At the Center of the Periphery:
Remediating Anime to and through Mexico City

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Abstract

This dissertation analyzes the history, mechanisms and relationships that have enabled and shaped the flow of Japanese animation to and through Latin America, particularly via the labor of translators, voice actors and other media professionals working in Mexico City, the region's pre-eminent site of media importation and re-circulation. While sometimes discussed as an exception to the global hegemony of the Anglo-American culture industries, the history and breadth of anime's global circulation has only recently begun to be understood beyond scopes of analysis focussed on anime's impact in the Anglo-American cultural context itself.

Drawing on work done in the areas of global media analysis, postcolonial theory, and media industry studies in conjunction with archival and field research, I argue that the circulation of anime through Mexico City to the wider Latin American mediascape functions as a significant and long-held exception to dominant dynamics of cultural flow — travelling "laterally" across sites of relative cultural peripherality rather than along pathways of cultural circulation established by political and cultural hegemons. By looking in at anime's development as a global cultural commodity and how it has integrated the Latin American mediascape through Mexico City, I make the case for two interrelated points. The first of these focuses on anime as a media culture shaped fundamentally by logics of peripherality, with structures, aesthetics and production cultures all geared towards a mode of global circulation that has often brought it to emergent, peripheral and semi-peripheral mediascapes. The second looks at the positioning of Mexico City as a regional media capital shaped just as much by its role as a point of connection between Latin America and the rest of he world as it is by its own

locally-oriented production cultures. I further argue that, rather than representing a unique phenomenon, the transperipheral nature of anime's media flows to Latin America serves as an entry point to an entire spectrum of long-standing cultural relationships across relative peripheries. Anime's circulation through Mexico to Latin America serves in this way as an antecedent to the more recent growth of other such points of connection across emergent, peripheral and semi-peripheral mediascapes.

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Introduction: Secondary Media in Secondary Markets

In October of 2017, Mexican media commentators and fans were buzzing about the re-emergence of several popular anime series on Mexico's main competing broadcast networks. While these properties had indeed been fixtures in Mexico and Latin America's wider popular culture since their arrival in the 1990s, they were just now re-entering prime spots in the terrestrial broadcast sphere that hadn't screened new iterations of these franchises since the early 2000s (Padilla Rendon). All of these franchises (including *Dragon Ball Z*, *Sailor Moon*, *Super Campeones*, and *los Caballeros de Zodiaco*) had been generational touchstones for Latin American children growing up in the 1990s, and all of them were now being re-released with new contributions to their respective franchises, either rebooting or updating them with the gloss of current production values. This sudden re-emergence prompted several commentators to ask if this comprised a renewal of the so-called "anime war" ("guerra del anime") of the 1990s, in which rival Mexican media empires Televisa and TV Azteca raced to see which if them more effectively capture the larger market share of the child audience through a massive glut of Japanese animation imports (Jaramillo).

By almost simultaneously obtaining licenses to the rebooted, renewed or otherwise updated versions of these shows — several of which were once the flagship programming of

their children's programming blocks —Televisa and TV Azteca seemed indeed to be resuming a competition first started in the early 1990s. This rivalry was first initiated with TV Azteca's advent itself in 1993, disrupting as it did Televisa's long-held near monopoly over Mexico's national broadcast system. As with many media upstarts in newly expanding media systems, Azteca sought to create a clear identity for itself quickly, and with relatively limited resources. Like so many emergent actors before it, it found material to do so in its children's programming block in the abundant media libraries of Japanese anime producers such as Toei Animation, Sunrise, Nippon Animation, and Studio Gainax (Frias Davalos). This group of programs, (some new, some old, some equally successful in the Anglo-American mediascape, some entirely unknown there) came to form a wave of Japanese media importation that ran concurrently to —but not necessarily in tandem with —anime's emergence to the Anglo-American mainstream.

While now remembered as a period in which anime culture came to comprise a significant part of Latin American children's culture, this wasn't the first wave of anime to integrate the Latin American mediascape, which had indeed been consuming anime media consistently since the 1970s, often as appointment television for family viewing (*El Torreon*, 9 July, 1978). As with the wave of anime brought in as part of the Mexican "anime war", these series came to integrate the wider Latin American mediascape largely via the labor of translators, voice actors, musicians and other media professionals working in Mexico City, the region's pre-eminent site of media importation and re-circulation.

This dissertation concentrates on the history, mechanisms and relationships underpinning this pathway of media distribution — one that I see as significant precisely for the way in which it circumvents typically understood notions of culture as mapping onto either regional modes of circulation, or along networks mapped onto center-periphery dynamics. It is a

pathway of flow that, poorly documented as it is, has much to say about both the cultural flows connecting East Asia to Latin America, and the role played by Mexico City as a media capital amid the wider Latin American mediascape. It likewise presents an antecedent to the more recent growth of other such points of connection across emergent, peripheral and semi-peripheral mediascapes, many of which have grown precisely around the trafficking of secondary media to secondary markets. In this case, this comprised the circulation to and within the Latin American mediascape of "cheap" animation from Japan — a category of cultural production that has variably been denigrated for perceptions of its quality, violence and oddness even as it has been celebrated for its financial success and persistence across the global media market.

Accounting for Anime

Japanese animation's sudden shift in the Western popular consciousness to mainstream visibility (and commodification) during the 1990s prompted a corresponding rupture in its study by scholars in the fields of animation, global cultural flows, children's media cultures, and media industries. Though anime itself had a long-established global presence that included many franchises successful in the Anglo-American cultural sphere (Ruh, 33), it was during this time that many anime texts became media phenomena on the scale of (and often surpassing) the most successful Western media franchises, as with The Pokémon Company in particular. It was also during this time that the long-obfuscated nature of these products as Japanese cultural exports shifted to a more open, though still negotiated, recognition of their cultural origins by re-mediators and audiences. This recognition elicited a variety of popular reactions in the West and beyond, with much hand-wringing from moral guardians, parents and journalists over fears of cultural invasion. Part of this reaction was deeply tied into anime's status as a conspicuous

subversion of familiar dynamics of media flow. Popular media cultures predominated by importation are of course more the rule than the exception for many peripheral and postcolonial localities, but this was (and is) still an exception in the Anglo-American mediascape.

Reactions such as these in the wider Western popular discourse were variably complemented and refuted by perspectives which saw the popularity of Japanese cartoon culture (incorporating animation, comics, and video games) as evidence of a rising tide of capital-friendly cosmopolitanism. For animators and other creative workers, this shift in the cultural landscape generated new aesthetic and narrative paradigms that are only just now coming to the forefront of the production cultures of Anglo-America and Europe. Finally, for the children's media industry at large it was a gold rush, with a few notable successes heralding a massive scramble for the next big thing in Japanese children's media franchising. Anime's emergence and impact across these areas have likewise rapidly increased its study in academic circles. Scholars have now employed its texts and cultures as a means of addressing a variety of polemics pertaining to animation semiotics, media flows, nation-branding, identitary representation, cross-cultural fandom, exoticism, and many other areas of interest.

For global media scholarship in particular, anime's multitude of trajectories represents a noteworthy glitch in the hegemonic dynamics of global media circulation — an instance of global contra-flow that, rather than appealing to the cultural proximity suggested by diasporic cultural/linguistic communities (as with the case of, say Indian film or Latin American telenovelas), represented a true trafficking of media from a (relative) cultural periphery to the wide-reaching cultural fora of the Western "center". As Daya Thussu notes, anime's global circulation in this way represents what may be the sole instance of such consistent (and surprisingly long-established) contra-flow on the global stage (12). Anime is in this way a

problem of sorts, in that it is something to be accounted for. What has allowed it to circulate as it has? How does its visibility and commercial success map onto Japan's positioning as both a collective political and/or cultural entity? Are its industrial and artistic practices something that can (or should) be emulated by other production cultures? And, importantly, should its financial successes and widespread cultural impact really be understood as an exception to hegemonic frameworks at all, or are they merely a perpetuation and reflection of the same logics the Anglo-American empire has been working to normalize?

The pursuit of these and related lines of inquiry has generated a growing culture of meta-criticism towards the agendas that underpin much of this scholarship. In outlining her own investigation into anime's global fan communities, Sandra Annett notes in what way the question of anime's transnational popularity itself brings to light several problematic assumptions with regard to the ultimate instrumentality of its investigation from within Western institutions and localities. As she affirms, many of the more essentialist tendencies in anime scholarship are "primarily designed to tell us how 'we' can understand 'them'", going on to note that such agendas ultimately display a "power dialectic of self-Other identity, operating in different registers in North America and Japan" (2). Such tendencies ultimately re-entrench dualistic social narratives that se

the actors and cultures in question. Within such frameworks, anime culture is employed as an object of study only insofar as it fits within (or inversely, refutes) a narrative of diametric opposition towards dominant Anglo-American media flows. It is the exception that elucidates the norm — ultimately acting as an extension of the same inward-looking media systems and narcissistic cultural impulses that media scholarship is itself attempting to understand and even combat. Annett for her part responds to this investigative tendency by

evoking Anna Tsing's concept of friction as a tool in approaching global media circulation, noting the multivalent ways in which cultural encounters, appropriations and integrations reflect upon and shape existing dynamics (1). In acknowledging the multiple longstanding and often opportunistic hybridities, conflicts and alliances that have shaped both anime's development and its incursion to the global mediascape, friction in this way offers the opportunity to look agonistically beyond reductive bilateral perspectives, towards a more nuanced and productive understanding of this seeming contradiction to established global media dynamics (Tsing, 5-6). At the same time, and in spite of the nuance that such frameworks lend in accounting for hybridity and rejecting identitary essentialism, the underlying dialectical problem of cultural dualism remains an important factor in the study of anime as a global phenomenon so long as our investigative agendas remain entrenched in the tendency to explore its circulation predominantly within its incursions to the Anglo-American mediascape.

Overlooked and Emergent Pluralities

Notwithstanding its sudden notoriety from the 1990s onwards in many Western mediascapes (and the ripple effects this had on a global scale) anime had a different history in other cultural contexts and media systems. What exactly distinguishes the nature of this difference is something of an open question, though, in large part because anime's history and cultural life outside either its Anglo-American cultural impact or its regional circulation in East Asia is incredibly limited. This is a significant oversight when accounting for its surprisingly long held position as a central aspect of children's media culture in many other places — many of them under-examined peripheries themselves. The vast majority of investigative work looking at anime in any capacity as a social phenomenon has been conducted on three social fronts: Either

as a lens into Japanese culture itself by both local and external social critics, as a facet of this state's regional media presence and ubiquity in East and South-East Asia, and finally (and most commonly in the English-speaking academic community), as an area of cultural impact in the Anglo-American sphere. This delimitation has profoundly affected debates surrounding anime's circulation and reception. While much has then been written on anime in terms of either the explosive, widespread popularity of certain texts and franchises in the United States (*Pokémon* comes to mind) (Yano, 113) or as a site of subcultural cohesion (Napier, 48), little has been said about the quietly pervasive, quotidian presence established by Japanese cartoon media in emergent, peripheral, or otherwise overlooked media environments.

Given the overwhelming dominance of Anglo-American media circulation in the global cultural landscape, it is understandable that the popularity of anime within this center of cultural hegemony has become a predominant area of discussion in the field. But it is dangerous to assume this experience can stand in for the lived realities of anime cultures in other circumstances. Reactions in the Anglo-American context to the worldwide dissemination of Japanese media will of course bear the stigma of fears regarding the status of their own global cultural hegemony and internal integrity, but this particular anxiety is not necessarily shared by other mediascapes in this same way. After all, why would anime's presence within other media environments be seen as particularly invasive when these have been already overrun by foreign texts, references, bodies, agendas and realities? In a mediascape marked by a multiplicity of alien "odors" — to adopt Koichi Iwabuchi's terminology — why should the scent of "Japaneseness" stand out in particular, or as particularly invasive, when faced with other, larger, more looming foreign presences (2004, 58)?

This investigative bias has only very recently begun to be addressed — largely through scholarship that, even when occurring within academic institutions entrenched in metropolitan cultural landscapes, has been itself situated from a de-centered cultural subjectivity. Annett's previously mentioned work on anime fandom contributes to this emergent tendency, as does Fabienne Darling-Wolf's work on anime's quotidian history and resonance in Europe (107). My own investigative agenda with this dissertation project is entrenched in the need to further open the field to a greater plurality of regional and cultural perspectives. In this sense, anime cultures serve as a lens through which to study one of the most established areas of such pluralization of media flow, as well as a historic precedent to much more recent emergences in the global media marketplace and its corresponding transnational mediascapes. These kinds of media circulation have fomented the need to interrogate in what way cultural dimensions of power play out against a field in which assumed dynamics of how culture relates to economic and political power are becoming increasingly complicated, and in which media flows must increasingly be read beyond bilateral relationships of importation/exportation, given that the market has become, on the one hand, more pluralistic, while by the same token only achieving such plurality via the standardization inherent in the success of a still very embodied global imperial system. Within such circumstances, notions of cultural dominance, invasion and imperialism function less as a one-to-one line of influence than a matrix of relationships, proximities and histories. This in turn complicates notions of vertical media flow — those pathways of media circulation that Thussu sees as onto center-periphery dynamics, both emerging from and feeding into their structural asymmetries (15-16). This leads me to further consider in what ways such flows of culture, their negotiations, and their influences, may be read

across Thussu's conceptualization of "horizontal", or less inherently hierarchical, media flow (23).

In order to approach the polemics embedded in such often unrecognized or obfuscated dimensions of power, this dissertation project looks at how anime has travelled and circulated in Latin America — another region often examined as both a (relative) cultural periphery, and a source of media formats which have themselves found global success via exportation in horizontal and 'counter-hegemonic' vertical media flows. Latin America represents a cultural/regional aggrupation that has itself arguably experienced the longest history with modern European colonial institutionality in general, as well as (thanks to its proximity to the United States and its Monroe Doctrine) the most intimate historical relationship with the emergence of the current dominant neoliberal world order. While touching upon several media systems and actors in the region, the vast majority of my investigation here will focus on Mexico and Mexico City in particular as a site of importation, administration, production, re-circulation, and indeed remediation. This befits both its long-held role (discussed more fully in Chapter 2) as a point of articulation between Latin America, colonial centers, and elsewhere, as well as its well-established positioning as Latin America's largest single site of not just locally-oriented media production, but also dubbing, translation and general media re-circulation. These aspects, in addition to its housing of the single largest concentrated media audience in the region, all lend Mexico City value as a starting point to a wider investigation of both anime's history and presence in the region, as well as how the region at large has been incrementally fostering importation from other Non-Western producers.

In examining the presence, circulation, and popularity of anime and other Japanese cartoon media in Latin America via Mexico, this project develops two broad fields of analysis.

Firstly, it contributes to the emergence of a greater plurality of voices working towards a de-centered perspective of newly powerful players in the global media market, and how these have built upon the example and systems of more established (but often still culturally peripheral) actors in the field. In this sense, anime cultures can be seen as both precedent and prototype for the emergence of local production industries, and for strategies of entering the global media market itself. The second area of contribution here is in examining Latin America's own positioning as a site demarcated by cultures of media importation, translation and re-circulation. This is particularly salient when considering the increasing plurality of this mediascape itself, with popular and culturally impactful media importation coming not only via Japanese animation, comics and videogames, but also through Korean, Turkish and, more recently, Indian cultural flows. Prominent among all of these emergent pathways of circulation is the question of how these correspond with different kinds of situated institutional power, whether it is that of a powerful country using its media as a conduit of state-directed "soft power", opportunistic entrepreneurship within the chaos of overlooked and emergent global neoliberal marketplaces, or in media circulation culture's capacity to evidence (and possibly even foment) wider instances of linguistic and cultural proximity though the inadvertent creation of cultural affinities.

Though this project's wider aims are deeply entrenched in macro-scale issues of sociopolitical hegemony as these are reflected in and affected by media systems and circulation, the linkages I am looking for and interested in here then are not primarily those that bind center and periphery, but rather those that connect different modes and degrees of peripherality, whether economic, cultural, or institutional. It is in this sense that I wish to latch onto Thussu's notion of horizontality as it pertains to media flow, and see in what way such pathways, both long-held and emergent, may resonate with a broader conceptualization of inter- or trans-

peripherality. Latin American cultures of anime remediation, circulation, and reception offer us an almost entirely untapped field of investigation with regard to the study of such relationships, and with regard the ways they represent the secondary and often unintended effects of metropolitan power on the context of global media circulation.

Approach, Methodologies, and Application: Mexico City as a Site of Remediation

The academic culture of global media scholarship has understandably been marked by a pressing concern with how disparities in political-economic power manifest in the social structures reflected in and shaped by media cultures. In the wake of the consolidation of the highly integrated, though also incredibly asymmetric, global socio-political system represented by global neoliberalism, global media studies have been fundamentally shaped by an engagement with disparities of economic clout, representation, and their corresponding effects on flow and representation of identities and social agendas. Suffused as these have been with the realities of postcolloniality and the aims of the decolonization project, global media studies have, perhaps more than any other subfield of media analysis, found themselves amenable to integration with longstanding understandings of statist geopolitics, with all their concern for institutionality, trade networks, and the perception of culture as tied first and foremost to national imaginaries. Though there has been much work done to disentangle global media studies from the "container thinking" identified by Ulrich Beck as a facet of state-oriented categorization (20), much of this has necessarily had to begin its discussion from and contend with models and agendas of inter- and transnationality already established by the conceptual boundaries of Political Science as a scholarly discipline. In this sense, global media studies have had to adapt tools developed for an

understanding of geographically-entrenched institutional modernity to the realm of postmodern communication, exchange, difference and hierarchization.

