

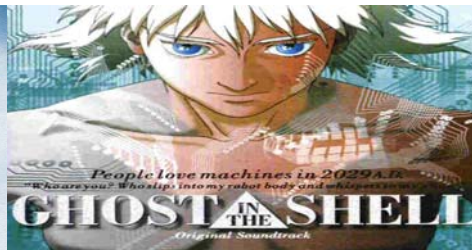
Bachelor Thesis

Organization & Strategy

Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Dynamic Capabilities

‘Animerica’

American animation influenced by Anime and Manga



Author: Bastiaan Bless

Anr: 570633

Program: Business Studies

Supervisor: Dean Hennessy

University of Tilburg

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Preface

After the first meeting with my supervisor, who talked about ‘Art markets’, I was very inspired to do research about a topic that is more on the creative side. Not only because it appeals to a creative part of myself, but creative industries and art as a whole are of growing economical importance. Hereby, taking the risk it might be a little off topic. Personally I have always had a sincere interest in comics and animation. The past years I got acquainted with Anime, discovering a major movement behind this. Ever since my visit to Japan in 2006 my interest in Japanese Anime and Manga became bigger. Moreover, I noticed that I am not the only one with a growing interest in this art form; there are admirers that have great respect for Japanese animation all over the world. Therefore I decided to do research in this field.

I present this thesis in a form that I find adequate to the subject, knowing that it is not common to use illustrations. But the atmosphere I want to create strengthens the scientific statement I make.



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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Introduction

This research paper is a bachelor thesis for Business Studies. The aim of this paper is identifying, defining and solving a problem interesting for academic research. In this case I chose the subject ‘organization & strategy’ and within this subject the topic; ‘Innovation, Entrepreneurship and Dynamic Capabilities’.

As a side effect with this paper I hope to strengthen the importance of Anime and Manga in the animation industry not only as a whole but also adjust the overall image of Anime and Manga in the western world.

1.2 Problem Indication

The interest in and consumption of Japanese animation has exponentially increased across the world in the last 15 years. The total sales of Anime and related goods for instance exceeded Japan’s steel exports in 2004 (Leonard, 2005). The Japanese Prime Minister, Junichiro Koizumi, even called Anime the saviour of Japanese culture (Leonard, 2005). Anime and Manga not only created fans from all over the globe showing interest but they have also interested professionals in the field of media, animation, and arts. Anime is considered as leading in its field by many animators (JETRO, 2005). Because worldwide animators consider Anime as one of the most professional animation forms it therefore attracts many animators. Anime and Manga are leaving its prints in the animation industry all over the world. This is mainly happening in the comic, movie, television, and videogame industry. Many claim that Japanese animation is many steps ahead and it has a major influence on the global animation industry. In 2003 Anime accounted for 60% of all broadcast animation worldwide (Ridout, 2006). But the specific impact of Anime and Manga in the global animation industry is unknown, and more specific: what the effects are for that part of the industry that ‘is in power’ by a long tradition, namely the American animation (with Disney as the main representing firm).

In this research I will go deeper into this problem. I will concentrate on the effects of Anime and Manga on the American animation industry. This is one of the world’s



well known and largest (in history and figures) animation industries and should be fairly representative for the rest of the world. In my research I will focus on the change in innovation and the capabilities of the American animation industry; the use of animation in movies, television shows, and videogames. Therefore, I will attempt to research the capabilities of the American animation industry and take a closer look to diffusion of innovation. I want to research if the Japanese animation is important in determining and changing the capabilities of this industry.

1.3 Problem Statement

This problem indication leads up to the following problem statement.

Which features of Anime and Manga (Japanese Animation) have influenced the capabilities of the American animation industry since its major breakthrough worldwide?

Several sources report the influence of Japanese animation on the animation industry worldwide. In this research I will assume that there is some sort of influence. I will try to further specify to what extent this influence exists, what the causes were for this influence, and how it affects the capabilities and change in innovation of the American animation industry.

By ‘influence the capabilities’, I mean that there are several developments and trends that will influence the capabilities of the animation industry to renew their resources as a response to this dynamic environment.

By ‘major breakthrough worldwide’ I refer to the period that Anime and Manga got recognized worldwide. This is when its movies were seen and known throughout the world and people all over the world started to watch Japanese animated television series and read Manga comics.

I will research the influence since its breakthrough; therefore, it will be a long term perspective.

1.4 Research Questions

In order to give a relevant answer to the problem statement and provide a relevant conclusion I divided the problem statement in the following research questions.



1. How does change in innovation occur at the industry level?

With this first question I want to motivate and explain how Japan is causing the American animation industry to change. I do so by assessing management literature about diffusion of innovation. Since there is no specific literature available about the animation industry I will give a general description about diffusion of innovation at the industry level.

