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Japanese Pop Culture

Feedback 4

The majority of the readings have been covering the world of manga. The final reading of Schodt's manga articles was the most interesting for me. It first brought up the topic about the Japanese being able to take original works and make stories of their own based on those characters without worry of copyright infringement. Being able to make manga stories based off of other's work and not get into big trouble is a bit of a cultural difference. Here, there is a big to do about not plagiarising, starting in the middle school years. "It's illegal and not right to take others' work and call it your own". Which is something that has been stressed the last eight or nine years of my academic career. Even when it comes to creating something creative for fun, one has to worry not about infringing on those copy rights. I mean, it's America, land of the free [[to sue anyone based on any assumption that your idea has been stolen]]. But I think that the primary difference in this cultural aspect is like what the article said, that the Japanese kids are so consumed in studies, that it's a good imaginative stimulus/release to make their own little manga with other characters that aren't their own original creation.

In the same article, I found the origin of the word "Otaku" was a great read for me personally. I had always wondered why that word had become to use for people to call others "nerd". I had usually thought that if one was an Otaku, they were a Japanese anime obsessed person who played nothing but video games and was a negative connotation. But the article said "hardcore aficionado", which was a super surprise. Sometimes I had been called Otaku and felt that I did not even come close to being like that super nerdy image. Sure, I do like video games and studying Japanese, but I didn't want to associate myself in that way. But I found it interesting that Otaku used to be a polite word for "you" for people that they had not met before, and then became a word that was plastered on what the article said "shirts and jackets" of the people who were the first convention go-ers.

Lastly, the videos that we've been watching in class have been even more interesting; maybe it being so just because we've been able to watch anime and commercials. Anyway, there is a cultural difference that I'm not so sure about, but could be something different between Western and Japanese animation. Throughout my childhood, I never really found there to be material specifically made for

boys and girls. I had assumed that all the cartoons were generally targeted for all genders and all ages: Bugs Bunny, Loony Toons, Muppets, Pokemon, Rocco's Modern Life, Batman, Scooby Do, and so on. I assumed that everyone, regardless of gender could watch it since it was just entertainment. But maybe there weren't as many attempts to make shows that were for each gender until recent. But regardless of the fact that certain shows are targeted for different genders, I believe that just like manga, since it's TV, and it's just for fun to watch and enjoy, there isn't a major issue of what someone is watching to a degree. The major difference between these two, manga and cartoons on TV, is the Western culture's image of people getting to a certain age and being expected to not watch cartoons. My parents told me that one day I would most likely decline in the interest I had for the TV shows that I had been watching at the time, and would just grow out of it. To a certain degree, that was correct, part of me was thinking that mid-high school, cartoons was just not the choice topic of the older kids. But that part of me was wrong as there are still people out there who do enjoy the cartoons on TV. Personally I'm more impressed by the Anime that comes from Japan, but that is just preference over one rather than my point of social norms. But yes, Japan seems to be very relaxed when it comes to their standards of reading manga that is even aimed for kids. It could be that the Western culture is like this due to our need to emphasise the need to "grow up" and our culture's reverence for those who are more adult and grown up. In the Western commercials, it seems that we like to use adults for almost all the products. For example, Fanta: in the movie theaters, it was advertised by four sexy looking ladies drinking the soda on jet skis. Japan? Very entertaining/hilarious commercials of middle school students at a wacky middle school with very charismatic teachers. Maybe the West needs to slow down and chill out about growing up so fast? If adults say "man, I wish I could be a kid again", why not we just find a way to not stress being so old so fast?