It is in part for this reason that the behavior and motivations of (trans)national culture industries have been so readily mapped onto neo-colonial and late-capitalist imperial dynamics. The geopolitically and nationally-delimited frameworks offered by the dependency model's center-periphery dynamic (Love, 46-7) was a natural fit for social critics and scholars concerned with the problem of the new amorphous face of imperialism, fitting comfortably not only within the approaches encapsulated by the raw resource/developed product equation of center-periphery trade, but indeed supplementing it on the level of ideology. In this sense, the imperial culture industry is both vehicle and payload, functioning not only as another developed commodity imported to peripheral markets, but in doing so also functioning as an active ideological agent of metropolitan ideological hegemony.[1]

Amid the embracing, refutation, and negotiation of this entangling between dependency theory and media circulation, Thussu's treatment of flow and directionality is a valuable tool in understanding global media cultures in a way that not only accounts for the mapping of power onto the situated institutionality of states and media capitals, but also factors in how flow is not merely a question of bilateral dealings between exporters and importers. Thussu's diagrammatic treatment of flow along the conceptual axes of the vertical and the

[1] It is precisely along this line of argumentation that we can situate the work done in 1971 by Dorfman and Mattelart in *How to Read Donald Duck.* Written during Chile's Popular Unity administration, this short volume represents one of the earliest academic analyses to tie an ideological reading of children's media (not to mention cartoons and comics) to the agendas of the decolonization project. This volume is particularly valuable to this investigation, not only in its reading of children's media as a vehicle for soft power, but also as a precedent in establishing a comparative framework for how directionality of flow in children's media has been interpreted and from within Latin America itself.

horizontal complicate more simplistic mappings of geopolitical imperialistic power onto media flow. These complications have run along several axes of investigation, whether it be in complicating our conception of the media industries involved as discrete entities (Iwabuchi, 2004, 66, Johnson, 157), in mapping a more multi-polar world of media hegemony (Thussu, 28-29), or in accounting for the ambiguities, contradictions and inconsistencies of supposedly imperialistic media flows when accounting for active audiences (Fiske, 55, Morley, 19-21). In certain cases, the very tenets of this mapping have been brought into question when accounting for media markets that exist at the extreme periphery of empire, accessing media not through sanctioned exportation, but through grey and black markets, most of which themselves go through a variety of remediations in different localities (Gray, 2011, 102).

Throughout all of the nuance granted in complicating the relationship of late-capitalist hegemonic frameworks to media cultures, the broad investigative agenda has still been primarily concerned with "verticality", be it on a macro-global, or regional level. This is certainly the predominant discourse of capital analysis as it ties to questions of regional, national, and institutional hegemony and even empire. Though the functions of global capital do ultimately favor such asymmetric and often unilateral relationships on the macro scale, capital is also messy (Tsing, Hardt and Negri, XV). It is opportunistic. It is, in accordance with its recent global consolidation, also supremely multidirectional and multivocal. Without setting aside its inherent inequities and asymmetries, global capital can as such still be taken as a site for a variety of opportunistic connections that can and should be considered beyond those of capital-as-empire. Where for example, should we situate the supremacy of Mexican media in Latin America? Where the predominance of a state's media output over its regional fellows has variably been met with the consideration of its media exportation as a vehicle of statist "soft

power" in other places, there has been no popular or academic assertion that Mexico's presence in the wider Latin American mediascape has been working this way — an aspect of its regional presence I look at in Chapter 2. Along similar lines, how should we understand the massive, though perhaps generationally delimited appeal held by Japanese anime, and more recently, Korean TV and music in the Latin American region?

Rather than confronting such questions along the pathways that exist directly between centers and peripheries, this dissertation approaches this problem sideways, both strategically and conceptually, concentrating on the question of laterality as it pertains to media circulation and remediation. How can we understand, categorize, and historicize relationships that exist "outside" histories of dependency — skirting around the edges of empire, or forging alliances that traverse metropolitan centers and systems in their initial contact, but are not themselves predominantly shaped by hegemonic intent among their key participants? Is there productive and/or subversive potential in such connections? In what way do they speak to spectrums of transculturation that are wider than we might have once considered? When we remove center/periphery dynamics from the foreground of the equation, what other dynamics of power, friction, and affinity shape cross- and trans-peripheral media cultures?

In approaching horizontality, I should clarify that this is not to say that I intend to ignore metropolitan power by any means, or even to put aside the various asymmetrical relationships that shape both the systems and particular linkages I intend to examine. I'm not arguing that the relationships I intend to look at between Japan and Latin America in the flow of media are by any means an interaction of altruistic equals. I in fact would affirm that "true" horizontality — something we might imagine as the equal, reciprocal interaction of actors without asymmetrically conflicting interests — is all but impossible within such dynamics. At

the same time, I tend to believe that it is both valuable and necessary to conceptualize a wider spectrum of media relationships with hegemony than one which remains trapped in a dialectic with the looming figure of cultural imperialism. An understanding of struggle, dissent, and subversion may be important in engaging with the current inequities of the global socio-political landscape, but so too is a grasp of the various affinities, opportunistic alliances, and regional, trans-regional, and even transcultural coalitions that have emerged in response to and through the creation of a consolidated (if highly asymmetrical) global media marketplace.

It is to this end that I find Thussu's framework of media flow, directionality and control so useful. Under the rubric he proposes, vertical flow and counter-flow may be easy enough to conceptualize as mapping along political-economic relationships of peripherality and dependency, but horizontality is a bit more of an open question. If we are to assume, as I do, that it is exceedingly difficult for any instance of cultural circulation to be entirely symmetrical (or for that matter completely bilateral), then what level of asymmetry differentiates horizontal and vertical relationships of flow? This notion is further complicated when taking into account the intricacies that demarcate intra-national, regional, and cross-cultural flows of media, as well as transnationality of production, administration, and regulation. What complications exist in terms of getting cultural product from point A to B? Was this the original intended trajectory? Who shaped the product along the way? What 'outside' influences affected the mode and direction of its trajectory? Thussu for his part has already done much to speak to these problematics even as he conceptualizes this model (27). At the same time, the metrics it offers for the ways in which media circulation can speak to existing and emergent socio-political frameworks of interaction across centers of media production, distribution, and remediation are still worth honing and utilizing in conjunction to other methods of media analysis. The study of flow ties media

circulation to other dimensions of institutional power, incorporating industrial media analysis with the study of geopolitics, cultural geographies and the analysis of both formal and informal cultural economies. In attempting to build upon Thussu's metrics of flow, I am as such ultimately concerned with connecting the broad social and intellectual agendas of the decolonization project to media analysis in a way that moves beyond fears of cultural imperialism as if it were a potentiality rather than something that has already fundamentally shaped our political, economic, and social institutions. The damage, if we choose to call it that, has already been done, several times over. What remains then? A direct rejection, subversion, or opportunistic exploitation of an overwhelming global system? Or a search for interconnection, affinity, and strategic alliances? If a productive future can be constructed via such connections in the realm of culture, it is in the realm of horizontal cultural flow that I believe it can be found.

Putting aside such amorphous long-term goals for now, I will address this particular project through a multidisciplinary methodology that incorporates, to varying degrees, historiography, textual analysis of anime texts, translation studies, interviews with industry professionals, and situated field research. Though the study of contemporary media importation and circulation in Latin America could be approached from several sites and angles with regard to flow, geography, and institutionality, the impulse to focus this question on Mexico City as a site of directed media circulation is nigh unavoidable. Given this site's relative size and presence in the wider field of Latin America's culture industries, it would require more justification to avoid this as an entry-point than it would to embrace it. While several Latin American states now possess large enough media industries to create parallel channels of importation with respective dubbing and subbing industries, Mexico's predominance in this industry is still felt due not only to the sheer amount of media it continues to channel and (re)produce, but also to the cultural

impact it has had in the filters, affects, and voices (often literal) that mark Latin American media circulation as a whole. Mexico has the oldest film industry in Latin America, the longest history of network radio, and — by a narrow margin — the longest history with television (Gonzáles de Bustamente, 5-6). It was the site of some of the earliest implementations of color television technology, and can be seen both as an early site of transnational institutional cooperation in the establishment of its networks (Sinclair and Straubhaar, 21-2), as well as one of the earlier sites of industrial outsourcing in television animation.[2]

As in many other spheres of its industry and culture, Mexico's media history has been highly shaped by its proximity to the United States. Indeed, where the US' media influence can be found throughout the Latin American region, it was in Mexico, as it is with many other phenomena, that this impact was felt most immediately and acutely with respect to this country's positioning as a bridge (physically, politically, culturally) between Anglo- and Latin America. It was precisely this proximity that Nestor García Canclini identifies as a predominant factor in the early establishment and relative robustness of Mexico's film industry with respect to other Latin American states (266). As he notes, Mexico's geographic proximity to Hollywood strongly aided its film industry by lowering the cost of access to materials, technical and procedural expertise, and institutional linkages. In terms of broader historical trends, Mexico City's institutional positioning as a point of connection between the media systems of Anglo and Latin America is made all the more compelling when considering the continuity this represents with regard to this city's long history as a nexus between the Latin American region and the two major empires that have shaped it since the beginning of the conquest. In traversing this 500 year history, this

[2] As Tom Sito notes, outsourcing to Mexican-based labor forces has been an element of US animation production since the late 1950s, with the production of *The Rocky and Bullwinkle Show* (1959-64) taking place in Mexico from this show's inception. Notably, this option was only taken once plans to do the same thing in Japan fell through (251-2).

positioning situates Mexico City as a site that has served this function across the boundaries of pre- and postmodernity. This is the same city that served as the first viceroyalty of the first Spanish colonial project, thus embodying the prototype for all modern European colonisation on the American continent and beyond. This history likewise designated it the site of the oldest university in the Americas (The Colegio Imperial de Santa Cruz de Tlatelolco), which itself connotes Mexico City's role not just as a foundational site of colonial cultural importation, but also as a pivotal locality for the negotiation of colonial knowledge production and its interactions with metropolitan epistemological power (Cortéz, 87-88).

It is in this tradition that Mexico City can and should be considered as a media capital with a particularly potent history as both a producer of culture and — more importantly to my interests in this project — an embedded point of remediation, translating and negotiating cultural meanings and agendas. This project's framing of Mexico City as a media capital (Curtin, 205) is firmly centered on its capacity and role as a site of importation, recirculation, and adaptation to regional markets. I am above all then interested in Mexico as a media capital defined not so much in terms of what 'new' cultural products it produces or administrates, but rather on what its embedded production communities do to media texts and products that circulate within it in order to reach the wider Latin American mediascape. By placing emphasis on this sphere of production and mediation, I intend first of all to speak to the interplay of deterritorialisation and geographically entrenched relationships that characterize so much of both the ambiguity of current industrial practices and our perspective of them. In doing so, I secondly aim to examine and underline the role of remediation itself as an industrial practice that functions beyond its usual associations with digital platforms, shaping media cultures across cultural boundaries as

well as the development of media capitals (such as Mexico City) that function as concrete entry points between languages, regions and media systems.

By looking at these intermediary processes, this project contributes to a more integral perspective of both established and emergent centers of inception, material production, re-direction, and administration of media and it circulation. It allows for a perspective that may more clearly identify and track the often invisible, but very concrete, ties that influence not only who is communicating with whom and what is being communicated, but also what factors play a role in establishing the context for this communication, and what very real resources, labor, and infrastructures are committed to the establishment and maintenance of the relationships involved.

The State of the Field

The scholarly politics surrounding discussion of media cultures, their interaction and circulation have grown increasingly complex with the emergence and recognition of the many social, political, spatial, and economic transformations brought about by late modernity — a social appellative defined just as much by geography, technology, and the supremacy of certain epistemological frameworks as it is by the temporal emphasis its name implies. With the establishment of digital cultures, a "unipolar" international environment, and neoliberal transnational political economies (processes that began to consolidate roughly in the 1970s), old divisions of scholarship have had to contend not only with increasing hybridization and interdisciplinarity, but also with the inherent unevenness of scholarly concerns, trends, and political agendas as these spread regionally and globally. Consequently, even scholars with similar overarching concerns — many of whom advocate political emancipation and resistance to hegemony as central tenets of their work — have come into conflict over which particular

agendas to prioritize, and which methodologies and theoretical tools will be most useful to this end. As Iwabuchi observes, many of these debates have been framed around more or less three conceptual binaries: ideological domination/semiotic resistance, political economy/active audiences, and an emphasis on global hegemonization/local appropriation. Iwabuchi observes that while a general favoring of the latter aspects of these dynamics gained currency during the 1980s and 90s, the growing supremacy of neoliberal frameworks and their inequities would, as he states, swing the pendulum back in the other direction (2007, 61).

As with the decentering of debates over anime's global impact, much of the impetus to push investigative agendas back in this direction has come from scholars situated in peripheral or semi-peripheral environments themselves. Vamsee Juluri, for instance, speaks pointedly to the schisms he identifies between Indian (and other peripheral) media scholarship and that of the United States. In particular, he identifies the latter's emphasis on postmodern theory and its focus on "unknowability" and the limits of scholarship — just as new global perspectives were attempting to enter the wider debate (13). Marwan Kraidy similarly speaks to celebratory discourses of hybridity, underlining the idea that in spite of its destabilization of previously established flows and networks, hybridity and globalization are not post-hegemonic, and in fact may perpetuate and deepen existing disparities of power (148). Focusing more specifically on the idea of media flow as a cypher for deeper shifts in political hegemony, both Thussu and Iwabuchi temper their discussions of the potential for flows running counter to US media control by noting how these are in their vast majority already incorporated into the macro-structures of a media environment already under the purview of US-centered corporate interests. Where Thussu then affirms that the umbrella of hybridity is still dominated by both the media and circulatory structures of the global metropolis (27-8), Iwabuchi likewise affirms that even when media flows

counter to (or across) hegemonic pathways of distribution, companies situated in the United States ultimately act as redistributors, filters, and "pivots" around which such inter-peripheral flows occur ("Contra-flow", 69).[3]

This role for its part is entirely commensurate with the contemporary conceptions of late capitalist empire that have been attributed to the United States' role in the current geopolitical climate. This can be observed in the work of Gindin and Panitch, detailing a model of empire that is at once both nationally oriented and geographically entrenched, but at the same time much less interested in direct political control than in setting up and maintaining two interdependent agendas. The first consists of fostering implicitly clientalistic economic relationships between the global North/West — that is, not just the US — and peripheral localities. The second focuses on the maintenance of geopolitical systems favorable to capitalist market circulation (35). In placing the US at the center of this less nationally-centered but still highly formalized imperial system, Gindin and Panitch still allow for the global transnational capitalist class (TCC) identified by Ellen Wood (9-10). Applied to a perspective of media production, circulation, and even reception practices, this model likewise accounts for the messiness inherent in many of the systems the US could and would interfere with if they opposed its larger agendas. The caveat is that the United States, as the head of a partially deterritorialized economic empire in which it is the primary enforcer, but not the only beneficiary, is in the long term less interested in fulfilling specific geopolitical agendas than it is in simply inculcating regions into a wider capitalist system and managing the inevitable chaos that arises when capitalism fails along the world's many peripheries — be they national/regional peripheries, or internal ones in metropolises themselves (248). While the US then remains a

[3] This polemic in particular is one of the topics I discuss further in Chapter 5 of this dissertation.

central node of interconnection and management to the global political-economic sphere, discursive power is able to be dispersed somewhat to incorporate new centers of political, economic, and cultural control. Ramaswami Harindranath for his part would situate these other centers of power as being directed by a local (though still functionally transnationally-entrenched) comprador class (162), a category of actor that is itself analogous to a specific kind of Transnational Capitalist Class. Seen from within our own discipline, we may situate such centers of power as likewise functioning as (or in concert with) the concept of the media capitals as understood by Michael Curtin (205). This simultaneously de-centered and re-entrenched way of looking at contemporary empire as it relates to media corresponds well to Thussu and Iwabuchi's perspectives on flow — particularly Iwabuchi's with its focus on the re-centering impulse of globalization (73).

In the wake of such conclusions, some authors note that this emphasis on the US and its predominance in such exchanges has had the unfortunate effect of not only tempering overly celebratory analysis, but also of limiting the parameters of discussion to instances in which the US itself is involved (Yang, 326). While an awareness of such macro-structures is essential to an integral perspective of these social processes, this is not to say that we should allow for the erasure of cultural exchanges that indeed run counter or parallel to such networks. It is after all in such exchanges that avenues of true resistance and communal interconnection may be found and potentially fomented. As Lee and LiPuma similarly suggest, we should also be aware of the structural limits and caveats of the modes of circulation we are looking at. Though circulation is in and of itself overwhelmingly conceived along commercial parameters, this is not to say that "legitimated" markets are the only ways in which media and ideas travel (199-200). It is indeed within such networks that we may find the work of Brian Larkin and Jonathan Gray on African

media piracy of US texts, and the work of Babson Ajibade, Jyoti Mistry and Jordache Ellapen, and Tim Havens on Nollywood – a site of production that amounts to the third largest production culture in the world in spite (or because) of its integral entanglement with networks of regional piracy.