2. What are the capabilities of the American animation industry?

In this question I will take a closer look at the American animation industry. I start by providing a general description about capabilities. With this knowledge I want to describe more specifically what the most important capabilities are of the American animation industry and indicate to what extent Japanese animation influences the capabilities of this industry.

3. What is the definition and history of Anime and Manga?

This is a question of theoretical nature to sketch a clear image about the definitions Anime and Manga. These terms are unfamiliar to many people and even people that are familiar with these terms get confused about the exact meaning. More knowledge about the definitions and its history is necessary to explain and understand its influence overseas. Furthermore a clear definition is a condition for sufficient research. Moreover I explain why I choose to use both terms instead of one of the two.

4. What was causing the popularity of Anime and Manga in America?

We know that nowadays Anime and Manga are popular all over the world. But with this question I will try to find an answer to the main reasons that caused the popularity in America. Knowing these causes it should become easier to understand and explain which features of Anime and Manga make it so successful. And thereby it might show what part is imitated and implemented in the American animation industry.



1.5.1 Research Design

The type of research that will be conducted will consist of a descriptive research. In this research I will give a description about diffusion of innovation and capabilities. I describe the characteristics and capabilities of the American animation industry and Japanese animation and its history. Above all I want to describe the relation between this popular Japanese animation style and the capabilities of the American animation industry.

The research method that will be used is a literature review. Concerning the amount of time available for this research and the topic (Japan and America) this will be the most appropriate method. Therefore the theoretical framework will be structured by work that is already done by others.

The unit of analysis will be an industry. Namely, the American animation industry and the Japanese animation industry.

The main concepts that will be investigated are; Diffusion of innovation, capabilities, the American animation industry, Anime and Manga, and causes of the worldwide popularity of these Japanese animation forms.

1.5.2 Data Collection

For this research secondary data mainly consisting of existing literature will be used. Because literature will be the main source of data I will critically access all material on reliability. Furthermore, I will primarily try to find relevant literature no more than 10 years old.

The type of literature that will be used for this research will mainly consist of articles from academic journals and other acknowledged researches. For this research a

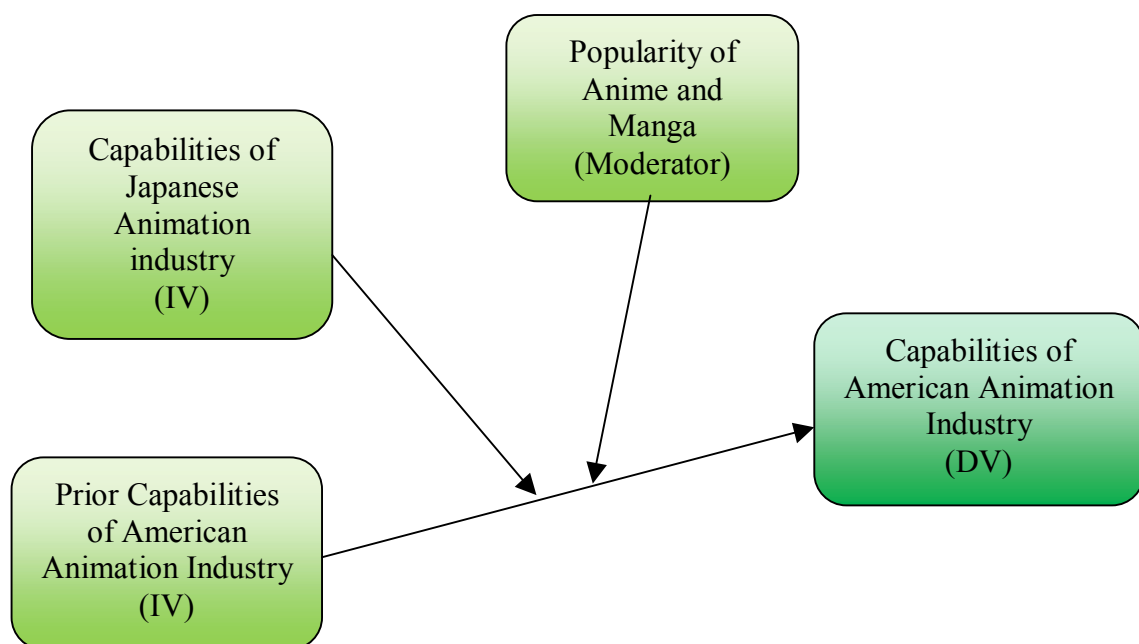


minimum of 30 references will be used with at least half of these references consisting of publications from recognized journals. Besides the database of the UvT I will also use the database of University of Nijmegen. The search mechanisms that will be used to find these articles will consist of:

dbrief.uvt.nl
 scholar.google.com
 Web of Knowledge

Other sources such as books on this topic and interviews with professionals in this field will be used as well.

