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FEATURES AND DIFFERENCES BETWEEN AMERICAN COMICS AND JAPANESE MANGA

In the modern world, there is an increasing popularity of various types of literature, particularly comics and manga. These forms of graphic storytelling are becoming more widespread, leading to the creation of animated and cinematic adaptations and expanding their influence on the global market.

Despite the similarity between comics and manga as forms of graphic storytelling that use illustrations to visualize the plot, there are significant differences between them. These differences are determined by the cultural and artistic traditions of their countries of origin. Specifically, Western comics, originating in the United States and Europe, are characterized by colorful illustrations, a focus on superhero themes, and format variability. In contrast, Japanese manga, which has developed within the aesthetics and cultural characteristics of Japan, is usually published in black and white, features a unique system of symbols and expressive means, and adheres to a specific stylistic approach and reading rules (typically from right to left).

Although comics and manga are popular areas of interest today, the distinction between these publications has not been widely discussed in academic research, making this topic relevant for further study.

In this context, it is necessary to examine the key differences and features of these forms of graphic storytelling. The relevance of the topic highlights the need to study comics and manga as distinct types of literature, understanding their unique characteristics and differences for both readers and creators, including artists, scriptwriters, and publishers.

In Ukraine, scholars such as H. Pocheptsov, N. Kosmatska, A. Moskvychyeva, Ye. Oliinyk, S. Samanchuk, and D. Belov have conducted research on comics and manga.

Among foreign researchers, significant attention has been paid to comics and manga as important cultural phenomena. Roland Barthes studied the interaction between text and images in comics, which is a key aspect of this medium. Frederik L. Schodt analyzed Japanese manga, its visual language, and its influence on global culture. Thomas Johnson-Woods and Mark McWilliams examined manga as a mass cultural product shaping modern Japanese identity. Jacqueline Berndt emphasized an interdisciplinary approach to studying manga, highlighting its connection with social and historical processes.

The objective of this research is to study and comprehensively analyze these two forms of graphic storytelling, identify their distinctive features, structural and artistic characteristics, and explore the cultural influences that shape their uniqueness.

Our research has identified several key differences, the first of which is color and visual style.

Firstly, American comics typically use bright colors that emphasize emotions and dynamic action. In contrast, manga is mostly published in black and white, allowing for a focus on details and shading to create depth.

American comics are often released as individual issues, which are later compiled into volumes. Manga, on the other hand, is usually serialized in magazines before being collected into volumes, allowing for deeper narrative development.

Secondly, there are differences in reading direction and cultural traditions. American comics are read from left to right, following the Western writing tradition. Manga is read from right to left, in accordance with the Japanese writing system, which can be unfamiliar to new readers.

Additionally, the storytelling approach, character development, and artistic features of these graphic narratives differ.

American comics often focus on dynamic action and adventure, sometimes placing less emphasis on character development. Manga, in contrast, gives more attention to the inner world of characters and their emotions.

Manga employs specific artistic techniques, such as large eyes to express emotions, while Western comics tend to depict characters and environments in a more realistic manner.

The analysis of the features and differences between American comics and Japanese manga reveals significant cultural and artistic distinctions. American comics are characterized by vibrant colors and an emphasis on dynamic action scenes, highlighting the emotional intensity of events. In contrast, manga focuses on details, shading, and deep psychological character development.

The publication format also differs: comics are released as individual issues that are later compiled into graphic novels, whereas manga is serialized in magazines before being collected into volumes, allowing for deeper storytelling. Another important distinction is the reading direction: comics are read from left to right, while manga is read from right to left, which may be unusual for beginners.

Regarding artistic styles, manga employs specific elements such as large eyes to convey emotions, while comics present characters in a more realistic manner.

Future research may explore the evolution of styles and genres, sociocultural aspects, their influence on popular culture, and psychological perspectives. This will help provide a better understanding of their impact on society and culture.

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