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***The World of Manga as a Cultural and
Global Phenomenon : “Naruto”***

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Dedications

I dedicate this work to my true heroes, my parents, whose unwavering sacrifices, guidance, and unconditional love have shaped me into the person I am today. I am forever indebted to you for being the guiding stars that have illuminated my path and the constant presence that has filled my life with boundless love and support.

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Abstract

Graphic literature, including comics and graphic novels, combines narratives with art to deliver exciting works addressed to different age groups and audiences. It uses pictures to tell fictitious and non-fictitious stories through a wide range of genres and themes. Manga is one of the predominant types of comics and graphic novels. It describes the Japanese style of comics and becomes a worldwide style of comics too. This research aims to explore the world of Manga by diving deep into its historical evolution, subgenres, themes, characteristics, and impact. Besides, it highlights Manga as a Japanese cultural phenomenon that shapes Japan's values and traditions. It also exposes the global aspect of Manga which conquered the globe till many countries adopted it to interpret their own cultural identities. Accordingly, this work uses one of the best-selling and most influential Manga "Naruto" to illustrate the specific aspect of Japan's culture and draw attention to its adaptation abroad to convey different cultures and norms.

Keywords: graphic Literature, comics, Manga, Japan's culture, Naruto.

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General Introduction

General Introduction

Literature and culture built a harmonious relationship with each other throughout human history. Literature portrays the cultural components of society such as; beliefs, values, customs, codes, and behaviors in different literary forms. Hence, the graphic novel is a literary subgenre that uses images to narrate stories and depicts the visual culture of a society.

The field of graphic novels and comics was governed by the American comics trips and the French Bande Dessinee for centuries till the 19th century when the Japanese comics called Manga invaded the world, especially the Euro-American comic market. Manga becomes a powerful means of influencing the youth's thoughts and behaviors. It is the most popular and most notable cultural entertainment. In fact, it is an open window into the Japanese culture which the West was ignoring or showing hostility to due to the historical reasons for the war.

In the beginning, Manga artists were influenced by Western cultural traits through their comics so as express their Japaneseness. Later, the Manga become an international visual language thanks to globalization and Japan's economic and technological power. Thus, it evolved into an enormously adaptable product around the world.

“Naruto” is one of the most popular and best-selling mangas in Japan and in different continents since it has millions of fans of different ages across the globe. It tells the story of Naruto Uzumaki, a young ninja who looks for acceptance and leadership. This manga displays two parts: Naruto's pre-teen years and his teen. Many children's fans grew up with Naruto. It exposes the conflict between good and evil, kindness and hatred, optimism and pessimism, perseverance and surrender, self-determination, and inability, smartness and stupidity.

This manga illustrates the Western influence on Japanese culture like fair and colored hair, big blue eyes of the characters, and some Christian beliefs. At the same time, it represents different aspects of Japan's culture such as; mythology, Confucianism, and ninja's life. Naruto becomes a global phenomenon and one of the splendid character development, strong storylines, well-executed scenes, and morals of optimism and self-determination. Naruto is adapted by many artists across the globe to express their own cultural identities. Thus, manga is never a Japanese comic but an international style of comic. Accordingly, this research tends to discover the world of manga by answering the following questions:

- Is it addressed to children only?
- What makes Manga a cultural and global product?
- How does it affect its audience?

To explore the answers to these significant questions, and to achieve its purposes, this work is divided into two chapters which discuss the topic from different perspectives and views.

The first chapter is based on an interdisciplinary approach to display the connection between graphic literature and Manga.

Manga as a graphic novel and comic exhibits the deep components of Japanese

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culture: beliefs, values, dreams, fears, and behaviors. It deepens the cultural links between nations, discovers and adjusts false views of the other, and encourages the adoption of new thoughts and morals from other cultures.

The second chapter highlights how the Manga of “Naruto” shapes Japan’s culture and achieved huge popularity in Japan and across the globe. Besides, it indicates the different adaptations of this manga in various communities to make an appeal to their own cultural motives. It also depicts the positive and negative influence of this Manga by illustrating the set of morals and values that it transmits.

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A Worldwide Cultural
Force.**

Chapter One: Manga A Worldwide Cultural Force

1.1 Introduction

Literature has always presented a collective memory for human beings. It is a deep reservoir where people's knowledge and entertainment are recorded, preserved, and transmitted. Due to its aesthetic excellence, literature affords its readers a universal interest and pleasure. As a significant art, it reflects and figures culture. It creates in people profound emotions and wide perspectives to discover their identities and purposes. Literature, with its different genres and themes, tends to portray society and also work to change it. Hence, this chapter tries to explore this notable world and shed light on its patent part "Graphic Literature" by diving deep into the cultural and global perspectives of its famous art style "Manga" and discovering its universal influence on youth's thoughts and cultures.

1.2 Manga as a Graphic Novel

Graphic literature, embracing comics and graphic novels, is any work that uses visual art (pictures) to tell a story discussing a wide variety of themes and addressing different age groups and audiences. The roots of this art go deep in human prehistory with word-image texts from cave paintings, Egyptian hieroglyphics, Greek pottery, and Mayan carvings. Many critics differentiate between comics and graphic novels. Comics are "short and meant to be read in one sitting, they are usually part of larger series and contain serialized narratives intended for children and younger readers, whereas a graphic novel is a full-length story in comic book style for a mature audience". That's why French scholars refuse to consider comics as graphic novels. However, comics have evolved to portray all shapes in sequential art, respond to many different age groups and audiences, and envelop an enormous range of genres and styles. Thus, graphic novels are distinguished from comic books by their common styles, which include manga, superhero stories, non-superhero stories, personal narratives, and non-fiction. The famous scholar, Jackline Berndt recognized manga as "one of three main comic cultures of the world along with American Comics and Franco-Belgian bande dessinée". (Berndt, 2008, P.229).

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1.2.1 Definition

Outside of Japan, manga has traditionally been considered a distinct world that comprises a diverse variety of Japanese-produced and published comic books and graphic novels. According to the Merriam-Webster dictionary, manga are "Japanese comic books and graphic novels considered collectively as a genre". Nevertheless, as people from different countries started adopting this style, many scholars think that "it's better to categorize these works based on the specific characteristics usually found in drawings for this reason". Regardless of the country of origin, manga is essentially printed in black and white (fig. 1) because they are drawn by a single person and are published in various weekly magazines and collected later in volumes. However, full colors are sometimes used. Manga is read from right to left in the Japanese language rather than left to right like English publications.



Figure 1: Astro Boy Manga

The term manga was created by the creative artist Katsushika Hokusai (1760-1849). The word is comprised of the characters (Kanjis): -man- meaning “whimsical, random, involuntary, uncontrolled” and -Ga – meaning “pictures, drawing, painting”. It can be translated as “free line drawing or caricature”. The same word is used by Koreans as “Manhwa” and the Chinese as “Manhua”. The writers of manga are called “Mangaka”. They are both authors and painters of their works, and each one has his/her own style of manga, such as Tezuka Osamu’s Astro Boy and Akira Toriyama’s Dragon Ball Z. The mangaka Rakuten Kitazawa (1876-1955) was the first to use this word with its modern meaning. Osamu Tezuka is considered the God of Manga due to

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his valuable contribution to the world of Japanese comics.

The Guardian in 2017 described manga as “stylish, philosophical, and visually striking”. Moreover, The Sunday Times in 2013 noticed, “It is richly detailed and visually immersive”. It owns a variety of audiences (children, youth, and adults), sub-genres, and themes such as romance, comedy, horror, action, adventure, fantasy, science fiction, etc.

Manga is a big business with famous publishers like Kodansha and Shogakukan. In 2020, the manga industry in Japan recorded ¥612.6 billion due to the fast development in digital sales and the invasion of foreign markets, especially the American one. Thus, they are translated into different languages. It is a very popular art form since everyone in Japan reads manga. Being the result of Japan’s cultural encounter with the western entertainment media and distributed by Japan’s globalized culture industry, manga, and anime have become the most universally recognized forms of contemporary mass culture and a powerful force in the mediascape and the marketplace. According to MacWilliams, manga and anime are “a key part of contemporary Japanese visual culture...[but also]... play an increasingly important role in the global mediascape of electronics and print media that is shaping collective imaginations, experiences, and feelings of people throughout the world” (MacWilliams, 2008, p.8).

Thus, manga is not simply a series of stories in pictures, but it shapes a nation’s culture, traditions, assumptions, beliefs, dreams, and fears. “They attract millions of people, both Japanese and worldwide because of their aesthetic of excess, conflict, imbalance, and oversensuality” (Bouissou, 2008). They expose not only Japanese culture to the world but also portray the global influence of other human cultures.

1.2.2 Historical Evolution

Manga has roots that go deep in history, despite attempts by some in the West to limit its origins to Western influence, particularly that of America. One group of scholars, led by Frederick L. Schodt, claims that manga originated in the 12th century, in the pre-war period (pre-Meiji). Others argue that it started during and after the

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occupation of Japan by the Allies, when Americanization¹ influenced Japanese art through comic strips such as Popeye and Disney cartoons.

Hence, manga is not a recent concept. When we talk about manga, we go back to the 12th century in Japanese history, to "giga" or picture scrolls that were produced by Buddhist monks. The scrolls glided back and forth, representing the passage of time with popular symbols like cherry blossoms and scarlet leaves. "Choujuugiga" (Fig. 2), translated as "Animal Scrolls," is the most celebrated artwork in that genre, produced by the Buddhist priest Kakuyu, depicting animals behaving like people and satirizing Buddhist priests. Giga's work includes a diverse range of comedic genres. Charming humor can be seen in scenes from the scroll that portrays cartoonish rabbits and monkeys washing and preparing themselves for a ceremony. A monkey robber hides from the animals with sticks and takes down a frog from the colorful ceremony. The Frolicking Animals Handscroll may have had an indirect but significant influence on current manga through a constellation of artistic inspirations distributed across Japanese art history.



Figure 2 : Choujuugiga

Throughout the 17th century, another genre called "Haiga"(Fig3) emerged which is an art and literature painting type concerned with poetry, notably linked verse (Haikai), an extended version of 17-syllable haiku poetry. Yosa Buson's (1716-1783) Caricatures of Eighteen Poets (1777) is an example of Haiga. This type is less popular than the other Japanese comics, but that doesn't lessen the impact it had on the creation

¹ The action of making a person or thing American in character or nationality.

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of contemporary Japanese cartoons at the start of the twentieth century. Ōtsu-e (Fig4) is another type of traditional painting that was created in Ōtsu City, Ōmi Province, from the early 17th century until the late 19th century. Otsu-e, which means "pictures from Ōtsu," worked originally intended as Buddhist religious images and were created in very expressive works by nameless painters.



Figure 3: Haiga



Figure 4: Otsu-e

The graphic motifs have extended to encompass secular themes from ancient literature and other sources. Popular scrolls portray a demon dressed as a Buddhist monk reciting the name of the Amitabha Buddha, and a lady clutching a wisteria branch. As Ōtsu city was the harbour between two major cities, these artworks were designed to be affordable souvenirs for visitors and passersby.ōtsu-e achieved

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unexpected popularity throughout the Edo era (1615-1868) with music and theatre. Its imagery inspired a number of woodblock printmakers, especially Utagawa Kuniyoshi (1798-1861), whose work was influenced by Ōtsu-e characteristics. Thanks to Kuniyoshi's Masterpiece "Floating-world "(Ukiyo Matabei meiga no kitoku, 1853) a new genre was established "ukiyo-e". These paintings were generally scandalous images of sights from the red-light district, though they also illustrated the age's pleasures, such as the newest outfits and the most popular places to visit. One of Kuniyoshi's pieces that sparked controversy at the time was "the yellow cover," in which he paraded a pantheon of Ōtsu-e figures, headed by a demon in Buddhist robes, towards him within a yellow cloud. Kuniyoshi was taken aback by the amount of criticism his print sparked. Although being accepted by censors at first, it was rapidly understood by the people as having revolutionary political significance. As a result, the Edo City governor promptly prohibited the print, dismissed the censors who authorized the design, and directed the annihilation of the woodblocks used to create it. Ukiyo-e and Ōtsu-e paintings gained massive popularity in the 20th century and are treated as a national treasure.

Another collection of drawings (Toba-e) (Fig.5) was also published in the 18th century during the Edo period (1603-1867). Toba Sōjō(1053-1140), the artist to whom that scroll is credited, was honoured in the early 18th century through the popularization of Toba-e-paintings and prints that highlight exaggerated physical features and highly emotional gestures. "The Toba Carriage," claimed by toŌoku Shunboku (1680-1763) and originating from the 1720s, is an important woodblock that represents the Toba-e style perfectly. It portrays four guys preparing to cook a pumpkin in a kitchen. Due to the gourd's enormous size, two men use a crosscut saw to split it, a third uses all of his might to hold the gourd in place, and a fourth uses a huge Uchiwa fan to keep the other three cool. Sound effects and exclamations are written in the vacant area around the characters. The cutting of the saw is marked in the upper left as "zashi zashi," and the stronghold of the third cook is signalled in the bottom left as "hike hike," which is one of the contemporary manga characters.

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Figure 5: Toba-e

Katsushika Hokusai, a famous "Toba-e" and "ukiyo-e" artist who lived from 1760-1849 and left over 30,000 works, invented the term "manga" in 1798. He was the designer of the famous woodblock "The Great Wave". His new name for some of his artwork collections was made up of the terms "man" 漫 meaning "whimsical" and ga 画 meaning "picture," and from then until the beginning of the twentieth century, it referred to a simply done sketch or group of drawings. However, The name "manga" gradually came to signify something closer to the English term "comics" and "sequential art," referring to a succession of pictures, typically mixed with text, that conveys a narrative in a single-sheet or multi-page style. And that was Following World War Two when Japan found itself occupied by the United States. This was a significant event in the evolution of manga. The Americans brought their own comics and animations to the nation, such as Disney masterpieces, Mickey Mouse, Betty Boop, and Bambi, making a lasting effect on the aspiring manga-ka (manga makers and comic book artists). After the independence and with the beginning of Japanese modernization, Japanese artists developed their own style, first in newspapers and magazines that sought popularity, and later in dedicated weekly and monthly comic publications that included a collection of roughly 10 or 20 series parts every edition. Osamu Tezuka, who developed the iconic Astro Boy, and Machiko Hasegawa, with his Sazae-san, were among the earliest and most popular manga artists. Tezuka hailed as the "Father of Manga and Anime," designed the unique wide eyes that have become synonymous with both genres. Astro Boy, for example, embodies the style, and as such, it soon became - and continues to be - very popular in Japan and internationally.

Manga started with the children's audience with Osamu Tezuka New Treasure

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Land (Shinta Karajinia) written in 1947. Accordingly, as the children grew older, manga also converted to the adult audience. Thus, it is directed at children, youth, and adults. There is a manga for everyone.

Manga's universe is expanding and achieves a peak towards the end of the twentieth century as a result of its widespread distribution. The subjects and styles are very diverse, yet the costs remain relatively low. It invades the Euro-American market in the 19th century.

During the 2000s, the manga market has been a significant element of the publishing sector and a significant contributor to the Japanese economy as there are thousands of manga, anime, and computer games that devoted fans, known as Otaku who reached 2, 4 million in Japan and spent Over 2, 5 billion dollars a year on these products(Makino,2007).This emphasizes the greatness and importance of the manga's market.