Model / Theoretical Framework





Chapter 2: Diffusion of innovation at industry level

This first chapter will provide a theoretical insight on diffusion of innovation. Since there is discussed that the Japanese industry is changing the innovation of the American animation industry I will describe how change in innovation occurs. I will go over some characteristics and factors that determine how innovation at an industry level can change.

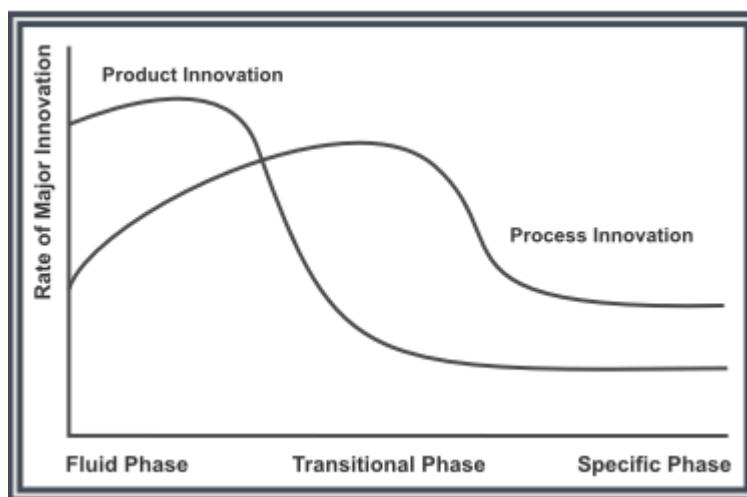
Innovation can be defined as the first introduction of a new product, process, method, or system. Similarly, it can be defined as the adoption of an internally generated or purchased device, system, policy, program, process, product, or service that is new to the adopting industry (Lee et al, 2003). In the case of the American animation industry it mainly concerns a new process, method, and policy. Innovations often vary in terms of the rates of adoption or imitation among industry participants. Some innovations diffuse among many competitors at a rapid rate, while other innovations diffuse more slowly among just a few industry players (Lee et al, 2003). Diffusion is the process by which an innovation is communicated through certain channels over time among industry members (Rogers, 1983). The Japanese animation diffused slowly but by now to many industry players around the globe. Literature on innovation diffusion argues that the properties of an innovation can influence the rate of imitation and diffusion (Mansfield, O'Neill, Rogers, in Lee et al, 2003). Since not all innovations are alike, innovation-specific characteristics influence the diffusion process. For diffusion to occur, potential adopters must see the benefits to imitation, including the belief that imitation will increase profits or enhance legitimacy for the imitating industry (Lee et al, 2003). Clearly the American animation industry saw benefits to imitate some features of Manga and Anime.

Most innovations, especially successful ones, result from a conscious, purposeful search for innovation opportunities, which according to Drucker (1998) are found only in few situations. These situations of opportunity exist within an industry:



unexpected occurrences, incongruities, process needs, and industry and market changes. But there are also situations of opportunity outside an industry and its intellectual environment: demographic changes, changes in perception, and new knowledge (Drucker, 1998). The opportunities for the American animation industry were found in process needs, industry and market changes, and changes in perception. This will be specified in the later chapters. Besides these situations innovation results from two major sources: (1) internal R&D that draws on the firm's accumulated knowledge, and (2) imitation of the innovations of other firms (Lewin, Massini, Winter, in Danneels, 2001). In this paper the latter; imitation of innovations of another industry is discussed.

Although there are several different factors and circumstances influencing the dynamics of an innovation, William Abernathy and James Utterback succeeded in making a model of the dynamics of innovation in an industry.



Source: Utterback, 1996: Mastering the dynamics of innovation

Over the years the model has proven to be valuable in several industries in explaining the pace of innovation as a factor of industrial competition over periods of time (Utterback, 1996). At this time I would say that the animation industry is at the specific phase where product and process innovation appear in small, incremental steps.



The degree of innovations and their diffusions also differs within countries. Between Japan and America there are some noticeable differences herein. In the 1990s, the speed of organizational change was considerably more incremental in Japan than in Europe and America (Pettigrew et al, 2001). Besides that, in carrying out an innovation, Japanese firms allocate their resources quite differently than do American firms. The Japanese devote a much larger percentage of total innovation cost to tooling and manufacturing equipment and facilities than do Americans. American firms, on the other hand, devote more innovation cost to manufacturing startup than do Japanese firms. Moreover American firms devote a much larger percentage of total innovation cost to marketing startup than do Japanese firms. In every industry, the percentage of innovation cost devoted to marketing startup in the United States is about double that in Japan (Mansfield, 1988). Although this information might be dated it will be stated in later chapters that the Japanese hardly spend any costs on the marketing startup of Manga and Anime in America.



