. 289). In SPYxFAMILY, Yor Forger's character is voiced by Saori Hayami, a prolific Japanese voice actor who is known for the voices behind many female characters in popular anime series. Yor's voice can also be categorized as sweet voice, which is an example of a stylized, professional voice (Starr, 2015).

Within the anime frame, the function of sweet voice “provides authenticity to feminine gender performance” (Starr, 2015, p.20). Starr (2015) outlines four general principles regarding the traits of sweet voice: 1) sweet voice characters are in positions of traditional female authority (e.g. mothers, student council presidents, older sisters, nurses, goddesses, teachers); 2) sweet voice characters are extraordinarily beautiful where the character is seen as mature and a classic beauty rather than cute; 3) sweet voice characters are neither villainesses or heroines, instead often being supportive characters who take care of the protagonist and thus rarely undertake independent action; and 4) sweet voice characters are sexualized yet ladylike, where their sexuality is highlighted in some respect, but they tend to dress conservatively (e.g., long skirts).

Yor fits into the first principle because she is playing the role of a mother to Anya. She also fits into the second principle with her long black hair and the fourth principle where her assassin outfit is a black, shoulderless, long dress with a cropped off mid-thigh in the front. The dress is also extremely form-fitting and accentuates her figure and cleavage, highlighting her physical traits. When Yor is not dressed to kill, she is dressed more conservatively, often in long sleeves (sweaters, cardigans) and leggings or skirts hitting knee-length. Despite Yor being an assassin, her characterization still checks off most of the four general principles which Starr (2015) discusses, reflecting how Yor is ultimately still molded into the normative roles of women, such as mother and wife in the anime series.

4.1 Finding 1: Killing with Grace

In addition to what Starr (2015) discusses about sweet voice, Starr also explicates how this particular stylized form of speech works in tandem with linguistic features particular to Japanese Women’s Language (JWL) (Okamoto & Shibamoto-Smith, 2004), where both features have to occur together for it to be attributed as a positive character evaluation (Star, 2015). Some features of JWL include sentence final particles *ne*, *wa*, *no yo*, first-person pronoun *atashi*, tag-question *kashira* and interjection *ara* (oh). In the anime, Yor does not get the usual JWL features assigned to her character. Instead, she is consistently assigned with the polite and honorific speech styles when she speaks. In Excerpt 1 below, the audience sees Yor in her assassin identity when she is introduced in Episode two in the anime.

Excerpt 1: First scene with Yor in assassin mode (Episode 2, 06:29-07:06)

- | | | |
|---|---------|--|
| 1 | Guard 1 | すみません、レディー。
sumimasen redii
excuse-me lady |
| 2 | | こちら の フロア は 現在
kochira no furoa wa genzai
this.POL GEN floor TOP now |
| 3 | | 貸切 と なってまして
kashikiri to natteimashite
reserved QUOT become.GER-POL
Sorry, miss. This floor is currently closed to the public. |
| 4 | Guard 2 | 誰か 女 頼んだ か
dareka onna tanonda ka |

- someone woman order.PLN-PST Q
Did someone order a woman?
- 5 Guard 3 さあ
 saa
 INJ
I'm not sure...
- 6 Yor あの… でも こちら に
 ano.. demo kochira ni
 um but here.POL DAT
- 7 売国 クソ野郎 殿 が
 baikoku kusoyaroo dono ga
 betrayal bastard lord.SUFF SUB
- 8 いらっしゃると 聞きまして
 irassharu to kikimashite
 exist.HON-NPST QUOT hear.POL-GER
But I heard there was a traitorous bastard committing treason here...
- 9 Guard 4 何事?!
 nanigoto
 what-thing
What was that?!
- 10 Guard 5 賊 です! 女 が 一人で…
 zoku desu! onna ga hitoride
 bandit COP woman SUB by-oneself
There's an infiltrator! A woman...
- 11 Yor あの… 監査局 の ブレナン 次官 です よね
 ano.. kansakyoku no burenan jikan desu yo ne
 um audit-bureau GEN Brennan vice.minister COP IP IP
- 12 大変 恐縮 なの ですが、息 の 根
 taihen kyooshuku na no desu ga, iki no ne
 terribly indebted AN GEN COP but breath GEN root
- 13 止めさせて いただいても よろしい でしょう か
 tomesasete itadaite mo yoroshii deshoo ka?
 stop-CAUS-GER receive-HUM-GER too good.HON COP Q
Excuse me, you're Deputy Secretary Brennan of the Auditing Board, yes? I'm terribly sorry, but may I humbly be allowed to stop your breathing?

In the above excerpt, Yor is tasked with assassinating the Deputy Secretary of the Auditing Board and heads to the location provided. In the process of getting to him, she ends up killing the people guarding the floor. Prior to Yor making her assassin/infiltrator identity clear, she is positioned as a prostitute by the guards where one of them assumes she was called to the floor with the verb *tanomu* (to order) (line 4). Yor does not respond to that claim and proceeds to lay out her

intentions in lines 6 to 8, where she reveals that she is aware of the act of treason committed by someone in the government. Here, Yor is clearly positioned as an assassin in this moment, to which her role is confirmed by her victims in line 10 where there is a clear indication that she is viewed as a threat despite her being *hitori de* (by oneself).

