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Transnational Flows of Anime and Manga in the West

Abstract: Although Japanese popular culture has been crossing national borders since the postwar period, it is the intensification of these flows during the late 1990s and early 2000s that inspired academic research from various fields in the new century. However, these uneven flows have often been misrepresented as a unified Western experience, accounts which research into specific national contexts has aimed to correct. This paper presents examples of such research published in English and underlines the importance of context in local encounters with the global. By introducing points of similarity and distinction, it shows the uneven nature of these transnational popular culture flows.

Keywords: anime, manga, transnational flows, Europe, USA, national context

1. Introduction

Japanese media and play products have been crossing national borders since the postwar period, but it is during the last decade of the 20th century that Japanese popular culture became increasingly visible on the global stage. Generations that grew up watching Japanese animation – anime on television and VCR soon continued their interests in manga – Japanese comics, but also in other products of Japanese primarily media culture. By the new millennium, this popular culture was considered a global and transnational phenomenon, and for Japan, an increasingly important cultural export. However, scholars have noted the importance of separating the dissemination and reception of Japanese popular culture in different regions, as Clements states „the

story of Japanese animation overseas" cannot be represented by any single language territory (Clements 2013: 178). By introducing research focused on different national contexts, this paper aims to present a basic outline of these transnational flows in the context of the West. It offers a limited review of nationally contextualized observations and presents the different local aspects that are put forward by scholars.

2. The dynamics of push and pull

Sociologist and mass media specialist Marco Pellitteri distinguishes two stages of dissemination of anime beyond its national borders. The first stage concerns countries with some aspect of association – South Korea and China, which are geographically close or countries of East Asia under Japan's industrial influence, and the USA as Japan's main strategic partner in the postwar period. Only in the second stage does the reach of anime extend into other markets, including those of Europe (Pellitteri 2014: 372).

2.1 Individual actors

Individual actors had a very significant role in the spread of this transnational popular culture in the West, whether by official routes facilitated by international connections or unofficial ones motivated by fannish enthusiasm. While unofficial flows propelled by fans had the biggest impact in North America, the situation in Europe developed somewhat differently. According to Sean Leonard, popular reception of the media outside of Japan was the result of an „international *pull*, not *push*" (Leonard 2005: 282), which is why the dissemination of this popular culture should not be considered only as a matter of Japanese export, but also as a demand for import created by their consumers, that is, its fans (Levi 2006: 46). In this regard, anthropologist Ian Condry considers the global movement of anime an example of „globalization from below" (Condry 2013), a force also termed by Appadurai as „grassroots globalization", where „a series of social forms has emerged to contest, interrogate, and reverse these developments [the state of exclusion from national and global debates on globalization] and to create forms of knowledge transfer and social mobilization that proceed independently of the actions of corporate capital and the nation-state system (and its international affiliates and guarantors)"[1] (Appadurai 2000: 2-3). Although anime and manga would later on become widely commercially available, Leonard points to the crucial role of fans' enthusiasms and efforts during the period from the late 1970s to early 1990s in the formation of an international anime fan distribution network, one that later im-

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[1]   As an example of such globalizing forces, Appadurai provides the example of NGOs, as a system of institutions that operates in parallel with global capital and nation-states dealing with the mobilization of certain groups of people around specific issues (ibid. 15).

pelled the establishment of the North American market. Leonard also emphasizes the importance of new technologies in these early efforts, particularly VHS that advanced the intra fandom circulation of materials. By 1990, fans were making their own *fan-subs* – amateur fan translations and subtitles, and later on, some fans started their own anime companies and became successful in the industry.[2] Leonard also introduces the notion of a „cultural sink", as „a void that forms in a culture as a result of intracultural or transcultural flows", circumstances in which the desire for anime among the American public was a result of the absence of formal supply lines of animated programs for adults (Leonard 2005: 282-284). Bainbridge and Norris point to a similar process taking place in Australia, where over 90% of the market share is held by Madman Entertainment, a company created by, again, fan enthusiasm and lack of formal distribution (Bainbridge and Norris 2012: 5-7). Monji Kenjirō, former director general of the Public Diplomacy Department, in communication with anthropologist Christine Yano also underlines the power of these forces and states, „So it's not that we [Japanese government] are exporting „Cool Japan." It's done by foreign countries [consumers]"[3] (Yano 2013: 262).

2.2 Two phases of anime in the West

Pellitteri also uses the *pull/push* dynamics to illustrate these global trends, distinguishing two phases (strategies) of anime and manga arrival to Western markets. The first phase, which he names *Dragon*, lasts from the 1960s until the mid-1990s and is symbolized by the giant robot Grendizer[4], a period when mostly localized popular culture content, originally intended for the domestic Japanese audience, spread to Western and other regional markets. However, the media flows during this period were not a result of Japan's national export strategies, but personally or financially motivated individual entrepreneurs and companies in the West. In the second phase, named *Dazzle*, the export of Japanese cultural products was based on their already established appeal among

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[2] Translation and subtitling of the OVA *Vampire Princess Miyu* by Robert Woodgead and Roe Adams is considered the first example of *fansubbing*. These fans would later on form AnimEigo, the first licencing firm in the United States focused on anime (Galbraith 2013: 70).

[3] The term „Cool Japan" refers to the phenomenon of the popularity of Japanese culture as described by Douglas McGray in his influential article *Japan's Gross National Cool* (Foreign Policy, 2002). It is also the name of the official strategy of the Japanese government based on the promotion of popular media products and elements of traditional culture with the aim of achieving certain economic goals.

[4] The series *Yūfō Robo Gurendaizā* (1975), an example of the super-robot genre introduced by Nagai Gō with *Mazinger Z* (1972). It was especially popular in Italy and France (renamed Goldrake and Goldorak respectively) and is in the context of research into these media, used in reference to the generation that grew up with the program during the 1970s and 1980s. The program was also very popular in Canada and some countries in the Middle East (Pellitteri 2010: 13, 548 n3, 549 n12, Garrigue 2004 as cited in Darling-Wolf 2015: 107).