Chapter 3: What are the capabilities of the American animation industry?

Here I will take a closer look at the American animation industry. I will discuss some typical capabilities of this industry and how dynamic the American animation industry is. With this knowledge I can more specifically describe how Japanese animation may influence these capabilities.

Capabilities can be defined as processes that ‘integrate, reconfigure, gain and release resources’ in response to market conditions (Eisenhardt and Martin, 2000). Since I am looking at the capabilities of an industry I want to make some additions to this definition. The concept of industry capabilities consists of collections of practices and high- level routines (Winter, 2000). These practices and routines form a learning ecology (Lampel and Shamise, 2003). In this case the American animation industry is learning from the Japanese. “The main engine of industry capabilities is a cycle of innovation and imitation. Firms seek innovative capabilities to gain advantage, and to the extent to which they are successful other firms in the industry follow suite; borrowing, adapting, and improving on what their competitors are doing” (Lampel and Shamise, 2003). The Japanese are the competitors that are being imitated by the Americans so they can gain an advantage. Since the environment is constantly changing, new product development is an important capability (Tidd, 2001).

In America the animation market and hereby the industry is changing. The demand for animated entertainment has grown significantly the last two decades. This is caused by an increase in broadcasting hours by cable and satellite television along with the growing popularity of the Internet. In the past, animation series were aimed at children aged nine and below. Presently, television stations are producing animation series for teenagers, adults, and the whole family. Animation series such as *The Simpsons*, *South Park*, and *King of the Hill* have been and still are very successful on primetime television. Global animation revenue is expected to reach US\$142



billion by 2008 (Tschang, 2004). So animation is an industry to be taken seriously and worthwhile to research.

Animation is increasingly used in video games. Everyone knows that Japan is one of the major suppliers in the videogame industry. Not only on the level of computers but also in videogames. In many video games the style and content is influenced by Anime and Manga. Furthermore movies are more and more reliant on animation and computer graphic special effects (Tschang, 2004). Both the video game industry and movie industry are big markets. Both markets are experiencing changes and developments very rapidly and can be considered as very dynamic.

Markets for creative products like film, animation and games are harder to predict than any other industries (de Vany, 2004). Predictions are even harder to make when the creative processes are located in different geographic and cultural regions from the market. This also confirms that the American animation market is highly dynamic. Animation production is a very labour-intensive business process, which creates process needs, that can be segmented in different stages. Some of these stages are highly suitable for outsourcing to lower-cost locations. Much of American animation is outsourced to be “produced” overseas, in places like Japan, Korea, the Philippines, and increasingly India. The reasons for outsourcing are often cost and quality, but also lack of talent (Tschang, 2004). So besides cost reduction by producing overseas the quality of animation is often considered better in Japan, and other countries, compared to America. Hence one can conclude that this overseas production process has influence on American animation. Since much of American animation is outsourced to other countries, which all will have a certain influence, it makes the industry less stable and predictable.

“The industry is known for being highly cyclical, and the prospects of partial work over the year or regular layoffs frustrates artists in the US. Globally, the industry saw a strong revival in the 1990s, as Disney recorded a few blockbusters, including *The Lion King* and the *Beauty and the Beast*. This led to a boom in investments, which eventually turned into a bubble, before a downturn for studios.” (Tschang, 2004).



Once more this underlines why the American animation industry can be considered as highly dynamic. Artist work is uncertain and the industry depends highly on their successes. As a consequence of no success big and rapid changes can be made. Disney and Fox for example, closed all of their 2D studios to focus on 3D animation, because the marketing executives saw opportunities for greater profits in this market. It was based on studios' perceptions that market tastes were changing and that 3D was far more profitable (Tschang, 2004). This was caused by some big hits like *Finding Nemo* and *Shrek*. But it is commonly observed that it is the story, style, and characters that will lead to a particular film's success, and not only the technology. Some industry watchers feel that this is only a phase which more major stumbles of 3D animated features will bring to a close (Tschang, 2004).

In America, the distribution of animation is essentially controlled by large television channels such as the Fox Network, some specialized channels such as Nickleodeon and Cartoon Network, and the larger studios such as Disney. It is only when a production studio gets large and well-known enough that it can effectively dictate its own future (Tschang, 2004). This means that it is not easy for starters to penetrate the market. The way to get your animation out there is through the bigger channels and studios. Needless to say the competition is fierce, but Japan has integrated itself successfully into the American market. In recent years Japanese Anime has gained tremendous popularity in certain markets in the United States. Sean Atkins, Creative Director of Cartoon Network said, "About 40% of the network's programs are Japanese Anime or Anime inspired," (Faiola, 2004). Once more this shows a significant influence of Anime on the American animation market.