With Yor being singled out as one woman against a group of burly men, it also reflects the surprised reaction of the victims in this scene, where Yor is positioned as someone a group of men should be scared of. At this point in the episode, Yor reveals her weapons and takes down the guards, causing loud noises and thus catching the attention of those inside the room. Yor then enters the room and confronts another group of men. Lines 11 to 13 show honorifics assigned to Yor in a way that stylizes her as an assassin in an extremely polite and humble manner with the use of receiving verbs such as *itadaitte* (humbly receive) in line 13 as she asks for permission before assassinating the Deputy Secretary. With Yor's real identity as an assassin, she has a job that is not usually associated with politeness and gracefulness, but her speech style indicates otherwise.

Typically, assassins are portrayed as cold-blooded and would immediately go for the kill as they would already have the specific details of their targets. However, this is not the case with Yor's characterization as an assassin; despite the fact that Yor has already identified her target (line 11), she goes above and beyond by seeking permission in a humble way to kill (lines 12 and 13), which is a waste of time as assassins should be getting the job done as swiftly as possible. As such, assigning the polite and honorific speech style to Yor, in addition to her beautiful visual appearance and sweet voice, serve to position her as a graceful killer despite the violent nature of assassins where they are often depicted as ruthless, emotionless and sadistic in media.

4.2 Finding 2: Mama to the Rescue

There were two scenes in the anime when Anya gets kidnapped or held hostage by some bad guys while Anya and Yor are out and about. Both moments also show how Yor's mother and assassin identities are now pitted against one another, as Anya's safety is her priority, but she also takes down the villains in the process.

Excerpt 2a: Yor saving Anya from kidnappers (Episode 6, 09:22-11:45)

- | | | |
|---|-----------|--|
| 1 | Anya | アーニャ 先 出てる 飽きた! |
| | | aanya saki deteru akita |
| | | Anya before go-out.GER-PLN-NPST bored.PST-PLN |
| | | Anya's going out first. I'm bored. |
| 2 | Yor | 遠く に 行っちゃ ダメ です よ! |
| | | tooku ni iccha dame desu yo |
| | | faraway DAT go.PLN-COND bad COP IP |
| | | You're not supposed to go faraway! |
| | | ((Anya leaves the supermarket and collides with the villains)) |
| 3 | Villain 1 | ごきげんよう お嬢ちゃん |
| | | gokigenyoo ojoochan |
| | | hello young-lady.BEA-SUFF |
| | | Hello to you, young lady. |
| 4 | Villain 2 | ちょっと だけ 良い 子 に してて ね |

		chotto dake ii ko ni shitete ne
		a-bit only good child DAT do.GER-CONJ IP
		We would need you to be a good girl for a bit, alright?
5		メイドさん から 小遣い 貰ったら
		meido san kara kozukai morattara
		maid SUFF-POL from pocket-money receive.PST-COND
6		放して あげる から
		hanashite ageru kara
		let-go.GER give.PLN-NPST so
		Once we get some pocket money from your nanny, we will let you Go.

The first moment happens in episode six, when Anya was in a supermarket with Yor. Anya was in her school uniform and she attends Eden Academy, a prestigious top private school in the setting of SPYxFAMILY. While Yor was paying for the groceries, Anya decided to wander out of the supermarket and gets taken away by two villains. Here, Yor is positioned first and foremost as Anya's mother, as she reminds Anya to not wander too far off (Line 2).

Excerpt 2b: Yor saving Anya from kidnappers (Episode 6, 09:22-11:45)

16	Villain 1	財布 を 出しな 家政婦 さん
		saifu o dashina kaseefu san
		wallet OBJ take-out.CMD housekeeper SUFF-POL
		Take out your wallet, Ms. Housekeeper!
17	Yor	所持金 は 全て 使って しまって
		shojikin wa subete tsukatte shimatte
		cash-on-hand TOP all use.GER finish.GER
18		残っていません
		nokotteimasen
		remain.GER-NEG-POL-NPST
		Unfortunately I've used up all the cash I have on hand so I don't have any left.
19		なので どうぞ お引き取り を
		nanode doozo ohikitori o
		so please leave.BEA OBJ
		Therefore, please take your leave.
20	Villain 1	そう かい。じゃ お嬢ちゃん の 身包み 剥いで
		soo kai jya ojoochan no migurumi baide
		yes IP then young-lady.BEA GEN possessions peel.GER
21		おしまい だ
		oshimai da
		finish COP-PLN-NPST

That so? Well then, it's a done deal once we remove the possessions on the young lady.

22 あんた は どうせ クビ だろう から
 anta wa doose kubi daroo kara
 you-2PP TOP anyway dismissal COP because

You're gonna be fired either way.

23 おっとと 田舎 へ 帰りな クソ メイド
 ottoto inaka e kaerina kuso meedo
 oh-man countryside to return-CMD damn maid

Go back home, you damn maid!

((Yor smashes a pumpkin with her hands))

24 カ、カボチャ を 素手 で?
 ka kabocha o sude de
 pu.pumpkin OBJ bare-hands by

Did... she just break the pumpkin apart with her bare hands?

25 Yor 私 は その 子 の 母親 です
 watashi wa sono ko no hahaoya desu
 I-1PP TOP that child GEN mother COP

I am the mother of that child!

26 その お野菜 の よう に 成りたくなかったら
 sono oyasai no yoo ni naritakunakattara
 that vegetables.BEA GEN like DAT want-to-become.NEG-COND

27 早々 に 立ち去りなさい
 soosoo ni tachisarinasai
 quickly DAT go-away-.CMD

If you don't want to face the same fate as those vegetables, you'd better leave as quickly as you can!