Western audiences in the previous phase, allowing them to feature more visibly Japanese cultural elements, that is, less extensive localizations. This is also the period of the manga and anime boom in Italy, France, Germany and the USA, as well as the general internationalization of J-culture (various forms of Japanese popular culture). This stage is represented by Pikachu as the most recognizable face of the global *Pokémon* phenomenon, an anime that Pellitteri considers most significant for this period. Pellitteri views the Dragon phase as an example of an international *pull*, a force in which the West, even though they were not originally indended for its audiences, draws Japanese products toward itself. On the other hand, the Dazzle stage is marked by *push* incentives, when Japanese producers and distributors started to approach foreign markets in an organized manner. Along with these two, Pellitteri also recognizes a third phase starting to form in the mid-2000s, which as a synthesis of the previous ones is characterized by a *push-pull* dynamic. In this phase, aware of the global market potential and utilizing Joseph Nye's concept of „soft power"[5], the Japanese government began to actively develop and promote cultural products in collaboration with private capital (Pellitteri 2010: 24-25, 391-393, 532-533).

3. Anime in the United States

3.1 Formation of a fan base

The first Japanese animation productions were distributed in the USA in 1961. These were feature-length productions made by Toei Animation, which included *Panda and the Magic Serpent* (1958), *Magic Boy* (1959) and *Alkazam the Great* (1960)[6], while the first broadcast television series was *Astro Boy* (1963)[7]. In general,

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[5]   While a country can achieve some desired results with economic or military power – or *hard power*, some outcomes are influenced by a country's values, levels of prosperity or openness. According to Nye, *soft power* rests on the ability to shape the preferences of others based on the attractiveness of a country's culture, ideals and policies (Nye 2004: x, 5).

[6]   These productions were planned as a series of Asian-themed and co-produced projects designed as an easily localized product for export, and part of a strategy to access regional and international markets. Among them, *Panda and the Magic Serpent*, considered to be the first Japanese animated colour feature film, was also the company's first successful attempt to imitate feature Disney productions (Clements 2013: 95, 97-99).

[7]   An influential work by Tezuka Osamu credited as setting the foundations of the medium in the form it is today recognized. Manga scholar Frederic L. Schodt regards the series as a template for modern Japanese animation and a „new way of telling a story" that emphasizes storytelling, character development, and emotional impact (Schodt 2007: 71). Due to growing costs, the production depended on a contract with the American television network NBC Enterprises for which 104 episodes were localized. With foreign markets in mind, Tezuka made the series more culturally neutral from the very beginning, a style called *mukokuseki* in which the visibility of Japanese elements and characteristics is reduced. It is considered one of the central concepts of the anime style and one that facilitated its move into foreign markets (Minakawa 2009, Clements 2011 as cited in Clements 2013: 123-124).

these and the following productions arriving in the US via official distribution channels – those from above, were all highly edited and localized for American viewers and followed official regulations.[8] However, anime also spread through unofficial channels – those from below. Founded in 1977 In Los Angeles, the Cartoon/Fantasy Organization (C/FO)[9] was the first US fan club devoted exclusively to anime and it soon had numerous chapters throughout the country, creating a network of fans that gathered and distributed materials (Leonard 2005: 285-286, McKevitt 2010: 906-909). In addition to fan enthusiasm, a key factor in these endeavors was the emergence of computer technologies and the VCR revolution (Napier 2007: 135), which as early adopters of technology (Jenkins 2006: 138), fans used to access and share materials with other fans.[10] In Napier's view, these circumstances led to the establishment of a devoted fan community built on the convergence of a grassroots movement and new technologies (Ibid. 134). Fans' willingness and aptness to use new technologies would also result in their early move to the internet. For example, in 1988, the English-language newsgroup rec.arts.anime[11] was established, and due to its transnational membership (USA, Europe and Japan) it had a significant role in connecting international fans (McKevitt 2010: 915). In Leonard's view, this anime boom would not have been possible without fan activism and a developed fan network, as he is often quoted, „fans helped pave the way for the popularity anime enjoy today" (Leonard 2005: 298).

3.2 Key anime

Broadcast in the US from 1979 under the name *Star Blazers*, the science fiction series *Uchū Senkan Yamato* had a very significant part in the early popularization of Japanese animation and its establishment as a distinguished and recognized media form with its

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8   Some of the earlier series that were broadcast were *Gigantor* (1965), *Speed Racer* (1967) and *Battle of the Planets* (1978), shows that were, according to Kelts, popular because they were the first instance of American audience being exposed to a new style of Japanese popular culture (Jenkins 2006a: 157, Kelts 2006: 14).

9   Apart from C/FO, other anime clubs were active within the US, for example, the international Rhode Island Anime Hasshin or the Boston Japanimation Society, which is active to this day, as well as fan clubs in Canada such as J.A.C. Victoria (McKevitt 2010: 907-908).

10   Leonard states examples of trading tapes with other US fans and fans in Japan, lending and recording materials from Japanese video stores and later direct supply through members of the C/FO whose military family members were stationed in Japan (ibid. 286, 289-290).