Amid a larger mediascape still indisputably dominated by the political and discursive weight of the United States and its direct (though dispersed) economic allies, is there still space for resistance and/or subversion? While Lash and Lury might for their part call for a revision of the Adorno-Horkheimer model of cultural criticism in light of new post-Fordist paradigms (4), both they and Mistry and Ellapen reaffirm their fears of capitalism's power of incorporation and mass commoditization — one that has only gotten stronger with the diversity allowed for in its deterritorialized dilution of power (Mistry and Ellapen, 65). Confronting such a model of hegemony head-on seems like a futile effort. It presents conflicts over pre-existing domination of modes of communication that were very early on identified by such authors as Fernández Retamar with regard to language and epistemologies (5-6), Frantz Fanon with regard to broadcast media ("Voice of Algeria") and more recently, Mistry and Ellapen with regard to media technologies (49). In such scenarios, the subaltern is confronted with the conflict of having to challenge oppressors through both ontological and epistemological frameworks already inherently permeated with their own subjugation.

If the possibility of true *contra*-flow is as such inhibited by its inevitable co-optation into a culture of circulation adept at such assimilation into established discursive power structures, we might find more fruitful (and indeed, potent) instances of media interconnection in those networks which flow *around*, *parallel* or even surreptitiously *across* hegemony. Ones that follow what Thussu identifies broadly as horizontal media flows. As I state above, it is precisely

within the varied interactions offered by trans-peripheral modes of cultural flow that I situate the contribution of this research project. Because while commerce may be the overwhelming logic driving such flows to initially commence, these logics don't fully account for the work done by remediators in shaping them, nor do they explain the meaning taken on by media products once they have begun to circulate within the public sphere of the new cultural contexts they have integrated. Politically-oriented theoretical tools centered in state agendas are likewise inadequate barometers in and of themselves for studying such phenomena. As such, where Omar Al-Ghazzy and Kraidy incorporate Political Science notions of soft state power with regard to the dissemination of Turkish TV in the Middle East (2342), no such agendas really help to explain the cultural exchanges between Japan and Mexico, Japan and Latin America, or even Mexico and the rest of Latin America for that matter.

To a certain extent, we can interpret trans-peripheral connections such as these with theories of globalization and hybridity more generally. At the same time, these may not account, as Gray notes, for the role of remediators and their own agendas (or lack thereof) within such processes (2011, 112). In a very similar vein, we could likewise take into account the pre-existing transperipheral networks that have dictated Latin America's own mediascape — one in which Mexico is without a doubt the major player, but in which none of the soft-power frameworks one might expect to apply can be observed. To this end, can we then speak of other such sub-pivots of media control? With regard to anime importation from Japan to Latin America, for instance, we can find instances of circulation and redistribution that range from ones directly tapping into the US market (such as that of *Pokémon*, see Chapter 5) to those which take American importation as a cue, but develop independent institutional relationships (as in the case of the *Dragon Ball* franchise, see Chapter 3). Beyond this, we can also find many media

relationships which have been conducted completely detached from US institutionality or precedent, such as with *Heidi, Girl of the Alps* (1974), or *Saint Seiya* (1986, imported in the mid-90s) — both of which are shows which have never been dubbed into English at all.

In examining such questions of cultural cross-peripherality (especially under the shadow of US empire), we may further ask how we should conceive of the condition of peripherality to begin with. Does the very fact of having a prominent media presence on a regional or global scale not come into conflict with this idea? Japan and Korea are both in the OECD, after all, albeit dwarfed, sometimes even at home, by the United States' media presence. However, as states they too are complicit in various systems of internal subjugation and erasure. In a similar sense, the US itself has communities internally that we would of course consider peripheral — all as part of the Appadurian sense of deterritorialisation that marks the neoliberal era (37). What do we do when and if these communities establish contact with one another? In an even more complex dynamic, how do we parse situations in which such modes of contact occur via hegemonic media channels, as in the media flows examined by Havens? Functioning through networks and intermediaries that are often blind to the desires of such communities (109-10), Black Anglo-American (as opposed to Black Caribbean or Latin American) culture has become the shared site of expression for a variety of subaltern voices in the rest of the world — something Havens himself observes in the case of Polynesia (148). Should such means of contact through media be considered wholly vertical? What parameters (authorial involvement, media ownership, audience interaction) would we use to determine this?

In breaking into and complicating Thussu's model of flow and its directionalities, this project approaches these complications of situated contextual power imbalances and their negotiation. In further balancing this theoretical approach with the entrenched methodologies

offered and suggested by Curtin's conceptualization of the media capital as a unit and field of study, it likewise speaks to how flow can be seen at once as both reflecting and eventually affecting global power dynamics. In scrambling to integrate the world into a unified, interdependent system, late capital has provided peripheries with the tools to increasingly interact with one another. These tools may be subject to pre-existing hegemonies, and they may be limiting in several essential ways, but they nonetheless offer a greater opportunity now more than ever for contact and alliance between peripheral actors that once may have been barred from such contact, or even awareness of each other. Even as it recreates power, media flow so too allows for such connections to take place and flourish.

Chapter Overview

In incorporating industrial, textual, and cultural analysis of anime's importation, translation and remediation from Mexico City to the rest of the Latin American mediascape, this dissertation takes a multi-focal approach with respect to both the systemic and material realities of media cultures between Mexico, Japan, the wider Latin American region, and the United States, looking at both formal and informal modes of media circulation. Because this project is attempting precisely to address the relative scarcity of scholarship connecting East Asian and Latin American mediascapes, a substantial portion of its investigative contribution will necessarily be expository, firstly examining the role taken on by anime as a cultural commodity outside of Mexico in order to provide wider global context in Chapter 1. In Chapter 2, Mexico City itself is the focus, particularly with regard to its development as a media capital and a center of cultural power in Latin America that is nonetheless divorced from more statist models of this power as translating into "nation-branding" or cultural imperialism. From then on, the project's

organizational structure is less concerned with establishing context. Chapter 3 focuses on the processes of meaning-making which Latin American remediators and audiences have undertaken with anime since its earliest manifestations in the region in the 1970s, and how these have resonated in contemporary Latin American pop culture and social agendas. Chapter 4 in turn looks more concretely at the processes of both formal and informal remediation going on in Mexico City as both a point of transnational re-circulation of media, and a site of popular and unsanctioned media distribution and consumption. Finally, Chapter 5, while still concerned with Mexico as a central case study and site of remediation, takes a slightly more distanced perspective, looking at the interactions between Japanese media producers and Mexican remediators amid both the direct interaction with and systemic influence of Anglo-American institutionality.

Chapter 1 – Beyond Soft Power: Anime in Europe and the Middle East – is primarily concerned with establishing a wider scope and context for the more narrowly situated, Mexico-focused investigation to follow in Chapters 2-5. In it, I concentrate on instances of anime circulation that are notable insomuch as they speak to pathways working either tangentially or in parallel to commonly examined bilateral dynamics of flow shared between Japan and the United States. It is, after all, not only in Latin America that anime has been able to establish networks of distribution that circumvent the habitual dialectics of vertical flow and counter-flow we commonly see in discussions of anime circulation. Anime has circulated in other global media environments as well, often being introduced roughly around the same time period as it was in Latin America between the 1970s and 80s. As with anime's incursion in this region, however, there has been little scholarship that examines anime's cultural presence in other localities and media systems, let alone that contextualizes it within a framework of

comparative dynamics of flow. And where anime's presence in other East Asian states has been analyzed with regard to conceptualization of cultural proximity and soft power, its presence in other regional markets, as with Latin America, requires a different perspective.

To this end, this chapter consists primarily of a comparative historical-cultural analysis of how anime has circulated in Europe and the Middle East through such shows as *Heidi, Girl of the Alps* (1974), *Maya the Bee* (1975), and *Captain Tsubasa* (1983-6). As with Latin America, anime's presence in these regions is long-held and often deeply engrained into the generational identities of its audiences, and particularly those who watched Japanese animated imports between the 1970s and 1980s, prior to the opening of these markets to stronger flows of media from the United States. During this time period, anime emerged in the global children's television market as a more affordable alternative to similarly-formatted imports from Anglo-American sources. This, in combination with other aspects I examine, created an opportunity for anime texts to deeply impact the children's media landscape of several disparate markets, much earlier and more integrally than often accounted for by dominant contemporary academic perspectives. Given the dearth of scholarship on anime's popular impact more generally in these regions, my analysis here leans heavily on both Darling-Wolf's work on anime's European popularity and Sayfo's analysis of the development of the Middle-Eastern children's TV field in order to speak to both its popular impact, and how anime's influences may be seen in the local production cultures and textualities that have emerged in its wake in such countries as Pakistan, Iran, France, Italy, and Germany.

It is certainly the case that none of these regions has had an experience with anime that is completely analogous to that of Latin America. At the same time, the range of anime-influenced resonances that can be found in these sites of popular culture and local media

production cultures has much to say about the broader spectrum of influence and types of flow that have shaped anime's global presence outside the bilateral formulations so commonly understood when considering anime from the perspective of dominant cultures of media scholarship. In examining these relationships, this chapter at once helps to contextualize the following chapters on anime's incursion in Latin America, while at the same time highlighting the range of under-examined ways in which anime has circulated and shaped the global animation and children's media marketplaces. While the chapter is cursory by necessity, it is my intention to both consolidate much of the research done on this subject to date, as well as to reconfirm the need for more investigation into these areas and provide an impetus for more directed analysis of transnational media circulation in these and other overlooked localities.

Chapter 2 — Intermediary Influence: Mexico City as Site of Remediation — is primarily historical in nature, documenting the emergence of Mexico City as Latin America's most prominent site of audiovisual media production alongside its development as the region's predominant concentration of remediation industries. It will focus in particular on the wider scope of its growth as an administrative center and media capital highly contingent on its positioning as a nexus between empire and periphery — a concentration of comprador classes, intelligencias and technocrats, all of which respond to both Mexico's liminality as a cultural boundary between Latin America and the rest of the world. It will likewise examine in what way this development has played out against the Mexican state's historically non-interventionist presence in the Latin American region — something that would seem to work against its relative cultural protagonism in the region. Primary among my research agendas here is an examination into the ways in which Mexico and Mexico City's centrality to the Latin American mediascape relates to conceptualizations of cultural empire and state-focused notions of regional hegemony.

Given Mexico's history as a once-vast territory, and a highly centralized nexus of imperial control, why has its cultural prominence in the Latin American region never translated into any kind of imperialist, or otherwise imposing political presence? Why has this media capital, known throughout the region for both its prolific production and its significant presence in media importation, developed the way it has? As I expand upon here, I see the contemporary shape of Mexico City's role in Latin America as a major media capital as having been fundamentally affected by its ingrained role as a site of articulation between periphery and empire. This is a role in part shaped by Mexico's proximity to the United States, but is indeed a facet of its earliest colonial history as well. By examining Mexico City along such fundamentally transnational (and indeed pre-national) notions of cultural flow and exchange, my research agenda here is then just as much to challenge nationally-entrenched or "contained" histories and analyses of media systems as it is in establishing the social-historical context for my following chapters' study of anime's circulation in the region. I push here for an expansion into analytical agendas that focus on the interdependence of geographically entrenched media capitals — not only as sites of commerce and cultural circulation, but also as sites in which industrial cultures are themselves established and circulated.

Chapter 3 — Anime Latino: The Layering of Meaning and Identities in anime's Latin American Circulation — focuses on the question of identity, authorship and the meaning embedded in the cultural objects that have made the trip from Japan to Latin America. It focuses in particular on the ways in which popular subjects in the Latin American public sphere have interpreted and made social meaning out of anime texts. In order to examine these processes, I focus on how such social meaning-making has been shaped by Latin America's relationship to and vision of Japan since the 1960s, as well as how processes of remediation (predominantly

enacted in Mexico City) have likewise contributed to the creation of social meaning in and through anime textualities.

My primary case study in this chapter looks at the ways in which one particular popular anime text, *Dragon Ball Z,* was employed in 2011 by leftist social protesters in Chile to make complex and specific allegorical illustrations of their political agendas. As I argue, the way in which this show was discursively mobilized by these protesters speaks to a level of engagement with anime textualities that is at once more wide-reaching and integral than the mode of anime audienceship examined in the more subcultural nature of its fandom in other localities — the Anglo-American context in particular. It likewise reflects upon the ways in which this show's cultural associations with communal values, anti-individualist social agendas have been integrated into Latin American popular culture. This cultural presence in turn speaks on the one hand to possible points of cultural affinity between Japanese popular textualities and Latin American audiences, while on the other also suggesting ways in which such associations have been fomented and highlighted in the remediation process, by Mexican agents. Ultimately, this chapter then confronts the issue of how "Japanese", "Mexican", and/or "Latin American" anime is and becomes once it undergoes processes of remediation in order to integrate the Latin American mediascape.

Apart from being the largest, most established center of both media production and remediation in Latin America, Mexico City is likewise the largest single media market in both the region and the global Spanish-speaking world. As both the capital and largest market in a country whose population itself makes up a fifth of the entire Latin American populace, Mexico City comprises the single most powerful concentration of media industry, audience influence, and de facto regulation in Latin America. Where chapters 2 and 3 look at the effects of this

regional predominance historically in the case of the former, and more widely across the wider impact of anime in the region in the case of the latter, **Chapter 4 — In the Air and on the Ground: Asian Media's Circulation within Mexico City —** concentrates on Mexico City as a contemporary case study unto itself. As such, in this chapter I look at Mexico City across two dimensions of current activity, in its role as a major center of both institutional and unsanctioned media distribution and access. In doing so I focus in particular on how the circulation of anime and other Asian media is conducted amid the embedded media production and distribution cultures of the city.

While this chapter is less theoretically-oriented than the others, its contribution to the wider field lies centrally in the primary research it details with respect to several areas of interest. First among these is the perspective offered of the contemporary state of Mexico City's dubbing, translation and redistribution industries. This is an area of investigation that is under-examined even in Latin America itself, and which my own work is only beginning to delve into. Its second contribution is in establishing a perspective of the position of anime among the wider field of media remediation happening in this media capital, and in what way this flow of textuality relates to other trajectories taken to and within Latin America. Its final contribution is in examining how such media circulates amid the informal markets of Mexico City's proletarian markets, particularly in the neighborhood of Tepito — famously the site of one of the world's largest pirate media markets. In documenting field research done in the summer of 2016 in both Tepito and the wider pirate media market of Mexico City, I build here on similar work done by Ramon Lobato ten years prior, with a more narrow focus on how Asian media in particular is situated amid the wider offerings of these vendors. Employing a combination of archival work, observational research and interviews, this chapter draws parallels both between these two

disparate modes and stages of media circulation, looking at how they interact and feed into one another , and in what way the logics of 'legitimated' commercial media circulation are variably emulated, reinforced and undermined by Mexico City's unsanctioned, but nonetheless highly formalized and established, media markets.

Where my primary research agenda in previous chapters largely seeks to discursively de-center the United States as a (the) primary player in global anime distribution while still acknowledging its institutions' structural influence, **Chapter 5 — Triangulation: Anime's Circulation to Latin America through, around, and in the wake of the US mediascape —** brings its more direct involvement in this culture of circulation back to the fore. Still, this re-integration is not done to re-center it as an absolute determinant of circulation, but as a locality situating actors and institutions that have had variable modes and scales of influence in this wider dynamic. To this end, this chapter looks specifically at the range of institutional relationships (or lack thereof) that have shaped the way in which anime has circulated to Mexico and beyond. This involvement ranges from the direct remediation of media texts and franchises through the US (as with *Pokémon*), a variety of what we might call parallel textual flows (as with *Dragon Ball* and *Digimon*), or a complete non-involvement that in turn sets the scene for significant divergences in cultural impact between Latin and Anglo-American media markets for certain franchises. Such is the example offered by the wildly successful anime *Saint Seiya* (1986-9), translated as *Caballeros del Zodiaco* (Knights of the Zodiac, 1992-1995). This was a series that made minimal if any impact in the United States, but which stands as one of the most successful anime franchises throughout Latin America.

In looking at these different kinds of circulation, I also intend to speak to the increasing intermingling and hybridities suggested by the ways in which Latin and Anglo-American anime fandoms themselves have come to exist in physically analogous, but culturally distinct spaces. Here I refer to the fact that, as with all areas of their interaction, the Latin and Anglo-American cultural spheres exist across a boundary that is at once rigid, brittle, and transparent, but also fragile and surprisingly easy to breach. This paradoxical intermingling is highly visible with regard to the presence of Latin-oriented media on platforms that are themselves entrenched in the United States' media markets.