Since most animation series are carried by television studios, and these studios are in the broadcasting rather than production business, they rely heavily on contracting with creative talent of outside production studios (Tschang, 2004). This also includes overseas talent. This can be tracked down in many partnerships between big American and foreign (Japanese) companies.



“The Japanese animation and video game industry became a global player with the distribution aid of western media industries. Mergers acquisitions, and partnerships such as Japan based Sony and Columbia pictures built bridges for Hollywood. Then, the British and American company, Manga Entertainment merged with Polygram to bring the major Anime hit *Ghost in the Shell* to western countries. Next, the *Pokemon* Anime success was distributed by Warner Brothers. After that, Walt Disney Studios distributed Studio Ghibli and Miyazaki Anime films worldwide” (Iwabuchi, 1998).



Chapter 4: Definition and History of Anime and Manga

2.1. Definition

I start this third chapter by providing the reader with a better understanding of the terms Anime and Manga. Not many people are familiar with these terms and even people that are find them confusing. A better understanding of these terms and their history will make it easier to explain and understand the upcoming sections in this paper. I will provide definitions and explore the history of Japanese animation. Moreover, I will explain why I use both terms for my paper and not one of the two.

“The Japanese term *Anime* is an apocopation of *Anime* ⁻*shon*, which is transliterated from English. In Japanese, both terms denote all types of animation.

In English, Anime refers only to Japanese animation. The term is used for both the singular and the plural” (Leonard, 2005).

“The word *Manga* literally means "comics" (or "amusing drawings") in Japanese. In the U.S., it specifically refers to Japanese comic books” (Wolk, 2001).

In general, when we use the term Anime, we refer to Japanese animated movies. With Manga, we specifically refer to Japanese comic books. Although these are two clear definitions, the term Manga is also often linked to animated movies. The reason behind this is that the two are closely interlinked. Many Anime movies are based on Manga comics. Moreover, many Anime creators are also Manga artists. These are some reasons why many people mix up these two terms. In this research I adopt the definitions as given by Leonard and by Douglas.

2.2. History of Manga

The Edo period (1600- 1868) brought the growth of a popular culture and an increase in comic pictures in Japan. It was during this period that the famous Ukiyo-E artists produced many comic works, although the government restricted output of



specifically satirical works. The comic works of Hokusai, a print artist, are well known under the general title of *Hokusai Manga*. It was Hokusai Katasushika (1760-1849) who first used the term Manga for comics and cartoons. Western artists who came to Japan in the periods following influenced comic artists during the Meiji period (1868-1912). Newspaper comics and cartoons gained importance during the Taisho period (1912- 1926) (Ito, 2005).

Following World War II, there was a flowering of comic art. It was during this period that science fiction Manga boomed. Also during this period, Osamu Tezuka created *Atomu Tuishi* (Ambassador Atom), later changed to *Tetsuwun Atornu* (Mighty Atom) and then made into an animated television series as *Astro Boy*. The changes in comic art after World War II reflected the movement to a mass society and the influence of American culture and moreover it marked the rise of Manga of contemporary Japan. Today comics are part of the everyday life for most Japanese (Grigsby 1996). Manga constitute about 40% of all books and magazines published in Japan. They are not just entertainment for teenage boys and a cult of others, as they are in the States; they are basic to Japanese popular culture, the sort of thing commuters read on the train. There are hundreds of Manga for girls and boys, men and women's Manga, romance Manga, political Manga, and more. All of these are often huge bestsellers (Wolk, 2001).

2.3. History of Anime

Japanese animators began to create animations as early as 1915. But it was several years later that Anime produced a major hit. In 1963, famed Manga artist and animator Osamu Tezuka released his legendary *Tetsuwan Atumo* (Mighty Atom). These television series were an immediate success in Japan and soon also overseas. In order to succeed in America the name was changed in *Astro Boy*. By the late 1960's animated series were securely established in Japan. The popularity of animated television series caused a major growth in the industry in Japan. By the mid 1980s there were over 40 different giant-robot Anime series, which were very popular in



Japan (Wolk, 2001). This is a genre that was typically Japanese. Just like Tezuka many pioneer animators were admirers of Disney and were influenced by it (Napier 2000). This was a main reason animators started to draw images of figures with very large eyes; a feature that till this day is typical for Anime and Manga.