11   Newsgroups were a common early form of internet communication. Access through e-mail allowed participation in discussions on topics a specific group is devoted to with all group members receiving messages addressed to the group. It was a widespread form of fan communication during the early days of the internet (see Nancy Baym *Tune In, Log On: Soaps, Fandom, and Online Community* (2000)).

own fan base.[12] As other anime broadcast in the USA during this period, it was edited, localized and aired as a children's program. However, fans soon picked up on the fact that it was originally intended for older viewers, and the awareness of altered segments and familiarity with Japanese originals, soon became a matter of fan knowledgeability and pride (McKevitt 2010: 893, Napier 2007: 126). Another significant anime for American and European audiences was *Robotech* (1985) – an American amalgamation of three Japanese shows that provoked outrage in fans, but at the same time expanded the medium's audience base. For many fans this show was their entry point into the world of anime, and McKevitt cites the founder of C/FO Fred Patten's (2004) claim that it was most responsible for raising the awareness of Japanese animation among the American audience (McKevitt 2010: 903, Schodt 2011: 311-312, Ruh 2010: 36-37).

4. A desire for an authentic viewing experience

4.1 Localization and editing

Although *Robotech* is an extreme example of this practice, highly localized and edited works were also among the first works to be shown in Italy (Pellitteri 2014: 370). Apart from DVD releases, until the early 2000s anime broadcast on Italian networks (translated from English) was drastically censored and edited at the visual, verbal and narrative levels. In accordance with the general perception of animated materials as those intended for children, depictions of sexuality, violence and blood were either altered or completely removed. Furthermore, cultural references were also localized. Perhaps the most famous more recent example is that of a *Pokémon* episode when an *onigiri*, or rice ball, was verbally changed into „sandwich" (in the North American version a jelly doughnut) without an accompanying visual correction (Parini 2012: 327-330)[13]. However, Parini notes a general decline in censorship over time, a trend which she partly attributes to efforts of fan associations such as Italy's and Spain's ADAM – advocating for the respect of comics and cartoons as forms of art, or North American SOS (Save Our Sailors) – a campaign initially formed in order to keep the show *Sailor Moon* on air (Ibid. 333).[14] The early 1990s cult feature-length *Akira* (1988) was

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[12]   An event that demonstrates the significance of this anime is the screening of *Saraba uchū senkan Yamato: ai no senshitachi* (1978) (although a different feature sequel of the series was supposed to be screened) in 1983 at the World Science Fiction Convention. The screening attended by two thousand people went on at 1:00 a.m. and with no subtitles, the organizers provided a commentary in English (McKevitt 2010: 893).

[13]   As Price notes, in dubbed anime in the United States, foods that are round such as *omochi*, *onigiri*, *dango*, are most often translated as doughnut, while flat foods tend to be translated as pancake or pizza (Price 2001: 163).

[14]   https://www.facebook.com/pg/ADAM-Italia-194622606751/about/?ref=page_internal, http://www.saveoursailors.org (accessed 13 Sep. 2018).

among the first officially distributed unlocalized anime that, apart from the English dubbing, retained its „Japanese odor" (Iwabuchi 2002: 28). Appealing to fans' desire for authentic content, it is considered to be a commercial vanguard ushering in the future of anime in the US where anime would widely be recognized as a Japanese product (McKevitt 2010: 903-905, Hernandez-Perez 2017: 15).[15] Considered a turning point in the Western experience with anime, the significance of *Akira* is indicated by the title of one of the earliest academic publications about anime in English – Susan Napier's *Anime from Akira to Princess Mononoke* (2001). Not only was this one of the most famous anime in the West whose dark themes represented in animated form fascinated Western audiences, it also, Napier states, started the anime boom in the West (Napier 2001: 41).

4.2 Fansubbing

Fans' desire for a particular kind of viewing experience, but also the limited selection of officially translated materials, gave rise to the practice of *fansubbing* - amateur translations and subtitling of anime, and *scanlations* – amateur translations of manga. A significant part of this transnational fandom, *fansubbing* can be considered essential in the spread of anime in the West. Often controversial in regards to copyright infringement even in fan communities, media scholar Rayna Denison views *fansubbing* as being „augmented by, rather than created by" fans, which is why she considers it as falling into a legal gray area where fan creativity borders on piracy (Denison 2011: 450). It is understandable that the objectives and desires of fans and those of official distributors sometimes differ. In the context of anime and manga fandom in the West, one such example is the disapproval of the extensive localization and censorship of materials in official distribution. If fans don't consider these adjustments (cultural or linguistic) acceptable, that is, they regard them as not being adequately authentic, they often turn to original or fan-mediated texts. Among transnational anime and manga fans, dubbing is often regarded as a form of modification of the authenticity of the text. Price notes that, because dubbing obscures the cultural context, most fans[16] consider it „annoying" and prefer to watch anime with subtitles instead (Price 2001: 163-164). Social scientist Ivo Žanić refers to dubbing as a „total translation", one that by placing a linguistic heritage of one country in a different context, generates different perceptions and interpretations of a text (Žanić 2009: 10). For such a transplant to be successful, it requires extensive adaptation – localization, that is, interventions „from

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[15]   According to McKevitt, the decision of the company Streamline to not mask Akira's Japanese origin is the result of long-standing fan activism to popularize anime (ibid. 905).

[16]   Alternatively, he notes that casual viewers more often watch dubbed anime (ibid. 163).

above", which this transcultural fandom, in general, does not approve of. A preference for forms which are perceived as more authentic is connected to the fans' desire to also experience the cultural aspects of anime, that is, the cultural otherness embedded in these texts (Gonzales 2007: 263). Unlike commercial dubs and subtitles, which, especially up until the 2000s diminish cultural distinctiveness, *fansubbing* often provides some socio-cultural explanations and context. Along with the fact that the number of officially available translated anime is limited, for most fans, commercial subtitling also doesn't adequately preserve cultural references. Because the officially released anime was extensively localized, early fan communities in North America started distributing original anime versions among themselves, and during the mid-1990s fansubbing groups started to emerge, creating their own editions of anime with formatting based on fan standards (ibid. 265).