1.2.3 Characteristics

Manga is a unique genre with distinct features, including its specific format and length, the use of certain colors, various sub-genres addressed to all groups and ages, attractive magical themes, expressive characters, fascinating art styles, and immersive storytelling narratives.

However, Western scholars tend to focus on manga as "mirrors of Japanese culture," neglecting the aesthetic and cultural ambiguity of manga, as well as its historical and cultural hybridity (Berndt, 2008, p. 296).

According to Carroll, manga and anime are not homogeneous in style, content, characterization, themes, age levels, and genders, and they are produced in ever-changing social-historical contexts.(cited in Macwilliams,2008,p9/10)

1.2.3.1 Format and Length

Manga follows the traditional style of the Japanese language. It is read from the right side to the left and the top to the bottom. (Fig 6)

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Figure 6: How to read Manga

Thus, an English reader requires to start from the back of the work. Some publishers utilize a technique known as flipping out to convert the tale into a format more recognizable to non-Japanese audiences.

These comics are published serially or in installments since the publisher wants to keep the reader interested and take the next piece of the story. In Japan, manga is first published in magazines that collect different stories. If certain ones get popular, then the stories are collected and published in a new volume. Next, the volumes are put in books (Tankobon)

1.2.3.2 Genres

Manga is a diverse form of entertainment with stories suited for all age groups and genders. There is a manga for everyone. That is why they are divided into groups according to their demographics and audiences. As children become older, they need new manga's content appealing to their age as teenagers and adults. Moreover, one of the dominant divisions in the manga market is the split between male and female demographics. Critics have turned this division to the segregated school system in Meiji² Japan. So, we can distinguish different categories.

Shonen Manga

This manga is addressed to boys from 10 to 18. Shonen means "young boy". Its

² An area of Japanese history that extended from 1868 to 1912.

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stories focus on adventure, action, friendship, sports, and battles. Its covers frequently depict male protagonists in dynamic action scenes. They also possess an aspect of comedy. Naruto, Dragon Ball, and One Piece are popular examples of the Shonen manga series. (Fig 7)

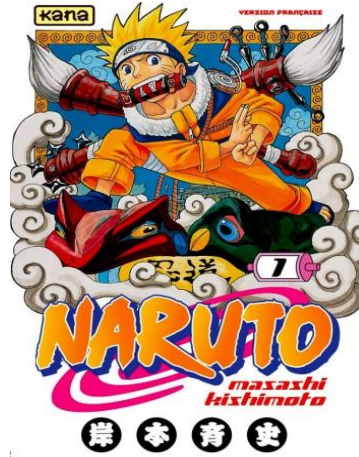


Figure 7: Naruto Shonen manga cover

Shoujo Manga

It was introduced by a group of female manga artists. This manga is directed at young girls aged from 10 to 18. It emphasizes on relationships, emotions, and dramas. It gives an idealistic image of romance and coming-of-age themes. Unlike shonen manga, shoujo manga covers are decorated with slender elegant male characters, flowers, and pretty images. Some popular shoujo manga series include: Ao haru ride, Sailor Moon, and Fruits Basket. (Fig8)

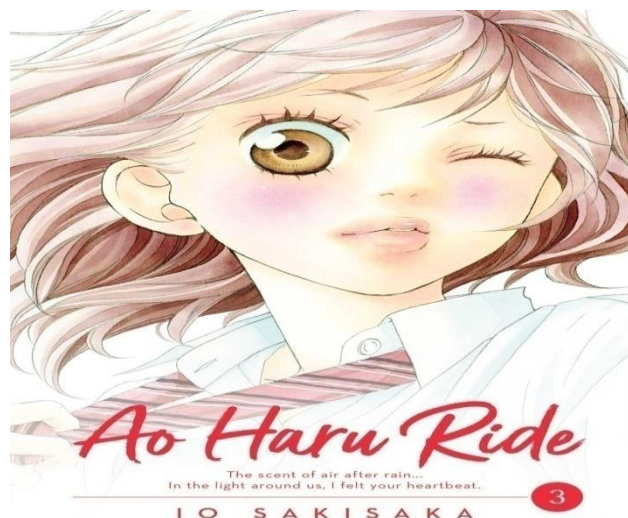


Figure 8 : Ao Haru Ride Shoujo manga cover

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Kodomamuke Manga (Kodomo)

They are designed for young children aged from 4 to 10 especially those who have just started reading. These stories envelope simple plots that stress moral lessons, friendship, and adventures. This manga exposes comic illustrations to make reading enjoyable. The famous Kodomo manga include: Doraemon, Pokemon, and crayon skin chan.(fig9)

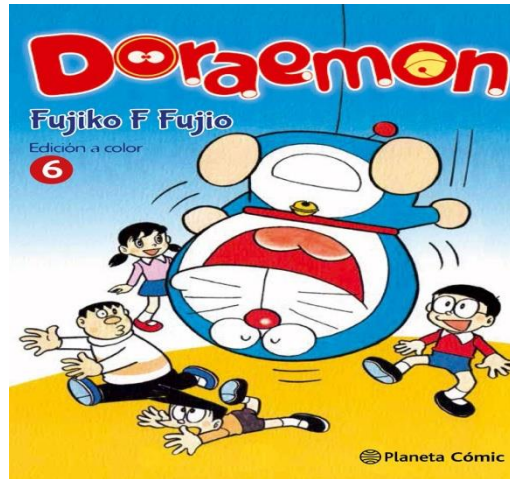


Figure 9: Doraemon Kodomo manga cover

Gegika

This popular manga, which means “dramatic pictures”, was introduced by Yoshihiro Taksumi whose works are courageous and more realistic in art style and general content and less cartoonish approach to storytelling. Unlike the cuter characters of many mangas, the Gegika contains more mature and serious dramas. It is portrayed to older readers as it was popular among poorly educated urban workers and university students during the 1960s who were against the establishment of politics of the time. Senpei Shrato’s Ninja Bugeisho (secret Martial arts of the Ninja), which pictures peasant uprisings, reflects the student worker and anger over current issues such as the Japan-American security treaty. The popularity of this category was linked with Doujinshi (fan art). Many fans created it to show their love for a published manga story or to show their own imaginations and artistic abilities to build a different or new direction to the original story. They are not simple amateurs, since some of them succeeded to sell their works due to their high quality.(fig10)

There are other categories depicted to adults like Seinen (man / masculine) which

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is published for men, Josei (women/ feminine) for women, Shonen-ai (boy love), and Shoujo-ai (girl love). These subgenres are not appropriate for children and are censored in many countries because of showing violence, sex, teen pregnancy, and abortion.



Figure 10: Gegika Manga

2.2.3.3 Major Themes

Themes of manga are typically diverse including action and adventure, romance, science fiction, comedy, sports, thrillers, and slices of life. Here are the most popular themes discussed in the manga.

Firstly, Action, which is one of the most popular themes, covers subjects of sport, mecha, and cars. Sports stories focus on athletes' struggle to forge a destiny due to their hard work. It can be either an initiatory narrative on perseverance and team spirit or a love story or friendship. Sport has always had an important place in Japan. We can notice this in the manga of Suzuka and Prince of Tennis.

Mecha or robots is a very prominent theme in series such as Gundam Seed and Full Metal Panic. It discusses the possibility to exceed others' knowledge and the future of the country due to high technology. The Japanese consider robots as pet items like the robot Aibo or simple tools. Also, the manga portrays automobile races and introduces the term vigilant cars. This can be seen with motorbikes, speed boats, and vessels. This is indicated in the Pole position and Initial D or Capeta.

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Secondly, human relationships constitute an exciting theme in the manga. This incorporates Romance, Gakuen (milieu scolaire), comedy, Harem, and slices of life. School romance comedies are the most used concepts in Shonen manga. These stories frequently picture a young couple falling in love while dealing with their growing adolescence and school environment. There are teenage romance stories because the majority of manga readers are teens. We can cite here: Pastel School Rumbled, Gakuen Heaven. In addition to this, the term "Harem" is utilized to speak about a manga in which the principal character is surrounded by a great number of persons from the opposite sex with whom he has to cohabit and choose the one he likes more. Examples of this concept are: love Hina and Ychigo 100%.

Moreover, this rubric includes slices of life stories. They are simple and slow stories that narrate the daily life of a person or a group of friends. Work, friendship, and love are the general elements exposed in this theme. There is nothing extraordinary. Examples of this type are Honey and Clover and Koi Kaze.

Thirdly, literary themes such as initiatory narrative, horror, adventure, and history are also interesting manga topics. The initiatory narrative follows the evolution of the character toward comprehension. This development isn't always positive. Horror depicts the darker side of characters like in Tomié and Ghost Hunt. Thrillers (Black novels) and detective stories are also included in this rubric with Arcana and Detective Conan. Manga explore horror and the supernatural including folkloric and literary sources, and urban myths that are incarnations of the phantom world of Yokai³. Besides, adventure centers action, discovery and traveling in the universe where the heroes develop. It follows a protagonist's journey as he confronts villains and defeats obstacles like in Naruto, Dragon Ball, and One Piece. As the Japanese like history mainly theirs, we can also find historical mangas portraying the Samuria epoch and atomic explosions or other countries' histories like the adaptations of the Three Musketeers, an account of Monte Cristo and Christoph Colomb.

Additionally, science fiction is another famous theme in the manga. The imaginative world has always existed in the human imagination for many reasons: to understand the surrounding world, to criticize this world, or simply to create and

³ Yokai : a class of supernatural entities and spirits in Japanese folklore

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modify. The art of creating imaginative worlds is called world building which is featured by the use of high technology as giant robots, shifting at a very high speed, traveling in time due to a machine, and future or parallel worlds.

Furthermore, Eechie is used to represent sexual content with a comic effect. Female readers' strong attraction to Shonen-ai has been linked to the social pressures against Japanese Women's experience of sexuality outside of the family (Lelland 2007, 14-15, Orbaugh 2003, 211 ; ogi 2001,151-53).

Lastly, some mangas bring up unique subjects such as food, music, songs, and dance competitions. This can be found in mangas like Mister Ajikko, Food Wars, and Full Moon Wo Sagashite.

1.2.3.4 Art Characteristics

The manga's art style varies among artists ranging from cutesy characters with big eyes (Tezuka's style) to more realistic images (Gegika). Manga remains an art form with distinctive common characteristics that set it apart from other comic book genres.

First of all, manga is known for its use of black and white art, while some are published in color, the majority are drawn in pen and ink and are black and white with an emphasis on clean lines and the use of screen tones to add texture and shading. The reasons for using black ink refer to the fact that it costs less and results in lower prices for the end product. Besides, the producer uses very cheap recycled paper. Manga is usually done by one person. That means the artist has to draw and ink almost 50 pages of manga in a month by himself alone. Another reason is the faster production as it will be impossible to color manga to release new chapters weekly. Additionally, reading a black-and-white manga makes it a unique piece of art.

One of the most recognizable features of Manga is its unique character designs. Manga characters are often drawn with glistering large almond-shaped eyes, small mouths, abnormal hair color and spiky hairstyles (Fig 11), slender silhouettes, and white skin. These exaggerated features give them a distinctive appearance that resembles Westerners. It was started by the mangaka Osamu Tezuka, the creator of Astro Boy who recognized being affected by Disney film style in the 30s and the

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'40s. Opposed to the gritty realism and overt politics of the Gagika style, Tezuka founded an archetypical manga style featuring cute characters with large eyes. This style becomes one of the manga's stereotypes and these physical features are used to convey emotion and create a connection between the reader and the characters. Consequently, the big eyes help to get the characters' emotions in a powerful way.



Figure 11: The character Midoria from the manga my Hero Academia

Besides, manga characters usually show over-exaggerated emotions.

“When a character cries, tears pour out in buckets; when they laugh, their face seems engulfed by the size of their mouth, and their eyes become slits. An angry character has rosy cheeks and steam roiling around the body” (Abert,2018) (Fig12).

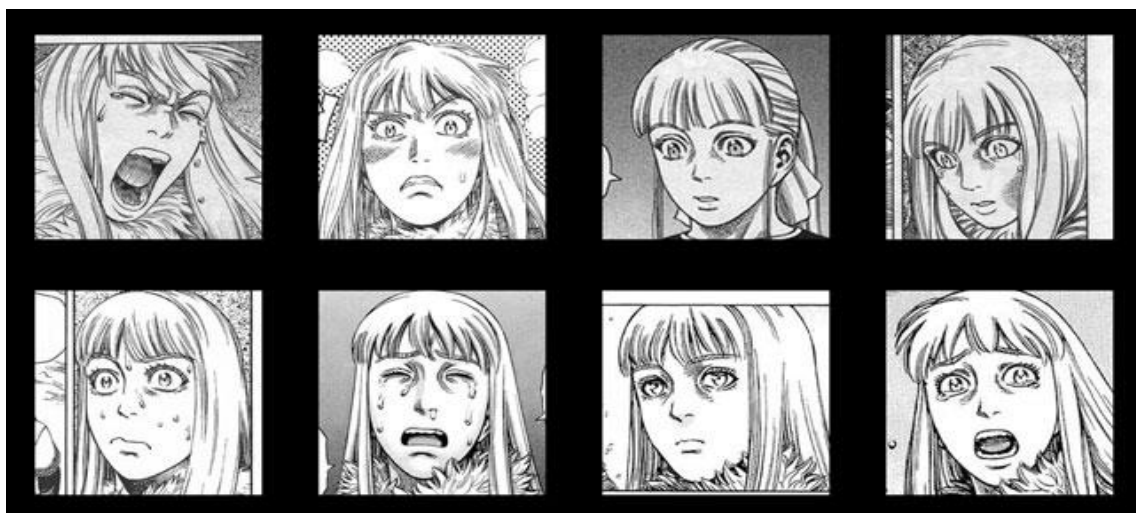


Figure 12: Different expressions of the character Canute from the manga Vinland Saga

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In addition to manipulating their characters' facial expressions, artists frequently include special devices to make feelings more clear. For example, a sweat drop on the forehead is used to show that the character is feeling embarrassed or tired. Exclamation points over the head translate shock or surprise, while steam from the ears demonstrates anger or frustration. Artists sometimes draw eyes differently by leaving them white to show confusion or astonishment. Accordingly, manga show detailed close eyes of faces more frequently and focus on the physical expressions of emotions. Other mangaka sometimes change the style of characters purposely to emphasize what the character wants or is going through. For instance, a muscled and tall hero can be drawn as a child if he is angry or does not want to do something. The shift is generally very brief.

Manga has also a unique panel layout. The panels are often arranged in non-linear ways, with different shapes and sizes to create a sense of pacing and emphasis. This allows the artist to control the flow of the story and highlight important moments. Thus, manga is set up with detailed art panels containing bubbles of speech. The story is contained within a frame called "Koma", which surrounds an image making a picture border. So, to read a manga page, you start with the "Koma" in the top right corner and end with the "Koma" in the bottom left. (Fig13)



Figure 13: this page from the manga Naruto is divided into 7 Koma.