However, the villains were already waiting outside the supermarket and proceed to kidnap Anya. The kidnappers also position Yor as the nanny rather than Anya's mother in lines 5, 16 and 23 with the terms *meedo-san* (maid) and *kaseefu* (housekeeper) used when addressing Yor. However, Yor maintains the position as Anya's mother and produces a declarative in line 25 that she is the mother and therefore has the responsibility as Anya's parental guardian to keep her safe.

Excerpt 2c: Yor saving Anya from kidnappers (Episode 6, 09:22-11:45)

29 Yor 大丈夫 でした か
 daijoobu deshita ka
 okay COP.POL-PST Q

Are you okay?

((Yor kneels down and embraces Anya))

30 すみません、私 が 目 を 離れた ばかり に

- sumimasen watashi ga me o hanashita bakari ni
 sorry I-1PP SUB eyes OBJ leave.PST-PLN just-because DAT
I'm sorry, because I didn't keep my eyes on you...
- 31 よしよし
 yoshiyoshi
 there-there
Don't be scared.
- 32 食材 も こんなに して しまった し
 shokuzai mo konnani shite shimatta shi
 foodstuffs too like-this do.GER finish.PST-PLN CONJ
- 33 私 っば ダメ な 母親 です
 watashi tteba dame na hahaoya desu
 I-1PP INJ bad AN mother COP
The ingredients have gone to waste...I'm really a bad mother.
 (3.0)
 ((Anya staring at Yor feeling down))
 ((Anya raises right hand to pat Yor's head))

From lines 29 to 33, Yor goes back and forth in being positioned as both a nurturing and an incompetent mother: she first checks on the wellbeing of Anya (line 29), then apologizes for losing sight of Anya (line 30), goes back to soothing Anya (line 31) while berating herself for being a bad mother because she ended up destroying the ingredients she had just purchased at the supermarket during the scuffle with the bad guys (lines 32-33). As such, keeping a constant eye on children and handling the ingredients for cooking are both associated with the expectations of being a good mother. In the previous excerpt (and also the previous scenes in the episode), Yor gave a warning to Anya in line 2 to not wander off. Luckily, Yor was able to intercept the villains before anything could happen to Anya, providing the perspective where Yor would be viewed in a positive light by viewers, despite the fact that she had not lived up to the expectations of what it takes to prevent becoming a *dame na hahaoya* (lit. a no good mother). There is then a three second silence with no lines exchanged in the scene, as the audience sees a close-up of Anya looking somewhat overwhelmed and emotional, who proceeds to console Yor while Yor is beating herself up over loss of the groceries they just bought at the store.

Excerpt 2d: Yor saving Anya from kidnappers (Episode 6, 09:22-11:45)

- 34 Anya アーニャ 強くて かつこいい 母 好き
 aanya tsuyokute kakkoi haha suki
 Anya strong-and cool mother like
Anya likes the strong and cool mother.
- 35 よしよし
 yoshiyoshi
 there-there
Don't cry.

- 36 必殺 パンチ ぼがーん
 hissatsu panchi bogaan
 deadly punch bam
A deadly punch, bam!
- 37 Yor は、恥ずかしい です
 ha-hazukashi desu
 em.embarassing COP
T-that's embarrassing!
- 38 Anya 母!
 haha
 mother
Mother!
- 39 アーニャ 特訓 して
 aanya tokkun shite
 Anya special-training do.GER
Anya will do special training.

Yor's position as an incompetent mother is challenged via Anya in line 34 where Anya associates Yor with the adjectives *tsuyokute kakkoi* (strong and cool). In line 35, Anya is seen repeating what Yor said to Anya back in Line 31 in an attempt to console Yor: *yoshiyoshi* (there there), which is a phrase in Japanese said to soothe children when they are upset or crying. This has an intended comedic effect because soothing is often done by adults to children and is also often categorically-bound to the role of mothers, where mothers are usually the ones soothing a child. Anya also refers to Yor's abilities as *tokkun* (special training), possibly as a reference to Anya being aware of Yor's assassin identity due to Anya being a telepath. However, Anya is not trying to train to become like an assassin. Rather, her desire is to emulate the cool-ness of what Yor can do, as well as learn some self-defense skills so that she can protect herself from future incidents like this one.

Excerpt 2e: Yor saving Anya from kidnappers (Episode 6, 09:22-11:45)

- 45 Anya アーニャ 母 みたい に になりたい
 aanya haha mitai ni naritai
 Anya mother like DAT want-to-become.PLN-NPST
Anya wants to become like mother!
- 46 Yor (I) 普通 の 母親 らしく 振る舞う こと は
 futsuu no hahaoya rashiku furumau koto wa
 normal GEN mother seem behave thing TOP
- 47 できなく とも、私 に できる こと を
 dekinaku tomo watashi ni dekiru koto o
 do.POT-NEG indeed I-1PP DAT do.POT-PLN thing OBJ
- 48 精一杯 頑張ろう
 seiippai ganbarou

as-much-as work-hard.VOL-PLN

Even if I can't conduct myself like a normal mother, I will continue to give it my all.

Anya claims she wants to become like Yor in line 45. Yor, upon hearing this, is positioned as someone who still needs to work hard to become a better mother despite her being unable to be a *futsuu no hahaoya* (a normal mother) given her real identity as an assassin, which comes with her being trained in combat. Lines 46 to 48 are in monologue-style, where Yor's thoughts are verbalized for the audience. As such, Yor is also positioned as a female role model who is worthy of emulating despite the fact that Yor sees herself as lacking in many ways as a mother figure to Anya.