Transnational fan preferences are greatly shaped by perceptions of authenticity. However, they are also informed by community standards, forms that by way of habituation and familiarity become established as convention. One example of this is the Hungarian manga edition of the popular media franchise *Naruto* (1997) under the publisher MangaFan, a company attuned to fan preferences. Apart from respecting format conventions, for example unmirrored print[17], MangaFan[18] translated directly from Japanese (most other translations were done from French and English editions) (Kascuk 2012: 20-24, 20n6, n7, n8). With *Naruto*, the company also followed these established conventions, but decided on the Hungarian phonetic transcription for the translation. Interestingly, although translated directly from Japanese, which places it closer to the original than the mediated *scanlations* or *fansubs* from English fan translations (e.g. the Hepburn transcripts, using English words, etc.), fans accustomed to the English language conventions criticized the Hungarian version as comical and imprecise, a judgment Kascuk identifies with the importance perceiving one's fan experience as being authentic (Ibid. 25-28). While localization attempts strive to familiarize wider audiences with these media texts, present-day fan interactions with anime and manga, especially in countries outside of the major markets, still depend on *fansubbing* and *scanlation* efforts of dedicated fans. Based on the principle of fan gift culture (Hellekson 2009), they are illegally distributed over

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[17] According to Pellitteri, in Italy it was *Dragon Ball* that popularised the unmirrored standard among manga readers. Other publishers soon started following this practice and gradually it was accepted as the norm in Western manga publishing. In his opinion, this is one indication of the acceptance of Japanese popular culture in the West (Pellitteri 2010: 442).

[18] Kascuk views the publisher MangaFan as a key element in the formation of anime and manga fandom in Hungary. MangaFan was led by fans he calls *fantrepreneurs* – fans that take part in industry and distribution, and considers them a crucial factor in the process of lesser-known fan cultures crossing over into the mainstream (ibid. 20).

the internet, with translations in English being the most numerous. Consequently, it is these immediate experiences that then shape fans' perceptions of authenticity. In the case of the Hungarian edition of *Naruto*, even though the form is „closer" to the original – as a direct translation from Japanese, the decision to use Hungarian transcriptions moved it further away from Hungarian fan conventions and established perceptions of authenticity.

5. European markets

The Western anime boom, or the golden age of anime, refers to the early years of the 1990s when, apart from becoming popular among wider audiences, anime also became a profitable product to import and export[19] (Otmazgin 2014: 54). By the mid-2000s, video sales in the United States and Europe stabilized, and during the period from 2006 to 2011 manga sales surged (Hernandez-Perez et al. 2017: 8). However, Pellitteri notes that while anime's reach in the United States was limited until the 1990s boom, in some countries in Europe (primarily Italy and France) the first anime boom already took place during the 1970s and 1980s, while the second one roughly corresponds to the one taking place during the 1990s in North America (Pellitteri 2010: 12, 448, Pellitteri 2014: 366-367).

5.1. The Grendizer generation

According to Pellitteri, countries central to the development of anime and manga culture in the West are Italy, France, Spain, Germany and the United States, centers that had an influence on other countries[20]. Pellitteri places the first wave of Japanese popular culture in Europe from 1975 to 1995, particularly pointing to Italy where the highest number of anime has been released. Italy is also Europe's largest manga publisher, followed by the French and German markets[21] (Bouissou et al. 2010: 253-4,

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[19] Otmazgin states 2003 as the most profitable year, with profits exceeding 4.84 bil. dollars, which is 2.3 times more than Japan's steel export to the US the same year (Ibid).

[20] Pellitteri states a detailed list of fields of influence, for example – Switzerland, under influence of Germany, Italy and France; Portugal under influence of Spain; Belgium, Luxemburg and Monaco, of France. The UK is singled out as a separate market. Pellitteri further lists other European countries – the eastern Adriatic region, the Balkans and Northeast Europe, including Croatia, but is unclear about under what country's influence they fall. In Scandinavian, Eastern European and Baltic countries anime arrived in different stages but was never as widespread as in the main markets (Pellitteri 2014: 369 n16, n17, n18).

[21] According to the President of Viz Media Europe, within Europe manga is most popular in France, Italy and Spain (http://geekout.blogs.cnn.com/2012/01/26/manga-in-the-heart-of-europe/ (accessed 4 Aug. 2019.), but Pellitteri notes the unavailability of sales figures for Italy and considers the possibility that greater profits of the French market in the 1990s, might be due to higher unit prices rather than a larger number of unit sales (Pellitteri 2010: 73-74).

Pellitteri 2014: 364, 369). Even though manga became popular only later, Pellitteri attributes their success, especially in the Italian market, to the fact that most of the broadcast series were based on them (Pellitteri 2014: 371). However, even though its expansion in Europe was propelled by television broadcasting, he notes that in recent times, anime is no longer as present on European television stations as it used to be. Some of the reasons are price increases, new ways of distribution and negotiation, stricter contracts with Japanese producers, but also European Union directives for the reduction of the purchase of anime in order to encourage the European animation industry (Pellitteri 2019: 24).

Audiences of the largest European markets, those of Italy and France, have been accustomed to Japanese animation since the mid-1970s when the liberalization of television frequencies gave rise to the establishment of new channels[22]. As a financially competitive product, anime was used to fill in hours of newly available airtime. The first and probably most significant original Japanese anime series[23] that started the „anime mania” in Italy and France in 1978 was *UFO Robo Grendizer* (respectively, *Atlas UFO Robot* and *Goldorak, le robot de l'espace*) (Pellitteri 2010: 69-70, 296-300). The broadcasting of *Grendizer* marks the beginning of the popularity of anime in both these countries, and in France[24], the generation that grew up during the late 1970s and early 1980s is even referred to as „the Goldorak generation” or *la génération Goldorak*[25] (Garrigue 2004 as cited in Darling-Wolf 2015: 107).[26] Pellitteri notes that while *Chiisana Viking Vicke* (1974) and *Alps no shōjo Heidi* (1974) were previously broadcast in Italy, their European setting and „soft” contents did not have the same effect as *Grendizer* in 1978, which he considers being Italy's first authentic exposure to Japanese animation (Pellitteri 2010: 300).