The famous critic and scholar Natsume Fusanosuke describes the work of the

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Mangaka “First, an artist frames the object he observed within his picture. Before he lines up them, he breaks them down according to an abstract standard he calls time. And then, capturing in the scene all of its sounds, which we call language, he contains their own word balloons” (Johnson-woods, 2010)

In Japanese manga, Onomatopoeia⁴, is used because there is not much distance between words and images in Japanese “ For example words like Biku tome (not at all”) or hirakinori (“getting defiant”) are drawn in like onomatopoeia despite their not being sound words” (Fusanosuke,2020, p174). There are also panels where the borders disappear. This makes Japanese panels different from Western comic panels.

Another feature of manga is its dynamic movement. Action scenes in manga are often portrayed with a sense of motion and energy, using speed lines and dramatic poses to convey movement. This adds a sense of excitement and tension for the reader and adds to the overall storytelling experience. Manga contains fewer words and relies more on visual storytelling. Therefore, it has a faster pace than American comic books. Unlike the west whose languages nearly consist more of sounds and consequently letters are used to indicate these sounds using the hearing part of the brain, the Japanese language uses both the hearing and seeing parts of the brain simultaneously. This occurs because the Japanese language brings together hearing part words called Kana and seeing part words called Kanji. Natsume affirms that “Japanese has an aspect to it where fundamentally sound and image intersect at all times, so that’s why we can immediately swap out time and space.”(Fusanosuke, 2020)

Thus, the structure of the Japanese language results in the manga’s closeness between the pictures and the words (the symbolic manga’s picture), the loose quality of time sequences and the use of less text (highly decorative panel compositions) and the utilization of white space (expanded interpretive possibilities for what happens between each panel).

Additionally, the critic Simon Richmon explained, “The cinematic style of presentation is common along with graphic “sound effects” and speed lines to emphasize action. Boys are characterized by jagged straight lines and girls are presented in a more flowing and flowery style”.(Johnson-woods,2010). He highlights

⁴ The formation of a word from a sound associated with what is named (e.g cuckoo = crack)

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the widespread usage of diverse artistic styles to depict boys and girls in the media. Boys are frequently drawn with jagged straight lines emphasizing activity, whilst girls are depicted with a more flowing and floral manner. These images, however, have the potential to feed into prejudices and reinforce gender norms. It is critical to foster diverse and inclusive media depictions.

1.2.3.4 Story Characteristics

Manga is a medium of storytelling that has unique characteristics. “They rely on easily comprehensible schema of representation, clear plots and the readers’ easy identification with the stories’ characters” (Macwilliams, 2008, p10)

One of the most prominent story characteristics of manga is long-form storytelling. Many manga series are serialized, with chapters released on a regular basis over a period of months or even years. For example, Naruto manga was serialized from 1999 to 2014. This allows the in-depth exploration of complex themes and characters’ shapes, creating a deeper connection between the reader and the story. In general, manga possesses complex and profound emotional plots that attract readers through its drama. Many critics assert that this is what separates it from its other comics.

Another important feature of manga is its focus on character development. Manga series explore the emotional journeys of their characters, allowing the readers to connect with them deeply. On one hand, characters have a defined personality, whose relationship with others exists in a more real humanized way. On the other hand, the manga’s spacial or temporal location must be in the Japanese territory or have a relationship with Japan.

Besides, “there is less reliance on text and narrative is created through expressive line drawing along with the visual development of individual characters.”(Rousmaniere, 2019). Manga contain less text than Western comics, they are extremely easy to read with reader-viewers consuming a 320-page comic book in twenty minutes (Shodt, 1996, p26). Thus, manga is a visual storytelling medium with artwork that is as important as dialogue in conveying the story. Additionally, unlike Western comics which feature superheroes who save the world alone, Japanese manga

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features realistic heroes and heroines even if their life isn't ordinary.

Furthermore, manga encompasses a wide range of genres and themes, from action and adventure to romance and slice-of-life. This diversity allows for a wide range of storytelling possibilities, attracting a high range of interests and preferences and appealing to all age groups and audiences.

Moreover, manga also makes use of good pacing⁵ and foreshadowing⁶ to create tension and suspense, creating important story moments. In addition to this, many manga series use symbolism and metaphor to convey a deeper meaning, adding another layer of depth to the story. For example in Full Metal Alchemist manga, Lut's last words to Roy Mustang were "I look forward to the day when those eyes will be wide with agony". Mustang later ends up blind. In episode two of Your Lie In April Kaori is the fourth performer to play. In Japan, the number four is considered unlucky and is the word for death.

1.2.4. Relationship to Anime

Manga and anime are two cultural mediums that affect one another. Manga represents printed Japanese comic books and graphic novels whereas anime exposes Japanese animation (cartoons) "They both blend the visual and the verbal into a unified whole, manga via a synthesis of text and images and anime through dialogue in cinematic line action" (Carrier 2009, 69). Being the created product of Osamu Tezuka, "the godfather of Manga" and the "Japanese Walt Disney", manga share many similarities and possess many differences.

Unlike anime, manga is published in black and white as coloring them takes too much time and money. It is cheap to publish since it requires only one mangaka who is the author and illustrator. Besides, manga is a quicker way of publishing stories. A single manga can be written, drawn, and inked within a single week while an anime series will require months of work to produce an episode.

Moreover, manga is considered to be "more artistically original than anime, much the same as books are to films" (Trautle, 2006). On the contrary, lots of anime are pre-

⁵ Interesting development in some way in every single chapter whether it is a character or plote.

⁶ A narrative device in which suggestions and warnings about events to come are planted to expect what is coming.

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existing stories adapted from the manga. Manga is the source for over 90 percent of anime.

Additionally, manga is a unique storytelling medium, allowing creators to tell long and complex stories that can take years to complete. However, anime can bring manga to life in ways due to the use of animation, voice acting, colours, and music that can be more engaging than the manga. The two can be closely linked as many manga have been made into anime such as Attack on Titan, Dragon Ball, and Naruto. Thus, lots of manga are known thanks to their anime adaptations.

In fact, the relationship between manga and anime goes beyond just being source material for each other. They are part of a larger industry known as the “anime/manga industry” or “Otaku culture” and are a significant part of Japan’s economy. “Anime and manga are intertwined industries where one influences the other”.

The popularity of manga and anime led to the creation of a vast range of merchandise such as figures (dolls, figures), posters, and T-shirts. This merchandise is a significant source of revenue for both the manga artist and the anime production company. Moreover, many popular manga and anime series have been adapted into video games, such as Dragon Ball Z, Naruto, and One Piece which also generate significant revenue.

Furthermore, anime is considered a vehicle to raise the sales of manga, and related franchise merchandise. For instance, Kuroko’s Basket Ball anime in 2012 shot the manga series into second place after the bestselling comic One Piece. This anime represents the sport series Renaissance.

1.3 The Depiction of Japanese culture through Manga

Manga is the most popular form of Japanese entertainment, due to Japan's literacy rates, newspaper circulation, TV viewing rates, and mass media technologies. Moreover, it has become a significant part of Japanese daily life thanks to its cheap price and diverse themes, from romance and action to horror and slice of life, for different age groups and audiences (children and adults, men and women). Thus, manga possesses a unique ability to grow with its readers. The famous manga expert Takamasa Sakurai claims that "Japanese manga broke the convention that manga is

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something that only kids would want to watch" (Fox, 2020)).

Manga has become synonymous with Japanese culture, as it exposes a variety of aspects of its culture such as Kawaii (culture of cuteness), food (sushi), language, architecture, festivities, religious ceremonies, customs, values, art, clothing, cherry blossoms, vending machines, and mythology. The linguist and cognitive scientist Neil Cohn has defined manga as "Japanese visual language" (Macwilliams, 2008). They are considered as "mirrors of Japanese culture" by many Western scholars. Ernst Fenollosa affirms that Japanese art indicates a "carefully nurtured refinement that gave deep insight into the secrets of the East" (Chilson, 1963, p96). "They are an open window onto the Japanese id, a view - not necessarily of reality itself, but of a culture's aspirations, dreams, nightmares, fantasies, and fetishes" (Schodt, 2006,p2).

Manga has succeeded in brightening the aspects of Japanese society that were once opaque and exotic for non-Japanese readers. Kinsella describes manga as a "medium that carries an immense range of cultural material" (Kinsella, 2005, p3). It gives a deep picture of Japan instead of the stereotyped superficial image in the West. Through its depictions of Japanese culture, it can provide readers with a window into the country's rich history and traditions. For example, manga may feature historical figures, events, or settings, which can help readers learn about Japan's past. Although manga may refer to science fiction and technological artifacts, traditional Japanese customs are still visible. Shinto and Buddhist religious festivities, such as Oshogatsu (celebrated to start a new year), Setsubun (celebrated for the coming of spring), and Hanami (celebrated for the coming of cherry blossoms), are still showcased in manga, even though most Japanese people claim themselves as atheists. Part of the manga's landscapes shows Shinto temples and imperial castles. Historical characters such as the samurai, the traditional aesthetics from feudal times, Yokai (Japanese mythological creatures), and Japan's traditional folklore are also displayed.

Additionally, manga portrays many Japanese values like Zen⁷ philosophy, Bushido (Samurai codes of conduct), and the Fuito (fight). They are morals of national thought and Confucianism which indicate Konjo (strong-spiritedness), success by hard work, self-denial, dedication, persistence, loyalty, and respect for elders as in Dragon

⁷ A school of Buddhism that originated in china and flourished in Japan .Zen means meditation with an emphasis on self control and insight.

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Ball manga and Naruto. Consequently, the Japanese are slaves to work, and it is still common to think of staying in the same company for a lifetime, to which they owe more loyalty than their own families. Similarly, manga may illustrate traditional arts and crafts such as calligraphy or flower arrangement, tea gardens, which can offer insights into Japanese aesthetics. Japanese customs like bowing (Ojigi) as greeting hierarchy of Japanese corporation symbolized in the seats assigned to each worker in the meetings, removing shoes before entering a home and wearing slippers, honorific speeches called Keijo, no eating and drinking while walking in public, and using of Onomatopoeia (sounds like "Ahh," "Hee," and "Huhh" similar to "I see" and "Really") are also exposed in manga.

Furthermore, manga exposes the challenges of modern Japan. The excess workload added to high pressures for getting the best university and unemployment have caused the suicide of many Japanese people. It also portrays the mixture between millennial culture with modernity. In addition to this, older traditions in Japan considered forms of homosexual activity normal or beneficial (Plugfelder 1999, p 287). Hence, there is no censorship on ecchi manga in Japan unlike overseas.

Another important element in Japanese culture that manga deeply pictures is sport since it is viewed by Japanese society as a "testing of the spirit" (Sabin 1993, p. 202).

Finally, manga constitutes an essentially distinctive cultural identity. It created a defined sense of Japan's own unique culture as a powerful source of national pride as citizens. "In the Japanese case, political cartoons were essential for defining 'us' against 'them' and contrasting a sense of Japaneseness" (Yulia Mikhailova, 2008, p 156). Jean Marie Boussissou claims that "Japanese culture is less repressed than Western cultures, which are constrained by Judeo-Christianity. It is much less inhibited about sex, phantoms, superstitions, numerous spirits, monsters (friendly or not), and a healthy dose of the irrational, all survive in Japan's collective unconscious, thanks to the country's late entry into modernity, its ignorance of Cartesian philosophy⁸" (Bouissou, 2008).

Accordingly, manga offers "the first formative exposure" to the culture for many non-Japanese people around the world and encourages cultural exchange.

⁸ Refers philosophical and scientific system of Roné Descartes that accepts dualisms like mind , body ,good , evil ,nature and culture.

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1.3.1 The Role of the Manga in the Japanese culture

Manga plays a significant role in Japanese culture, serving as a form of entertainment, education and cultural expression. It has become an integral part of Japan's creative industry and its impact can be seen in various aspects of Japanese society.

First of all, manga represents a central aspect of Japanese daily life as millions of people read it at home, in means of transport, in cafes, in offices even at parliament. So, Japan is what Susan Sontag describes as an "image world", where Japanese mass media are producing and consuming images (Sontag 2003,80). This creates an environment full of stories. The fact that the annual sales of manga books and magazines reach between 35 and 40% of all productions in Japan show the extent and range of audiences.

Likewise, manga is often used as a teaching tool in Japanese classrooms, as it can help students learn about history, literature, grammar and other subjects in fun and engaging way. For example, the manga "chihayafuru" teaches readers about the traditional Japanese card game of Karuta.

Besides, manga and anime are essential players in Japan's soft power and soft nationalism. They expose a positive image of Japan to inject in Japanese a powerful sense of national pride. Manga also provided space for artists and writers to express their own unique perspectives and experiences. Many manga explore themes related to Japanese identities such as 'Barefoot Gen' which depicts the bombing of Hiroshima and its impact on Japanese society. They are means of transmitting conservative and ideological messages. "As the efficient and wide diffusion of cultural messages and instruction becomes more and more important in rational society, manga has become a vital means to facilitate cultural socialization (such as family values or military values) and even political ideology (such as the support for the Liberal Democratic Prime Minister)" (Hashimoto, 2018, p3)

Moreover, manga is a popular form of entertainment in Japan, with millions of readers across the country. Many manga have been adapted into anime, video games, and action films, contributing to Japan's flourishing media industry.

Manga is also a complete medium of expression created to escape from the pressure of the real life including hard work and studies. According to the manga expert, Frederick Schodt, they also have the power to express people's hopes and fears. (Macwilliams, 2008 P12). They are "an articulation of a dream world" (Napier 2005, 73-74). Manga is a source

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for political, ethical or existential critical reflection. They are “new sources and disciplines for construction of imagined selves and imagined worlds” (Appaduria 1996, 3-7, Treat 1993, 365-366, Ito 2003-2004) (cited in Macwilliams, 2008, p10)

They promote self-understanding as they can be a source of identity and also a fictive world of identification. “Today, young Japanese adults can be greatly influenced by this fictive world that offers a space for frank discourse, a safety zone to talk about anything on any topic from sex to violence to war” (Hashimoto, 2018, p3). Manga becomes the escapism dream for many Japanese people who wish their lives were like in manga because they feel isolated or stuck in a more industrial and capitalist society.

Finally, manga is a medium to discuss social issues and criticize the capitalist system far from parents, teachers and political authorities such as in the classic manga *Zenigeba* (money crazy). Thus, manga stimulates their readers to question certain aspects of Japanese society.

1.3.2 Manga’s perception in Japan

Manga is a widely respected and popular form of entertainment in Japan. It is viewed as a mainstream form of entertainment enjoyed by people of all ages ,genders and backgrounds. It is not limited to a specific age group and is enjoyed by both children and adults due to its wide variety of themes, ranges, and depth. Every Japanese person reads or has read at least a single manga. It is a part of everyday life, an important part of the Japanese economy and culture. Manga's posters and figures can be seen everywhere in Japan. They are media scapes of dreamscapes "when stressed-out modern urbanites daily work out their neuroses and frustration" (Macwilliams,2008, p10). Manga is often featured in mainstream media and is a topic of discussion on TV shows, news programs, and other forms of media.

Manga is also considered an art form in Japan. Its unique style, storytelling, and character design make it stand out as a unique and creative medium. Many manga artists are admired as true artists, and their work is featured in museums and galleries. The influence of manga can also be seen in other art forms, such as anime, video games, and fashion. There are also doctoral candidates writing about manga, and even honorable professors specialized in manga and anime.