The second time Anya runs into bad guys is during the latter half of Episode 13, where she wanders off after a huge white Pyrenees Mountain dog, Bond (who eventually becomes part of the Forger family). The Forgers were out at an animal adoption fair when Loid steps out to take part in an urgent undercover mission. Yor realizes that Anya is missing and starts panicking.

Excerpt 3a: Yor realizes Anya is missing (Episode 13, 15:43-16:50)

- | | | |
|---|-------|---|
| 1 | Yor | アーニャさん どこ です か
aanya san doko desu ka
Anya SUFF.POL where COP.POL Q
Miss Anya, where are you? |
| 2 | | あの すみません、
ano sumimasen
um excuse-me |
| 3 | | こんな 感じ の 小さい 子
konna kanji no chiisai ko
like-this feeling GEN small child |
| 4 | | 見ませんでした か
mimasendeshita ka
see.NEG-POL-PST Q
Excuse me, have you seen a small child like this around? |
| 5 | Man | さあ…
saa
INJ
No... |
| 6 | Woman | 見てない わ ねえ
mitenai wa nee
see.GER-NEG-PLN IP IP
Me neither.
((Yor starts panicking))
((Jumps up into the infrastructure above))
((Close-up of Yor's eyes shaking)) |

- 7 Yor(M) いない… 会場 の どこにも
 inai kaijoo no dokonimo
 exist.NEG-PLN hall GEN nowhere
She's nowhere to be found in the hall.
- 8 もしかして 犬 に 食べられて しまった?!
 moshikashite inu ni taberarete shimatta
 by-any-chance dog DAT eat.PASS-GER finish.PST-PLN
Could she have been eaten by a dog...?
- 9 いや 落ち着く の です ヨル
 iya ochitsuku no desu yoru
 no calm.down NOM COP Yor
No no, calm down, Yor!
- 10 それは 多分 ありえません
 sore wa tabun ariemasen
 that TOP maybe possible.NEG-POL-NPST
That's obviously not possible!
- 11 だ と する と まさか…
 da to suru to masaka
 COP QUOT do-PLN-NPST if surely-not
If that's the case, what if...
- 12 誘拐?!
 yuukai
 kidnapping
She was kidnapped?!

In Excerpt 3a, Yor realizes that Anya has gone missing and starts to panic. Her inner monologue in her head from lines 7 (marked with (M)) onwards gets the better of her as she comes up with ridiculous scenarios such as Anya being eaten by a dog (line 8) and concludes that Anya might have been kidnapped (line 12). At this moment, Yor does not leave the location to search for Anya and instead continues to worry. Yor is positioned as fretting over her child where she comes up with worst-case scenarios, reminiscent of how mothers can sometimes be extreme. There is also a comedic layer here with Yor's expressions in the anime, as she loses her self-composure whilst coming up with these scenarios - the exact opposite of what the audience would expect from someone who is supposed to be an assassin.

Excerpt 3b: Yor realizes Anya is missing (Episode 13, 15:43-16:50)

- 18 Yor (I) ど、ど、ど、どう しましう
 do.do.do.doo shimashoo
 h.h.h.how do.POL-VOL
W-w-what should I do...?
- 19 アーニャさん が 結婚 させられて しまいます
 aanya san ga kekkon saserarete shimaimasu

- Anya SUFF-POL SUB marry do.CAUS-PASS-GER finish.POL-NPST
Miss Anya will be forced to marry her kidnapper!
- 20 ロイドさん も いない こんな 時 に
 roido san mo inai konna toki ni
 Loid SUFF-POL too exist.NEG-PLN like-this time DAT
Why did this have to happen when Loid is not around?
 ((Yor pacing back and forth, palms covering mouth))
- 21 ああ どう しましょう 私 ってば どう しましょう
 aa doo shimashoo watashitteba doo shimashoo
 oh how do.VOL-POL I-1PP INJ how do.VOL-POL
Aah, what do I do? What do I do?
- 22 早く トイレ から
 hayaku toire kara
 quickly toilet from
- 23 戻って きて ください ロイド さん
 modotte kite kudasai roido san
 return.GER come.GER please Loid SUFF.POL
Please come back quickly from the toilet, Loid!

Lines 18 to 23 in Excerpt 3b show how Yor is being positioned as unable to solve the issue on her own and therefore needed Loid's help in order to save Anya. Here, Yor is positioned as equal partners to Loid, where both are equally responsible for Anya and that Yor needs to keep Loid in the loop. The 13th episode ends on a cliffhanger when Yor manages to figure out where Anya is. Episode 14 picks up from this scene and the audience is treated to Yor fighting off the villains and thereafter sharing a warm mother-child moment with Anya.