Indeed, it is put in quite concrete display by the ways in which anime texts have been included and curated on US versions of emergent digital distribution systems such as Netflix, Hulu, and Amazon Prime. To be more specific, these US-based digital platforms house several texts, such as *Saint Seiya* on Netflix, that can be seen to cater specifically to Latin American audiences, offering dubs in Spanish, but only subtitles in English. This catering of content to US-entrenched Latin American audiences is made even more evident when noting how shows such as *Digimon Adventure* have been curated on the same platform. In this instance, the show has been offered in two versions, each under an entirely different title, as if they were separate entities altogether. One offers the show's US dub, with its associated modified credits and minor edits. The other offers the unedited original in either the original Japanese (with English subs), or Spanish. In examples such as these, we can see both hybridity and disjuncture across anime cultures, with each cultural identity (Japanese, Anglo, and Latin American) coming to serve as a cypher for the fraught interactions of the other two. This in turn reflects upon modes of peripherality that are truly de-territorialized, trafficking not at the edges of systemic power, but circulating right through it.

Finally, my **Conclusion — Towards a Broader Perspective of Transperipheral Culture —** will discuss in what way this project contributes to a more comprehensive perspective of peripherality amid a contemporary global mediascape subject to the rapid deterritorialisation. In addition, it will look at how the case studies examined here feed into what I see as an emergent culture of transperipheral media circulation — not only with respect to anime or Latin America, but across emergent centers of media administration globally.

A Note on Methodology and Structure

As the preceding chapter descriptions suggest, this dissertation project delves into a variety of different investigative agendas and tendencies within the scope of media and cultural studies. Given the inherently multi-disciplinary character of global media scholarship as a whole, not to mention the various disciplines it draws from and builds upon, my work here is not too far afield from many contemporary works on the subject. At the same time, the historical, geographic, and disciplinary sprawl of this particular project warrant some explanation of its investigative methods and structural approaches. Much of my work here is exploratory, after all, seeking to address social structures and relationships that have only just recently begun to be formally investigated.

In terms of concrete methodology, the vast majority of my work here has consisted of archival work informed by close textual analysis. Materials for this line of investigation were sourced primarily on both the open internet and digital institutional university and journalistic archives. Much of my work with these resources is synoptic — consolidating and incorporating historical accounts and related secondary sources into this project's investigative framework and agenda. Given their historical bent, this tendency is most prominent in Chapters 2, 3, and 5,

though it likewise informs this project as a whole. Chapter 1, for instance, concentrating as it does on resonances of anime production and textuality in contemporary Middle Eastern and European media, is informed by a combination of trade press, broader journalism, fan interviews, online forum discussions, and close formal analysis of several animated works. All of this is likewise informed by both my own training and work as an animator, as well as a variety of secondary academic sources focussed on the investigation several related fields.

Even with such resources, the fact that so much of what I am looking at here is contingent on perspectives on modes of Asian-Latin American transculturation that have only recently even been recognized as such has led me to unorthodox avenues of archival consultation. This is especially the case with regard to cultural phenomena taking place prior to the mid-1980s, which have for their part required some degree of digging and extrapolative textual analysis. In exploring and speculating on the incursion of Japanese culture and identity in Latin America during the 1960s in Chapter 3, for instance, I consult not only Latin American magazine ads for Japanese products, but also a Japanese-focussed arc on the popular Argentine newspaper comic strip *Mafalda.* In a similar vein, Chapter 3 likewise makes use of discourse analysis with regard to both the performative aspects of anime-influenced Chilean protest cultures and their subsequent mediatization through journalism and popular commentary.

In transitioning from this project's wider historical agendas towards the contemporary embedded dynamics of media commerce, circulation and popular resonance in Mexico City, this project's methods accordingly incorporate a greater emphasis on first-hand investigation in addition to these other strategies. Chapters 4 and 5 in particular are informed by a mixture of embedded observation, informal contact and formal interviews with media professionals and street-level vendors in Mexico City. My on-site investigation for these chapters was primarily

grounded in two weeks worth of visits to the Tepito neighborhood's open-air market in the first half of July, 2016. This was supplemented with similar, though less concentrated investigation of Mexico City's surrounding smaller sites of informal media commerce, such as wandering vendors and kiosks. During this time, I also sought contact with media professionals working in Mexico City's dubbing and media distribution industries. In the Tepito market itself, this resulted in both interviews and less formal conversations with a handful of vendors, one of which I elaborate upon in much more detail in Chapter 4. Establishing this same level of contact with media workers in Mexico City's more formalized media industries was more difficult, given both my limited time in the city and (at the time) lack of embedded contacts. As such, while I was able to secure a very informative formal interview with voice-over artist and director Mario Castañeda during this trip, I was not able to secure the same level of contact with other professionals during this same visit, with communication remaining informal. These contacts have nonetheless provided me with valuable perspective into both the localized production communities of Mexico City, as well as how these are positioned amid wider regional and global media production and distribution communities. Looking towards the future, the network of embedded contacts I have begun to establish in the completion of this project remains a valuable resource that leaves me in a much better position to both expand on the work done here and embark on other investigative projects concentrating on Mexico's media industries and production communities.

The task of structuring both this line of primary investigation and my more historically-focussed work in this dissertation has entailed some necessary compromises with respect to the project's overall organization and cumulative flow of argumentation. Much of my work here has indeed been dedicated to reframing and connecting social, political and

commercial relationships that have proven difficult to historicize and track from a practical standpoint. Because of its split focus on both anime's transnational global circulation and Mexico City's role as a Latin American media capital, it as possible to arrange this dissertation's chapters along several lines of emphasis and induction to its wider investigative agendas. Both chapters 1 and 2 have a distinct historical bent to them, the first documenting anime's growth and presence in a wider global media market, and the second tracking Mexico City's development as a center of media flow. Consequently, it isn't until Chapter 3 that both of these lines of investigation come into play while looking at anime's trajectory throughout the wider Latin American context via Mexican remediation. Practically speaking, either of these chapters could have come first. In opting for the structure I have, I've placed anime's circulation itself as the primary through-line linking these chapters together, though this is not to downplay the position of Mexico City itself as a central factor to my investigative agendas here. Looking to the future, I intend to address this question of relative emphasis by addressing the broader issues I have begun to look at here across two distinct but interrelated projects — one focusing on the cultural presence of anime in Latin America (and how it shapes other lines of importation to the region), and the other looking at the role played by Mexico City as a site of media (re)circulation for non-Western media in the Latin American context.

Towards a Transperipheral Perspective

It is in such negotiations of entrenched, institutional power — how they interact with each other as well as with their own local contexts — that I see the more fundamental contribution of this dissertation. Key among all this is the notion of how peripherality itself is envisioned, and how its subjects relate to it and each other. Peripherality is of course a relative term. It is also just as

much about notions of cultural protagonism, epistemology and ontology as it is about the more material realities of postcolloniality and political global hegemony in the statist or imperialist sense. Major media localities such as Mexico and Japan have indeed been variably refuted as participants within notions of peripherality. And indeed, most locations and communities have much less cultural protagonism in the realm of media production and circulation than these sites.

By the same token, however, we should also be cognizant of peripherality's transversal identitary dimension, and aware that peripheral dynamics are just as much about identitary and communal self-perception as they are about relative positioning of power and hegemony, and that relative economic and political power don't necessarily map onto cultural power. Even the most powerful members of a given location's comprador class behave in a way that belies deference to market logics, racial hierarchies, and social stratifications that often undermine their own identities and dignity, meaning that what we are dealing with is peripherally-positioned behavior. Such has been the case throughout the history of both Japan and Mexico's respective emergences in the global media market, and it is in such behavior that I see the value of examining how different emergent actors negotiate their own entrances in this field. Elsewhere I have written about the ways in which newly emergent and peripheral players in the global media marketplace have sought to integrate the wider field through the emulation of more powerful, established players (2017, 7). What I have been increasingly interested in more recently however is the way in which such behavior so often results in a futile attempt to replicate aesthetics and production values that are themselves highly dependent on resources unavailable for such players.

At its earliest stages of development, anime too once represented a cheaper, supposedly inferior alternative to Western, Anglo-American style animation. But its producers

soon found ways to turn their more limited resources into an aesthetic identity, imbued with both wider literary and visual traditions, and the inherent strengths of the televised platforms anime was consolidated within. More recently-established producers of animation and other media have taken their cues from the possibilities offered by such strategies, turning assumed limitations into aesthetic parameters. Similar emulation can be seen with regard to the Latin American telenovela format and its global circulation and influence in production styles. The global success of both these categories of textuality has to do in large part with their relative position in the global media marketplace as cheap, accessible commodities, that nonetheless have found resonance among a wide variety of (often subaltern) audiences. They are indicative of the power of trans-peripheral modes of media circulation and consumption.

Amid the growing plurality of media production on the global stage, the possibilities for a greater scope of transculturation across different points of contact are likewise increasing exponentially, often initially through chance encounters, but then ingraining themselves deeply within the popular consciousness of a growing variety of communities. And all of this is occurring predominantly in secondary and tertiary media markets — those willing to experiment with such material because of the willingness of its producers to make it accessible. By looking at anime, its history, its distribution, and its cultural integration into the Latin American popular consciousness, this dissertation makes contributions to several overlooked areas of media studies. More importantly to my own investigative agendas, however, it frames this trajectory as a precedent to much wider processes of emergence across the borders of global cultural hegemony, allowing for a mode of cosmopolitanism that elides the supposed cultural center, and is in fact only possible at its peripheries.

Chapter 1 — Beyond Soft Power: Anime in Europe and the Middle East

Whether looked at through academic or vernacular knowledge bases, the Latin American mediascape's relationship to Asian cultural products is difficult to pin down. It is only very recently that institutional metrics have taken this dimension of media importation into account at all, concerned as they have been primarily with national, intra-regional, Anglo-American and European media circulation in the region. This relative murkiness is compounded by the fact that Asian media is relatively new on the scene as a category of importation independent from channels owned or directed by Western media conglomerates. While anime has been making its way to the region since the early 1970s, Korean and Turkish dramas are much newer lines of importation, commencing their own (now successful) flows of syndicated programming in 2000 and 2014 respectively. In my own recent interactions with contemporaries and more established scholars, I've taken to asking about which kinds of metrics are available with regard to Asian media importation. From what I've learned, while there has been a growing awareness of this sphere of media circulation in the region, this has not yet been well represented in statistical readings of Latin America's mediascapes. If accounted for at all, such imports usually fall under the category of "other". This combination of both inadvertent erasure and discursive oversight of such media flows colludes to make it so that the recent (and not really so recent at that) waves of

media distribution into the region from countries such as Korea, Turkey and now India have only just begun to be regarded as something noteworthy in and of themselves. This emergence is for its part all the more notable for the fact that Latin America continues to grow as a field of media commerce — particularly with regard to the growing field of television. Whereas once the region was (in discourse if not praxis) diminished as a secondary market at best, global media conglomerates have taken a growing interest in catering to the Latin American market on the level of both regional and national markets. This is most clearly evidenced by the number of Anglo-American media companies which have sought to produce locally-oriented programming in Brazil, Colombia, Chile, and other states in the region. In a similar vein, Indian media producers are for their part also beginning to heavily factor the Latin American market into their own budgetary projections (Kumar).

Taking into account the long-assumed peripherality of Latin America as a wider media market (a perspective shared both outside of and within Latin America itself), this shift in the framing of the region makes it difficult to track and contextualize the wider relationships, dynamics and histories that have triggered this sudden multi-directionality of media importation. Stated simply, there is a great deal happening, it is happening right now, and it is coming from directions that fall outside of Latin America's habitually discussed parameters of commerce, politics and cultural exchange. While still highly contingent in their own way, the attention paid to more established dynamics have made it difficult to see not only the impact of these waves of media importation, but also the necessary points of connection (whether these are commercial, institutional, or cultural) that have permitted and shaped them. The need to track and understand the growth and potential of this multi-directional importation is becoming increasingly contingent from a Latin American perspective. This is true not only because these nascent

cultural relationships have now coincided with concurrent commercial and diplomatic ties with many of the sites in which this media is being produced, but also because the United States' own recent diplomatic and commercial behavior is becoming increasingly erratic in the face of its internal structural failures.

From my own position as a Latin American media scholar, one of the immediate recourses in understanding this phenomena lies in the examination of its structural precedents and wider comparative contexts. That is, in what way can this amplified role for Asian media in Latin America be traced to longer histories of Asian media importation in this and other regions? How can what we already know about emergent media markets, sites of production, and indeed, the nature of global peripherality itself, inform our understanding of what is happening here? Just as importantly, what does this have to say about the wider implications and application of notions of cultural proximity (La Pastina and Straubhaar, 274), and cultural odor (Iwabuchi, 58) amid a media environment in which assumed 'foreign' cultural presences aren't seen as invasive, but rather quotidian? Particularly environments such as those of many peripheral localities in which the vast majority of the mediascape is made up of imports and foreign-language media. Such is the case for several Latin American media cultures, not to mention many others with even less access to economic or technological resources, industry partnerships, or simply the wider linguistic community that would facilitate more locally-produced media environments. For such communities, their mediascape may have never represented them wholly, thus fostering a culture of negotiated audienceship that comes to permeate the everyday, rather than reading such foreign presences as an exception.[4]

[4] This phenomena of quotidian foreignness in import-dependent media environments is something I discuss further with respect to Japanese animation in Latin America in Chapter 3.

In spite of this recent growth and the impression it gives that such pathways of media circulation are a wholly new phenomena, Asian TV has in fact had a long and culturally impactful role in the wider Latin American media imaginary via the importation of Japanese media. This has of course been primarily through animation, but also through a few notable instances of live-action programming as well ("La señorita que murió en un terremoto"). Furthermore, we may go as far as to speculate that the quotidianity of this long-established relationship between Japanese media and Latin America is in fact more the rule than the exception when it comes to the wider presence and impact of Japanese media across the globe — this in spite of the dominant narratives that have been attributed to Japanese media's sporadic and markedly subcultural presence in the Anglo-American media context. Taking both this longevity and its quiet pervasiveness into account, Japanese media's global circulation can be taken as both a prototype and archetype: a model against which more recently-emerged cultures of media production and circulation can be compared in their respective negotiation of Western-dominated networks of global media flow.

By taking advantage of the opportunities offered by both the historical and regional dimensions of this phenomena, this chapter focuses on the ways in which Japanese media's strategies of production and exportation (two processes often inextricable from each other) have impacted the media cultures of two other broad geo-cultural aggrupations generally overlooked with regard to their importation of East Asian Media in the wider discourse: the Middle East, and Western Europe. The significance of anime's first wave of importation into both regions, roughly between the latter half of the 1970s and the early 1980s, is fundamental to my overall argument in this dissertation project as a whole. First of all because it speaks to the general strategies taken by anime producers with regard to its global circulation, and how these embedded practices have

in turn affected anime audienceship as a wider global phenomenon. It likewise illuminates the role taken by anime as a global children's TV phenomenon amid the establishment of several national and regional television industries and systems during this time period. Anime's circulation in these regions during this time as such provides a comparative basis from which to read the development of Latin America's own media distribution systems and audience cultures during this same time period. Furthermore, and as I discuss in Chapters 3 and 5, it was during this same moment that Latin America's own media markets were first being marked by local cultures of anime audienceship.

Japanese animation, or anime, has already been noted for its distinctive spreadability, and its historically noted instances of prominent, generationally affiliated affective bonds with audiences (Jenkins, Ford and Green, 2, Iwabuchi, 58). As Darling-Wolf notes, however, such commentary often ignores the importance of global anime audienceship before the 1990s, thanks in part to the inadvertent erasure of anime's global history outside Anglo-American markets (107). This chapter for its part is intended as a preliminary investigation into this wider world, building on work that is attempting to address this oversight into a greater variety of experiences with Japanese and other East Asian media. To do so I'll be relying on Darling-Wolf's own work on the popular impact of anime in France as a model of how we may further delve into this phenomenon. Darling-Wolf's work in this regard is valuable not only for the actual investigative findings it has produced with regard to European anime cultures, but also because it offers a model for similar study elsewhere. These perspective are particularly lacking with regard to perceptions of anime's Middle Eastern circulation and cultural resonances. Unfortunately, such absences are par for the course with regard to Middle Eastern perspectives on popular and children's media. This may simply be an issue of a lack of English-language scholarship, or may

likewise be affected by other more pressing issues occupying academic attention. Regardless, much of my work in getting a sense of anime cultures in this region has as such depended on the ways in which anime audienceship has in turn been reflected in local cultural production — an imperfect methodology, but one which I see as only further confirming the need to take anime culture into account as a means of understanding the current field. In underlining anime's traces in contemporary Middle Eastern animation production and media cultures, there is an implicit connection to wider networks of fannish engagement with Japanese media that speak to the formation of local media cultures along lines of generational, subcultural, and mass cultural identity.

Part of this chapter's purpose is precisely in underlining such continuities — be it in the European, Middle Eastern, or Latin American contexts. The cumulative upshot of this comparison across these spheres of influence lies then not in the suggestion of essential distinctiveness across these regions, but rather in the reality and potential suggested by such continuities themselves, whether across spheres of transculturation experienced within each region with respect to Japanese media, or across these and other mediascapes as a wider landscape. It is my intent in this chapter then to supplement the fundamental goal of this dissertation project — to illuminate the context, implications and possibilities of Anime's presence in the Latin American cultural sphere, and not how such histories can themselves illuminate wider cultures of contact across relative cultural peripheries.

