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Japan215

Japan's Influence

People have easily been influenced throughout observable times to change easily. It's also widely known how influential people can be and how susceptible they are to new and foreign things. This can definitely be seen with Japan's impact on the US. It hasn't always been obvious but rather a subtle growth. Some factors that can be observed for this growth is the emphasis on cute culture as well as gender roles.

Yurukyara, meaning loose character, are characters that represent a town or prefecture in Japan. These mascots were designed to be cute in a sort of strangely depicted way (Tan, 2). Tan's article specifically talks about how yurukyara led Japan to its extreme levels of cuteness among the cute or kawaii culture. This specific culture alone can capture the attention of many individuals, especially the younger generation when they're just figuring out who they are. Cute culture can easily have people range from a simple interest to even their own identity. A well known prefecture in Japan that displays this is Harajuku where it's acceptable to dress to an extreme level outside of the social norm. Even outside of Japan, there are still people outside of Japan that give themselves the freedom to dress similar to that of the Harajuku norm. Even for those that could be too unsure of themselves to dress this way, there are events created from Japan's influence to deem it acceptable. Anime conventions where there are other cultural events held are perfect examples. Typically because cosplay is normal at these kinds of events, people

will dress in the many different styles that Japanese people have shown to the world. As normal as it may be to seek after one's desires for anything cute, it can also be seen that there are also others who are seeking different extremes.

Throughout most societies many people are trying to fight against the typical gender norms that have been placed among them. Looking at *Revolutionary Girl Utena*, an anime and manga created by Saito Chiho, a new trope has entered the anime world. This anime is about a girl who chases after her own desires to be a girl prince while battling other individuals that are challenging both her gender role and physically. The main character refuses to wear the girls school uniform and is being questioned all the time on it. The challenges that the main character faces sort of embody the challenges that people under the same kind of beliefs on gender roles (Kotani, 2016). Anime and manga such as *Revolutionary Girl Utena* have a role to play in society by showcasing such difficulties, and possibly inspiring people to challenge their own identity through gender. This new trope of anime has a sort of domino effect, and influences similar kinds of stories of a strong girl or a girl that doesn't follow what's deemed to be normal. In turn, this affects different individuals to maybe awaken something to battle themselves and others in the same sense as the anime shows. It also doesn't have to be as complex as struggling with identity as well. There are also anime where the girl can be strong without a man such as in the anime *Sailor Moon* which battles the idea that women need men to survive. It's shows like this that can help people to show that their individualism matters.

These different factors which some people could find to be as extreme or even outrageous have helped shape different societies and groups of people to what they are today. More importantly, it's still showing others what they desire and would like to seek.

Cited Sources

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