Excerpt 4a: Yor saves Anya again (Episode 13, 21:36-22:27 & Episode 14, 02:00-04:00)

- ((Yor appears from behind Villain 2, high up in the air))
 ((Villain 2 turns around))
 ((Yor smashes right leg into Villain 2's face, bones crack))
 ((Villain 2 gets thrown against buildings in zig-zag manner))
 ((Villain 1 and German shepherd makes shocked noises))
 ((Yor lands on ground, heroic cinematic background music plays))
- 8 Yor 許しません よ 変態 誘拐犯 さん
 yurushimasen yo hentai yuukaihan san
 forgive.NEG-POL-NPST IP pervert kidnapper SUFF.POL
I'm not going to forgive you, Mr. perverted kidnapper!
- 9 アーニャさん に 結婚 は まだ 早い です!
 aanya san ni kekkon wa mada hayai desu
 Anya SUFF.POL DAT marriage TOP still early COP
It's still way too early for Miss Anya to marry!
 ((Heroic cinematic background music ends))

- ((Episode 13 ends here))
((Episode 14 starts with recap of lines 8 to 9))
((Anime opening song starts))
((Yor frowns, maintains fighting stance while carrying Anya))
((Villain 1 panicking))
- 11 Anya ((Crying)) 母!
haha
mother
Mother!
- 12 Anya ((Yor turns to Anya who is in tears))
アーニャ 怖かったー
aanya kowakatta
Anya scared.PST-PLN
Anya was so scared!
- 13 Yor よしよし もう 大丈夫 です
yoshiyoshi moo daijoobu desu
there.there already okay COP
There, there. You're safe now.
- 14 Villain 1 (I) 母親?
hahaoya
mother
She's her mother?
- 15 チッ 二人とも やる しか ない
chi futaritomo yaru shika nai
tsk both.people kill.PLN-NPST nothing-but exist.NEG-PLN-NPST
Tsk! We have no choice but to kill off both of them.
- 16 Villain 1 おい 犬子! あの女 の 喉笛 を 噛み砕け
oi inu ko ano onna no nodobue o kamikudake
hey dog child that woman GEN windpipe OBJ crunch-CMD
Oi, pup! Rip out that woman's throat!
((German shepherd growls))
((Yor turns back with an unladylike expression: baring her teeth while making growling noises))
((German shepherd whines and runs away at full speed))
- 17 Villain 1 おい こら!
oi kora
hey hey
Oi, come back here!
- 18 Anya 母! 怖いー!
haha kowai:.....
mother scary.PLN-NPST
MOTHER! I'M SCARED!

19 Yor あ、もう 大丈夫 です っば
 a moo daijoobu desu tteba
 ah already okay COP INJ
Ah, like I said you're safe now.

In Excerpt 4a above, Anya attempts to escape from the villains, only to end up going in circles around a building and bumping into the villains again. Just when they were about to kill Anya, Yor makes an appearance and beats one of the villains to a pulp, which in turn shocks Villain 2 and the German Shepherd who was with them. In Line 8, Yor is positioned as a hero (accentuated by the choice of heroic-sounding background music) because she comes in swooping to save Anya and maintains her polite speech style even when speaking to perpetrators. When Anya bursts into tears in line 11 calling out to Yor, Yor is now positioned as mother to Anya once again, where she soothes Anya and tells her that she is safe now (line 13). When Villain 1 does not give up and tries to kill both Anya and Yor, Yor, who was looking at Anya in an attempt to calm her down, turns to stare at the German Shepherd with an exaggerated expression. Yor makes growling noises while baring her teeth (which are depicted as razor-sharp) at the German Shepherd, effectively scaring the dog away. This scene momentarily positions her as possessing animalistic qualities, which were triggered by her sense of protectiveness over Anya. However, this non-ladylike and scary expression of Yor's ends up making Anya cry harder (line 18). Immediately following Anya's reiteration of her being scared, Yor's expression reverts back to her normal appearances as she yet again reassures that Anya is safe (line 19).

Excerpt 4b: Yor saves Anya again (Episode 13, 21:36-22:27 & Episode 14, 02:00-04:00)

24 Yor あっ 待ちなさい!
 a machinasai
 ah wait-CMD
Oh, hold up!
 ((Halts in her steps and turns back to Anya))

25 Yor (I) いや これ 以上 アーニャ さん を
 iya kore ijyoo aanya san o
 no this more-than Anya SUFF-POL OBJ

25 ほったらかし に して は ダメ です よ ヨル
 hottarakashi ni shite wa dame desu yo yoru
 leave-alone DAT do.GER TOP bad COP IP Yor
No, you cannot leave Miss Anya all alone any longer than this, Yor!

Villain 1, who is now alone in the alley after his dog ran off and his partner-in-crime is still unconscious, decides to escape. Yor's initial reaction to him escaping was to put Anya down and chase the villain, but she stops and reminds herself that she cannot leave Anya all by herself anymore (line 25), therefore reinforcing her identity as a mother. Yor ends up staying with Anya and makes sure that the unconscious bad guy is tied up so she can hand him over to the police. What is more important to Yor was that Anya was safe and that triumphed Yor's desire to catch the villain who managed to escape.

Excerpt 4c: Yor saves Anya again (Episode 13, 21:36-22:27 & Episode 14, 02:00-04:00)

- 35 Anya この犬さん アーニャのこと助けてくれた
kono inu san aanya no koto tasukete kureta
this dog SUFF-POL Anya GEN thing save.GER give.PST-PLN
Mr. Dog here saved Anya.
- 36 Yor な、何にせよ アーニャさんが無事でよかった
na-nanniseyo aanya san ga buji de yokatta
in-any-case Anya SUFF.POL SUB safe and good.PST-PLN
M-more importantly is that you're safe and sound, Miss Anya.
- 37 心配したんですから
shinpai shita n desu kara
worry do.PST-PLN COP COP because
I was so worried.
- 38 Anya アーニャ勝手にお外に出てごめんなさい
aanya katteni osoto dete gomennasai
Anya wilfully outside.BEA leave.GER sorry
Anya is sorry... for going outside without permission.
- 39 Yor まったくです。
mattaku desu
true COP
Honestly...
((Yor bends down to embrace Anya))
- 40 Yor 帰ったらお説教ですからね
kaettara osekkyoo desu kara ne
return.COND ear-bashing.BEA COP because IP
I will have to give you a scolding when we get home, okay?