Synecdoche West: Anglo-America as both Archetype and Exception

In setting up this comparative framework, I've found it necessary to participate in the well-established (but still necessary) problematization of the notion of the West in and of itself as a

category of geo-political, cultural, and hierarchical understanding. This is of course a tension that is as old or older than the field of post-colonial studies itself. It finds its establishment in Cultural Studies proper with Edward Said's historization of the binary logic of European self-definition through the cultural other represented by the Orient (38-39), and in Economics with the establishment of Panitch and Singer's dependency framework, which for its part did much to challenge the nationally-entrenched logic of the modernity project. It likewise finds much earlier precedents in a variety of commentaries, writings and other modes of contestation from even the earliest colonial contexts. In the Latin American case for instance, Spanish ecclesiastical scholars were already questioning the imposed hierarchies of colonial life by the mid 1500s, pointing out that the Nahua language and sciences had greater intricacy and rigor than their Spanish-language equivalents. It is from these long-standing and varied instances of critique from across the colonial world that formalized structures of contestation and resistance to European colonial system(s) would coalesce across the global periphery in the mid-20th century. These lines of both political-economic and cultural response would in turn come to a head just as the global political landscape gave way to the realities of the Cold War, which for its part would substantially alter old imperial paradigms and realities. Conceptually alone, it would not only re-establish new parameters of East and West, but likewise re-entrench logics of neo-colonialism along shifting parameters of North and South, First and Third World, and (more productively for our purposes) center and periphery. All of this is to say that in this dynamic of relative, competing binaries, the "East" and "West" comprised a collective "North" which both exploited and conducted bloody conflicts by proxy in the countries comprising the "South".

The resulting and persistent problems of geopolitical definition and affiliation created by this dynamic lie along several axes. We may note, first of all, that in the wake of the Cold

War's culmination, the meanings laden in these cardinal directions were suddenly put in disarray and re-articulated as the current world order congealed and made itself visible. The "West" and "North" have now become intermingled and often interchangeable, while the East and South have come to stand in variably for cultural or economic threats, peripheries, or failed integrants to the hegemonic system ruled by a stratified community of political-economic hegemons. These hegemons are for their part conceptualized as a floating deterritorialized cosmopolitan class (Wood, 9-10), or further structured into a more nationally-entrenched community of plutocrats guided by the leadership (financial and political) of those of its members based in the United States (Panitch and Gindin, 248). The second conceptual problem suggested by the culmination of Cold War politics lies precisely in the deterritorialisation of hegemony itself — not to mention poverty, and the increasingly wrought, contested nature of the nation state as a geopolitical demarcator of, identity, economic structures, and demographic circulation (Appadurai, 301-302). The weakening of the nation-state in this way (both structurally and conceptually) has resulted in an increasing intermingling of the global center and periphery. As the inevitable existence of ghettos of wealth in the global South becomes increasingly apparent, so too can we see a multitude of internal third worlds in any given metropolitan locality (Hapke, 114-115).

Thirdly, and most importantly to the focus of this chapter, the post-Cold War period's simultaneous reaffirmation and complication of these interdependent binaries did much to obfuscate/alienate the relationships that bind these categorizations on a global structural level. That is to say, not only did this environment obscure the many continuities that bind these categories together (what exactly characterizes the United States' relationship to Russia, Europe, China?), it has likewise obfuscated the internal frictions, negotiations and hierarchies that occur within the regions and spheres of power that ostensibly comprise the centers of global political,

economic and cultural power. Because the discourse of de-colonization has been obliged to define itself in contrast and opposition to North/Western subjectivities, the global West has itself now inadvertently been envisioned as a discursive monolith, placing the United States for its part both at the top of the imperialist hierarchy, and situating it overwhelmingly as its sole cultural representative. The US in this way becomes both apex and archetype.

That being said, it does not take much work to note that the most powerful entity in a given system might not be the most representative of its wider realities. All the same, much cultural scholarship struggles to contend with the implicit distortions suggested by such a conflation, extrapolating too many global conclusions from very particular local metropolitan realities. As Darling-Wolf notes in her own meta-analysis of anime's discursive framing by Western academics, there is a long-running tendency for Japanese animation's broader global presence in particular to be conflated with its history and impact in the Anglo-American context. In examining this epistemic oversight, Darling-Wolf underlines in what way this ultimately obfuscates a much more complicated relationship between anime and the "West" as a whole, ignoring not only the realities of these local mediascapes, but also erasing whatever particular histories these localities might share with Japanese media, culture and indeed other modes of transculturation (104). This erasure, predominantly entrenched as it is in the United States with its own particular relationship not just to Japan, but to media importation in general, has in turn fed into a very particular line of historization with regard to anime as a cultural product, commodity, and wider social phenomenon. It has fed into a now-common narrative held by both popular and academic spheres that situates anime as an incidental cultural presence in the wider global mediascape, relegated to subcultural fandom until the 90s anime boom lead by *Sailor*

Moon, *Pokemon, Dragon Ball Z*, and their many imitators (whether in production or distribution) (Annett, 3).

While this assessment is not in itself so problematic with respect to the particular Anglo-American experience with anime, and while the United States' cultural influence would in turn have a substantial ripple-effect in other media markets, this particular narrative fails to account on its own for the wider global reality of anime's circulation. Nonetheless, anime scholarship has been burdened with the distortion of a synecdoche in which the United States comes to represent the West itself, not only due to Anglo-America's impact as an influential market and re-distributor of media properties, but also in the extrapolation of its own popular realities onto a much wider environment. This distortion places the study of anime in other mediascapes in something of a dilemma. On the one hand, it would be irresponsible to completely discount the influence of the Anglo-American context outright. After all, it has historically had and continues to have a great deal of influence globally (whether intentionally or not) as a media exporter and site of re-circulation. In the same vein, the Anglo-American popular experience has itself come to shape the global face of anime consumption and fandom to such an extent that it has become difficult to conceptually separate it from other modes of affective engagements. On the other hand, much of the language and conceptualization emanating from the Anglo-American epicenter with regard to the anime media phenomenon simply doesn't correspond to the lived experiences that anime has engendered in other mediascapes. This is particularly true of those mediascapes that have integrated Japanese programming more consistently and along different media flows than the United States. For these localities, anime and other Japanese media carry different cultural meaning, and have fostered other responses.

Anime as Blueprint: Middle Eastern Animation

Anime arrived to many parts of the Middle East as a cultural commodity embedded in their early broadcast and cable TV systems. Adopting the same industrial strategies taken by other Japanese businesses at the time, anime producers took to undercutting the price of their programming in order to make them more attractive commodities for peripheral and emergent broadcasters with limited access to the more expensive products offered by Western producers such as Disney, Warner Brothers and Hannah Barbera (Luo, Sun and Wang, 38). This worked in conjunction with the political and cultural rejection of Western media in many Middle Eastern regimes to facilitate the spread and popularity of several anime shows throughout the region. As detailed by Omar Sayfo, most television broadcasters took several decades to develop concerted policies with regard to children's programming, opting to integrate programming primarily on the basis of convenience (79-80). This created a fertile marketplace for anime, which existed variably alongside Anglo-American, Western European, and Soviet-produced programming throughout the region. Audiences from Iran, Saudi Arabia and elsewhere have since expounded in online forums about their memories of watching such shows as the soccer-centric *Captain Tsubasa* (1983-1986)*, Swiss Family Robinson* (1981), and *Belle and Sebastian* (1984) ("How Iranians Changed", "Is Japanese Animation Popular"). These manifestations of early fandom and generational identification comprise much of what is available by ways of evidence of anime's popular impact in the region during this time. Unlike the Anglo-American context, where early anime fandom has since manifested in an entire generation of anime-inflected Western artwork, it is only just now that the artistic communities of these localities have been able to give rise to homegrown, locally-directed animation production cultures.

The first ever animated series produced in Pakistan premiered on the 28th of February 2013. Provocatively entitled *Burka Avenger,* this programme was at once envisaged by creator/director Haroon Rashid as children's entertainment, feminist pedagogy, and a re-appropriation of Islamic markers of cultural identity. Styled in the vein of other superhero narratives, *Burka Avenger*'s eponymous heroine lives a double life as both a maternal schoolteacher and superhero, defending the educational rights of children, and especially girls. She does so by donning a ninja-esque niqab (not a burka per se) as a uniform, heroically foiling plots put in motion by religious zealots and corrupt self-interested political figures (NPR "Lady in Black", fig. 1). Thanks both to its landmark status in Pakistan as locally produced children's programming and its progressive social commentary, *Burka Avenger*'s full run of 52 episodes across four seasons has been well received across the Indo-Middle Eastern region, with its original Urdu soundtrack receiving dubs in ten languages, including Turkish and Persian (Bhalla, "Burka Avenger Swoops"). It has likewise been well received critically, garnering several accolades, including a Peabody Award in the year of its initial release, and an international Emmy nomination in 2015.

Figure 1: *Burka Avenger* (2013)

In both its guise as entertainment and activist media, Burka Avenger seems to frame itself as a conscious local response to a wider global mediascape, clearly articulating a negotiation of ingrained 'external' cultural influences while attempting to take ownership both of local sociopolitical problems and widely mediated (and orientalized) indicators of Islamic identities — particularly those which speak to women's roles in Muslim society as signaled by hijab. By associating the symbolic weight of hijab with both the identity-obscuring vestments of superheroes and ninja, *Burka Avenger* re-articulates this marker of gendered cultural/religious identity into something potentially empowering in the possibilities it offers for "marked" anonymity.

Alongside its inherent political-symbolic value, this rearticulation likewise serves as evidence of a particular strain of strategic syncretism, taking obvious cues from the Anglo-American superhero genre and filtering them through both local contingencies and stylistic influences from anime and other East Asian media. From a technical standpoint, *Burka Avenger* likewise evidences a distinct visual identity influenced by these factors. Indeed, in my own engagement with this show, what stood out in particular was how off-kilter its animation itself was with respect to most other CGI-animated animation. Rather than following the squash-and-stretch principles of character animation cemented by Western studios during Hollywood's golden age, or even the more graphically inclined limited animation principles popularized by Hanna-Barbera and UPA in the TV animation field, Burka Avenger's characters display a sometimes disconcertingly frenetic shift between motion and stillness, with one still (though often dynamically composed) pose held by a character for an extended period. The movement linking these static poses would for its part occur suddenly and rapidly, with the "animation" connecting them often happening in much fewer frames (and thus a faster rate) than would be the

case in most contemporary animation productions. The vocal animation likewise mirrors this staccato pacing, with less attention paid to phonemes and emotive expressiveness than to the rhythm and tempo of speech created by the vocal track.

This almost percussive rhythm to the animation is all the more notable for the way that it defies the usual principles of CGI character animation as a technical workflow. To clarify: whereas most modes of animation depend on the creation of an illusion of movement via the precise sequencing of various still renderings, CGI animation works more like puppetry in that the animator poses the endpoints of movement and transformation, with the computer itself largely given the task interpolating (inbetweening or "tweening") the movement connecting these poses. This principle often leaves lower quality CGI animation with an oddly "floaty" feel to it, as the computer's interpellation of movement carries some inertia and often doesn't account for shifts in directionality or speed, thus making sudden stop-starts or naturalistic arcs of motion almost impossible to render without a skilled animator's guidance. Indeed, the bulk of a character animator's work in CGI is less in "creating" movement than in wrangling and tweaking the computer's manipulation and rendering of virtual constructs (characters, objects, fluid dynamics). All of this is to say that in the case of *Burka Avenger*, the predilection for characters to hold static poses must by the nature of this framework be a deliberate decision, given that in CGI, more than any other mode of animation, stillness is just as much a purposeful choice (aesthetically and technically) as movement would be.

If pressed to find a wholly Western genealogy for these traits in *Burka Avenger*'s animation, I would say they harken back to the Chuck Jones's short *The Dover Boys*, produced for Warner Brothers in 1942, (Fig. 2). Like *Burka Avenger*, this seminal short similarly emphasizes exaggerated still poses held together with rapid, purposefully blurred, almost

mechanical movement. When taken in conjunction with many of its other formal elements however, including its use of emotive, abstract backgrounds and an emphasis on fantasy martial arts (Fig. 3), I am much more inclined to think that this particular aesthetic/technical decision was made with an eye towards Japanese anime and to a lesser extent, Chinese wuxia "kung fu" films. While such sources' influence may for their part be conceivably dismissed as a filtration of both anime and Kung Fu culture into the Pakistani context through western media, the adoption of elements from both Asian media forms in this way by *Burka Avenger*'s producers ultimately speaks to a much more integral mode of influence – one which evidences a concerted, and indeed strategic, adoption of anime's animation principles not only for aesthetic value, but also in response to many of the same technical, economic and circumstantial factors that shaped anime's aesthetic development itself.

Figure 2: *The Dover Boys* (1942)

Figure 3: Abstract backgrounds in *Burka Avenger*

Burka Avenger is in fact only one of a handful of anime-inflected projects to have emerged in recent years from the Middle East, engendering projects of different scales and stages of development. Among these, the most interesting may be those which are still in production, including the giant-robot series *Torkaizer* from Dubai (Fig. 4). Its narrative centers on a young man from the emirates getting caught in an extraterrestrial invasion while visiting Japan, and ending up as a pilot of a giant robot in order to defend the earth. Given both these plot details and the clear allusions to Japan itself as the show's initial setting, *Torkaizer*'s production has been hailed as creating the "First Middle Eastern Anime" ("Abu Dhabime?"). This begs the question of what exactly is implied by the label of anime in the first place if applied to animation produced outside Japan. Because while in the Japanese context itself, anything animated is indeed referred to as anime, the label has taken on a much more specific, and indeed nationally-centered character when used elsewhere (Bond). Does it connote genre? Aesthetic? Narrative format? A set of production practices?

Lay definitions of anime tend to include references to big eyes, limited animation, expressive backgrounds, and sci-fi or fantasy genres often conveyed in the most globally trafficked anime texts — usually those aimed at children and teenagers. More formally speaking, however, anime is now understood as any animation both conceived and produced in Japan, excluding shows (such as *ThunderCats* or *My Little Pony*) which were produced in Japan, but largely narratively controlled by outside agents. As with any media aggrupation defined by regional or national affiliation more than artistic intent, the actual range of aesthetics, thematics and genres that anime deals with go far beyond the usual associations ascribed to it. Still, when productions like those of Torkaizer are labeled as "anime" or anime-esque, this is because they evoke the cultural associations of anime as it is understood by the majority of popular subjects and cultures that have consumed it. Traits such as commonly used tropes, settings, aesthetics, and the often inadvertent cultural odors they carry as Japanese media. Iwabuchi's concept of odor here becomes all the more important, as it denotes a variety of cultural trappings — perhaps most importantly depictions of quotidianity — that may go unnoticed by its producers, but which take on cultural meaning as a given text enters a new cultural context. As Iwabuchi further notes, the suppression of such "odor" has become a conscious strategy by Japanese cultural and industrial producers as a means of facilitating the circulation of their goods internationally (Iwabuchi, 2002, 94).

The very fact that anime texts have become so associated with Japanese culture — quite often in a positive light — speaks to a general undermining of such strategies (Iwabuchi, 2004, 59). This failure of self-erasure (something I delve into in more detail in Chapter 3) is due firstly to the fact that lived experiences and specificities are of course impossible to erase entirely. They are secondly attributable to the idea that that unless a producer has a particularly

distanced view of their own social context, they simply wouldn't know which aspects of their own culture are a point of difference, "noise" or "odor" to begin with, let alone when their work is being circulated in a variety of other media systems and cultural contexts.

Figure 4: *Torkaizer* (TBR)

Thanks to this dynamic, anime's global circulation has been marked by a palimpsestic tendency of muted and often inadvertent cultural self-identification only partially obfuscated by cultural markers assumed to be more friendly to wider global (read: Anglo-American) audiences. In the case of a production like *Torkaizer* then, the appellative of "Middle Eastern anime" is applied in large part thanks to the ways in which this show corresponds to audience's expectations of anime itself, and what they see as anime media's distinctive traits. As evidenced by this incomplete project's briefly outlined plot details, production stills, animation samples and popular critical reception, much of this association has to do with the show's visual aesthetics and the generic trappings of the giant robot subgenre of *mecha* (robot sci-fi) anime it emulates,

with characters and design elements that could easily pass for those of classically-oriented giant robot anime such as those of the *Gundam* franchise or *Gurren Lagann* (2007). The giant robot genre for its part is one of the most established, and thus, distinctive narrative types in Japanese pop culture, with the first anime of the tendency, *Tetsujin 28 Go*, first airing in 1963, in the same year, and only shortly after the first example and codifier of TV anime, *Astro Boy* (Napier, 87). As with the example offered by the Emirati *Torkaizer,* the giant robot subgenre hinges on the premise of human combatants enhancing their martial prowess through their enclosure in large, weaponized, usually humanistic machines. As observed by Susan Napier, this premise alone, while the most visible aspect of these narratives, is also overwhelmingly accompanied by narrative traits that balance technological spectacle with humanist (or post-humanist) anxieties with regard to agency, adolescence, performative sexuality, and engagements with otherness (96-98). Protagonists of giant robot anime are overwhelmingly adolescent boys, with enemies usually consisting of unknowable mechanical or alien threats. With these traits, giant robot anime can be seen as entering into the same matrices of (post)apocalyptic media that have shaped the Kaiju (giant monster) genre, along with many of the same post-war anxieties and treatments of implicit social trauma (Tsutsui and Ito, 3). During the 1990s, this became even more apparent with the influence of the giant robot series *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (1994), which brought longstanding subtextual elements of the genre (child soldiers, institutional abuse, unknowable and unresolvable conflict) into the overt text via narrative deconstruction (Napier, 211). The influence and popularity of this show's approach resonated throughout the genre's later iterations, turning what was once an already melodramatic sci-fi genre into a textual form much more overt about the connections it was making between its sci-fi narratives and ongoing post-conflict social anxieties.