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In addition to being an art form, manga also serves as a platform for social commentary in Japan. It deals with a wide range of topics, such as politics, society, and culture, and is often used to express the opinions and beliefs of the author. Manga can be a powerful medium for addressing social issues and encouraging discussion and debate.

The importance of manga today is manifested in several ways in Japan. For example, the district of Akihabara, which has evolved over the years from specializing in technology to an almost tourist district specialized in manga and anime. Moreover, the choice of Goku, from Akira Toriyama's famous Dragon Ball, as ambassador for the Olympic Games in Japan, as well as the artistic participation of mangakas Hirohiko Araki and Katsushiro Otomo, highlight deeply the cultural and artistic respect of manga in Japanese society.

Nevertheless, a large percentage of parents and educators perceive manga as a negative phenomenon related to crimes. They have been criticized for their sexual and violent content, which endangers underage readers. For example, the "Otaku Killer" who murdered four young girls was found possessing Hentai manga.

In spite of these drawbacks, manga remains a window to the social, cultural, and economic Japan.

1.3.2.1 Social Phenomenon

Manga is not only a form of entertainment or cultural expression in Japan, but it is also a social phenomenon that has had a significant impact on Japanese society. Manga has the ability to bring people together and create a shared experience, playing a role in creating a sense of national identity. For instance, "Mushishi" and "Kimi Ni Todoke" are examples of manga that showcase Japanese folklore and cultural traditions. According to the manga expert Frederik L. Schodt, "Manga and anime were long destined to become such a large social phenomenon" (Schodt, 2006).

Manga often reflects the social and cultural issues of the time such as social order and hierarchy, sexism, racism, ageism, classism, and so on. This provides a commentary on contemporary Japan. For example, "Koe no Katachi" explores the topic of bullying and its impact on the victim and criminal, while "Ooku" imagines a

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world in which women hold political and social power. Manga like "20th Century Boys" and "Billy Bat" offer a critical view of Japanese history, politics, and society.

Additionally, the manga industry in Japan is a significant source of employment, providing jobs for manga artists, editors, publishers, and other related professions. Many aspiring artists see manga as a viable career option, leading to a competitive and dynamic industry. An example of this is "Bakuman," which follows the lives of two aspiring manga creators who aim to become successful in the industry.

Moreover, manga has also driven tourism in Japan. Many manga series are set in real-world locations in Japan, and fans often visit these places to experience the settings of their favourite stories. For instance, "Lucky Star" is set in the city of Washimiya, and as a result, the city has become a popular tourist destination for anime and manga fans.

Finally, some manga series have served as a platform for social and political activism. For instance, "Eve no Jikan" explores the concept of robot rights and discrimination, while "Buddha" offers a critique of traditional Japanese religion and societal hierarchy. "Barefoot Gen," which depicts the bombing of Hiroshima and its impact on Japanese society, is a prime example of a manga that has sparked conversations and activism related to nuclear disarmament.

1.3.2.2 Commercial Product

Manga is not only a cultural phenomenon in Japan, but it is also a major commercial product. The manga industry in Japan is a multi-billion dollar industry, with manga sales in Japan accounting for a significant portion of the country's publishing revenue. The manga market was worth 613 billion Japanese yen in 2020. Manga magazines, tankobon, merchandise, adaptations, and international sales all contribute to the manga industry's success.

Manga magazines are a popular commercial product in Japan. For example, Weekly Shonen Jump is a manga magazine that features serialized manga chapters and has a circulation of over 2.5 million copies per week. The magazine's success has led to the creation of various spin-off magazines and related products. The magazine serves as a platform for new manga series to be published and discovered by readers,

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making it an essential part of the manga industry.

Tankobon, which are the paperback collections of individual manga chapters that have been serialized in magazines, are sold in bookstores and are a significant source of revenue for the manga industry. Many manga series have achieved immense popularity, resulting in high tankobon sales. For instance, “One Piece” has sold over 490 million tankobon volumes in Japan alone, making it one of the best-selling manga series in history.

Manga merchandise is another significant part of the manga industry. Fans can purchase figurines, posters, clothing, and other related products. Merchandise sales can significantly increase the revenue of a popular manga series. For example, “Dragon Ball” merchandise, including action figures, T-shirts, and other ornaments, are popular among fans and have contributed to the success of the manga series.

Furthermore, manga adaptations are a significant commercial product in Japan. These adaptations include anime, live-action movies, and TV dramas. The success of the anime adaptation can increase the sales of the manga and its related merchandise. For example, the anime adaptation of “Attack on Titan” was a huge commercial success, leading to increased manga sales and merchandise sales.

Additionally, international sales of manga are also a significant part of the manga industry. Manga translations are sold in various countries, making it a global commercial product. For example, “Naruto” and “Death Note” are popular manga series in the United States and have been translated into multiple languages for international sales.

Finally, Carroll considers manga as a mass art which reinforces “the values of the capitalist system that produces it” and “encourages a spirit of passivity by encouraging consumers to conform to the status quo, unlike genuine art, which intellectually engages them to reflect critically on their lives in a way that may lead to revolutionary social change” (Carroll 1998, p72-76). However, Appadurai criticized this view and claimed that they are a source for political, ethical, or existential critical reflection since they offer “new resources and disciplines for the construction of imagined selves and imagined worlds.” And also provide a “staying ground for action and not only escape” (Appadurai 1996, p 3-7)."

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1.3.2.3 Digital Manga:

Digital manga has become increasingly popular in Japan in recent years. With the rise of smartphones and tablets, more and more people are reading manga on digital devices. There are several key aspects of digital manga in Japan that have contributed to its popularity.

One aspect of digital manga is the availability of digital manga platforms. Several digital manga platforms are available in Japan, such as MangaONE, ComicWalker, and Shonen Jump+. These platforms offer a wide selection of manga series that can be accessed on various devices.

Another aspect of digital manga is the availability of subscription services. Many digital manga platforms offer subscription services that allow readers to access a large selection of manga for a monthly fee. For example, ComicWalker offers a subscription service called ComicWalker Unlimited, which allows readers to access thousands of manga series for a monthly fee.

Digital manga also provides opportunities for exclusive content. Some manga series are released exclusively on digital platforms, such as "Attack on Titan: Before the Fall." This creates a new market for digital manga and provides opportunities for new series to gain popularity.

Interactive features are another aspect of digital manga. Digital manga platforms often include interactive features, such as the ability to zoom in and out of pages, add bookmarks, and access additional information about the manga series. This enhances the reading experience for fans and provides a new level of interactivity.

Localization is also an important aspect of digital manga. Digital manga platforms offer manga translations in multiple languages for international readers. This helps to expand the global market for manga and provides opportunities for Japanese manga artists to reach a wider audience. For example, Shonen Jump+ offers English translations of popular manga series like "My Hero Academia" and "Jujutsu Kaisen" for international readers.

However, piracy is a concern for digital manga, as it is with any digital content.

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To combat piracy, many digital manga platforms have implemented measures like encryption and digital rights management (DRM) systems.

1.4 The Adaptation of Manga in Worldwide cultures

As a unique aesthetic artform destined to Japanese audiences, manga succeeded to surpass the cultural barriers and attract overseas audiences in Asia, Europe, North America, Africa and Australia. This success is due to manga's diversity of themes, age groups and backgrounds. Moreover, Japan's technology and economic power helped the Japanese to be the second exporters of cultural products after the U.S. Thus, the Japanese authorities decided to use it as a tool of diplomacy to spread its soft power and Japanese-ness. The manga fan foreign Minister Taro Aso considers Japan's global culture as an affective tool of diplomacy. "Soft power"⁹ is just as valuable as "hard power" to boost Japan's brand image because it reflects "Japanese sensitivities and way of thinking" (Macwilliams, 2008, p15). This encourages foreign creators and artists to adapt the Japanese manga into local types of manga as a way to interpret their own identities.

The adaptation of manga in worldwide cultures has been an interesting and varied process. Manga has become popular in many countries around the world, and as a result, it has been adapted and transformed to fit the needs and preferences of different cultures.

One of the most common adaptations of manga is through translation. Manga is now available in multiple languages, including English, Spanish, French, and German, among others. Some manga series have been translated into multiple languages, allowing them to reach even wider audiences. Translation is an important adaptation because it allows readers who are not fluent in Japanese to enjoy manga.

Another adaptation of manga has been through localization. Localization involves altering the content of the manga to fit the cultural context of a particular country. For example, in some countries, certain cultural references or jokes may not make sense to

⁹ The ability to influence or persuade others through persuasion and personal attraction.

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readers, so they are changed or explained differently in the localized version. Localization can also involve altering the artwork or dialogue to be more appealing to the local audience.

In some cases, manga has been adapted into other forms of media, such as anime, live-action films, or video games. This is often done to capitalize on the popularity of a particular manga series and to bring it to a wider audience. These adaptations can sometimes differ from the original manga, as they may need to make changes to the story or characters to fit the new format.

Additionally, manga has been adapted by fans themselves, through fan fiction, fan art, and cosplay. Fans may create their own stories using the characters and worlds from their favourite manga series or create their own artwork based on the original designs. Cosplay involves dressing up as characters from manga or anime, often with elaborate and highly detailed costumes. These fan adaptations are a testament to the creativity and passion of manga fans around the world.

So, why has manga become a global cultural product? And how does it become a means to express cultural identities?

1.4.1 Manga as a Global Cultural Product

Manga has a distinctive style that sets it apart from other forms of comics or graphic novels. "It may be cheaply mass-produced, but manga is also a high-quality consumer good" (Bouissou, 2008). Manga is often characterized by its use of exaggerated facial expressions, dynamic action scenes, and detailed backgrounds. This visual language is unique to manga and has become iconic among its fans. The use of visual storytelling in manga is also notable. Many manga series are designed to be read from right to left, which is different from the traditional left-to-right reading style of many other comic formats. The visual language and storytelling techniques in manga are part of what makes it a unique and engaging form of art.

Mr. Teiji Hayashi, former director of the Public Diplomacy Planning Division, Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MOFA) of Japan explains, "Manga has a wide range of fans, from small children to senior citizens, because its storylines are clear and the characters are rich in humanity". This is why they are often "utilized not only for

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entertainment but also to provide simple explanations about difficult matters like history, natural science, and social issues" (Iwasaki,2019). Manga has accompanied cultural and economic globalization. Manga is ideally suited to the cultural obsessions of the early twenty-first century (Bouissou, 2008). Unlike Western countries, which have always believed in the universality of their values and sought to spread them as a cover for their imperial ambitions, Japan has historically been doubtful about sharing its culture with the world because of the Shinto religion, which tended to be only national. Hence, it is more remarkable that its popular culture was capable of gaining "universality" due to its collective imagination.

In conjunction with Japanese fashion, pop music, and TV dramas, both are central players in Japan's "soft power/soft nationalism," and both have effectively displaced Disney and Americanization as the new "dominant transnational economic and cultural force" (Macwilliams, 2008, p15).

Mio Bryce claims that "manga is a part of Japanese culture with an extraordinary suitability for transcultural flows."(2010) Nurturing national identity through culture has a long history in Japan. It first arose in the early twentieth century as a response to the challenges of modernization and westernization. "Japaneseness" became related to high cultural symbols like Zen, the tea ceremony, and Ukiyo-e prints. In the 1980s, Toyota and Sony were considered new symbols of Japan's superior high-tech industrial power. In the early 1990s, software became the newest icon of Japanese identity. According to Iwakushi (2002), that was referred to as "Soft nationalism" (cited in Williams, 2008, p15).

Furthermore, according to Kinsella (2000), manga and anime were used to express Japanese "soft nationalism." The Japanese government has encouraged Japanimation's official status as one of Japan's cultural exports (Macwilliams,2008 , p15). This makes Japan the second cultural exporter in the world. An example of Japanese politics is the popular TV anime, Captain Tsubasa, which was translated into Arabic to be "Captain Majed." It is about a boy who dreams of becoming a great football player. The Captain Majed stickers were put on the Japanese supply trucks during their coalition forces in Iraq. According to Massakey (2006), the show is used to propagandize the bright future of Japan as a peace-loving, soccer-playing foreign power who acts for the good of Iraqi people who love soccer (cited in Macwilliams,

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2008, p16).

Therefore, according to Brendt and Richter (2006), manga and anime offer their Orientalist iconography "in the complicit exoticization of Japan" (cited in Macwilliams, 2008, p.16). Douglas McCray observed, "Japan is reinventing superpower again. Instead of collapsing beneath its widely reported political and economic misfortunes, Japan's global cultural influence has quickly grown. From pop music to consumer electronics, architecture to fashion, and animation to cuisine, Japan looks more like a cultural superpower than it did back in the 1980s when it was an economic one" (Macwilliams, 2008, p.16).

However, scholars like Iwabushi point out that Japanimation is deliberately produced for transnational mass consumption. Thus, manga articulates both the universal appeal of Japanese cultural products and the disappearance of any perceptible "Japaneseness". An example of Japanese cultural odorlessness is Shirow Masamune's *Appleseed*. Some of its characters have Japanese names, others are Greek figures. This supports John Treat's (1996) view that "It is now impossible to write or even conceive of Japanese popular culture without involving much of the rest of the world" (cited in Macwilliams, 2008, p.16). In fact, Tezuka gathered his themes and characters from all sources- Asian and European history, the worlds of fairy tales, and American science fiction films. The manga are populated not only by samurai, ghosts, and robots but also by actresses like Marilyn Monroe and comic book heroes like Dick Tracy. Iwabuchi concludes that the key to the global success of Japanese anime and manga is that "they leave their use value to consumer tastes and cultural traditions outside Japan" (2002, p.463), allowing themselves to be appropriated according to local preferences (Allison, 2006, p.192).

Manga has conquered the global market for the mass circulation of manga, mainly through newspapers, magazines, and comic books, but now also through the electronic media of video games, the internet, and cell phones. Translation was an efficient tool in spreading manga abroad. But the need to translate manga from Japanese resulted in concrete delays in their international release. Moreover, many titles were never released internationally because they were inappropriate for specific markets. Thus, the internet offered a wonderful solution and faster spread of manga.

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Many fans learned Japanese, acquired the original manga, then scanned, translated, edited, and posted them on the internet for free downloading. This is called scanlation.

In addition to scanlation sites, there is a Wikipedia manga subset: publishers have websites where various mangaka demonstrate their skills. International manga competitions are another image of the internationality of manga, such as Tokyo Pop's Rising Stars of Manga competition in the U.S. and in the U.K. Besides, the Japanese government has launched the International Manga Award in 2007 to promote international diplomacy and that manga can "enhance understanding of Japanese culture" (Johnson-Woods,2010, p.11).

1.4.2 Manga as Way to Interpret Cultural Identities

Being a unique distinctive Japanese cultural phenomenon doesn't delete the universal features of manga. Due to the conquest of the international market, manga becomes a universal style created by not only Japanese mangaka but also artists from diverse cultures and identities all over the world. It attracted fans from all continents : Asia , Europe, North America, Africa and Australia. It also penetrates its readers' cultures. Thus, those readers and artists tried to express their own cultural identities through manga.