While Yor is figuring out what to do, she checks with Anya to figure out what happened when Anya was missing and reiterates how Anya being safe is more important than Bond saving Anya (line 36) because Yor was worried (line 37). Once Yor explains how worried she was, Anya apologizes (line 38) but Yor does not launch into an actual scolding of Anya. Instead, she bends down to embrace Anya and tells Anya that she will get a scolding when they go home (line 40). This kidnapping scene is a call-back to episode six, where Anya gets into trouble for the first time. What is different is how Anya responds to the second kidnapping by apologizing in line 38, which reflects the socialization of Anya into what kind of behavior is appropriate if she wants to be a good child and not a naughty one.

Additionally, the way Yor handles “scolding” a child seems to be stylized, as this is not what usually happens when parents scold their children for misbehaving. By pre-empting the audience to Yor’s gentle demeanor, Yor is positioned as someone who is patient, level-headed and able to maintain her gracefulness even in a situation which calls for a moment where she may lose

her temper at Anya. Yor is positioned as a saint here, where she 1) does not lose her temper and 2) carries out her role as an upright and law-abiding citizen by reporting the incident to the police.

4.3 Finding 3: Flaws Shall Not be Shown to Out-group Members

In the anime, Yor is depicted as someone who is not the best at doing household chores, apart from cleaning (due to her being an assassin). In particular, there is a running gag where she is extremely bad at cooking despite her constant efforts to improve her cooking skills. As such, it is often Loid who is in charge of making the meals. In addition, five episodes before the season ends, a new character, who is also a spy like Loid, appears as a potential love rival to Yor: Fiona Frost. Fiona's visual appearance can be said to be a "cool beauty" of sorts, where she does not express much emotion due to her training as a spy and she has short, snow-white hair. Fiona appears in episode 20 of the anime and when she is not undercover, she is working as Loid's assistant in the same hospital he is at. Fiona is also trying to get rid of Yor because she has a crush on Loid and sees herself as a more suitable candidate to play the role of Loid's wife in this entire mission.

Given that Yor and Fiona both have non-normative roles which require them to be on the move whenever they get a mission or task assigned to them, this goes against the traditional views of women staying in the private sphere while men take on the role as a breadwinner.

The following excerpt below is the very first time Yor interacts with Fiona. Fiona uses the excuse of returning a magnifying glass that Anya left behind in the hospital when she was there to pay a visit to the Forger residence. Yor happens to be the only person at home when Fiona rings the doorbell, as Loid and Anya are out walking the dog.

Excerpt 5a: First interaction between Yor and Fiona (Episode 20, 03:37-07:02)

- | | | | |
|---|---------|--|--|
| 1 | Yor (S) | はあ… 今日 の 朝食 も
haa kyoo no chooshoku mo
((sighs)) today GEN breakfast too
失敗 して しまいました
shippai shite shimaimashita
failure do.GER finish.POL-PST
I failed at making breakfast again today.
((flashback to breakfast time))
((Anya drinks from bowl, makes a face and drops bowl))
((Yor covers face with both hands)) | |
| 3 | Yor (S) | 結局 お昼 は ロイド さん に
kekkyoku ohiru wa roido san ni
in-the-end lunch.BEA TOP Loid SUFF.POL DAT | |
| 4 | | お任せ して しまって
omakase shite shimatte
entrust.BEA do.GER finish.GER
Loid had to make lunch for us yet again... | |
| 5 | | シチュー 以外 を 早く 上手 に になりたい です
shichuu igai o hayaku jyoozu ni naritai desu | |

stew apart-from OBJ quickly skilful DAT want-to-become COP
I want to become better at making dishes apart from stew.
 ((doorbell rings))

In Excerpt 5a, the episode starts with Yor washing dishes in the kitchen while speaking out loud to herself. She sighed because she messed up breakfast again (line 1). As a result, Loid ended up having to prepare lunch (line 3). As previously mentioned, Yor's inability to cook is a running gag in the anime as well as the original manga, but her lack of cooking skills also point towards two assumptions of the storyline being set up: firstly, women are the ones who should have cooking skills and secondly, it is not typical to have a man handle the cooking in the household. Nonetheless, Yor has not given up yet as she strives to become better at cooking (line 5). Following her self-directed speech, the doorbell rings and she opens the door to Fiona standing outside the Forger residence.

Excerpt 5b: First interaction between Yor and Fiona (Episode 20, 03:37-07:02)

- 28 Yor(I) わあ… 綺麗 な 方 です ね
 waa kiree na kata desu ne
 wow beautiful AN person-POL COP IP
Wow, she's so pretty.
- 29 Fiona 何か
 nanika
 something
Is there something wrong?
- 30 Yor いいえ
 iie
 no
Oh, no!
- 31 Fiona 素敵 な お宅 です ね
 suteki na otaku desu ne
 lovely AN home-BEA COP IP
This is a lovely home.
- 32 Fiona(I) 不倫 相手 が 来た と ても 思ってる?
 furin aite ga kita to demo omotteiru
 affair match SUB come-PST-PLN QUOT but think-GER-PLN
Does she think his mistress has shown up?
- 33 そう ね。隙 あれば
 soo ne suki areba
 yes IP chance have-COND
- 34 妻 の 座 乗っ取ろう と 言う の だから、
 tsuma no za nottorou to iu no dakara
 wife GEN seat take.over-VOL QUOT say-PLN NOM because