This aspect of the genre — a direct holdover from the Japanese post-war period — interests me for the resonances it might suggest between the allegorical thematic language developed in Japan as a means of engaging with its own particular social anxieties, and how these have found resonance in the current generation of Arab media producers. There is something to be said for an interrogation into how Arab and other middle Eastern audiences have engaged with media in the wake of their own fraught relationships to territorial conflict and foreign intervention. And while such connections may indeed prove tenuous with regard to anime in particular, especially given its similar popularity in other locations with very different social contexts, the potential for some kind of commonality warrants further investigation. This is particularly salient when we take into account the fact that anime has been one of the few media forms that has proved popular throughout the region. As Sayfo argues, while children's media importation to the Arab world came from a variety of sources, differences in both available budgets affiliation to either the Western or (post)Soviet bloc made it so that products from companies such as Disney, Warner brothers or Hannah Barbera never made as pervasive an impact as anime. Sayfo attributes this primarily not to anime's comparative economic accessibility, but moreso to its ease of importation, appealing both to existing moral and aesthetic tendencies in the region (87).

Elsewhere in the region, anime's influence on contemporary production has been expressed in other ways as well. In Iran, with its already well-established film production culture, local producers have been building on the nascent local animation industry through higher profile projects, one of which has used anime's adult-oriented associations to create a project that has for tis part received both critical praise and financial support from such festivals as Annecy and Cannes. This project, an animated epic feature film, is entitled *The Last Fiction,*

and is due to be released in October of 2018 (Amidi, "The Last Fiction", Fig. 5). As with *Torkaizer*, the anime influences in *The Last Fiction* are most evidently seen with regard to visual design and associations of genre. Unlike *Torkaizer* or *Burka Avenger*, the evocation of these traits is evidently drawing less on anime's dimension as a vehicle for children's action-adventure stories than in the adult-oriented tendencies of films such as *Akira* (1988) or *Ghost in the Shell* (1995), mobilizing them here to lend a certain tone of animated gravitas to this film's animated presentation of Persian folklore. This tendency, while sharing several continuities with child-oriented anime in terms of genre and approach, is one of the true points of departure between Japanese animation culture and that of the Anglo-American context, and consists most basically of the ability to see animation as a viable platform for serious, long form dramatic storytelling in the popular realm. In this sense, the Japanese animation tradition has more in common with those of Europe, which similarly have embarked on dramatic animated films to a much greater extent than Anglo-American producers. This schism may indeed be the reason that anime has been stereotyped in the Anglo-American context as too violent, too sexual, and generally too adult-oriented. Apocryphal stories abound of tragic films such as Grave of the Fireflies or Barefoot Gen (both films featuring children dying during the Second World War) being found in the children's sections of video stores and the like.

Figure 5: *The Last Fiction* (TBR 2017)

Popular commentary focused on the distinctiveness of Japanese animation has highlighted the affordances of animation in general for telling adult-oriented stories that include fantastic elements, magic realism or other features that would be otherwise difficult to integrate outside of a more abstracted visual language (Ebert, 1999). As an adaptation of *Shahnameh,* a thousand year-old epic poem and a foundational literary work of Persian culture, *The Last Fiction* blends historical and mythic narrative, thus lending itself precisely towards this type of textualization. In doing so, I see it as taking its cues from anime at least in part because it is in anime culture that the broadest base can be found for this kind of storytelling. Part of anime's distinction among the wider global animation market indeed has to do with the ways in which it is the product of a national animation culture much less entrenched in cultural associations with exclusively child-oriented media.

While the Western animation field is certainly better provisioned as a whole (and arguably more aesthetically diverse) the kind of story that *The Last Fiction* is telling has little

precedent in this artistic tradition. As observed by Jason Mittell, the Anglo-American animation tradition is particularly ill-suited to animation dissociated from the distinct parameters of child-oriented media, thanks in large part to demographic engineering by TV programmers seeking to find precise audiences to advertise to during the 1960s (2004, 62). Even now, animation in the Anglo-American context is still deeply tied to the industrial parameters and limitations of the children's media market. And while there has been a growing trend in adult-oriented animation in this environment since the 1990s, this movement too has found it difficult to engage with adult-oriented animation that lies outside the realm of satire or comedy in general. This limitation is difficult to shake, because, as I have argued elsewhere:

> Adult or 'family' oriented Western animated programming, such as that of The Simpsons (1989–), South Park (1997–) and Family Guy (1999–2003, 2005–), indeed derives a certain subversive pleasure by representing sexuality, social satire, and/or other topics deemed not to belong to children's lives, in juxtaposition with this medium. Almost every Western adult-oriented animation produced in the last several years can be seen to do this, perpetuating a culture of animation that, on the one hand, is flourishing in terms of aesthetic development and circulation among diverse audiences, while at the same time remaining static in terms of genre, tone and thematic approach. (Díaz Pino, 2015, 236)

Anime, in contrast, developed as it has for a local audience that was not acculturated into such expectations. Consequently, it developed along a very different thematic and aesthetic range of textualities. Despite the fact then that much of the anime that has found global success has done so in the realm of children's programming and films, the wider scope of anime culture as a whole has produced a variety of globally trafficked adult-oriented media as well, including,

psychological horror, historical drama, and pornography. Among these, several of its texts have been critically celebrated as prestige adult cinema, lending auteur status to such creators as Hayao Miyazaki, Isao Takahata, Satoshi Kon, and more recently, Shinkai Makoto (Hikawa). While deeply intermingled with the parameters of television anime, this strain of Japanese animation distinguishes itself in the wider global mediascape for its ability to merge a popular, commercially-viable mode of address with the ability to tell nuanced, adult-oriented stories in animation, often with elements that reflect magical-realist tendencies. This is an ability that on the one hand seems perfectly suited to animation as an artform, but which has yet to be fully embraced in animation production cultures outside Japan, which for their part may produce adult-oriented animation, but fail to reconcile these parameters.

Both the pedigree and apparent gravitas of *The Last Prophet*'s production and institutional associations suggest that the choice to adopt anime-esque aesthetics is unlikely to be a flippant, superficial choice. Given the requirements of the adaptation, it can in fact be read as a precisely navigated response to the need to forge a discursive approach to a project that could be wildly misrepresented. As with many of the sites of production I've discussed thus far, Iran is only just now establishing an animation production culture, and the choice to adopt anime as a model of narrative building in such a foundational project is telling, as it suggests that the aesthetic choices being made for this project are just as much about affiliation to certain artistic/textual traditions as they are about artistic preferences. As with *Torkaizer* or *Burka Avenger*, the extent to which the integration of anime influences in *The Last Fiction* correspond with the precise needs of the text being produced suggest that what is going on here runs deeper than fannish appreciation or superficial adoption of anime as a source of influence. It indeed

suggests a deeper understanding by these producers of anime as a wider culture marked by a particular set of approaches to aesthetic expression, narrative construction, and production styles.

The incipient nature of many of these projects may seem like a poor indicator of anime's presence in the wider production context of the Middle East, but they evidence a level of incursion commensurate with the scale and development of the young animation industries of many of these countries. All of the examples I have seen of anime-influenced media production in the region can be seen to adopt these traits for both affective and strategic reasons. Whether fannish or coldly pragmatic, this adoption of anime-esque aesthetics, narrative modes, production techniques, and paratextual associations demonstrates a level of intertextuality that rivals that of recent Anglo-American emulations of anime-esque paradigms, and indeed surpasses it in many cases. The way in which they integrate anime across these multiple levels and dimensions speaks to a culture of anime spectatorship that has an integral understanding of the generic nuances, creative priorities/possibilities, and commercial strategies of anime. It likewise suggests that the intended audiences for these texts are likewise familiar with the generic conventions and tropes embedded in these texts — as well they should be, given the permeation of anime throughout the region (Sayfo, 87)

Orientalizing Occidental Landscapes: Anime's Family Programming in Europe

In stark contrast to the Middle Eastern context, Europe's erasure from the wider discussion of anime's global presence is less due to a relative lack of examination into its own transitional media circulation than to its conflation and sublimation within the monolithic "West". In folding Europe's experience with Japanese media into that of the US, there has been a tendency for the US experience with anime to override the different timelines, textualities and affective networks

that marked anime cultures here (Darling-Wolf, 104). This relationship finds its most prominent antecedents with the trend for *Japonisme* among 19th century painters, writers, and other cultural producers residing in France (then the center of the global modernity project in many ways). Among other influences, this contact would play a major role in the development of impressionism through the importation of ukiyo-e woodblock prints (FAMSF, "Japanesque"), and by extension, play a part in the social/aesthetic direction of European art as a whole.

As with the Middle East, the European mediascape's experience with anime importation was marked in the latter decades of the 20th century by the logistic realities of how emergent television network systems develop, often scrambling to generate and adapt material to both fill timeslots, and indeed, establish the parameters, ethos and nascent media production systems that would come in time to define each particular media landscape (Hendershot, 74, Mittell, 2003, 34, Sayfo, 79). European media markets, like the wider Middle Eastern mediascape, quite habitually depended on foreign imports to supplement, and even comprise the entirety of some categories of programming. This recourse, though widespread, was of course fraught with tension. Criticism of this dynamic came from multiple sides, with reference to ongoing debates over the need for region cohesion (Bourdon, 264), acute fears over the effects of potential cultural imperialism (Chalaby, 33-4), and the negative effects of commercialism (Bazalgette and Buckingham, 10-11). Such discussion surrounded media importation in general, but was aimed in particular at the importation of US media, quite often mirroring similar critiques from even more-dependent media peripheries (Dorfman and Mattelart, 28).

While the European children's TV landscape was not as import-dependent as that of the Middle East, which would take some time to develop dedicated children's programming strategies (Sayfo, 79), Europe's newly-emerged TV platforms and limited budgets during the

1970s and 80s provided plenty of fodder for media imports from the Japanese market. As with the influences seen in *Burka Avenger* and other recent Middle Eastern animation productions, anime's influence is likewise visible in the European production context. Befitting Europe's many advantages in establishing its own animation production environments, this influence is correspondingly visible from a much earlier period of animation production, with Western European shows from as early as 2001 demonstrating clear anime influences (Darling-Wolf, 120-121). Several of these programs have distributed globally, including *Totally Spies!* (2001-14), *Code Lyoko* (2003-7) and *Wakfu* (2008-) from France (figs. 7,8 and 9 respectively), *Winx Club* (2004-15, fig. 10) from Italy, and *W.I.T.C.H* (2004-6, fig. 11), a Franco-Italian co-production based on an Italian comic book series. Similarly to the current wave of Middle Eastern anime-inflected productions, these shows adopted anime aesthetics in conjunction with other distinctive elements of anime culture. Most of them take on distinctly serialized narrative structures. Several are, like many anime series, adapted from comic books.[5] Also noteworthy is the way in which these shows frame their young female characters, most of which are at once profoundly feminine in terms of their framing, while at the same time being largely presented as action protagonists of some sort or another.

[5] This in and of itself is a notable point of affinity between the animation cultures of Western Europe and Japan. It is all the more resonant when considering that the Belgian comic tradition (source of both the *Smurfs* and *Tintin*) owes much itself to the 18th century art of Japanese artists such as Hiroshime, which were emulated in the work of 'ligne claire' comic book artists such as Hergé (Ebert, 2000).

Figure 7: *Totally Spies!*

Figure 8: *Code Lyoko*

Figure 9: *Wakfu*

Figure 10: *Winx Club*

Figure 11: *W.I.T.C.H.*

This pointed juxtaposition between unabashed girliness and the masculinized world of action/adventure narratives has several antecedents in Western media of course, but the way in which it is articulated in these particular shows suggests a genealogy connecting them more closely to such popular shojo anime as *Sailor Moon* (1992-3) and *Cardcaptor Sakura* (1996-2000). Both of these series had prominent roles in popularizing anime in general, and specifically shojo (girls) anime among Western audiences. "Magical girl" shows such as these were indeed one of the only areas of the wider Western animated TV mediascape in which audiences could see feminine-coded action-adventure narratives for quite some time. This is a fact famously underlined in the US context by the difficulty media salespeople had in framing these anime series for prospective programmers, either editing shows or producing mildly deceptive paratexts with the intent of either obfuscating the prominence of their girl protagonists and/or underlining their appeal to the coveted boy demographic (*retrojunk.com*, "Sailor Moon Promotional Video")

Franco-Italian animation's embracing of "magical girl" narrative structures and tropes speaks then to another facet of anime's wider cumulative impact — the introduction of (contextually) new generic tropes and languages through which identities and narratives may be articulated. What may be most interesting about this dynamic is the notion that Japanese media is itself often critiqued as a whole for not being particularly emancipatory for girls in and of itself. Local feminist critiques of Japanese media and social structures emphasize some vast inequalities along lines of gender. Likewise, there are legitimate criticisms to be made of magical girl anime in particular with regard to their emphasis on the necessity and expedience of girls hiding their abilities (Newitz, 6). At the same time, and because Japanese animation culture is so vast in comparison to most others in terms of genre, subject matter, and demographic orientation

(Leong, 22), anime's incursion into other mediascapes often offers audiences the opportunity to encounter narratives, genres and articulations of identity that are otherwise unavailable to them. That is, until they are eventually integrated into their own cultural lexicon and subsequently imitated. Anime's impact in providing this lexicon in other localities' cultural fields hinges then precisely on the meanings accrued, negotiated, refracted and created in crossing from one cultural context into another, rather than in something inherent in the Japanese context alone. It is an emergent process.

In more recent years, this strain of imitative production in the European context has also developed in a different direction, with one particular Belgian company, Studio 100, engendering another kind of continuity between anime and European animation. Rather than imitating generic and aesthetic elements of anime, Studio 100's productions seek out a more explicit continuity, rebooting successful anime series of the 1970s and 80s — particularly those produced by Nippon Animation, which were for their part often based on already well-regarded pieces of European and Anglo-American literature. Among its roster of original programing, Studio 100's website prominently features several anime reboots, including ones based on *Heidi, Girl of the Alps* (*Arupusu no Shōjo Haiji*, 1974), *Maya the Honey Bee* (*Mitsubachi Māya no Bōken,* 1975), *Vicky the Viking* (*Chiisana Viking Bikke*, 1974) and *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils* (*Nirusu no Fushigi na Tabi*, 1980). While the official paratexts promoting these shows make no mention of their status as anime adaptations, opting instead to wholly highlight their origins in European children's literature, both the choices of texts and the adaptations' formal elements make it entirely clear that these are not independent parallel literary adaptations, but derivative works (see figures 12A, 12B, 13A and 13B). The strategic value of obfuscating the continuity between these series' and their originary animated texts is questionable, given both their fidelity

to these anime and the fact that the wider public discourse surrounding them is clearly eager to focus on this relationship, rather than their position as literary adaptations. Indeed, when mentioned in both trade and popular press, it is altogether unclear whether the rights obtained by Studio 100 in adapting these works refer to those surrounding the intellectual property embedded in Nippon Animation's work, or simply that of the original literary works (Callan). If the latter, this would explain why the connections shared between these shows and Nippon Animation's adaptations are so downplayed in official literature. Regardless, this obfuscation speaks to a complex dynamic of power and opportunism on the part of Studio 100's engagement with Nippon Animation — one which mirrors long established colonialist dynamics. This palimpsestic overwriting of this Nippon Animation's work is indeed all the more startling when considering that several of these shows were produced by artists who would later go on to found the celebrated Studio Ghibli. Ignoring these connections is as such counterintuitive, working against Studio 100's discursive framing of its own adaptations as worthy successors of quality children's media.

