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#2Bi-weekly paper

In Douglas Mcgray's article *Japan's Gross National Cool*, The article explains that Japan and the United States have plenty in common when it comes to producing and channeling mass culture. What is popular in America will surely gain popularity in Japan. Likewise, there is a large influence of Japanese art such as *manga* and *anime*, in the United States. Cultural Globalization is more than just American corporate fast-food and music crossovers-it is the high demand of wealthy consumers who contribute to the distribution of mass culture. Japan has its own form of highly innovative benefactions, which are flooding American mainstream society. Many popular products in the entertainment industry in the U.S. have its roots in Japanese design, such as the Nintendo game systems and movies like *The Matrix*. Despite its political and economic downfalls, Japan has remained culturally powerful and inspiring to the world. Unlike the United States which motive has been to sell American capitalism and idealism, Japan is more fixated on expressing its cultural perceptions and tradition. Japanese "cool" is perhaps incredibly popular, due to its lack of foreign exposure or influence from other nations. Japan has remained true to itself in regards to artistic and creative entertainment. However, Japan also thrives on the inspiration of foreign ideas and creates its own interpretation. There has been a huge trend in young artwork and design in Japan. Japanese culture and society is undoubtedly changing with the times. Power rests within the hands of consumers. " *There is an element of triviality and fad in popular behavior, but it is also true that a country that stands astride popular channels of*

*communication has more opportunities to get its messages across and to perfect the preferences of others.” -Joseph S. Nye Jr.*

I agree with Joseph S. Nye Jr.- that a nation that is up to date with the current trends in popular culture, and who collaborates well with others of the like (The United States and Japan) are more likely to do well economically. Manufacturer's are able to create products that are appealing to consumers within the pop industry and in turn, financially benefit from it.

*“The Japanese youth are redefining and reshaping themselves physically, mentally and spiritually.”* In the article by Joseph Britton Japan- *OtaCool Nation Trends of japanese Otaku youth*, The author examines how Japanese youth are redefining themselves and how it has affected their perception of communication. Using his interview based on his own research of 400 Japanese youth, Britton has introduced us to the word *“Otacool.”* Otacool nation is a growing popular subculture within Japan that is composed of technologically aware geeks or nerds who are basically obsessed with the use of robots, virtual reality, computerized animation, like *manga* and *anime*, and live a certain lifestyle that would otherwise seem unconventional in their country. While investigating the word *otaku*, the author indicates that while these young fanatics or *katakana*, spend the majority of their time communicating through the use of technology, they are spending less time communicating in person. They are only concerned with what is occurring within their fantasy world; that they are too distracted and uninterested in what is going on in the real world. According to humorist and essayist Akio Nakamor, this neglect of real life experiences is having a huge impact on society as a whole. These *gemu otaku*, *pasokon*, *otaku*, and *roboto otaku*, are creating and living a life that simulates real life in their own creative way. Their entire lives revolve around *mind-time* or their time spent on this fantasy world of

entertainment. An important element in this fictitious world is *moe culture*, where cute things are celebrated. Most of the cute characters popular within this society, have their origins in Japanese anime and manga. The youth are extremely obsessed with these characters because they see a certain aspect of themselves and identify with them. Basically, the pop-art, computer games, animes and comic books, are just a reflection of themselves, and what they wish they could be. I agree with the author that otaku is always reinventing itself and that it is currently composed of otacool individuals who separate a part of themselves from reality and are apart of this escapism that revolves around fantasy, virtual reality and the world of fiction. I see it in my own society and country as well. It is just another way that humans have created to feel like they belong somewhere; to be part of, giving them a sense of purpose and importance.