1.4.2.1 In France

First of all, at the start of the twenty-first century, Japan became the world's second-largest exporter of cultural products. Manga has conquered 45 percent of the French comic market, becoming the second-largest consumer of manga in the world after Japan. It also dominates through industrial mass production. In the 1970s, Japanese studios were producing episodes of the manga UFO Robot Grandizer (known in France as Goldorak) for less than 3000 US dollars per minute, compared to 5000 US dollars per minute for Tintin produced by French studios. Young fans of Goldorak and Cindy Cindy - the two most popular Japanese animated TV series among French youth at the end of the 1970s - grew into adults who would open the French market to manga with the all-conquering translation of Akira in 1989-90. These groups of fans have

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enabled French publishers in recent years to bring to market quality series for an educated adult audience, including the gekiga, Tezuka's adult series, or the work of female cartoonists.

According to Jean Marie Bouissou(2006), manga brings pleasure to the mind by satisfying six fundamental psychological needs: the will to power, the need for accomplishment, for security, for excitement, for escape, and the need to be distinct. Manga's success in France is due to the exceptional freedom allowed to it and to a number of peculiarities of Japanese culture concerning sex, phantoms, and superstitions. "There are significant themes in the global success of manga at the turn of the century: the apocalypse, science, and the individual" (Bouissou,2006,p10). Keiji Nakagawa's Barefoot Gen (1972) achieved little success in the West because the apocalypse in a Judeo-Christian world is God's business without human intervention. It failed to be translated because it pictured a pure Japanese experience, which is the Hiroshima trauma. On the contrary, Otomo's Akira opened the French market to manga due to its disillusionment, which awoke among French children who grew up in the late 1960s, surrounded by doubt and disappointment, and the evaporation of the communist dream. Akira diffused multiple interpretations like anti-Americanism, anti-militarism, and humanitarian-Buddhist religion. Later, Tezuka's Astroboy pictured the fact that, thanks to science, children would build a better future after failing in the war. During the 1990s, manga series started portraying the revenge of nature or supernatural forces against pollution and genetic modification or the manipulation of deadly viruses. This theme earns a large readership in France and abroad as pollution and global warning are dominating worldwide.

Consequently, in France, artists, readers, and fans of manga have started to make their own Japanese-inspired comics, including fan fiction, fan art, and cosplay, and young adults have been forming their fan clubs and websites and displaying their comic creations in the public domain. These fan works often reflect the cultural identities and experiences of the creators, as they incorporate aspects of French culture into their works. These French manga are sometimes called "manfras". They possess the same Japanese traditional aspect with the same graphic styles. They are only created by French people. Examples include City Hall, Pink Diary, Dofus, and Radiant by Tony Valente, which became the first French manga published in Japan.

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Figure14: Radiant French manga cover by Tony Valente cover

1.4.2.2 In The USA

In the United States, manga has exploded in popularity over the last two decades. North America is one of the largest foreign markets for manga, worth an estimated 300 million USD in early 2011. "The features which most radically distinguish Japan from the West (lack of monotheism, lateness of modernity) are precisely those which have given it pride of place in the 'past modern universalism'" (Bouissou,2006, p6). At the beginning, scholars and readers often viewed this art form through an Orientalist view, "treating manga as the exotic antithesis to American and European comics" (Eike, 2022). In the past, Americans were obsessed with Japanese high classical culture, such as Zen Buddhism and the fine arts. Toshiya Veno has noted, "If people once asked, 'what is Zen?' now they ask 'What is Otaku?'" But today, the elegant geisha strolling in a tranquil garden has been replaced by a saucer-eyed, super-sexy heroine in a post-apocalyptic dystopian landscape. The image of Japan for American youth today is not Pearl Harbor or Japan's traditional "classical" culture, but Naruto, Cowboy Bebop, and Ranma.(Macwilliams,2008,p.16). Manga has gained popularity globally because it has always offered something for audiences diverse in age, gender, and taste. Neither French nor American comics could provide such variety. At the turn of the twenty-first century, manga appealed to the spirit of Western youth looking for a world exposed

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of the uncertainties of reason and exhausted of the modernity's utopias. The reason for the popularity of manga and anime in North America, according to Schodt, is that "manga and anime are great fun and also demonstrate the true potential of comics and animation, both of which were first developed in North America but were later neglected and ghettoized as entertainment for juveniles or emotionally immature adults" (cited in Macwilliams, 2008, p16).

The number of young American fans of manga has increased, translated manga has become more popular, and the study of pop culture has become more legitimate at universities. Another sign of the popularity of manga in the U.S is the proliferation of many conventions and local clubs for children and adults. Shonen Jump, the most important manga weekly for Japanese teenagers in the mid-1990s, has begun appearing in an American version.

Today, the style has become so popular that American publishers are adopting the manga style and translating Japanese "classics" like Akira into English. Inspired by manga's powerful style, American artists, readers, and fans have started to create their own manga to express their own experiences and cultural identity, such as festivities and food like pizza. An example of this is "The Adventure of CG" by Suet Lana Chmekora. While CG's face is drawn according to manga conventions with oversized eyes, her story is about an American college student during her semester in Tokyo. Original English Language (OEL) manga are increasingly being sold in book format as well. Also, the online comic Megatokyo is directed by the popular American manga artist Fred Gallagher. TokyoPop's editorial director, Jeremy Ross, affirms that manga is now an "internalized style of visual storytelling that transcends national origin. We're seeing the globalization of manga taking place" (Cha and Reid, 2005).

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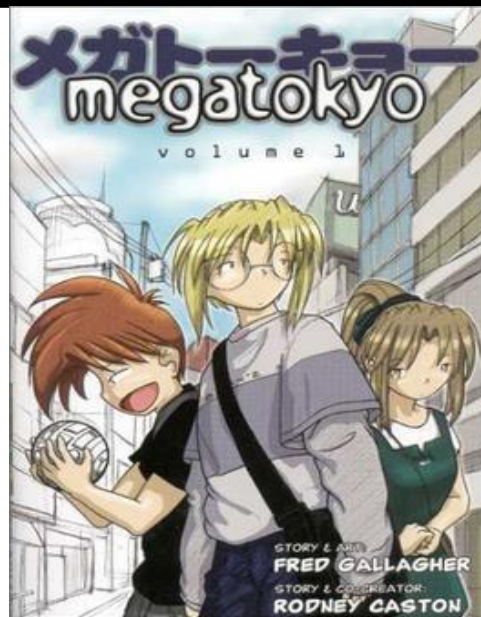


Figure15: Megatokyō manga cover directed by the American manga artist Fred Gallagher

Megatokyō is an American manga portraying the adventures of Piro young of anime and manga and his friend Large.

1.4.2.3 In Korea

While manga is a Japanese art form, it has also had a significant impact on Korean popular culture and has become a way to interpret cultural identities in Korea. Manga has influenced Korean pop culture in a variety of ways, from the visual style of comics to the storytelling techniques used in Korean dramas. The Korean cartoonist Yeon-Sik Hong claims, "most Koreans still remember well the Japanese invasion of the country and its colonial rule. So, we call Japan a country that is so close, yet so far." There has been some resistance on both sides. Korean comics in Japan tend to be localized or rubbed of Korean design and language elements. The tension was notified in part, by a growing rivalry in pop culture, including Japanese manga and Korean manhwa.

One way that manga has been used to interpret cultural identities in Korea is through its influence on the Korean comics industry, also known as "manhwa." Manhwa artists have been inspired by manga and have incorporated elements of the visual style and storytelling techniques of manga into their own works. This has

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created a unique blend of Korean and Japanese cultures, which can be seen in popular manhwa series such as "Yumi's Cells" and "Tower of God."

Another way that manga has influenced Korean culture is through its role in the Korean wave, or "Hallyu." The Korean wave refers to the global popularity of Korean entertainment, including music, dramas, and films. Manga has played a part in this wave by inspiring Korean artists and writers to create works that are influenced by Japanese culture. This has led to the creation of popular Korean dramas such as "Boys Over Flowers," which is based on a Japanese manga series.

Finally, manga has been used to interpret and express personal cultural identities in Korea. Korean manga fans have embraced the art form and have created their own fan works, such as fan fiction and fan art. These works often reflect the cultural identities and experiences of the creators, as they incorporate elements of Korean culture into their works.



Figure16: Tower of God korean manga cover

Tower of God is a Korean manhwa which is about a boy named Bam who spent his life in a mysterious Tower with his close friend Rachel.

1.4.2.4 In Algeria

Manga has also become a way to interpret and express cultural identity in Algeria. While the popularity of manga in Algeria may not be as widespread as in some other countries, it has still had an impact on the country's cultural landscape. The art form's

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tremendous social and commercial influence can be attributed to its popularity among young people and its role in identity construction through popular culture (Toku 2001; Wilson 2003).

Manga helps its participants see Japanese culture not as exoticism but as imaginary to recreate personal and cultural identity. Members alter the manga style, giving their characters a distinct look that may be utilized to develop their own identities.

One way that manga has been used to interpret cultural identity in Algeria is through its portrayal of Japanese culture. Manga often depicts Japanese customs, traditions, and way of life, which can help Algerian readers better understand and appreciate Japanese culture. Additionally, the art style of manga, with its emphasis on expressive characters and intricate details, can be appealing to Algerian readers who are interested in visual art. The famous manga and anime that attracted a lot of Algerians are: Captain Majed, Dragon Ball, Pokemon and Naruto.

Another way that manga has been utilized in Algeria is through its use in language education. Many Algerians have learned Japanese through reading manga, as it provides an engaging and immersive way to learn the language. This has led to an increased interest in Japanese culture and language in Algeria.

Finally, manga has been used to explore and express personal cultural identity in Algeria. Algerian manga fans have created their own manga-inspired works, including fan fiction, fan art, and cosplay. These fan works often reflect the cultural identities and experiences of the creators, as they incorporate aspects of Algerian culture into their works. Manga, according to Alexandra Gueydan-Turek, an associate professor of Francophone studies at Swarthmore College in the United States, may help postcolonial nations struggle with their own cultural identities. She outlined the birth of DZ-manga, or Algerian manga, to dual tendencies: "a foreign nation which claims manga, as an alternative to both Western graphic forms and traditional Islamic art; and a localization through narratives that primarily address the young local readers." For Algerians, "manga is a way for them to discover a culture which is far from Algeria," agrees Salim Brahim, director of the Algerian manga publisher Z-link (Fig: Z-link). Z-link publishes titles in Arabic, French, and Berber, as well as the magazine

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Laabstore, dedicated to manga, anime, and games.

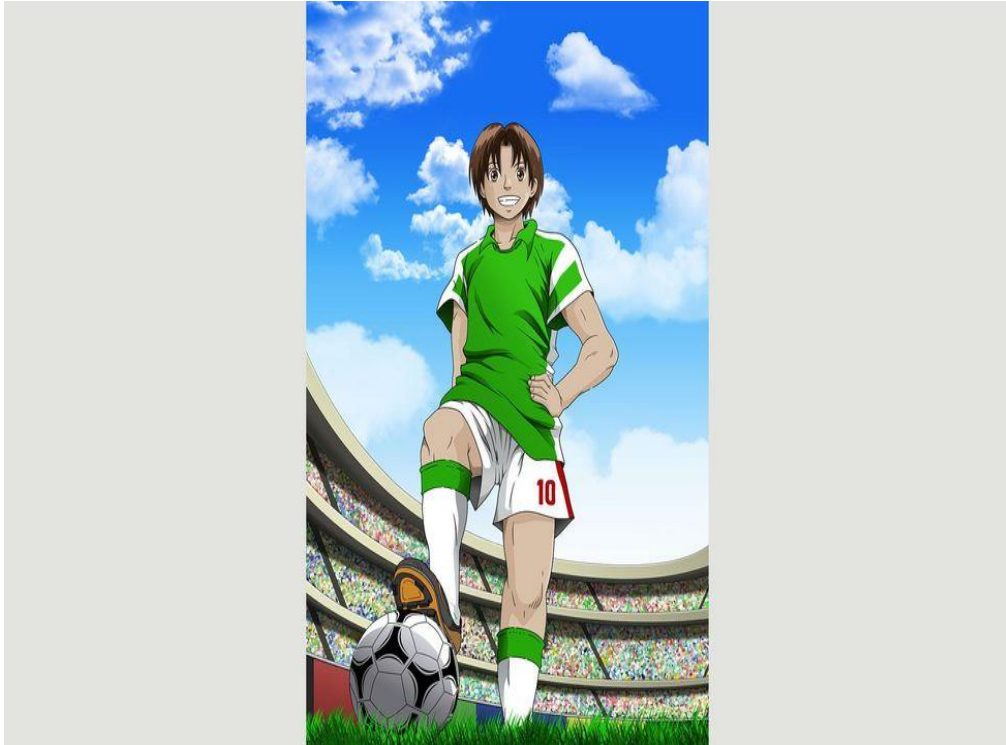


Figure17: The Algerian magazine Laabstore is dedicated to manga, anime and games.

This is an Algerian manga with the same Japanese characters' design portraying captain Majed with the National Algerian Football team clothes.

1.5 Conclusion:

Mangas are comics or graphic novels which use pictures to tell stories. It is a rich and diverse storytelling medium with its unique characteristics. Its focus is on powerful character development, a wide range of genres, and the use of pacing, foreshadowing, symbolism, and visual storytelling. It is addressed to a diverse number of age groups, sex and interests. This has made it a beloved medium for storytelling in Japan and around the world.

Manga's roots originated in the 12th century and evolved with Japan's importation of Western technology and popular culture in the early twentieth century such as Disney cartoons as a tool of Americanization.

After their success, manga series were adapted into anime. Manga represents

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printed Japanese comic books or graphic novels while anime portrays Japanese animation(cartoons). The relationship between manga and anime is multi-faceted and complex as they affect one another.

Manga is a powerful medium for storytelling and cultural exchange. Through its depictions of Japanese culture, it can offer readers a glimpse into the country's rich heritage and traditions as well as provide a platform for exploring contemporary social issues. Furthermore, manga has influenced various aspects of society. Its ability to reflect and comment on social issues, promote Japan's culture and identity, and contribute to the country's soft power has made it a powerful tool for cultural expression and exchange.

Additionally, manga is perceived in Japan as a respected and influential art form and an important part of the country's cultural heritage. Its popularity continues to grow both domestically and internationally and it remains a significant part of Japanese society. As a social phenomenon, manga has had a profound impact on Japanese society. Its influence as a unifying force, source of employment, driver of tourism, a reflection of society and a medium for activism has contributed to Japan's reputation as a global centre of pop culture. Besides, manga is a significant commercial product, which has become essential to the Japanese economy.

Overall, manga succeeded to evolve as an international language of Japan. Its adaptation to worldwide cultures has been a diverse and fascinating process. Through translation, localization, adaptation to different media and fan works, manga has become a truly global cultural product loved and appreciated by people from all over the world.

Furthermore, manga has become a way for people across the globe: in France, the US, Korea and Algeria to explore and interpret cultural identities both their own and those of others through its depiction of Japanese culture, diverse characters and personal fan works.