Figure 12A: *Arupusu no Shōjo Haiji* (1974)

Figure 12B: *Heidi* (2015)

Figure 13A: *Mitsubachi Māya no Bōken* (1975)

Figure 13B: *Maya the Bee* (2012)

Notwithstanding the particular ethical implications of Studio 100's handling of these texts as potential franchise properties, their choice to reboot these shows as CGI animated programming falls very much in line with wider trends in the European children's media

landscape, which has for several years now been using CGI animation as a tool to revive or reinvigorate animated (and puppet-driven) works popular in the 1970s, 80s and 90s. English-speaking examples of this can be seen with recent iterations of such properties as *Postman Pat* (1981, CGI reboot 2016), *Thunderbirds* (1965-6, CGI reboot 2015-), and *Thomas The Tank Engine & Friends* (1984-2007, CGI continuation 2008-). The timing of this is telling, likewise in line with even wider trends in nostalgia-driven franchising of children's media. Given this media landscape, the strategies taken by Studio 100 in attempting to franchise these texts is not at all surprising beyond the act of a European conglomerate doing so with Japanese, rather than "home-grown," properties. But this begs the question then of whether audiences even perceive these shows as something extraneous. While contemporary literature covering both their popularity and their respective revivals in current media will often sometime point out their provenance, this is often discursively minimized in favor of discussing how they were adapted from classic European children's literature. It likewise doesn't speak to how these shows were perceived at the time by children or parents. While other shows, especially those with a more sci-fi bent, certainly carried more associations with certain waves of Japanese importation, the origins of these family-friendly 'classics' are easier to elide. As such, while both popular commentary and Darling-Wolf's interviews in France on the subject make it clear that the discourse surrounding these shows is and was well aware of their origins, there is also a clear impression that there is also a strong sense of cultural, and particularly generational identification at play here (113-114). I see this as being connected to three factors. The first is the inherent ability for animation in general to obfuscate stigmas of cultural odor in the process of linguistic and cultural translation (Black, Epstein and Tokita, XII). The second is Japanese animation's own export-oriented (though now ingrained even for locally-oriented media)

centering of Caucasian phenotypes in its animated works through the notion of mukokusekiseki.[6] The third is the fact that so many of these family-oriented texts were so intent on both sourcing and representing narratives, landscapes and identities of European origin, though this wasn't always the case by any means.

Regardless of the reasons facilitating such affective impact, the very fact that these shows continue to be so well regarded and commodified indicates to what extent they have forged a sense of belonging within the wider European mediascape. It would indeed be difficult to overstate the popularity and generational identification fostered by programs such as *Heidi* and *Maya*. Though often ignored in wider discussions of anime cultures, these shows were major media phenomena, not only in Europe, but also the Middle East, Latin America, and Japan itself, proving both incredibly commercially successful and culturally impactful. Beyond their sheer success, what is most interesting about this incipient wave of anime importation was the way in which many of these shows would frequently be packaged as appointment family viewing, rather than being segregated to children's scheduling blocks. This positioning corresponds with the heightened status attributed to them as adaptations of respected canonical Western literature, and is reflected both in the discourse of the day and in subsequent memory. *Heidi* especially has proved to be a particular point of nostalgia among viewers throughout Europe, the Middle East and Latin America, with an incredibly robust life in syndication. As of 1984 for example, the Spanish newspaper *El País* noted that *Heidi*, a 1975 import for Spain, was at that point the

[6] Mukokusekiseki (or just mukokuseki) is the phenomena in Japanese comics and animation that, in conjunction to its Disney and Fleischer-inspired aesthetics, lends many of its characters racially "neutralized" traits. Large eyes, small mouths, multicolored hair — all aspects that have been variably read as "erasing" precise racial traits, while at the same time acquiescing to the ethnic centralization of Caucasoid phenotypes. This aspect of Japanese cartoon media has been hotly debated among both scholars and lay critics, but given its consolidation in anime's earliest inception as, partially, a US-oriented export product, much of the criticism it has received for reifying Caucasian bodies is at least partially well-founded (Clements, 130).

highest-rated show in the history of Spanish television (Ortega). Early reports of Studio 100's *Heidi* reboot similarly note the original anime's popularity in Germany and Italy.

Darling-Wolf's own research in France similarly demonstrates in what ways different anime came to be held as potent markers of generational identity. Much like in other children's media landscapes, as France's anime imports came into and out of circulation and syndication every couple of years, viewers within a single broad generational grouping would identify more with the cartoons that happened to catch them at the right time. As such, the very first generation of children exposed to anime in the 1970s and early 80s favored the wildly successful giant-robot show *Goldorak* (*Yūfō Robo Gurendaizā,* 1975-7). This series made such a strong impression in the children's media landscape that its audiences continue to be referred to as the "*Goldorak* generation" in France's popular discourse (Darling-Wolf, 107). Subsequent audiences would come to identify more strongly with later imports, including *Albator, Captain Future,* and adaptations such as *Heidi, Remi sans Famille* (based on the French novel of the same name by Hector Malot) and *Tom Sawyer*.

The dynamics of transculturation inherent in both these reboots and the European adoption of anime's wider aesthetic and narrative characteristics raise quite a few questions, and speak both to issues of assumed ownership, authorship, and the trajectory of both across time and space. Studio 100's quiet erasure of the Japanese provenance of its catalogue reflects a sense of European cultural entitlement to these texts — one that is greatly facilitated by the fact that this company has specifically chosen to "recuperate" series derived from European literary works. But are they rather simply coming back home?

On the one hand, we may assume that the reason so many of these shows became engrained as they did in the European popular consciousness was simply because they sought to

replicate Western stories and perspectives. Several factors complicate this notion however. For instance, we may note that several of the European works adapted by Nippon Animation, while beloved by some localities, meant relatively little in others until they were introduced to the public consciousness through their anime iterations. Such is the case of *Maya the Honey Bee*, adapted from a 1912 German children's book which was for its part shares little with the animated series beyond the basic premise of the story, which follows a bee as she grows up and helps her hive with her wits and skills in intermediation. In cases such as this, which involve the depiction of animals rather than human societies, the anime not only didn't need to bother with cultural specificities pertaining to its German origins, it likewise ignored or undercut much of the original book's categorization of insect species along lines of essentialist lines analogous to race or nationality. The anime likewise framed itself largely as a critique of militarism — something that runs very much counter to the martial tendencies of the original novel. These shifts in emphasis ultimately have the effect of distilling a story that was once much more concerned with nationalism and the ideal citizen into a bildungsroman that follows other, very different moral/social priorities. All of these traits are, furthermore, repeated in Studio 100's rendition of this storyworld.

This tendency to downplay or rearticulate the moral subtext of originary works was likewise at play with respect to Nippon Animation's treatment of *Heidi*. As Raffaelli observes in his own comparative framing of the anime adaptation's treatment of the 1881 Swiss novel by Johanna Spyri, Nippon Animation made several strategic changes to pacing, character interactions, and most fundamentally, motivation. Several of these changes may conceivably be contingent on the needs of any series adaptation of a novel, but others were more specific to the parameters implied in adapting a deeply Catholic European novel to a context of Japanese

children's television (Raffaelli, 124-5). Consequently, where the title character in the original suffers greatly from being separated from her home and grandfather, and is eventually taught to find solace and peace through prayer, the anime adaptation excised the religious component altogether, casting her resilience and virtue in a much more intuitive, humanistic light. This humanism extends to Heidi's eventual triumph over the adults oppressing and ignoring her needs. She alone realizes her cousin Clara's inability to walk is psychosomatic, and eventually wins over the family and gets them to bring Clara to the mountains, where the natural environment itself heals her and allows her to walk. As Luca Raffaelli observes, this then reframes an event (Heidi's return to her home, Clara's ability to walk) that was a divine reward for temperance in the original novel, situating it instead as the result of the protagonist's ability to use her intelligence and interpersonal abilities to confront and overcome oppressive social circumstances (126). This amounts to a fundamental shift in adaptation — one which is perpetuated in Studio 100's own version of the narrative.

This, combined with the simultaneous adoption of much of the same pacing, characterization, visual aesthetics, and other elements of Nippon Animation's approach, culminates in a situation in which, rather than simply re-appropriating European stories, Studio 100 is integrating a perspective of European locations, people and culture that has been integrally shaped by the perspective of Japanese artists. In this sense, what we are looking at here is a situation that distinctly reverses the dynamics of orientalist discourse, and indeed compels the European context to adopt a perspective of itself through the lens of Asian ontologies. This is of course a situation complicated itself by several factors, including but not limited to Studio 100's erasure (if only attempted) of this relationship, as well as the Japanese context's own traumatic molding by both wider colonial realities and its occupation/colonization by the United States.

Notwithstanding these factors, such a deep integration of Japanese textuality into the Western European mediascape speaks to the expanding permeability of transcultural relationships. It demonstrates to what extent the "contact zone" as envisaged by Pratt is tricky to pin down not only because of the rampant mediation of contemporary society, but also because the effects of contact itself can flare up unexpectedly, and are often consciously or unconsciously obfuscated in the interplay of asymmetries of discursive power (Pratt, 34). It likewise invites us to think more concertedly about relationships of discursive power, and in what way dynamics of assumed appropriation and erasure may have more complex underpinnings that manifest over time and in the wider understanding of widely-shared narratives.

Anime as a Blueprint

In juxtaposing the circumstances surrounding both European and Middle Eastern anime-derived productions, what strikes me most is in what way actors in each of these media landscapes seems to be making use of anime in ways that are deeper and more structural than the mere replication of aesthetics. Given the Japanese animation context's own development into a powerful global player from what was once a relative media periphery, however, this is not entirely surprising. There is plenty to be learned from both the Japanese animation industry's development and its hybrid distribution models, which have been adept at targeting both local and export markets (Ruh, 33). In the wider animation landscape, the Japanese production industry has developed a profile highly shaped by its affiliation to TV platforms, rather than film.[7] Almost every structural trait now associated with anime in the wider discourse has in some way been shaped by its growth on a platform that, from the start, offered limited production resources but extended,

[7] As noted by Black, Epstein and Tokita, though Japan has a robust film industry as well, it would not be until the 1990s that it would focus its possibilities as an export-oriented market (X).

serialized time to tell stories. This, in conjunction with both Japan's strong tradition in the medium of comics (another platform of extended narratives and tight budgets) and the almost immediate export-orientation of the Japanese TV animation industry (Marling, 40), suggests a set of principles that other emergent industries might take as a model.

Indeed, with early television animation projects such as *Tetsuwan Atomu* (*Astro Boy*, 1962) Japanese animation established a blueprint of production, textuality and financial strategies that would come to define the popular perception of what "anime" is in and of itself, along with its aesthetics, limitations, and relative positioning with respect to other modes of animation. Where in the Japanese language the term "anime" itself denotes any animated media then, this term has come to be associated with a variety of rather specific traits (both negative and positive) in the wider cultural landscape. These have included but are not limited to: The use of lower frame rates, limited animation (connoting "cheapness"), "big" eyes, uncannily Caucasian-looking characters, relatively overt sexuality and violence, discordant weirdness, novelistic story progressions, meditative narrative pacing, comparatively complex characterization, and modes of address that break with the confinement of animation to the realm of pre-adolescent audiences. If Hanna Barbera and Jay Ward (of *Rocky and Bullwinkle* fame) were the companies that came to define the parameters of TV animation as a distinct industry, it is the Japanese animation industry that would test and demonstrate the wider capabilities of television as a platform for animation. Further, and thanks in large part to its need-driven push to export, this industry consequently came to occupy a breadth of exportation that eagerly permeated as many markets as it could, including those that were either ignored or repudiated by potential competitors in Anglo-America and Europe. As a result, audiences in Iran, Egypt, and other peripheral markets often had greater contact with *Captain Tsubasa* than with the Disney or

Warner Brothers characters that define children's culture elsewhere. It is likewise for this reason that these are the texts now being emulated by members of local industries (Black, Epstein and Tokita, VII-VIII). Not only do emergent producers often have close affective relationships with these texts, genres and visual languages, but they are also experiencing many of the same limiting factors that affected the formal and industrial parameters of early anime — all within a global mediascape that is even more overrun by established players. It is in these circumstances that Luo, Sun and Wang identify the tendencies followed by, as they call them, Emergent Economy Copycats (EECs): companies that emulate established players in order to enter the industry at lower price points (49). In many respects, this is how we might have understood the early anime industry as a whole, and it is in a similar light that we may see several of the newer producers that are imitating them.

Subcultural vs. Quotidian Affects

Beyond the pragmatic dimension of such decision-making, its affective implications evidence a substantial oversight with regard to anime's perception by dominant academic discourse. Anime fandom has been framed in our field almost exclusively in subcultural terms, where perhaps another understanding of it would be more productive when referring to the position many of its texts hold in other mediascapes.

This again relates to the schism that exists between the Anglo-American media context and that of much of the rest of the world. Thanks to its particular history in the region, the Anglo-American cultural experience with anime has come to be marked by distinctly subcultural modes of audienceship, with even massively popular anime franchises marked here by a clear — if often re-articulated and negotiated — sense of cultural odor. This mark of difference is all the

more perceivable thanks to the fact that anime's presence in the Anglo-American context is constantly placed in juxtaposition to (nominally) locally-produced texts, thus making its supposed intrusion all the more evident. Different visual aesthetics. Different narrative structures. Different technical parameters. Anime's characters don't synchronize their mouth animation with precise phonemes. Anime is shot in "3s" rather than "2s".[8] Anime is thus marked simpler — "cheaper" than local (though this itself is a contested category) content.

All of these are traits that might matter deeply when juxtaposing anime with Anglo-American animation in Anglo-America itself. They certainly break with the lore of "quality animation" as established by Disney and other prestige US studios. But outside of that context? What are the stakes? By what metric do we measure cultural difference in a mediascape in which both Anglo-American and Japanese media are imports? In which, thanks to dubbing, no one's lips really match their mouth's movements? In which cultural specificities are constantly being negotiated and patched-over in the act of translation? In a mediascape marked by a multiplicity of alien "fragrances", why should the scent of Japaneseness stand out in particular? During the 1970s and 80s, this was indeed the case for a great deal of the world, and in this context, would something like *Maya the Honey Bee* necessarily be perceived of lesser quality than a typical episode of *The Flintstones*? For much of its history, the face of anime in places such as Pakistan, Iran, France, Italy, Spain, Germany, Mexico and Colombia was not that of either the massive, merchandise-driven franchise, or the genre cyberpunk dystopia. It was, by and large, that of the child-oriented action-adventure show or family-focused literary dramas. These series' status as imports was for the most part known, but seldom if ever framed as threatening. This is an

[8] 3s and 2s refer here to the typical strategy in traditional animation to forego the standardized cinema frame-rate of 24 frames per second in favor of the more cost efficient but still viable 12 frames per second (2s) in the case of most Western animation, and 8 frames per second (3s) for lower cost fare. Anime in fact often employs variable frame rates, with low-action scenes running on 3s in order to save resources for higher end animation during more visually involved sequences.

affective environment with Japanese animation marked above all then by the everyday — the ordinary, as Williams would say (2). Anime in this sense can't be seen (exclusively) through the lens of subculture, or even stricter perspectives of organized fandom. It can't be seen as such a contested landscape, because it is one that, in these circumstances, permeated entire experiences of domestic life. It is in such experiences, scattered and asynchronous as they may be, that cultures of anime may be seen as a point of commonality across a variety of media landscapes — particularly those which had the bad luck to fall between the cracks of the emerging world order. In its low cost, in its opportunism, and in its structural impetus to be as many places as it could, this period in the trajectory of anime was one in which many trans-peripheral commonalities were made. The quotidian affect surrounding shows such as *Heidi*, *Maya, Captain Tsubasa* and their contemporaries are then not simply those that bind center and periphery, but as with many relationships of media flow, they also connect different modes and degrees of peripherality itself.

Chapter 2 — Intermediary Influence: Mexico City as site of Remediation

Though often eclipsed in discussions by Anglo-American media distribution and the specter of the United States' cultural imperialism, Mexico has served a pivotal role in the shaping of Latin America's wider media environment. This positioning has indeed held true since well before the advent of contemporary media infrastructures, but has continued to develop in often unexpected ways in the 20th and 21st centuries. In accordance with this entrenched history, this influence is further concentrated in Mexico City itself (Ciudad de Mexico, or CDMX), a metropolitan region that stands as a major global center of media production, commerce, and re-circulation.[9] Where the city's prominence in this regard has been diluted somewhat by the recent growth of other centers of media industry throughout the Spanish-speaking world, it nonetheless remains a leading site of articulation between the wider Latin American mediascape and those of the rest of the world (Castañeda). Mexico City's position as a site of negotiation, acculturation, translation and gate-keeping is in turn reaffirmed not only by its relative proximity (geographically, infrastructurally, administratively, and also culturally) to the United States, but also by its historically-entrenched role as the modern world's first major site of articulation and transculturation between Western empire and the global periphery.

[9] Though the city has been referred to in English for a long time as "Mexico City", it's official name had, until recently, been Mexico Distrito Federal, or Mexico D.F. It was only in January of 2016 that it has adopted the moniker Mexico City (La Ciudad de Mexico, or CDMX) (Agren).

In situating the American colonial project as a phenomenon bridging the gap between the pre-modern and modern world orders (and indeed establishing what we think of as a world order to begin with), we can see the importance of Mexico and Mexico City in the establishment of the modernity project. Mexico City's fraught history as the first major center of European Empire in the Americas marks it as the prototype for the political-cultural dynamics that would come to define modernity itself. Its initial transculturations and institutions, its ethnic, linguistic, epistemic, and ontological hierarchies, all serve as precedents in some way or another for the development of future colonial and neo-colonial processes. Befitting a cultural landscape shaped for over half a millennium in the wake of this position (with all the friction this entails), the CDMX has historically been and continues to be a dominant site in the formation of Latin America's media culture and identity. This holds true both with regard to the "internal" distillation and consolidation of Latin American media modes and textualities, as well as with the ways in which Latin American media have institutionally, financially and textually intermingled with those of other cultural spheres – particularly those of Anglo-America. Indeed, as with many post-colonial dynamics, it often becomes difficult to meaningfully separate the consolidation of Latin America's regional media cultures from its (predominantly asymmetric) interactions with foreign and transnational actors. Mexico's centrality in the region as a media capital is reflected in virtually all historical and statistical metrics of relative media power, including implementation of new technologies, monetary investment, professionalization, size and number of media companies, not to mention its sheer output of cultural production. This last metric applies to many modes of audiovisual cultural production, but is most often discussed with respect to the telenovela – Latin America's most iconic and ubiquitous media export (Havens, 53).