Considering it a characteristic of the Italian model of consumption, Pellitteri calls attention to the practice of multi-hour broadcasting of a series on a daily rather than weekly basis, as is generally the case in Japan. Later research of anime audiences has

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[22] Between 1975 and 1976 a reform of the broadcasting system was launched and broadcast frequencies were granted to private companies. This reform gave birth to three Fininvest channels that according to Pellitteri shaped the future of Italian television (Pellitteri 2010: 290-291)

[23] One that wasn't collaboration with Western studios, such as *Vicky the Viking*, a Japanese-German-Austrian production broadcast in Germany in 1974 and Italy in 1976.

[24]   Pellitteri notes that in many ways the French circumstances are similar to Italian. However, due to protectionist policies toward French and European productions, the number of anime broadcast on French TV was smaller than in Italy (Ibid. 9).

[25] In addition to *Goldorak*, another significant anime that left a generational mark in France is the popular shōjo series *Candy Candy* (1978). These two anime are widely known to several generations of French audiences and are considered as triggering the anime boom (Pellitteri 2019: 14, Darling-Wolf 2015: 107-108).

[26] The French language version Goldorak was also exported to Canada (Clements 2013: 178).

shown that this broadcasting format intensifies viewer experiences, results in a strong emotional and cultural experience, and also has a general impact on lifestyle (Pellitteri 2014: 368, 375). According to Pellitteri, unlike some other environments where anime is mostly tied to the sphere of subculture, in Italy Japanese animation left a multigenerational imprint, it is a part of the mainstream and exists as a „socially ubiquitous *corpus*" (Pellitteri 2019: 25). As in other Western countries, manga spread only after anime among Italian and French readers, beginning in 1990 with the dystopian *Akira*, popular among the generation that grew up with *Goldorak* (Bouissou 2010: 473). After the Goldorak generation, Garrigue distinguishes two later generations among young French audiences – the „Chevaliers du Zodiaque (*Saint Seiya*) generation" of the late 1980s, and the „Dragon Ball Z generation" of the 1990s (Garrigue 2004 as cited in Darling-Wolf 2015: 110). Media expert Fabienne Darling-Wolf warns us that these titles, along with some others that had a big impact on European viewers, are often disregarded in English language research on the spread of anime outside of Japan. Furthermore, she notes that the localization practices in France were different than those carried out in the United States, and that even its early audiences were aware of its Japanese origins (Darling-Wolf 2015: 110-112). Pellitteri sums up four factors he considers crucial for the popularity and mainstream establishment of anime in Italy and France: the large number of anime series and films broadcast, their presence in press for children, frequent references in the general press, and lastly the history of these media and the presence of related merchandise on the market (Pellitteri 2019: 4). Darling-Wolf notes that favorable conditions for the import of anime and manga were set in France already at the end of the Second World War. In order to delineate the European and American experience, she points to the lack of infrastructure in postwar France and the effect this had on the availability of television broadcasting. France also had a noticeably smaller domestic media production compared to the United States, which is why this market was more accepting of imported materials (Darling-Wolf 2015: 105-110).

5.2. „Crossing of the Pacific"

While the discourse on anime popularization in the United States mainly highlights fan efforts – supported by VHS technology, in the form of „bottom-up globalization" as the main force responsible for building a fan base, in Italy anime's popularity is based on television broadcasts, i.e. through primarily official or „top-down" flows (Pellitteri 2014: 368). Furthermore, given the different trajectories of these flows in Europe and North America, and of course, the rest of the world, Pellitteri calls for the abandonment of the term *global*, which he warns is carelessly used as representative of the American experience. In order to point out the extensive role of individual

actors and local circumstances, he proposes the term *international*[27] considering it to be more suitable for the various processes in the spread of Japanese popular culture (Pellitteri 2019: 5-6). However, the term *international* places too much emphasis on the state (Hannerz 1996: 6), disregarding the role of individual actors (including private companies) and local historically determined motivations. For these reasons, the term transnational has generally been accepted as more suited in regards to the uneven flows of anime and manga. As defined by Ulf Hannerz, it is „a more adequate label for phenomena which can be of quite a variable scale and distribution, even when they do share the characteristic of not being contained within a state. ... the actors may now be individuals, groups, movements, business enterprises" (Ibid.).

In contrast to the United States, where fan endeavors were the main „pull" force responsible for the arrival and dissemination of material, in European markets the initial impetus is largely the effect of, along with positive reception from the audience, historically located financial motivations. These circumstances point to the necessity of demarcating the European and North American experience with Japanese popular media. In addition to the issues with the term *global*, Darling-Wolf also points to how the term „West" is used in observations about the transnational popularity of Japanese popular culture. As Pellitteri (2014: 365), she finds that in the scientific discourse in English, the success of this popular culture in the West is often viewed through the prism of the North American experience, a genealogy she terms „crossing of the Pacific". According to Darling-Wolf, this tendency results in recentralizing the United States as a global media hub and homogenizes various fan experiences and idiosyncrasies of national markets (Darling-Wolf 2015: 101-104). „This positioning of the United States as the natural representative of „the West" ignores the experiences and cultural contributions of non-U.S. (particularly non-English speaking) „Westerners" and essentializes both „the West" and Japan" (ibid. 118).