- 35 間違って は ない わ
 machigatte wa inai wa
 make.a.mistake-GER NEG exist-PLN-NPST IP
Then again, I'm plotting to take over the role of his wife at the first possible moment, so she's not entirely wrong.
- 36 Yor 家具 とか は 全部 主人 が…
 kagu toka wa zenbu shujin ga
 furniture et.cetera TOP all husband SUB
Oh, my husband picked out all of the furniture...
- 37 Fiona(I) ヨル ブライア
 yoru buraia
 Yor Briar
Yor Briar...
- 38 あなた が ストリクス に とって
 anata ga sutorikusu ni totte
 you-2PP SUB Strix DAT to
- 39 足枷 に なる 存在 なら
 ashikase ni naru sonzai nara
 shackles DAT become-PLN-NPST presence if
- 40 排除 する まで
 haijo suru made
 remove do-PLN-NPST until
If you are the reason for the delay on Operation Strix, I'll make sure to get rid of you.
- 41 が、この 女 なかなか に
 ga kono onna nakanaka ni
 but this woman rather DAT
- 42 隙 の ない 身 の こなし
 suki no nai mi no konashi
 gap GEN exist-NEG-PLN-NPST body GEN to.carry.oneself
But...this woman doesn't seem to have any flaws in her appearance.
- 43 Yor(I) ユーリと フランキーさん 以外で 初めての の 来客
 yuuri to furankii san igai de hajimete no raikyaku
 Yuri and Franky SUFF-POL aside and first GEN visitor
She is the first guest we've had here other than Yuri and Franky.
- 44 緊張 します!
 kinchoo shimasu
 nervous do-POL-NPST
I'm so nervous!
- 45 私 は 人妻… 私 は 人妻…
 watashi wa hitozuma watashi wa hitozuma

I-1PP TOP married.woman I-1PP TOP married.woman
I'm a housewife... I'm a housewife...

Despite the fact that Loid and Anya are out walking the dog, Yor invites Fiona in and plays host to Fiona. The first thing that Yor notices about Fiona is how beautiful she is (line 28) and Fiona makes a similar judgment in line 42 as well. Here, visual appearance becomes relevant in relation to them as females. Fiona is secretly trying to overthrow Yor's position as Loid's wife since Fiona has a crush on Loid. Additionally, Fiona, as Loid's colleague, is aware that Yor and Loid are in a fake, contractual marriage for Loid's mission (Operation Strix). Therefore, Fiona is willing to go to extreme lengths to remove Yor from the picture if she ends up jeopardizing the mission (lines 38-40). Unbeknownst to what dark thoughts Fiona was having, Yor was nervous (line 44) because Fiona is the first guest outside of familiar faces such as Yor's younger brother and Loid's close acquaintance (line 43). In line 45, Yor reminds herself that she is a *hitozuma* (married woman), which also includes the connotation of being a housewife/homemaker.

Excerpt 5c: First interaction between Yor and Fiona (Episode 20, 03:37-07:02)

- 50 Fiona お子さん… アーニャ ちゃん?
 okosan aanya chan
 child-BEA-SUFF-POL Anya SUFF
- 51 とても 活発 そう な 女 の 子 です ね。
 totemo kappatsu soo na onna no ko desu ne
 very lively seems AN woman GEN child COP IP
Your daughter... little Anya, was it? She seems like a very lively girl.
- 52 Yor へ? ええ… アーニャ さん は いつも 元気 いっぱい です
 he ee aanya san wa itsumo genki ippai desu
 huh yes Anya SUFF-POL TOP always energy full.of COP
Huh? Yes... Miss Anya is always full of energy.
- 53 Fiona 色々 と 大変 でしょう。
 iroiro to taihen deshoo
 various COMP tough COP
- 54 子育て に うんざり しません か
 kosodate ni unzari shimasen ka
 child.raising DAT get.fed.up.with do-POL-NEG-NPST Q
It must be quite rough, isn't it? Don't you get tired of childrearing?
- 55 Fiona(I) あなた に とっては 所詮 義理 の 娘 でしょう?
 anata ni totte wa shosen giri no musume deshoo
 you-2PP DAT to TOP after.all step GEN daughter COP
She is only your stepdaughter, after all.
- 56 無理 せず 肩 の 荷 を 下ろしなさい。
 muri sezu kata no ni o oroshinasai
 impossible without shoulder GEN load OBJ take.down-CMD

- 57 Yor **Feel free to let go of that burden.**
 大変…? 何故ですか?
 taihen naze desu ka
 tough why COP Q
- 58 **Rough? What would give you that idea?**
 元気なのはとても良いことです。
 genki na no wa totemo ii koto desu
 energy AN NOM TOP very good thing COP
- 59 **I think it's wonderful that she's so full of energy.**
 元気がないと、どうしていいか分からなくて
 genki ga nai to dooshite ii ka wakaranakute
 energy SUB exist-NEG COND how good Q know-NEG-GER
- 60 困っちゃいますが、
 komacchaimasu ga
 have.trouble-POL-NPST but
- 61 アーニヤさんといるのは
 aanya san to iru no wa
 Anya SUFF-POL with exist-NPST-PLN NOM TOP
- 62 とても楽しいです!
 totemo tanoshii desu
 very fun COP
- 63 Fiona(l) **I actually don't know what I should do when she seems down, but it's so much fun being with Miss Anya.**
 ふー。すっかり母親気取りか。
 fuu sukkari hahaoya kidori ka
 hmph thoroughly mother pose Q
- 64 Yor **Hmph. So she actually sees herself as that girl's mother.**
 ああでも、色々こなされてるロイドさんは
 aa demo iroiro konasareteru roido san wa
 ah but various handle-GER-PASS-NPST Loid SUFF-POL TOP
- 65 確かに大変そうだなあと。
 tashika ni taihen soo da naa to
 certain DAT tough seems COP IP QUOT
- 66 **Oh, but it does seem a little rough for Loid because of everything he has to do.**
 私がか至らぬばかりに。
 watashi ga itaranu bakari ni
 I-1PP SUB incompetent just.because DAT
- 67 Fiona(l) **Because I'm so lacking...**
 そうよ。
 soo yo