In the late 1970's some of the earlier produced animated series were imported to America. However these were not very successful. It was not until the mid-1980s that Japanese animation became a significant force on American television (Furniss, 1998). American production companies typically removed un-American speech as well as all controversial scenes and the most scant of references to the original Japanese production teams (Leonard, 2005). You could argue that the Americans took over the ownership, without referring to the Japanese origin and creators. Today this would be considered as piracy.

In 1983, Otomo Katsuhiro, creator of *Akira*, became the first Manga artist ever to be awarded the prestigious (Japanese) Science Fiction Grand Prix. In 1985 Manga appeared in textbooks for high schools and it still does. In 1990 the National Museum of Arts in Japan mounted an exhibition of the work of Tezuka Osamu. In 1995 a production from Studio Ghibli was the first animation film to receive a Special Award at the Japan Academy Awards (Bouissou, 2000). Animation became a respected art form in Japan. And even more, Hayao Miyazaki's Studio Ghibli became a very strong and important brand for Japan. The Brand Japan 2006 survey conducted by the Nikkei BP Consulting Inc., found that the Anime production company Studio Ghibli Inc., ranked number one concerning brand image and recognition among Japanese consumers ahead of the Toyota Motor Corp., and companies such as Honda Motor Co., and Sony Corp (Frasier, 2007). Although this might not be the case among consumers in other countries it stresses the importance and influence of Anime.



Chapter 5: Causes that made Anime and Manga popular in America

In the previous chapter I mentioned some important names in Anime and Manga. There were more reasons for the success of Anime and Manga besides successful artists. In this chapter I will not only try to find an answer behind the reason that Anime and Manga are loved by so many fans all over the world, but I want to find reasons that caused the popularity of Anime and Manga in America.

According to Sean Leonard, Anime became a powerhouse in the global media market due to the international pull of Anime through the energy of enthusiastic fans. These fans used the introduction of the video cassette recorder to share raw un-translated Anime material with others. So, by means of video, Anime got excess into a large number of households. This was the birth of an enormous Anime fan distribution network. Through these networks, many admirers spread the knowledge of and enthusiasm for Japanese animation to other American counterparts, years before the widespread adoption of the internet (Leonard, 2005). By 1990, fans made their own translations and subtitles to Anime videos. This phenomenon was called ‘fansubbing’. Through the fans the Japanese were able to avoid very large costs for advertising campaigns that would be necessary to launch a movie. Moreover they were able to circumvent Disney’s grip upon the large screen distribution networks (Bouissou, 2000). Many of the first fans started Anime companies, becoming the industry leaders of today. Some claim that it was through these fans that the Anime revolution happened (Leonard, 2005).

In 1985, the Plaza Accord pushed the yen up by almost 75%. Many Japanese investments abroad followed as a result of this. This was a reason for America, and some other countries, to start a Japan-bashing trend. The American media had set their eyes on Japan and there even appeared hate-books about Japan. Due to this Japan-bashing anything from Japan received a big amount of attention, including Anime and Manga (Bouissou, 2000).



Furthermore, America had very strict rules about ‘political correctness’ and they even developed a Comics Code. While they used this in the beginning to prevent the Japanese from entering the American market en masse, in the end it turned against them. American cartoons were struggling for half a century with these constraints. As a result, the American readers became tired of no violence, no sex, no smoking and no nothing, which changed their perception. On the other side, Manga and Anime artists had a lot of freedom. They were not domesticated by giant production companies nor were they bothered by censorship. This caused the Japanese to break many taboos. This Manga tradition of extreme freedom is very appealing for the international audience, especially in America. As a result more Manga appeared on American shelves and some major American publishers, like Marvel Comics, started to publish Japanese titles (Bouissou, 2000).

During the 70’s there were a few Japanese comics and cartoons that penetrated the American market. The successful series featured mostly giant warrior robots. Back then this was a theme, and characters, that were foreign to American comics and television. Nowadays everybody knows *Transformers*, which may seem like an American product, but as you can tell this was largely influenced by the Japanese.

Several years later the children who used to watch the giant robot series came up to age. Now they were looking for more sophisticated products. And they were also still interested in exotic products. This was a reason for a large group of people to start reading Manga and get more interest in Anime (Bouissou, 2000). So nostalgia played an important role here that determined the preferences of some Americans.

A final reason for success is something that the Japanese are well known for. Mass-production resulted in success for Japanese car and electronic goods industries. Hereby, they capitalize upon a solid market base at home and then go abroad. According to Jean-Marie Bouissou, Mass-production lies at the roots of the success of Manga and Anime industry in the foreign market. Here you lower the production costs, market the main-product as cheap as possible while gaining profit from



accessories (Bouissou, 2000). A good and well-known example of this in the case of Anime and Manga is 'Pokemon'. Besides the comics and television series there were distributed many other accessories like cards, stuffed animals, and many toys.