5.3. Regional broadcasting

Although in close connection with Italian and French markets, according to Santiago Iglesias the progression of anime in Spain occurred at a different pace. Most series broadcast in the 1970s and 1980s were imported from these countries, but their reach and reception was not as extensive (Santiago Iglesias 2017: 112, Santiago Iglesias 2018: 1-2). This early period was marked by two shows – the super robot genre *Manziger Z* (1972) and the more children friendly *Heidi* (1974). Although Spain is the first Western country in which *Manziger Z* was broadcast, it was not as popular in scale as its

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[27]   According to the Croatian Encyclopedic Dictionary, the term *international* refers to contacts between peoples and states (HER 2003: 482).

sequel *UFO Robot Grendizer* in Italy and France. *Manziger Z* was criticized as violent content not suitable for children, perceptions that had a great impact in shaping public opinion about Japanese animation.[28] In contrast, the familiarity and Western setting of the more *tame* children's anime *Heidi* led many to believe that it was in fact a European or Spanish production (Santiago Iglesias 2018: 2-3), an estimation that reflects widespread perceptions of Japanese animation as violent content not suitable for children. Even though Spain was under the direct influence of the Italian and French anime markets, and Pellitteri includes it in what he defines as the first European anime boom during the 1970s and 1980s, Santiago Iglesias claims that during this first wave anime did not have the overreaching generational impact as it did in those countries.[29] According to him, the real Spanish anime boom started in the 1990s and is marked by the generational *Dragon Ball* (1986) serial, an anime that had a significant impact on other European audiences as well (Santiago Iglesias 2017: 114-116). Because the show was localized and broadcast regionally,[30] it reached and was accepted by a wider and more socially varied audience, circumstances that Santiago Iglesias considers as the main reason for its success in Spain (Ibid. 122, 125-126). As was the case in Italy and France, the Spanish anime boom coincides with the liberalization of television frequencies and the arrival of private television stations[31], that is, their need for financially viable programs (Santiago Iglesias 2018: 3).

5.4. Amateur manga

We see the same scenario happening in Germany, when commercial television networks started airing affordably acquired anime, starting with *Sailor Moon* (1991) and *Dragon Ball* (1986) on RTL 2 in the period from 1997 to 1998. The popularity of these shows led to the marketing of related merchandise and manga, soon proving to be more popular with younger generations than Western comics. This interest prompted

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[28] Santiago Iglesias adds that many of the early anime were distributed via adult film retail and distribution companies, adding to the overall belief that it was not suitable for children (ibid. 3).

[29] During the 1980s it was Euro-Japanese animated co-productions, particularly Hispanic–Japanese co-productions that were popular in Spain, a period Santiago Iglesias regards as a sort of hiatus for anime, but a „golden age" for these nationally and culturally hybrid materials (Santiago Iglesias 2018: 4).

[30] *Dragon Ball* was broadcast on regional stations and with regional alterations. In 1990 it aired on local languages in three Spanish regions: Galicia, Catalonia and Basque Country. Broadcasts in Spanish (Castilian) started two years later after which *Dragon Ball* grew into a nationally popular show. Furthermore, the regional versions were culturally adjusted using local tropes and expressions making it understandable to a wider audience (Santiago Iglesias 2017: 118-123).

[31] Pellitteri states the end of Francisco Franco's rule in 1975 as the time when the Spanish government started improvements in the economy and allowed for new media systems (Pellitteri 2014: 372).

comic publishers to invest in this „new" medium, and according to Malone, created a profitable German manga boom (Malone 2013 2.1-2.2). Characterized by a larger percentage of female readers, The German manga market is the third largest in Europe (Bouissou et al. 2010: 254), but unlike Italy and France, who both have productive and influential domestic comic production, German comics make up for less than 10% of the market (Dolle-Weinkauff 2006: 1). As for German anime and manga fans, scholars point to the widespread practice of amateur manga creativity, activities that are also encouraged by publishers by organizing various manga competitions. The high textual productivity (Fiske 1992) of German fans is indicated Dolle-Weinkauff's labeling of it as a„mangaka movement"[32] (Dolle-Weinkauff 2006: 5), while according to Jüngst, „Becoming a mangaka, a manga artist, has become a job today's German children dream of" (Jüngst 2007: 249). However, the authors of these amateur manga don't model their works on Japanese originals, but rather on their German translations. For example, although they are most often set in a Japanese setting, and include Japanese words and kana for onomatopoeic purposes, the titles are rarely in Japanese, a preference Jüngst explains by the fact that the titles are also translated in official German translations. Because these works of amateur creativity don't imitate Japanese originals but rather their local translations, Jüngst regards them as „pseudo translations" or works that have a status of simulacra (Jüngst 2007: 254-256, 258-259). As was the case with the Hungarian transcription of *Naruto*, what shapes judgments and value systems of local fan cultures is their immediate experience with objects of fannish interest.

5.5. Anime and manga as alternative culture

As we have seen, some type of media and technological shift marks the start of anime booms in most national contexts, and according to Mikhailova and Torchinov, in Russia it was the arrival of the internet that sparked the spread of anime and manga. While some anime was present on Russian television during the 1980s, as elsewhere, it was VHS that enabled the circulation of unlicensed materials.[33] With the backdrop of wider political and economic changes, the internet gave fans the means to reach desired materials. However, during the 1990s, access to the internet was limited to only around 10% of the population, mostly through employment. Furthermore, as the materials available online were mainly in English or Japanese, Mikhailova and Torchinov state that it spread mainly among more educated populations of young people. After the end of the Soviet Union, the 1990s also brought about a new system of values, a

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[32]   *mangaka* (漫画家), comic book artist, manga artist

[33]   Michailova and Torchinov state that manga was completely unknown in the Soviet era, although they presume some was brought over by students studying in Japan, or as English versions also from abroad (ibid. 177).