- yes IP
Yes, exactly.
- 68 あなた は 己 の 未熟さ を
 anata wa onore no mijukusa o
 you-2PP TOP oneself GEN immaturity.ness OBJ
- 69 自覚 すべき よ。
 jikaku subeki yo
 awareness do.must IP
You need to acknowledge your flaws.
- 70 この 作戦 に は 相応しくない!
 kono sakusen ni wa fusawashikunai
 this operation DAT NEG suitable-NEG-PLN-NPST
You are not fit for this mission!
- 71 Fiona そう そう。フォージャー 先生、 職場 で
 soo soo foojaa sensee shokuba de
 yes yes Forger teacher workplace at
- 72 よく ぼやいています よ。「うちの 嫁 は いつも—」
 yoku boyaitemasu yo uchi no yome wa itsumo
 often complain-GER-POL IP my GEN bride TOP always
**Oh, right. I did hear Dr. Forger complaining at work that his wife
 always—**
 ((Loid, Anya and Bond return from their walk))

From line 50, Fiona brings up Anya and describes her as lively (line 51), thereby positioning Yor as Anya's mother. Fiona pursues her agenda by trying to make Yor 'break' her character in an attempt to find a flaw and asks if Yor is fed up with childrearing (line 54), possibly questioning Yor's motherhood. In line 55, Fiona's monologue reveals the storyline that if the child does not share the mother's blood, then it is okay to be less of a mother figure (line 55) and that children from previous marriages are also seen as burdens (line 56). However, Yor challenges Fiona's position from line 57 to 62. Yor seems to have taken Fiona's description of Anya as a lively child as having some negative connotations, to which she responds with how it is wonderful for Anya to be so active (line 58) and that she would be at a loss if Anya were to lose that energy of hers (lines 59-60). Not only does Yor appreciate Anya's energetic self, but also makes the claim that she finds it very fun to be with Anya (lines 61-62).

Fiona continues to question Yor's right to be playing the role of Anya's mother in line 63. Yor goes on to show empathy towards Loid (line 65) because of her incompetence as wife and mother (line 66) which makes it tough for Loid. Here, Yor is positioned as the person who is expected to take care of everyone in the house. Fiona agrees with Yor expressing her incompetence through her monologue (lines 68-69) by using a condescending and aggressive second person pronoun *onore* (you) to refer to Yor and how she must acknowledge her flaws, concluding her view of Yor as someone who is *fusawashikunai* (unsuitable) for the mission. Right before Loid, Anya and Bond return home, Fiona makes one more attempt to make Yor crumble under pressure by trying to make Yor feel self-conscious about her incompetence by providing an example of how Loid complains about Yor at his workplace (lines 71 and 72).

5 Conclusion

From the excerpts shown in the paper, Yor's position as mother and wife is both reflexively and interactively positioned, where Yor often positions herself in both identities in a conscious manner. This is because her real identity is an assassin and she is aware that she lacks the usual social cues and does not know how to be a normal person. In addition, since her assassin identity has to be kept a secret, Yor's presence in the anime is therefore defaulted to either mother or wife when she is not an assassin. As such, Yor's position as mother and wife is maintained when other characters either reaffirm those positions, such as Anya and Loid, or challenge those positions, such as Fiona (and sometimes Yor herself).

Most scenes involving Yor in the anime often take place when she is not positioned as an assassin, therefore foregrounding her non-assassin identities such as mother, wife and sometimes government employee when she is at her workplace. As Lebra (1984) succinctly puts it, "[a] woman through motherhood becomes the most indispensable person in the household" (Lebra, 1984, p. 160). This also happens in the anime. When Anya gets into trouble, Yor is the one who saves the day, despite Loid being the entire reason why the Forgers exist as a family unit. Despite Yor's non-normative role as an assassin, she is often positioned as wife or mother, whereby she maintains her speech style and her consistent efforts to become a better wife and mother to Loid and Anya. Yor's characterization also aligns with the societal norms of what is expected of a wife and mother, despite the flaws which are presented to the audience.

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Appendices

Appendix A: Key Gloss for Morphemes in Transcription

ADJ: adjective marker
AN: adjectival noun
BEA: beautificatory (お before nouns)
CAUS: causative
CMD: command
COMP: complementizer
COND: conditional
COP: copula marker
CLF: classifier
DAT: dative marker
GEN: genitive
GER: gerund
HON: honorifics
HUM: humble
INJ: interjection
IP: interactional particle
NEG: negation
NPST: non-past tense
OBJ: object marker
POL: polite form
POT: potential
PST: past tense
Q: question particle
QUOT: quotative particle
SUB: subject particle
SUFF: suffix
TOP: topic particle
VOL: volitional