Name of Student

Title of Professor

Name of Class

Day Month Year

Japanese Pop Culture

The discussion of "Cool Japan' is a quite complicated one, and it can be understood only post World War II context. When in 1945 United States dropped the bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, then Japan decided to unconditional surrender. After that in 1947, Japan added another clause in its constitution to renounce war as its sovereign right. Once the bomb was dropped on Japan, then not only millions of lives were lost, but also the survivors of the war suffered both physical and mental trauma. So the national trauma caused by the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, losing world war II and also political and economic instability along with rebuilding the Japanese society is reflected in the storylines of many post-war Japanese films including movies like manga and anime. These movies reflected the social and political climate in Japan. For examples in movies like Godzilla, the aftermath of the attack was shown that how the environment was contaminated. In these two movies, it was shown by the artist Osama Tezuka's Astroy's boy that how Japan was anxious to achieve its technological and aeronautical aspirations in the 1960s. As Japan tried to rebuild its industries and tried to hold its position again in the region. The same things were depicted quite realistically in the movies, so it is safe to say that by making such movies, a window was also provided to look into Japanese culture post-war

Another reason that these movies were a reflection of Japanese society after the war is, the movies depicted the disillusionment among the Japanese youth caused by the 1980s economic recession and also rapidly modernizing society. The post-war situation in Japan among the youth specifically was worse. When these movies released than during this period two culturally, politically and economically transformative concepts first emerged like Cool Japan and Gross national cool. The movies helped the Japanese to represent their rich culture in front of the world. Anime and manga provided an insight into Japan rich culture like food culture, Japanese style inn and other traditional arts and crafts. The Cool Japan culture reflects the aspiration of Japanese in a productive way. After the war the Japanese focused on increasing the employment opportunities for their youth by promoting overseas development by small and medium businesses and also young designers, attracting tourists to Japan and also by revitalizing local communities. The Japanese government used cool Japan as part of their soft power in pop-culture disciplinary. Cool Japan increased the international demands for culture products like anime and manga.

Apart from giving an insight into Japanese culture these characters also provide insight into the gender relations that exist in that culture. The big eyes associated with the main character of the movie is a symbol of innocence. In Japanese culture, girls having big eyes are considered as innocent and beautiful. Normally girls who don’t have big eyes wear contact lenses to make their eyes big enough. Which is an indication of beauty in Japanese culture. Another reason for depicting the characters with big eyes is to show that Japanese girls are usually more like babies due to their innocence and they are less likely to be guilty of crimes. So all of these characters differentiate manga from other western characters. The use of traditional symbolism or other ghosts in manga reflects cultural elements of Japanese society. Although it is difficult to use any of the elements as sociological windows into Japanese society because of the commercial nature of most of the manga distributed to non-Japanese consumers to some extent, it is safe to say that they somehow provide an insight into the society overall.

But there are some limitations of using these characters as sociological texts because of the commercial nature of most of the manga distributed to non-Japanese consumers. For example, in 2018, 25% of all the locally produced manga was distributed to the world, and the other 75% was targeted to the Japanese customers. International manga is different from the domestic one because it is specifically created to promote Cool Japan and to attract other people from the world to visit Japan and its rich culture.