sense of social insecurity and an atmosphere of criminality. In these circumstances it was anime and manga that provided a „psychological niche" and a point of identification for those young people disapproving of the new socio-cultural situation and its values (Mikhailova 2006: 184-186). In the historical context of post-Soviet Russia, anime and manga fandom implied both a moral and a class distinction. As a local appropriation of global flows – those that were not Russian, for these fans, it was a culturally and socially specific category of distinction. Since the 1990s, this popular culture served as a point of identity, one that individuals used to morally and intellectually distance themselves from their negatively perceived immediate realities[34] (Mikhailova 2006: 196, Mikhailova and Torchinov 2008: 178). In general, as transnational and transcultural, this fan culture depends on a network that enables access to a variety of materials and information, circumstances in which the internet has had a particularly important role. According to Vukadinović, the internet is also the main reason why younger audiences in Serbia are more open towards anime and manga and what gives them the means to learn more about it. The first anime broadcasts in Serbia started during the 1980s with shows such as *Madō Kingu Guranzōto* (1989) and *Robotech* (1985), but the audience, mostly children, didn't distinguish them from other animated programs and called them simply cartoons[35], although adult themes made them interesting in a different way. After the sanctions imposed on Serbia (then FR Yugoslavia), television anime broadcasts were halted, and only after they were lifted could individuals begin searching for anime from their youth (Vukadinović 2013: 217-219). As in Russia, anime and manga fandom implied a social and class distinction, and at the end of the 1990s and the beginning of the 2000s, it was considered an alternative culture for elite audiences. Furthermore, what also contributed to its exclusivity was the fact that these media were more easily available to those with sufficient financial means and English competency (ibid. 220-221). In order to connect fans and raise awareness about Japanese popular culture in Serbia, fans established an internet forum and later on a fan association. Taking into account the attendance of a fan convention in Belgrade, Vukadinović estimates that by the early 2010s, facilitated by the internet, fans were successful in achieving their goals (ibid. 221-222, 225-226). According to Mikhailova and Torchinov anime and manga became less exclusive in Russia after materials and information about them became more easily available in Russian, making them more familiar to wider audiences and less „different" (Mikhailova and Torchinov

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[34] This position is illustrated in the statement of one Russian fan that declares: „it is high time to realize that anime and manga are the only alternative to the drugs and hooliganism dominant in Russia" (Mikhailova 2006: 187).

[35] Later, due to mainly broadcasting anime by the company Manga Entertainment, whose logo was visible at the beginning of each episode, they started to call them „manga cartoons" (*manga crtaći*) (ibid. 217).

2008: 190). Nevertheless, awareness does not imply general approval. The cancellation of the AniDag festival in 2018 after protests (associating it with a LGBT event) against the gathering for corrupting the youth of Dagestan is an example of how the notion of „difference", as well as the controversial reputation of anime and manga persist in spite of its longer presence and visibility.[36]

5.6. Scandalous media

The „difference" of anime and manga as a potentially dangerous and harmful factor was also present in the public discourse in Poland during the late 1990s and early 2000s. For example, when a young *Hellsing* fan committed suicide, the Polish tabloid Super Express found cause in the cultural foreignness of manga, while *Sailor Moon* was singled out for introducing violent behavior to girls, witchcraft to children and, along with *Dragon Ball*, was criticized for containing erotic content unsuitable for young viewers (Bolałek 2012: 37). In order to challenge these moral concerns and misconceptions of anime as inappropriately sexual and violent content, in 2003 Hungarian fans formed the Hungarian Anime Association, an organization which would bring together generations of fans (Kascuk 2012: 20-21). In Spain, subtle erotic content and violence in *Dragon Ball* was also the object of criticism from parental associations and conservative groups (Santiago Iglesias 2017: 123), objections that were raised in Italy and France during the Grendizer phenomenon as well. In Italy, parents, journalists and pedagogues formed an initiative to demand the cancellation or reduction of Japanese animation broadcasting, while in France these doubts even produced serious studies such as that of psychologist Liliane Lurçat about the negative effect of Grendizer on young children (Pellitteri 2010: 310, 345). Because Western perceptions of commercial animation are that of primarily entertainment intended for children (Ortega-Brena 2008: 22), an encounter with more mature and serious topics in the form of animation has an effect (or at least it used to) of dissonance with Western viewers. While for some viewers this can have the effect of triggering a general interest in the media, in some instances it can be deemed as inappropriate material in regard to what is considered its target audience. This view is exemplified in the controversy over the erotic series *Urotsukidoji: Legend of the Overfiend*[37], censored by the British Board of Film Classification in 1992 on the grounds of it being sexually explicit. This controversy marks the second of four stages of anime and manga in the UK as defined by Hernandez-Perez et al. The first stage lasted from 1963 to 1989, a period when anime arrived via cinema and later on video

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[36]   https://comicbook.com/anime/2019/02/11/anime-convention-cancelled-russia-violence-mob-threat/ (accessed 12 Dec. 2019.)

[37]   *Chōjin Densetsu Urotsukidōji*, an erotic horror anime and manga representative of the so-called tentacle rape trope.

editions and was mostly absent from television broadcasting[38] (Hernandez-Perez et al. 2017: 9-14, 31). The second stage took place between 1990 and 1999 and its beginning was marked by the premier of *Akira* at the Piccadilly Film & Video Festival, a film that sparked a wide interest in anime and manga, further accelerated by the accessibility and prevalence of VHS technology. This is also the period when a negative image of anime is formed in the general public, one that perceives anime as violent and vulgar content unsuitable for younger viewers, perceptions that were largely based on the *Urotsukidoji* controversy (ibid. 14-16, Kinsella 1998: 307-308). Creating a moral panic about the media in general, *Urotsukidoji* had a lasting effect on public perceptions of anime and manga in the UK, but also, viewed as its representation, on Japanese culture in general (Pett 2016: 390-392, 398-399). However, Napier notes that in most anime, violence and sexuality are no more explicit than in R rated American movies and that what Western audiences perceive as transgressive is merely an effect of it happening in a cartoon (Napier 2005: 297n13). For Pett, the *Urotsukidoji* controversy is an example of Western preconceptions of animation as a separate genre rather than a separate media – making it difficult to categorize, one that as entertainment (not art) is mainly intended for children (Pett 2016: 395-396). The third stage of anime popularity in the United Kingdom lasting from 2001 to 2008 is marked by an increase in anime broadcasting. Particularly significant for this period is the popularity of Studio Ghibli films and the formation of the cult status of director Miyazaki Hayao (Hernandez-Perez et al. 2017: 18-20). The fourth and last period begins in 2009 and lasts until the present day. It is characterized by anime's transition to specialized programming (e.g. Cartoon Network) and the expansion of TV on-demand services (e.g. Netflix and Crunchyroll). In addition, they point to a reduction of the proportion of „adult" content compared to the previous period from 29%, to 2% (Ibid. 23). The rise of on demand television in this last stage can be viewed as representative of wider anime audiences, and is also the way in which media content is increasingly being consumed.