Overall the Japanese hardly spend any costs on the marketing startup of Manga and Anime in America. This was not necessary since Anime and Manga penetrated their way into the American market anyway. This as a result of primarily circumstances and conditions in the American market.



Conclusion

Before going into a deeper discussion about the conclusion for the problem statement of this paper I want to mention some limitations of this research. I was surprised by the amount of material available about Anime and Manga. On the other end, literature about the American animation industry was very limited. Before starting this research I did not take this into account. I focused on literature about Japanese animation since I expected this to be difficult to find. After securing its availability I discovered it was harder to find literature on one of the largest animation industries in the world. The fact that the information about the American animation industry was not available interfered with the research in a significant manner. I did not succeed in identifying the exact capabilities of the American animation industry that were influenced. Nor could I determine to what extent the Japanese play a role compared to other influencing factors.

Despite of some limitations I did succeed in finding a lot of relevant information concerning the problem. I identified features of Anime and Manga that have influenced some capabilities of the American animation industry, as well as causes of the popularity in America.

With the knowledge of the research questions I can discuss the problem statement. Furthermore, I will take a look at the future by making assumptions of the relation between American and Japanese animation in the upcoming years and making recommendations for further research.

In the American animation industry diffusion occurred. The Americans saw several benefits in imitating Japanese animation. The more mature character of Japanese animation enhanced legitimacy for the American industry. It increased their target group, which automatically resulted in increasing profits. The American animation industry saw opportunities as a result of industry and market changes, and changes in perception of the American audience. The American animation industry found innovative capabilities from the Japanese to gain advantage; hereby they



borrowed and adapted themes and styles of what the Japanese were doing. This influenced the capabilities of the American animation industry.

There are several features of Anime and Manga that have influenced the innovative capabilities of the American animation industry since its major breakthrough. Until this day there is a noticeable influence. In my research I identified some important features that I will further discuss now. I will also mention some important features I identified that will need further research to make strong claims.

The first important feature of Anime and Manga influencing the capabilities of the American animation industry deals with the content of animation. Anime and Manga have had a big influence on the maturity of animation nowadays. Japanese animation was considered as more mature and taboo breaking. This was a reason for its success and for a diverse group of fans. The American animation industry implemented this ability for maturity in both comics and animation series. As mentioned popular tv series like *The Simpsons*, *South Park*, and *King of the Hill* are all very popular on prime time television. All of them are watched by audiences of all ages and each of these shows has been breaking taboos for American standards.

Secondly the ability to outsource has increased due to Japan. The Japanese animation artists are considered to be one of the best in the field. This is one of the reasons that many American animation companies outsource their production to Japan. The Japanese are faster and produce higher quality work. Also many studios depend on creative talent from outside. Once again a lot of studios reach out to Japanese artists. So even though an animation will be presented under the name of an American company or studio there is a good chance Japanese artists played a major role in producing the animation and therefore influencing it.

Another feature of Japanese animation that influenced the American animation is in its themes. The best known example to describe this would be the popular Japanese theme of giant (warrior) robots. This theme has been adopted by the Americans which resulted in similar creations; *Transformers*. But this goes even further. Besides creating something similar, the American animation industry



succeeded in making this a very popular theme as well. As a consequence many believe the giant robot theme was actually an American creation.

All these features contribute to the fact that animation, just like in Japan, is taken more seriously these days in America. It is not only admired and respected by a broader audience but it moreover has a very big economic influence. The American animation industry is a multi billion dollar industry today and the Japanese animation consisting of Anime and Manga has had a severe influence in this.

Another feature wherein Anime and Manga influence the American animation industry is style. Not only has the drawing style of the Japanese influenced Americans but also the style of creating an animation. In an American animation for example there are up to 12,000 to 16,000 drawings, while the highly stylized form of Japanese animation requires only about 4,000 drawings for every 22-minute episode (Tschang, 2004). Further research is recommended to specify exactly which features of Japanese animation are imitated and implemented in American animation. There are no literature, statistics, or figures available to prove exactly what capabilities the Japanese actually influenced in the American animation industry. So although the influence is noticeable specific research is necessary to make stronger claims.

Another field that requires further research deals with other important factors influencing the American animation industry. It was very hard to find useful information on this topic. Since the importance of the animation industry is stressed it should be helpful to determine important factors influencing this industry. With the knowledge of these factors it should be easier to control the industry.

Finally I briefly want to discuss the relation between Japanese and American animation for the future. Although it is not possible to predict the future I would like to make some assumptions and recommendations for further research.