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2.1 Introduction

Naruto is a popular Japanese manga series written and illustrated by Masashi Kishimoto. His manga series Naruto ran from 1999 to 2014, it sold over 250 million copies globally in 46 countries. Naruto belongs to the shōnen manga genre, which typically features a young and determined protagonist who embarks on a journey to defeat evil forces. The hero's character is developed through intense battles, which highlight themes of personal growth, discipline, perseverance, friendship, justice, and loyalty. Martial arts play a crucial role in the hero's journey, symbolizing the importance of overcoming personal obstacles with the support of others. This narrative style is prevalent in many popular Japanese stories, including Naruto, which is considered a prime example of this genre. The manga narrates the story of Naruto Uzumaki, whose hometown of Konoha was attacked by the 9-tailed fox demon on his birthday. Naruto's father, the 4th Hokage, committed his life to rescue the village, locking the monster in his newborn son. Naruto had a tough childhood due to his parents' death; he was rejected by the villagers, who out of fear and anger viewed him as the Nine-Tails itself. Thus, he always desired recognition from his classmates and hoped to become the Hokage; the village leader to prove himself. Naruto never gave up and was able to graduate from the ninja academy and become a shinobi 13 years later, with the aim of becoming the village's Hokage. He is accompanied by the competitor Sasuke Uchiha, who seeks power to revenge for the slaughter of his clan by his older brother Itachi, and Sakura Haruno, Naruto's love interest, who adores Sasuke. Yet when Itachi returns to the village after the Chunin examinations, Sasuke is unable to prevent him. Sasuke will submit to the evil Orochimaru in order to acquire power. Naruto must do all in his ability to save his friend from sinking into darkness, even if it means losing himself in the process

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2.2. The Representation of the Japanese Culture in Naruto:

Naruto, a popular anime and manga series, has captured the hearts of fans all over the world with its compelling storyline and unique characters. One of the reasons for its appeal is the incorporation of Japanese culture into the series. From the values and traditions depicted to the use of Japanese mythology and folklore, Naruto provides a glimpse into the rich and diverse culture of Japan. In this part, we will explore the different ways that Japanese culture is represented in Naruto and how it contributes to the overall success and impact of the series.

2.2.1 Mythology and Symbolism

Naruto incorporates a great deal of cultural and religious symbolism throughout the tale and the setting. Though the writer was expressing his appreciation and passion for Japan's many unique and entirely diverse characteristics, Naruto's universe is vast and diverse in terms of nations and geography, with a bizarre combination of technology and magic that is both brilliant and backward at the same time, resulting in a one-of-a-kind era. A large number of characters come from several origins and races. Many of them are complicated, have intertwined histories, and have gone through life-altering events that have profoundly influenced their fates, for better or worse. Many layers of meaning have been expertly twisted into all colors of the characters, their setting, and their history, contributing to the storyline.

One of the most prominent examples is the techniques utilized in the Naruto universe, particularly ninjutsu, which are heavily influenced by Buddhist mythology, which, along with Shintoism, are the two primary religions in modern-day Japan.

The fundamental source of power underlying ninjutsu is known as Chakra, which, although related to the Hindu concept of spinning energy focus points within the body, is distinct in meaning, with "chakra" translating to "wheel" in Japanese. Within the Naruto world, Chakra is characterized by five different natures, each corresponding to the five basic elements of the universe as defined by Hindu/Buddhist beliefs: Earth,

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Fire, Air, Water, and Lightning. These five elements are also associated with the Five Great Shinobi Countries, the world's five most significant countries, and the primary focus of the Naruto series, each led by a monarch-like governmental figurehead known as a daimyō. The protagonist of the series, Naruto, is from the Land of Fire and is the host of the nine-tailed fox, a mythical creature associated with East Asian folklore and recognized as one of the most powerful tail beasts. It is called 九尾の狐 (kyuubi no kitsune) in Japan, the "nine tails fox". In the manga, it is named 九尾 (Kyuubi), which means "nine tails".

The utilization of the nine-tailed fox's power is regarded as a potential weapon by the country's leaders. The relationship between Naruto's use of the fox's power and the Japanese goddess of the sun, Amaterasu, is also noted, as the main character learns to exert this skill, he transforms into a "luminous Naruto," with flames around his body. It is also the significance of the sun in Japanese culture, as exemplified by the Japanese flag the name “Japan” in Japanese 日本 Nihon is formed by two characters: the "sun" and the "origin", hence it is "the land from where the sun originates".

« The Amaterasu Jutsu from Naruto symbolizes the Amaterasu (God of sun) from mythology in the fact that its flames cannot be extinguished and remain burning until its target is consumed. This represents the sun's undying, powerful flames which were highly revered in most ancient cultures but may also be symbolic of the fact that Amaterasu was locked out of her cave and could never return, meaning the sun would shine forever » (kaphinated,2010)

Moreover, the concept of the Third Eye is present in both Western and Eastern cultures, but in Buddhism, it is regarded as a symbol of enlightenment and is associated with the chakra, which is linked to abilities such as imagination, visualization, extrasensory perception, and self-mastery. It is possible that this concept may have inspired the eye techniques in Naruto, such as the Sharingan, Byakugan, and

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Rinnegan.

The anime series also includes numerous other symbols from Japanese culture, including the names of the characters' Jutsu, which are derived from Japanese history. For instance, Sasuke's power, "Kirin", which is a devastating lightning technique, is named after an Asian mythical beast composed of a dragon's body, the horns and legs of a deer, and the tail of a lion. In Japan, the Kirin is considered the highest of all mythical beasts and is believed to be a benevolent and peaceful creature that brings good luck and does not even disturb the grass it walks upon, though it is capable of spitting fire when angered, which is fitting as Sasuke emerges from the Land of Fire.

2.2.2 Beliefs

Naruto is deeply rooted in Japanese culture and includes a variety of cultural elements and beliefs. One of the key beliefs mentioned in Naruto is the Shinobi Way, which is the code of conduct that governs the actions of the ninja in the series. It emphasizes the importance of loyalty, perseverance, and teamwork, and is influenced by the Bushido code of the samurai.

Another belief that is prominent in Naruto is Shintoism, a traditional religion in Japan that is based on the worship of spirits called kami. In the series, many characters practice Shintoism, and the story incorporates elements of Shinto beliefs and practices, such as the use of talismans and purification rituals.

Feng Shui is another belief that is mentioned in Naruto. Feng Shui is a Chinese philosophical concept that tries to align people with their surroundings. In the series, Feng Shui is referenced as a method for designing buildings and structures to promote good energy flow and balance.

Buddhism is also a belief that is present in Naruto. Buddhism is a religion that originated in India and spread to Japan. The story incorporates Buddhist concepts such as reincarnation and the cycle of rebirth. Another cultural element that is mentioned in the manga is samurai culture, which is embodied by characters such as Might Guy.

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Samurai were a class of Japanese warriors who followed a strict code of conduct known as bushido, which emphasizes honor, discipline, and duty.

Another element of Japanese culture that is present in Naruto is the use of summoning Jutsu. This technique allows characters to convoke animals or mythical creatures to fight on their behalf. It is based on the Japanese belief in Shikigami, or spirit helpers, which are believed to be able to help humans in various ways.

Naruto also combines the Japanese practice of Fuda, which involves writing a protective talisman or charm on a piece of paper. In the series, characters use a variety of sealing techniques to heal powerful creatures or objects, which are based on this practice.

The concept of Senjutsu, a type of mystical energy that flows through all living things, is also present in Naruto. This energy is used by certain characters, such as Naruto himself, to enhance their abilities and become more powerful.

Moreover, Naruto includes many mythical creatures from Japanese folklore, such as the nine-tailed fox (kitsune), the tengu (a bird-like creature), and the kappa (a water spirit). These creatures are an important part of Japanese mythology and culture and add to the rich cultural aspects of the Naruto universe.

There are also various characters in the series that have beliefs and practices that could be considered religious or spiritual. For example, Jiraiya, one of the main characters and a powerful ninja, is a follower of a fictional religion called the "Way of the Toad," which involves studying the teachings of giant beasts.

Additionally, some characters are shown to be respectful of various spiritual practices and beliefs, such as when Naruto and his team visit a temple to pray for success in their mission.

While religion is not a central theme in Naruto, the series incorporate some spiritual elements and acknowledges. Naruto pictures the importance of belief systems and practices in shaping a person's worldview.

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2.2.3 Confucius's Philosophy:

Confucianism, a philosophy based on the teachings of the Chinese philosopher Confucius dating back over 2,500 years, serves as a framework for social and legal systems still prominent in Japan and in most East Asian countries. One of the fundamental beliefs of Confucianism is that humans have inherent goodness that can be taught and improved through their efforts and positive input from their community. In *Naruto*, this idea is depicted through characters such as the Third Hokage and Jiraiya and the impact their teachings had on the world through the actions of their disciples.

Another important belief of Confucianism is the emphasis on following the path of human oneness to build a society founded on peace, harmony, and collaboration. This strongly resembles Konoha's Fire concept, as advocated by the First Hokage and inherited by his successors. The concept of leaders being chosen based on a merit system evaluations of their abilities and virtues is also part of Confucian philosophy. These rulers then aim to instill their greatest qualities in the following generation, protecting and nurturing them until they are ready to take the reins and become leaders in their own way. This is shown in the "Akatsuki Suppression Mission" storyline, with Asuma's death and Shikamaru's rise.

Confucius's philosophy also emphasizes the importance of education and knowledge, which is reflected in *Naruto* through the emphasis on training and studying to improve one's abilities. The characters in *Naruto* are constantly striving to learn and grow stronger, which aligns with Confucius's belief in the power of education to uplift individuals and society as a whole.

Another key aspect of Confucianism is the concept of respectful piety, or respect for one's parents and ancestors. This value is evident in *Naruto* through the emphasis on family bonds and the way characters such as Naruto and Sasuke are shaped by their relationships with their parents and mentors. The importance of respect for authority figures, such as Hokages and elders, also aligns with Confucian ideals.

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Finally, Confucianism stresses the importance of moral character and virtue, such as honesty, compassion, and self-control. These values are depicted in Naruto through the actions of characters like Naruto himself, who consistently demonstrates kindness and empathy towards others, as well as the villains who have lost their way due to a lack of moral grounding.

2.2.4 Food:

Food is a significant aspect of the Naruto series and has contributed to the popularity of several dishes in Japan and beyond. Narutomaki Ramen, a popular Japanese dish made of wheat noodles served in a meat or fish-based broth, is one of the most iconic foods in the series. Naruto is frequently shown eating it throughout the series. Naruto's love of ramen and his frequent visits to the Ichiraku Ramen restaurant have helped to make the dish even more popular, with several Naruto-themed ramen shops opening in Japan. (Fig18).



Figure 18: Narutomaki Ramen Representation in Naruto

Dango, a traditional Japanese sweet made of small balls of rice cake picked on a stick, is another food mentioned in the Naruto series. Anko Mitarashi, a character in the series, is known for her love of Dango, which has helped to raise its profile among fans of the show.(Fig19).

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Figure 19 : Anko Mitarashi a character from Naruto eating Dango

Curry, a chief of Japanese cuisine made with a spiced sauce served with rice, is also featured in Naruto. In one episode, Naruto and his friends go on a mission to recover a stolen recipe for a special curry dish. The series has helped to popularize the dish even further, particularly among younger generations who may have been introduced to it through the show.(Fig20).



Figure 20: The Curry of Life was Represented in Season 7 Episode 4 of the Anime Naruto.

Finally, mochi, a Japanese rice cake made of glutinous rice pounded into a sticky, chewy texture, is another popular food mentioned in Naruto. In the series, mochi is associated with the New Year's holiday and is often enjoyed as a special treat during this time.

2.2.5 Fashion:

The Naruto series features a range of Japanese fashion, including traditional and

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modern styles. Traditional Japanese clothing is prominently featured, with characters often wearing kimono and hakama made from silk or cotton, and featuring complex patterns and designs. For example, the Hyuga clan wears black and white garments with distinctive designs.

In addition to traditional clothing, characters in Naruto also wear ninja clothing, designed for mystery and mobility. These outfits are typically loose-fitting black clothing with hoods and masks to hide the face. Ninja characters also wear weapons such as kunai and shuriken, which are stored in pockets on their belts.

Modern Japanese clothing is also featured in the series, with some characters wearing school uniforms or streetwear. For example, Sasuke wears a blue shirt and grey shorts.

Accessories are an important part of Japanese fashion and are featured in Naruto as well. Headbands worn by ninja characters feature the symbol of their respective village, while jewelry such as earrings and necklaces are worn by some characters.

Hairstyles are also an essential aspect of Japanese fashion and are prominently featured in Naruto. Sakura's long pink hair is a distinctive feature of her appearance, while Sasuke's spiky black hair is also iconic.

2.2.6 Material Arts

Naruto depicts the ninja world and the Samurai code. He uses different martial arts: boxing, Muay Thai, Taekwondo, Aikido, and Kungfu. These diverse arts are well-placed within the fight scenes.

The power to manipulate Chakra in Naruto is obtained by the use of hand seals, which is based on the Buddhist tradition of employing specified hand postures known as "mudras", for both symbolic and practical purposes in meditation. Many martial arts also incorporate mudras into their body positions, and this practice has been integrated into Naruto as a method of focusing the Chakra and performing Jutsus. The hand symbol in Naruto is based on the Chinese Zodiac, which is not solely a Buddhist

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tradition. According to Kaphinated, the origin of the Chinese Zodiac in Naruto is derived from a blend of Chinese folk legends and philosophies, such as Feng Shui and Taoism. However, a variant of the story suggests that the 12 animals associated with the Chinese Zodiac came to bid farewell to the Buddha before he entered Nirvana. Furthermore, each of these animals has been linked to one of the Buddhist 12 Heavenly Generals or the 8 Protector Deities, and as previously mentioned, these two traditions have been fused in the Japanese mythology of Kanshi.

2.3 The Impact of Naruto on Worldwide Culture

The series has captured the hearts of millions of fans around the world, thanks to its engaging storyline, memorable characters, and impressive action sequences. Naruto has become a cultural phenomenon, influencing everything from fashion and music to video games and social media.

One of the key reasons for the series' popularity is its universal themes. Naruto's journey is one of perseverance, determination, and overcoming obstacles. His struggles to prove himself and gain acceptance from others resonate with audiences of all ages and backgrounds. The manga also explores more complex themes, such as friendship, betrayal, and the consequences of war, which have contributed to its lasting appeal.

However, Naruto's impact on worldwide culture is vast and multifaceted. While the series has undoubtedly had a positive impact on many fans, its impact on different cultures and societies around the world has varied. In some cases, Naruto's influence has been a source of inspiration, while in others; it has been criticized for promoting negative stereotypes or contributing to a culture of violence.

2.3.1 The Positive Impact :

Naruto has had a significant positive impact on worldwide culture. One of the most significant impacts is its role in popularizing Japanese animation and Manga in

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the western world. Naruto has introduced millions of people to the world of anime and manga, inspiring them to explore the medium further.

Moreover, the story of Naruto has become popular with audiences all over the world because of its themes of perseverance, friendship, and never giving up on one's dreams. The main character, Naruto Uzumaki, is a determined young ninja who never gives up in the face of adversity. This message of resilience and persistence has resonated with many readers, especially younger ones who may be facing their own challenges. Naruto's focus on teamwork and the importance of supporting one another has also been praised for promoting positive values and encouraging readers to work together towards common goals.

Another positive impact of Naruto on worldwide culture is its portrayal of Japanese culture. Through the manga's depiction of Japanese customs, folklore, and martial arts, readers have been introduced to a wide range of cultural elements that may have been unfamiliar to them before. As a result, many fans of Naruto have become interested in learning more about Japan and its culture, leading to increased tourism, language learning, and cultural exchange.