In various national contexts, initial encounters with anime and manga were a cause for moral concern, an image that fan groups have been eager to change. Pellitteri notes that, even though anime and manga fandom has been active since the late 1980s, it became more visible only by the end of the 1990s, and during the 2000s it was finally recognized by the general media (Pellitteri 2010: 441). After the early encounters marked by the presence of cultural difference, anime and manga has, to a certain degree, merged into the broader body of global media and popular culture.

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[38] Because anime was not present as much on television, early exceptions include *Battle of the Planets* and some European-Japanese co-productions, Hernandez-Perez et al. note that a nostalgia-based fan audience was never formed (Ibid. 9); circumstances that differ from the two phases (strategies) proposed by Pellitteri (2010) in which early localized television programs prepared audiences for the later and more extensive J-Pop culture boom.

5.7. Generational turning points

With the growing popularity of the media, manga editions eventually became more numerous than American comics in Poland, however, Bolałek states that until the publisher Hanami started publishing more serious titles, manga was largely disregarded in general media (Bolałek 2012: 36-37). As in most European countries, the first anime and co-productions broadcast in Poland were not recognized as Japanese and were sometimes referred to as „Chinese cartoons" (Jaworowicz-Zimny 2016: 26), which does imply a recognition of their foreign origin and difference. Bolałek divides anime fandom in Poland into three generational periods represented by three series – *Sailor Moon*, *Dragon Ball* and *Naruto*. According to Bolałek, the anime and manga boom in Poland started with the broadcasting of *Sailor Moon* in 1994, a period when anime was regarded as an alternative to American popular culture. The second period begins around 2000 with *Dragon Ball* and *Pokémon*, the latter considered more as a program for children and less significant to the more committed fan base. As we have seen, *Sailor Moon* and *Dragon Ball* are often mentioned as shows that triggered anime booms in other national contexts. The third phase is defined by fans of the long-running series *Naruto*, and described as an aggressive digital generation, used to the internet but very intolerant of the tastes of other fans (Bolałek 2012: 39-42). These three titles are also central in the example of Hungary and are notable for inspiring further fan interest in the media. Even though anime was broadcast earlier on Hungarian TV, for example, *Nirusu no fushigi na tabi* in 1988, Kascuk states that older fans point to the significance of *Sailor Moon* and *Dragon Ball*[39], shows that started airing in 1997.[40] Other anime, such as *Pokémon* and *Yu-Gi-Oh!* (1998) followed, but according to Kascuk, when the cable channel Anime+, later integrated into Animax Eastern Europe, started broadcasting in 2004, anime became accessible to a much wider audience. According to Kascuk, 2006 marks the beginning of the Hungarian manga publishing boom, with *Naruto* having the most significant sales results (ibid. 22-23, n21).

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[39]   The National Commission for Radio and Television Broadcasting put the broadcaster RTL Klub under investigation because *Dragon Ball Z* was deemed unsuitable for the category of children's show, resulting in the cancelation in 1999. However, the public concern with the morality of the show actually turned the attention of an entire generation towards it (Kascuk 2012: 21-22).

[40]   Both shows were adapted from French versions and aired of the television channel RTL Klub. Kascuk also notes that German and Italian satellite television was an important source of anime for this early generation of Hungarian fans (Kascuk 2012: 21-22, n12)

6. Conclusion

The flows of anime and manga in the West have been uneven in both scope and intensity. Scholars have identified two main forces driving the diffusion of Japanese popular culture beyond its national borders, those of *pull* and *push*. These correspond to the two phases or strategies proposed by Marco Pellitteri – the Dragon and the Dazzle. As these flows are by nature uneven, the *pull* force is further distinguished by its main actors: (1) fan enthusiasts making use of video and computer technologies – representative of the discourse on the North American experience – and (2) corporate interests along with the liberalization of television frequencies – put forward as key in the European context. It is only in the latter Dazzle phase that the main force propelling these popular culture products comes from Japan in the *push* form, and later, as Pellitteri proposes, the flows are established as the result of a dynamic synthesis of these two forces. The encounter with elements of cultural difference is characteristic of the Western audience's experience with this transnational popular culture. This contact is marked, on the one hand, by localization of content and moral concerns in the general public, and on the other hand, by fan desires for what is perceived as an authentic viewing experience, followed by grassroots efforts to direct the distribution and form of their fannish objects. However, research shows that regional and national context does matter, even though these transnational flows have remained largely independent of any nation or state. European scholars have pointed to issues in how the term *global* and the notion of „the West" have been misrepresented in the North American example, but the presented individual research of various national contexts also demonstrates that encounters with anime and manga are indeed shaped by political and socio-cultural circumstances, national media policies, access to technology and other conditions of the local. Research on the flows and reception of anime and manga beyond Japan will benefit from taking into account the various local circumstances that shape immediate experiences with these media texts.

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