It would be hard to imagine that comics will ever be as influential and important in America, or anywhere else, as Manga's are in Japan. Globally speaking the American



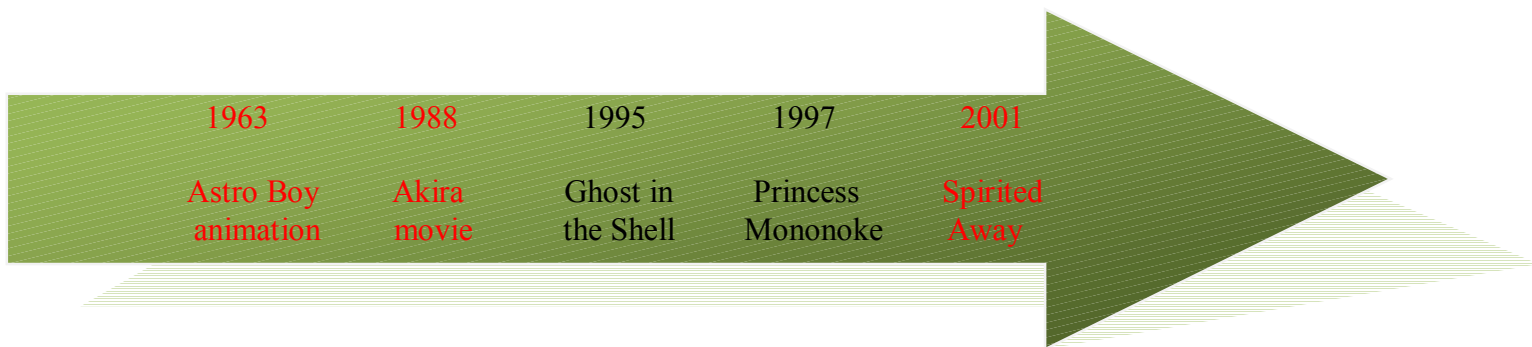
comic market is very big and important, but it attracts a specific audience, whereas, comics are read by everyone in Japan. Moreover, the most popular American comics deal with ‘superheroes’ wherein Japan comics have a wide variety of themes. It could be possible that in the future more comics will appear in America that deal with other topics besides ‘superheroes’. With the knowledge that Japanese animation is of high quality, I would assume that other animation artists will always keep an eye on Japanese animation to learn from their style and techniques. Of course it will happen the other way around as well, since the Japanese were influenced by Disney as well in passed.

I expect more and more people to get acquainted with Anime and Manga. Many people are already watching or reading Anime and Manga without even knowing its origin and meaning. Once people know what the characteristics of these two genres are they will recognize its influence. Anime and Manga are still increasingly used in America. While writing this paper I saw a *South Park* episode that was devoted to Anime and Britney Spears aired a new video clip that was all done in Anime style. I expect to see more Anime and Manga usage in the future in comics, movies, television series, music videos, and computer games.

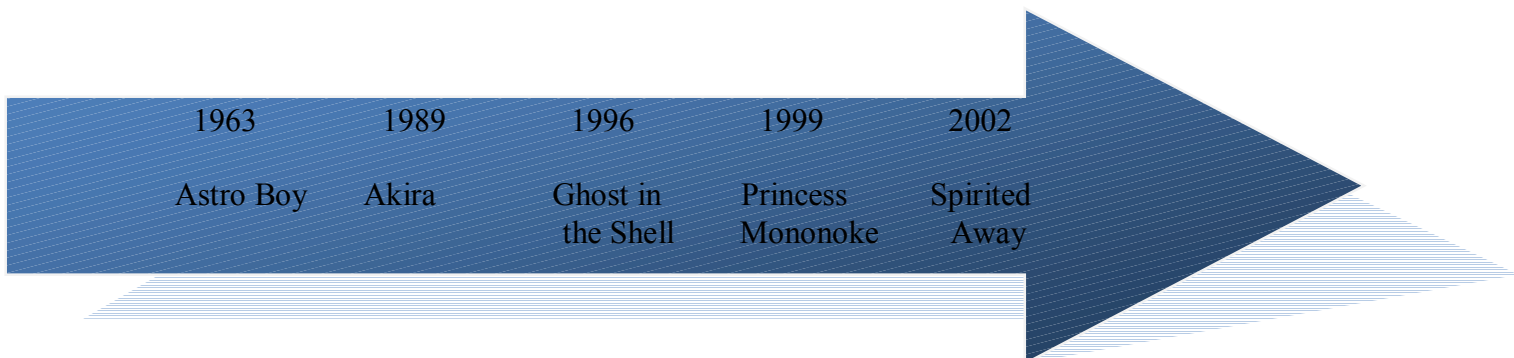


Timeline important events

Japan



America





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