The manga has also had an impact on the entertainment industry in the West. The popularity of the manga has led to the creation of anime adaptations, video games, and merchandise that have all contributed to the growth of the anime and manga industry in the West. This has not only provided fans with more ways to engage with the Naruto franchise but has also helped to create new job opportunities in the entertainment industry.

Naruto has inspired a generation of manga and anime creators in the West. Many Western artists have cited Naruto as a major influence on their work, and some have even gone on to create their own manga and anime series. This has helped to further diversify the Western manga and anime industry, bringing new voices and perspectives to the medium and expanding the range of stories and characters available to audiences.

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Another positive impact of Naruto is its representation of diversity. The manga features a diverse cast of characters from different ethnicities, and backgrounds, and with various physical abilities. This representation of diversity has been praised for promoting inclusivity and helping readers to see themselves and others in a positive light.

This manga also portrayed mental health. The manga explores themes of loss, trauma, and coping with difficult emotions, providing a relatable and realistic representation of mental health issues. This portrayal of mental health has been praised for reducing the shame surrounding mental health and encouraging readers to seek help when needed.

Naruto has had an impact on physical fitness and martial arts. The manga's depiction of ninja training and combat has inspired many fans to take up martial arts and other forms of physical activity. This has contributed to increased interest in fitness and health among fans, promoting a healthy and active lifestyle.

Additionally, Naruto has encouraged a sense of community among fans. The manga's popularity has led to the formation of fan clubs, conventions, and online communities where fans can connect with one another and share their love for the series. This sense of community has provided fans with a sense of belonging and has helped to create lasting friendships among fans from different parts of the world

The manga has also inspired fans to pursue their passions and interests. Naruto's message of following one's dreams and never giving up has resonated with many readers, encouraging them to pursue their own goals and aspirations. This has helped to promote a culture of creativity and innovation, inspiring fans to pursue careers in a wide range of fields, including art, animation, writing, and more.

Another positive impact of this manga is its influence on fashion and style. The manga's distinctive visual style, featuring bright colours, complex patterns, and unique character designs, has inspired many fans to incorporate elements of Naruto's style into their own fashion choices. This has helped to create a new fashion subculture that

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celebrates creativity, self-expression, and individuality.

Furthermore, Naruto has had a positive impact on the educational sector. The manga's popularity has led to the creation of educational resources, such as language learning materials and cultural studies curricula that use Naruto as a teaching tool. This has helped to make learning more engaging and fun for students, while also promoting cross-cultural understanding and global citizenship. It has also helped to promote reading and literacy among younger audiences. The manga's popularity has encouraged many young readers to pick up books and read more, promoting literacy and improving reading skills. This has also helped to cultivate a love of reading among younger generations, promoting a lifelong passion for literature and storytelling.

Finally, this manga has also helped to promote environmental awareness and conservation. The manga's depiction of natural environments, such as forests and mountains, has highlighted the importance of protecting and preserving the natural world. This has encouraged fans to become more environmentally conscious, promoting a culture of preservation and responsible stewardship of the planet.

2.3.2 The Negative Impact

While Naruto manga has had many positive impacts on worldwide cultures, it has also been criticized for some negative impacts. Here are some examples of the negative impacts of Naruto on Worldwide cultures:

One criticism of Naruto is its portrayal of violence. The manga features a lot of violence, including graphic fight scenes and depictions of injury and death. Some critics argue that this glorifies violence and promotes a culture of aggression and conflict, especially among younger readers.

Naruto is also criticized for its treatment of female characters. The manga's female characters are often portrayed in a stereotypical and sexualized manner, with their physical appearance and attractiveness being emphasized over their personality

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and abilities. This has been criticized for perpetuating gender stereotypes and objectifying women.

Naruto has also been criticized for its lack of diversity among its main characters. While the manga includes diverse characters in minor roles, the majority of its main characters are male and from similar backgrounds. This has been criticized for reinforcing mainstream narratives and excluding marginalized voices and perspectives. Also, when it portrayed race and ethnicity, some critics argue that it portrayed these minor characters in stereotypical and superficial ways that perpetuate harmful stereotypes. This can contribute to a culture of racism and discrimination toward marginalized groups.

Likewise, some critics have accused Naruto of promoting a culture of consumerism and materialism. The manga's popularity has led to the creation of a wide range of merchandise, including clothing, toys, and other products. Some argue that this promotes a culture of consumption and encourages fans to value material possessions over personal growth and development.

Naruto has also been criticized for its treatment of mental health issues. The manga features characters dealing with various mental health problems, such as depression and anxiety, but the portrayal of these issues has been criticized for being inaccurate and disgraceful. Some critics argue that the manga underplays mental health problems and extends harmful stereotypes, which can harm readers who may be dealing with mental health issues themselves.

Naruto has also been criticized for promoting a culture of toxic masculinity. The manga's emphasis on physical strength and aggression as markers of masculinity has been criticized for perpetuating harmful stereotypes and promoting a culture of violence and aggression. This has been particularly concerning for younger readers who may internalize these messages and adopt harmful beliefs and behaviors.

This Manga has been criticized for its portrayal of politics and government. The manga's depiction of political power and authority has been criticized for being

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simplistic and one-dimensional, failing to reflect the complex realities of political systems. This has been criticized for promoting a simplistic view of politics and undermining the development of critical thinking and political literacy among readers.

Moreover, Naruto has been criticized for its representation of disability. The manga features characters with disabilities, such as the blind character Toph, but the representation of these characters has been criticized for being stereotypical and perpetuating harmful stereotypes. Some critics argue that the manga portrays disabled characters as helpless and in need of pity, which can be disgraceful and harmful to people with disabilities.

Finally, Naruto has been criticized for its use of fanservice¹⁰. The manga often includes sexualized depictions of its female characters, which have been criticized for objectifying and demeaning women. This can contribute to a culture of harmful attitudes toward women.

2.4 The Different Interpretations of Naruto:

Masashi Kishimoto’s famous manga "Naruto", has been one of the most popular and enduring franchises in anime and manga history. Since its debut in 1997, the series has produced multiple interpretations, including manga, anime, movies, and video games. Each interpretation offers a unique perspective on the story of a young orphaned ninja named Naruto Uzumaki and his quest to become the Hokage, the leader of his village.

2.4.1 Manga

The Naruto manga is the original work that inspired anime, movies, and other adaptations. It is a serialized graphic novel that tells the story of a young ninja named Naruto Uzumaki and his journey to become the strongest ninja in his village, Konoha.

¹⁰ Refers to scenes designed to excite the viewer like nude scenes and shower scenes.

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The manga’s length is 72 volumes, with each volume containing multiple chapters.

One of the standout features of the Naruto manga is its emphasis on character development and emotional impact. Masashi Kishimoto spends a lot of time fleshing out his characters, giving them unique personalities, backstories, and motivations. This helps readers become emotionally invested in their journeys and makes the characters more relatable. For example, Naruto is initially portrayed as a ridiculous and attention-seeking troublemaker, but as the series progresses, readers learn about his tragic backstory and his determination to become Hokage, the leader of his village. By the end of the series, readers have gone on a long journey with Naruto and can see how much he has grown and matured as a character.

Another benefit of the Naruto manga is that readers can experience the story at their own pace. The manga is published in volumes, with each volume containing several chapters. Readers can choose to read the manga volume by volume or take their time with each chapter. This allows them to fully appreciate the artwork and take in the details of the story. They can also go back and re-read previous chapters if they need a refresher or want to better understand a particular scene.

Kishimoto's art style is another reason why the Naruto manga is highly regarded. He has a talent for creating dynamic and expressive characters that are easy to distinguish from one another. The action scenes are well-drawn and easy to follow, and the backgrounds are richly detailed. Kishimoto also uses visual storytelling to convey emotions and mood, using shadows or close-ups to emphasize a character's anger or sadness.

As the original source material, the Naruto manga is the most faithful adaptation of Kishimoto's vision. Unlike anime or video games, which can have filler episodes or shift from the main story, the manga tells the complete story as Kishimoto intended it. This means that fans of the series can be confident that they are getting the full story without any unnecessary additions or changes.

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2.4.2 Anime

The Naruto anime is a beloved adaptation of the manga, providing a new way to experience the story in a visual medium. The addition of voice acting, music, and animation makes the story even more engaging, bringing the characters to life and adding an emotional impact to key scenes. The voice acting, in particular, adds depth to the characters and allows viewers to hear their unique personalities and motivations. The music, composed by Toshio Masuda, is also a standout element of the anime. The iconic theme songs and background music enhance the mood and tone of the story, making it even more emotional and memorable.

The animation in the Naruto anime also helps to elevate the story. The fight scenes, in particular, are more dynamic and visually impressive than in the manga. The use of color, motion, and camera angles make the fights more exciting and intense, making the audience feel like they are in the middle of the action. Additionally, the anime features more elaborate and detailed backgrounds, giving viewers a more immersive experience.

However, the Naruto anime is not without its criticisms. One common complaint is the story development, with some episodes taking multiple episodes to cover a single chapter of the manga. This can make the story take more time than is necessary and slow, leading some viewers to lose interest. Another criticism is the use of filler episodes, which are episodes that do not directly advance the plot and are not present in the original source material. While some fillers can be enjoyable and provide new perspectives on the characters, others can be seen as unnecessary and detract from the overall story.

2.4.3 Movies

There have been 11 separate movies of varied quality released since the anime version of Masashi Kishimoto's Naruto premiered in 2012. Some are filler films with little to no impact on the broader narrative, while others have clear links to it. These

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are some of Naruto movies:

The first movie, *Ninja Clash in the Land of Snow* (2004), is mostly filler, with decent action scenes. It is worth a watch for the action, but it does not contribute to the overall plot.

The Legend of the Stone of Gelel (2005) has beautiful animation, but the story is predictable and relies too much on anime tropes.

The major plot of *Guardians of the Crescent Moon Kingdom* (2006) is centered on secondary characters, and the film is definitely filler.. There are few action scenes, but it shows Naruto matures and grows stronger before the main plot begins in *Shippuden*.

Naruto Shippuden the Movie (2007) deals with more mature themes and increases the stakes of the story. However, it is still filler and does not contribute much to the overall plot.

Naruto Shippuden the Movie: Bonds (2008) sets up themes for the main series and highlights Naruto and Sasuke's relationship, with a captivating villain and driving force. The action scenes and animation are gorgeous. It is a fun Naruto film worth the watch for most fans.

Naruto Shippuden: The Will of Fire (2009) features pretty much everyone except Sasuke, highlighting each character's opinion on Kakashi's sacrifice, pitting friend against friend. The film challenges the Fire of Will philosophy, making it the most inspiring and heartfelt Naruto movie, and worth a watch.

2.4.4 Video Games

Naruto has been successfully adapted into various video games, providing fans with a unique and immersive way to experience the story. These games offer a range of genres and styles, from fighting games to RPGs, adventure games, and more. The video games provide players with a chance to explore the Naruto world on their own

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terms, offering new and exciting challenges that go beyond what is presented in the manga or anime.

One of the key benefits of Naruto video games is their original storylines. These can expand on the world-building of the series, introducing new characters, locations, and plotlines. This can be especially exciting for fans who want to dive deeper into the Naruto universe and learn more about the mythology and history of the series.

The gameplay mechanics of the Naruto video games can vary greatly between titles. Some focus on fighting, allowing players to engage in fast-paced battles with iconic characters from the series. Others are more exploration-based, offering players the chance to explore the world of Naruto and solve puzzles along the way. RPGs like the Naruto Ultimate Ninja Storm series combine these elements, offering a mix of fighting, exploration, and story-driven gameplay. In addition to the varied gameplay mechanics, the Naruto video games also allow players to customize their own characters. This can be a fun and rewarding experience, as players can create their own unique characters and engage in battles against other players online. Multiplayer modes in video games can be a great way to test your skills against others and engage in heroic battles with other Naruto fans from around the world.

2.5 Cross-cultural Versions of Naruto

The translation of Naruto into numerous languages has played a significant role in the series' immense popularity worldwide. It has allowed fans all over the world to read the manga in their native language, enabling them to connect with the story and characters on a deeper level. The translations have made the series more accessible and inclusive to people who might not understand the original Japanese language. Moreover, the translations have also helped to spread the popularity of the series among diverse cultures and communities. Naruto's universal themes, such as the pursuit of dreams, the power of friendship, and the importance of hard work, have resonated with audiences of all ages and backgrounds, making it a beloved franchise

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worldwide. The translations have also created an opportunity for fans to discuss and share their love for the series on various online platforms. They have allowed people from different parts of the world to connect and interact with each other, creating a brilliant community of Naruto fans worldwide. In addition, the translation of Naruto into various languages has contributed to the growth of the manga industry globally. It has opened up new markets for publishers and creators, enabling them to reach a wider audience and explore new possibilities for storytelling. Also, it has made the series more accessible, inclusive, and relatable to people from different cultures and communities, contributing to its success as a beloved franchise with a global fanbase. This is what we will discover in this part.

2.5.1 The American version

The American version of Naruto has made significant changes to the original manga series to present it to the Western audience. One of the most notable changes is language and translation. The English translations have been edited to reflect American English, including changes to spelling, grammar, and vocabulary to make it more familiar and understandable for American readers.

Furthermore, cultural references that might not be familiar to Western audiences have been changed or omitted. For example, some references to Japanese holidays, customs, and folklore have been replaced with Western equivalents or removed entirely. This not only makes the story more relatable for Western audiences but also avoids confusion and misunderstandings.

One of the most noticeable changes made to the English version of Naruto was the alteration of characters' nicknames. In the original Japanese version, many characters had unique and descriptive nicknames that added to their personality and backstory. However, in the English version, these nicknames were often changed to more generic terms, or in some cases, replaced with entirely new ones. For example, one of Naruto's earliest nicknames in English was "Number One Hyperactive,

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Knucklehead Ninja," while in Japanese it was "The Show-Off, Number One Unpredictable, Noisy Ninja." The decision to change these nicknames likely came from a desire to make them more relatable to an English-speaking audience, but it caused confusion among fans that were used to the original Japanese versions.

Another change made to the English version of Naruto was the censorship of certain scenes and themes. For example, Rock Lee's signature technique, the Drunken Fist, was altered in the English version to remove any reference to alcohol, since the characters were all underage. Similarly, scenes featuring weapons, needles, and cigarettes were often reduced or cut entirely, which led to some confusion among fans that were used to seeing these elements in the original Japanese version.

In terms of the anime adaptation, the American version of Naruto features a different cast of voice actors from the original Japanese version. The dialogue has also been changed to reflect American idioms and cultural references. This allows American viewers to connect with the characters on a more personal level and enhances the viewing experience. For example, in the American version, references to Japanese holidays like Golden Week have been changed to American holidays like Memorial Day. Another noticeable change made to the English version of Naruto was the way dialogue was translated. In some cases, the dialogue was extended or shortened to fit the length of a scene or to match the mouth movements of the characters. This resulted in some awkward phrasing and moments where the dialogue did not match the original Japanese meaning. Additionally, certain Jutsu names and other Japanese words were translated literally, which led to some confusion among fans who were used to the original Japanese versions.

A significant change in the American version of Naruto is the inclusion of bonus content. The Naruto: The Official Character Data Book includes character profiles, interviews with the creators, and behind-the-scenes information about the series. These additions give American fans a more immersive experience and a deeper understanding of the Naruto universe.

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2.5.2 The French Version:

Naruto, as a Japanese manga series, has also gained great popularity in France and has been adapted for the French-speaking audience. The French version of Naruto is published by Kana, a publishing house that specializes in manga and anime.

Like the American version, the French version of Naruto features changes in language, translation, and cultural context to attract the French audience. The French translations have been edited to reflect the French language, including changes to spelling, grammar, and vocabulary that make it more familiar and understandable to French readers. For example, the use of honorifics in Japanese (such as -san, -chan, and -sensei) may not be familiar to French viewers.

Additionally, the French version of Naruto has also made cultural adjustments to appeal to the French audience. Some references to Japanese culture, traditions, and holidays have been changed or removed entirely, while others have been replaced with more familiar French equivalents.

The French version of Naruto also includes additional content not found in the original Japanese version, such as character profiles, interviews with the creators, and behind-the-scenes information about the series. These additions give French fans the opportunity to plunge deeply into the Naruto world.

The French anime adaptation of Naruto also features a different cast of voice actors from the original Japanese version. Like the American version, the dialogue has been changed to reflect French idioms and cultural references. This allows French readers to be closer to the character's experience and understands deeply their viewers to connect with the characters more personally and enhances their viewing experience.

2.5.3 The Korean Version

Like the American and French versions, the Korean version of Naruto may include changes in language, translation, cultural context, bonus content, and voice acting to appeal to Korean audiences. For example, the Korean version may use

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Korean idioms and expressions in the translation, adjust cultural references to be more relevant to Korean culture, and feature a different cast of voice actors speaking Korean.

In addition to these adaptations, there may be other changes specific to the Korean market, such as marketing strategies or promotional events. The popularity of Naruto in Korea suggests that the Korean version of the series has been successful in capturing the attention and interest of Korean fans.

However, it is important to note that these adaptations are not always universally accepted by fans, and some may prefer the original Japanese version with subtitles or prefer adaptations that stay closer to the original source material.

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2.6 Cultural and Moral Aspects of Naruto:

Naruto is a precious manga and anime series that has gained a significant following around the world. The series is not only entertaining, but it is also rich in cultural and moral aspects. The storyline and characters are influenced by Japanese culture, and the themes explored in the series highlight important morals. The characters in Naruto face challenging situations that test their loyalty, perseverance, and forgiveness. The series explores themes such as honor, respect, sacrifice, and friendship, which are central to Japanese culture and are universally relevant.

2.6.1 Morality

Naruto incorporates several Japanese morals throughout the series, one of which is the concept of hard work and perseverance. This value, known as "Gaman" is deeply ingrained in Japanese culture and is demonstrated by the main character, Naruto, who continuously trains and strives to become stronger. Naruto's unchanging determination and refusal to give up in the face of adversity are prime examples of the value of Gaman. The series emphasizes that through hard work and dedication, one can achieve great things, an important lesson that many viewers can take away from the manga. This idea of a leader chosen by the people because of his hard work is well summed up in this sentence pronounced by Itachi:

「『火影になった者』が皆から認められるんじゃない。

『皆から認められた者』が火影なるんだ。」

“The person who becomes Kage’ will not be recognized by everyone. ‘The person recognized by everyone’ will become Kage.” (Harvey, 2019,p 9)

Another important value depicted in Naruto is the concept of community and the idea of the collective good over individual interests. This value, known as "Wa" is evident in the way that the characters support and work together to achieve common goals. The emphasis on maintaining harmony and balance in society is also a key

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aspect of the value of Wa. This is demonstrated by the way that the various ninja villages in the series cooperate with each other, putting aside their differences to fight common enemies. Through this, Naruto teaches viewers the importance of working together towards a common goal, rather than just focusing on personal gain.

The value of loyalty and honor, or "Chugi," is another prominent theme in Naruto. The series portrays characters who are willing to make sacrifices for their friends and allies, even at great personal costs. This is exemplified by Naruto's willingness to risk his life to protect his friends and the Hidden Leaf Village. For example, Naruto expresses to his enemy:

「仲間とのことならどんだけ痛くてもガマンするつってんだ！
仲間が居ねーのが一番痛エんだよオレ！以上！」

"Even if it hurts when we have friends, I will endure! Because it's not having friends that hurt the most! It's worse!" (Harvey, 2019, p9)

Another character from the Land of Fire (Kakashi), seeing all the ninjas follow Naruto, concludes:

「心の穴は互いに埋め合いうことを人はいずれは知ることになるからだよ。
そしてその仲間で満ちた心を持つ者は強い！」

"People know that the holes in their hearts can only be filled by others. And those are the ones who have hearts filled with friends who are strong!" (Harvey, 2019, p9)

Additionally, the importance of tradition and respect for elders, or "Sonkei," is highlighted in the way that characters such as Jiraiya and Tsunade are shown to be revered and respected for their wisdom and experience. This value is also demonstrated through the reverence for the ninja system and the respect shown towards the leaders of each village.

Also, the value of self-discipline and self-control, or "Jishin," is an important theme in Naruto. The series depicts the characters' training and mastery of their abilities, as well as their ability to resist temptation and overcome their inner demons.

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Naruto himself is a prime example of this, as he struggles with the Nine-Tailed Fox demon sealed within him, but ultimately learns to control it through pure force of will. This value is important in Japanese culture and is considered a key aspect of personal growth and development. Through the characters in Naruto, viewers can learn the importance of self-discipline and the power of overcoming personal struggles.

The series also highlights the importance of duty and responsibility, or "Giri," through characters such as Itachi. Itachi places the well-being of his clan and village above his personal desires, illustrating the importance of self-sacrifice and serving a greater purpose.

Furthermore, Naruto hints at the concept of finding meaning and purpose in life through one's work or calling, or "Ikigai," through characters such as Kakashi. Kakashi is deeply committed to his role as a ninja and mentor, which inspires viewers to find their own passions and pursue them with dedication.

Sacrifice is a prominent theme in Naruto's morality. Characters are willing to sacrifice themselves for the greater good, as seen in the actions of Naruto's parents, who died to protect their village. This value is also evident in the relationship between Naruto and Jiraiya, where Jiraiya sacrifices himself to protect Naruto and his village. For example, in one episode, Naruto's mother, Kushina, sacrifices her life to protect her village and her newborn son from the Nine-Tailed Fox.

Naruto touches upon the importance of harmony with nature and the environment, or "Wa-nature." This value is implied through the use of nature-based imagery in the series, such as the summoning of animals and the use of natural elements in Jutsu. This highlights the importance of living in balance and harmony with the natural world, which is a fundamental aspect of Japanese culture.

Finally, forgiveness is an essential value in Naruto's world. Characters are encouraged to forgive their enemies and let go of their condemnation, as seen in Naruto's decision to forgive Sasuke despite all the harm he caused. This value also emphasizes the importance of second chances and salvation. For example, in one

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episode, Naruto forgives Gaara, who had previously tried to kill him, after realizing that they both share similar struggles and pains.

2.6.2. Gender:

Gender is an important aspect of Naruto's world, and the series portrays gender in different ways. While the series is primarily male-dominated, it also features several female characters who play significant roles in the storyline.

One of the most prominent female characters in Naruto is Sakura Haruno, a skilled ninja who is a member of Team 7 alongside Naruto and Sasuke. Sakura is portrayed as a strong and intelligent character, and she has proved her capabilities as a ninja in various missions. However, in the early parts of the series, she is often depicted as overly emotional and obsessed with Sasuke, which has been criticized by some viewers as a stereotypical portrayal of women. Nevertheless, Sakura's character develops throughout the series, and she becomes a more well-rounded character with her own goals and ambitions.

Another important female character in Naruto is Tsunade, the Fifth Hokage of the Hidden Leaf Village. Tsunade is a powerful and respected ninja who is known for her strength and medical abilities. She is portrayed as a competent leader and a role model for other female characters in the series.

In addition to these female characters, Naruto also features several other female Ninja who play important roles in the storyline, such as Tenten, Ino, and Hinata. However, it is worth noting that these characters are not always given the same level of development and screen time as their male counterparts, which has been criticized by some fans.

One such character is Hinata Hyuga, a shy and introverted ninja from the Hidden Leaf Village who has a crush on Naruto. Hinata's character development is one of the most significant in the series, as she gains more confidence and strength throughout the story. In the early parts of the series, Hinata is often portrayed as weak and timid,

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but as the story progresses, she becomes more assertive and confident in her abilities. This development climaxes in a crucial moment during the Fourth Great Ninja War, where Hinata risks her life to protect Naruto, showcasing her loyalty and bravery.

Another notable female character in Naruto is Kushina Uzumaki, Naruto's mother, who is only introduced later in the series. Kushina is a powerful and determined ninja who comes from a long line of Uzumaki clan members known for their chakra and sealing abilities. Her backstory is explored in depth, and she is shown to have had a difficult past, but her experiences have made her stronger and more resilient.

Ino Yamanaka is another female character who undergoes significant character development. Ino is initially portrayed as a narcissistic and shallow character who is obsessed with her appearance, but as the series progresses, she becomes a more well-rounded character. She gains more self-confidence and develops her skills as a medical ninja, becoming a valuable member of her team.

While these female characters are not without their flaws, their development throughout the series showcases their strength and perseverance in a world dominated by male ninjas. Their contribution to the story's themes of loyalty, sacrifice, and perseverance highlights the important role that female characters can play in anime and media, and their development is a step towards more diverse and inclusive representation in the genre.

2.7 Conclusion

As the most popular manga with millions of distributions in Japan and overseas through a period of years, Naruto succeeded to depict essential features of Japanese culture to the world. First, Masashi Kishimoto wanted to transmit a traditional Japanese heritage through the world of ninjas and true symbols of ancestral Japan including: beliefs and mythology, clothes and food. Besides, Naruto has marked several generations with its artistic style and moral content. Despite its positive

Chapter 2: Manga of “Naruto”, a worldwide culture phenomenon

impacts on fans, it has been criticized for harmful stereotypes related to race, ethnicity and religion.

Additionally, the remarkable success of Naruto encouraged non-Japanese publishers and artists to introduce different local versions of the series relatable to their audiences making them more accessible .While there have been significant changes to the language, translation and cultural context, the core themes and values of the series remained intact.

The popularity of the manga Naruto fosters its adaptation into anime series, movies and video games.

Finally, this manga shapes some universal values such as hard work , loyalty, sacrifice, tolerance and collective good over individual interest .It also exposes the role of women in the society including their strength and help to maintain the harmony in society .

General Conclusion

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Overall, manga is a Japanese term given to a specific style of comics or graphic novels. Despite being influenced by Western comics in the 19th century, it evolved as a unique Japanese art form with tremendous features. It is a Japanese genre read from left to right typically black and white featuring stylized characters with spunky hair and large round eyes, distinctive visual style, exaggerated expressions, dynamic movement, long-form storytelling and focus on character development. Later, manga's style was inspired and adopted by non-Japanese fans to become a universal literary genre despite the origin of their creators. Moreover, manga is distinct for being designed for different age groups with different sex, backgrounds and interests including men, and women, children, youth and adults, working class, highly literate people, and even politicians and businessmen. Also, it is characterized by its prosperous and numerous themes such as action, adventure, romance, friendship, sport, food, slices of life and even politics. Accordingly, there is a manga for everyone and manga is not a childish art. It attracts mature adults too.

Besides, manga is one of the most popular forms of Japanese entertainment media among both adults and children. It is found everywhere in Japan even in the Parliament. It serves as a significant cultural tool since it depicts Japanese culture and every day's life including beliefs, myths, traditions, festivities, fashion, food, assumptions, dreams and hopes. It is not only a means of entertainment but it is also a means of reflection and criticism of political and social issues such as; the pressure of hard work, isolation, unemployment, loneliness, motherhood and economic policies. Manga portrays Japan's past and contemporary society: the challenge between tradition and modernity. It is a modern rational nation believing in myths, superstitions and phantoms.

Additionally, manga's distinctive style, accessibility through digital platforms and ability to address various audiences and universal themes are all factors that have contributed to its global popularity. Manga has become the international language of Japan. At the beginning, it was less regarded by Western scholars and readers as literary worthless addressed to children and immature audiences with low literacy. Parents and teachers' associations rejected them because of violence and sex. In addition to this, the West was not interested in the theme of the Japanese original experience portraying the Hiroshima trauma because at that time the Western people

General Conclusion

considered themselves as the masters of the world. Also, the apocalypse in Judeo-Christian religion is God's business without human intervention.

On the contrary, Otomo's Akira was widely welcomed in the West due to its topics of disillusionment, doubt, and disappointment nurtured by a materialist civilization, the failure of communism, and the spread of despair and loss of hope. Indeed, Japanese manga was the first to portray the evils of science and related themes like pollution, global warming, genetic modification and deadly viruses. It appealed to humanitarian beliefs through Buddhism. Consequently, the booming manga started worldwide.

Furthermore, the success of manga encouraged the Japanese governments to use it as a tool of diplomacy and a part of Japan's soft power to brighten the image of Japan throughout the world and strengthen international relationships. Thus, manga invaded the world's markets in America, Europe, Asia, Australia and Africa. Japan became the second exporter of cultural products in the world. As a result, manga's style was inspired and adopted by non-Japanese fans to express their own cultural identities. This makes manga a universal literary genre despite the origin of its creators.

Naruto is a famous example of manga as a global cultural product. It dominated the local and international markets during the fifteen years of the beginning of the twenty-first century in Japan. It attracted a great range of audiences inside and outside Japan due to its excellent aesthetic content and the values that demonstrate Japanese history and today's concerns. First of all, the place of women in this manga interprets the vision of Japanese society about women. As a part of modernity, women are strong and able to fight while they make their traditional roles as wives and mothers. Despite their strength, motherhood is an important role in Japanese culture and society. When they become mothers, women abandon the labour market to take care of their children.

Secondly, unlike American self-made heroes like Superman, Batman, and Spiderman, Naruto's strength is due to links with others, their support and help; he is not made alone. That deeply represents the Japanese belief "Success is not due to talent or hard work alone, but it is linked to all others who believed in you and supported you". Thus, Japan is a collective society. The Japanese language indicates the supremacy of the world over the subject unlike the Western society which gives

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priority to “I”.

Thirdly, Naruto shows how the Japanese see the Americans. The hero killer, Bee who speaks Japanese with an English accent is the image of those Americans that seem spontaneous, too confident of themselves and their opinions, but still admired for their determination and audacity. This manga encourages the view that collaboration with others, compromise and harmony among people and countries is the real power to make peace.

Finally, the main criticism against manga has always been its sexual and violent content represented in graphic physical fights, bloody scenes, and nudity which are not tolerated in countries like China, and Muslim countries. Thus, a large percentage of parents, educators, as well as some governments, have been furious. Many countries have banned the import and selling of such types of manga. Another reason for people’s outrage is when some manga mocks and insults religion. For instance, in the manga Jojo’s bizarre adventure, the antagonist examines a book from the library and orders the execution of the protagonist, that book is Quran. Consequently, the Muslim community stopped the sale of that manga. In fact, some scholars accused manga of dangerous influence on the youth which causes juvenile delinquency.

In general, the manga world is different from the real world. It shapes a world full of dreams, hope, passion, honesty and reason. That’s why it has widely spread among the youth across the globe. However, some changes should be made concerning the content of manga to be accepted in all societies of the world.

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