Perhaps even more important than its strength as a center of "new" I.P. generation and production, however, Mexico City's function as a regional media capital is sustained by its role as a site of importation, linguistic and cultural adaptation (subbing and dubbing), and redistribution. While media conglomerates like Televisa may then generate a great deal of output that circulates throughout Latin America and beyond, the majority of the media that is siphoned through Mexico City to the rest of the Spanish-speaking cultural sphere is not actually "Mexican", or even Latin American in origin. It is, by and large, Anglo-American, West-European, Japanese, and much more recently, Korean, Turkish and Indian. Mexico City's regional prominence in the realm of media is thus primarily defined by its role as a site not of production, but rather of (re)distribution, gatekeeping, and the opportunistic infiltration of the Latin American mediascape's emergent markets.

It is with such dynamics in mind that I intend in this chapter to detail and historicize Mexico City's emergence as a globally significant media capital — one that furthermore I see as being defined primarily in its role in re-mediation and meaning-making as opposed to regulation, production or administration of intellectual properties. It is likewise my intention here to understand Mexico City beyond its positioning as a relative regional power in the conventional sense — as simply the site with the most relative resources, political clout and/or production output in a given territory. To do so would not only ignore what I see as its much more impactful role as a cultural-industrial intermediary to and from Latin America, but would also place Mexico – the city and the country – under the rubrics of the well-worn and ill-fitting rhetoric of regional hegemony and cultural imperialism. As I will expand upon throughout this project, and in spite of whatever turbulent internal politics may be going on in the Mexican state, Mexico's positioning as a relative media power in Latin America can't and shouldn't be read under the

same frameworks that we have attributed to the media politics of East Asia, South Asia, Southern Africa, or the Middle East. Where studies of the media of these regions are concerned with issues of soft power, nation branding, and the perceived threat of cultural imperialism through asymmetric media flow (see: Al-Ghazzy and Kraidy 2345-6, Black, Epstein and Tokita, X), the internal dynamics of Latin America's own inter-state relationships are different. Whatever kind of power is reflected by Mexico's relative prominence in the Spanish-speaking media sphere is highly complicated by the intimate relationship Latin America as a whole shares with the Anglo-American empire, and Mexico's own political and cultural positioning throughout the region as an often centralized, but seldom if ever feared nexus of media industry activity. To clarify, I negate implications of state-centered hegemony with regard to this positioning not because I reject the intellectual or political agendas that underlie the lens of cultural imperialism itself, but because I see their frameworks as impossible to "center" upon Mexico in the way that they have been projected upon such other regional media powers as, for example, Japan, Korea, India or South Africa (Thussu, 28-29).

The Media Capital

Confronted with the limitations and blind spots of more state-centered models of power and media flow, I'm compelled instead to read Mexico and the CDMX's regional and global positioning in dialogue with the lens offered by the concept of the media capital — a conceptual framework initially proposed by Curtin (205). In this conceptualization, Curtin offers a more coherent, nodal model through which to understand Mexico City's trajectory and function as site of prominence in media administration. By using this model as a lens, I hope to likewise employ it self-reflexively, seeing in what way employing it to look at the particularities of Mexico City's

role in the Latin American mediascape can offer us a lens into the possibilities of the media capital itself.

The idea of the media capital as a historical/geographical unit of media analysis is outlined by Curtin across several publications.[10] It is a model that, in placing the city at the center of geographically-minded analyses of media cultures, problematizes more nationally-entrenched modes of study, and allows for a greater emphasis on intra-national, regional and transnational negotiations, conflicts and collusions. Building on work by Morley, Straubhaar, and Sassen among others, Curtin argues that the media capital becomes an increasingly compelling and necessary unit of analysis insofar as media production and circulation is progressively negotiated not on a state level, but between institutions and actors entrenched in the particular logics, histories and infrastructures of specific industrial hubs. As he states:

> One might refer to these cities as media capitals, since they represent centers of media activity that have specific logics of their own; ones that do not necessarily correspond to the geography, interests or policies of particular nation-states. (2003, 203)

By the same token, in focusing on cities rather than states, the media capital's perspective enables a more critical stance towards the role of regulation and nationally-delineated film industries and broadcast systems (Curtin 2003, 204). Where more nationally-entrenched perspectives might then take the (both geographic and administrative) boundaries of the state for granted, possibly ignoring uneven historicity and/or geography and homogenizing the state as a unit of analysis, a focus on the city both adds a dimension of demographic specificity, while still

[10] I draw here from the concept of the media capital as put forward by Curtin in three publications, the first two of which largely overlap in focus and content. These are "Media Capital: Towards the Study of Spatial Flow" (2003), "Media Capitals: Cultural Geographies of Global TV" (2004), and the introduction to *Playing to the World's Biggest Audience: The Globalization of Chinese Film and TV* (2007).

allowing for an examination of tension between the local, the national, the regional, and the global. It doesn't ignore the role of the nation, but ideally allows then for a more concerted exploration into the unevenness of actual implementation of national policy, as well as the functional permeability of the state as an infrastructure, and a delimiter of power and cultural affinity.

Curtin's conception here extends beyond a framework of media industry, and in fact suggests a substantial re-orientation of the de facto cultural, regulatory, economic and geopolitical parameters of scholarly understandings of media geography and history. For understandable reasons, the state has loomed large as the predominant delimiter of many discussions over media production. Indeed, and particularly when studying issues of regulation and economic structure, the state is still valuable as a delimiter and object of analysis. However, both intellectual and material history have colluded to complicate our relationship with this metric. This is not only due to the ongoing processes of neoliberal deterritorialisation and transnationalisation identified by Appadurai and others that have both functionally and infrastructurally broken down the modern nation-state's administrative centrality in quotidian life. It is also thanks to the progressive institutional and popular realization that this centrality has always been insufficient, both intellectually and instrumentally, in dealing with the inconsistencies, exclusions and exploitations allowed and glossed over by the state and its monolithic constructions of identity, citizenship and even institutionality, which for a variety of practical reasons has never been wholly consistent even within the container implied by the sovereignty of state laws and cultural praxis.

The Media Capital Amid a Wider Landscape

In placing cities rather than states at the discursive center of inquiries over media flow and power, Curtin's model responds in turn to concurrent and ongoing debates in the fields of political science and geopolitical history. This is particularly true with regard to the ambiguities that surround contemporary perceptions of empire and hegemonic power, and how we can map these onto a geopolitical climate in which states can no longer be regarded as the sole primary agents of change or influence, and indeed in which the separation between state and private power must be seen as variably porous and pliable.

The concept of the media capital, particularly in its capacity as a lens through which to understand the activities of administrative institutions and actors, maps comfortably onto several theoretical frameworks of contemporary socio-political hegemony, most notably that of the Transnational Capitalist Class or TCC, constructed by Wood (9-10). Under her rubric of political-economic power, Wood severely downplays the role of state-centered political hegemony in favor of a model that instead places power in the actions and agendas of economic and political actors working in both metropolises and the global periphery. This aggrupation, which she designates the Transnational Capitalist Class, in turn consists not only of the bourgeoisie at the centers of global metropolitan power, but also consolidates these with the members of what several scholars identify as the comprador class, peripherally-entrenched economic actors who are responsible for providing the link between the dependency dynamics of colonial and post-colonial frameworks, and consequently benefit from both the traffic of resources out of and into peripheral localities (Harindranath, 162-3).

In Wood's estimation, it is thanks to the common interests of the central and peripheral bourgeoisie that we can attribute much of the deterritorialisation of socio-economic

asymmetry, abuse and exclusion across the boundaries of the state. Under these conditions, post-colonial localities would incrementally demonstrate the trappings of upper-class metropolitan life in their own centers of economic and administrative power, while metropolitan states themselves would increasingly be subject to the "third-worldism" of a shrinking middle class and a growing proportional population of precariat (Standing, 8-9). The TCC model of dis-entrenched political-economic power serves to illuminate some of the implied cultural, social and economic dynamics that underlie the media capital's dimension as an intersection and concentration of power and cultural production — at once rooted in the history and social frameworks of the locality it inhabits, while at the same time playing host to a multitude of "external" influences and interests.

The transnational allowances afforded by the media capital model are indeed noted by Curtin's application of it in his own work, primarily with respect to the Chinese contexts in Hong Kong and Beijing (2003, 218), but also with regards to other pivotal localities, both established and emergent. A central conceit to this model hinges on Curtin's assertion that the media capital can be read as functioning along several axes and dimensions of behavior and interaction. That is to say, that while Curtin himself concentrates predominantly on media capitals with regard to their roles in the production and administration of media textualities (2004, 290-291), this should not preclude this model from integrating geographical focal points in which other kinds of fundamental media-based activities take place. Such locations may then reasonably include not only sites of evident commercial or institutional importance, but also sites that play a role as way-stations of media flow, or even places in which essential media infrastructures are maintained and built upon. Within such a conceptualization, we may very well include such sites as the locations of Google's servers as media capitals — especially with regard to their

environmental and economic impact. Along similar lines, we may consider the possibility of including sites in which the after-life of media have a significant impact, such as, for example, those unfortunate localities in primarily the most exploited countries where so much of the world's e-waste ends up, made toxic and uninhabitable by (primarily) the refuse of communication technologies (Ottaviani). While the inclusion of such sites may push at the boundaries of the media capital as a useful concept, such boundaries are also worth considering in and of themselves. Doing so encourages us to reflect on the impact of media infrastructures and institutions not only in their typically understood role in the realms of cultural formation and communication, but also with regard to their integration in wider contexts and processes. We may as such consider the role played by communities not simply in generating, administrating or even distributing media texts, but also in bearing the brunt of media industries and institutions' resource generation, upkeep, or environmental impact.

Facets such as these, essential, but with little evident textual impact or perception of authorship, usually fall under the purview of peripheral or semi-peripheral communities and actors. As with wider trends in global manufacturing (sweatshops) and service industries (call centers), the role played by such actors in cultural production is often covered over and given little credit for whatever creative agency it is able to wring from the processes they participate in.[11] Indeed, it is more often than not that these processes are systematized in such a way as to specifically limit the possibility for such agency to be exerted at all when they are implemented as planned. Note, though, that the chaos and culture of opportunism inherent in global capital frequently sees ruptures and schisms within such dynamics, with the payoff being a growing

[11] It is here to some extent that we can consider the work done in the VFX and animation industries, though in the latter the authorial role played by particularly accomplished studios and artists in the outsourced animation industry is increasingly being recognized. This seems to be largely attributable to both the growth of access and interest from fans in social media, and shifts in the industry itself with regard to recognizing the creative agency of such actors (McNutt, 83).

bevy of powerful actors coming up through their positions in emergent centers of media power in order to become globally prominent players. Both Curtin and Wood's models speak to the context under which such emergences would occur within a wider context of deterritorialisation. In taking such trajectories, these emergent actors can be seen either to pivot or diversify their activities to enter into more culturally protagonistic roles, or alternatively imitate already powerful IP companies and their texts in order to gain a foothold in regional/global markets. I have written elsewhere with regard to the early stages of such emergence in Brazil, but we may already see it well at work with regard to companies such as Sony, Samsung, Televisa, and many others (Diaz Pino, 2017, 7).

Agency and Re-mediation

It is with such processes in mind that we should consider then not only the relative economic, industrial or political power of media capitals and institutions, but also the predominant modes of labor they represent across wider networks and processes of media production, flow and control over meaning-making. Given the ever-growing consolidation of cultural production under common formats, channels of distribution and institutional players, it is becoming increasingly useful to consider this vast global network of media flow as a single integrated system, functioning along a rhyzomatic network of concurrently competing, collaborating, and converging actors. Where once issues of competing empire, private entities, formats, and ontologies would have spoken to a much more fractured field (Mattelart, 9), the rise of both digital convergence and global capital integration have made such distinctions more difficult to sustain. As such, while we shouldn't downplay or ignore cultural processes that excorporate themselves from or work in opposition or apparent parallel to this networking tendency, we may

still note in what way they feed into or derive from this same field. To employ Löfgren's notion of cultural thickening, we can think of these not so much as fractures then as places and instances of cultural "thinning", which nonetheless still take place within a common wider system (Hepp and Couldry, 38). As with any wide-ranging system or network, it is then important to examine not just points of entry and delivery, but also what happens along the way, and how messages, texts, genres and formats are affected by the decisions that are made at the often obscured level of translation, re-direction, and packaging.[12] In considering the way in which such processes are entrenched in specialized institutions, professions, and localities, each with its own traditions, pools of labor, and agendas, we might frame such practices as comprising what we might call processes of re-mediation, remaking texts even as they make them circulate and enter new cultural spheres.

Remediation is not in and of itself a novel concept. For Bolter and Grusin, remediation is a process inherent to the digital dimension of convergence culture. It is a process in which textual meaning, function and form become subsumed within the possibilities and limitations of digital platforms, with the establishment of new juxtapositions, hierarchies, inclusions and exclusions (17). Such processes ultimately not only establish new, fluid modes of intra- and inter-textuality, but also, and perhaps more importantly, fundamentally alter people's interaction with media texts, platforms, and ultimately each other (14-15). My own use of the concept here is related, but depends more on praxis and institutionality than the affordances and limitations of platforms themselves. That is to say, where Bolter and Grusin's work sees remediation as an effect of the "flattening" of media onto common digital platforms as the site of the remediation itself, I see similar processes occurring on a wider level. As they themselves note, the digital

[12] With regard to the notion of "packaging", we could consider most pointedly the role played by a variety of types of paratext in framing, shaping and emphasizing certain modes of meaning making (see Gray, 2010, 179).

field isn't the first or only sphere of media transmission that has necessitated re-formatting, re-packaging, translation or a flattening of texts in order to correspond with and integrate particular mediascapes (11). We can speak of such activity as being an essential factor of every shift in media format, platform and dominant cultural framework. Remediation then becomes a useful concept when considering any instance in which, for whatever reason, texts can be seen not simply to circulate, but to undergo actively reformulation in order to enter new avenues and modes of media circulation and flow.

This notion becomes particularly salient when considering processes and industries of translation. It bears repeating that languages are themselves technological platforms with built-in limitations and affordance, and with cognitive and ideological biases and blind spots. This plays out even at the most basic conceptual/etymological level with regard to language dubbing, and indeed the associated industry terminology itself. Where the term "dubbing" itself then refers to the creation of a "double" — an assumed faithful copy working in parallel to the original soundtrack, the Spanish implication of the word takes on different connotations. That is, while the term "doblaje" is itself derived from the same meaning, it also means to "double over" — to bend, twist or manipulate in other ways. Consequently, the common understanding of the term "doblaje" takes on these implications of twisting, adapting and repurposing an object into something else — into something that functions differently, with different objectives. This divergence in terminology is telling, as it connotes a more complex relationship between the original text and its derivative. It works neither in parallel to the original, nor in simple tangential opposition, but like a creeping vine — clinging to the original when necessary, but also navigating its own path and generating its own meanings, sometimes unexpectedly.

While such manipulation may be considered anathema to the stated purpose of translation as general praxis, it often becomes necessary, or simply opportune. In Germany, for instance, translations of texts set in WWII are problematized by the illegality of phrases such as "Heil Hitler," which constitute hate speech. Though still used in period-specific contexts, many more lighthearted depictions of Nazis such as the German dub of the sitcom *Hogan's Heroes* (1965-1971) have opted to erase the phrase altogether, with the accompanying salute accompanied by unrelated dialogue: "the corn has grown *this* tall this year!" (Bräutigam). Humor indeed presents a challenge for translation in general, with the end result in dubbed texts often being either adapted, re-contextualized or entirely tangential dialogue which takes its cues from context or even just, as in the *Hogan's Heroes* example, the physical performances of figures on screen.

In other instances, this impetus to re-produce texts is simply a matter of expedience and opportunity. In translating the French stop-motion children's show *Le Manège Enchanté* (1964-74) into English, the lack of original scripts compelled producer Eric Thompson to forego any attempt to faithfully translate or cast actors for particular characters, choosing instead to write entirely new scripts and narrate the show himself for the BBC's version, *The Magic Roundabout* (1965-78). The end result of this was a show rife with topical humor of a very different tone to the original French version. More recently, similar instances of both convenience and opportunism have given rise to a whole subgenre of "gag dubs" in the Western anime translation industry, reformatting action/adventure or even somber anime texts into gag-heavy comedies (see: *Samurai Pizza Cats* 1990-1, *Ghost Stories* 2000-1). These acts of repurposing were even more pointed in the US anime importation of the 80s, with texts such as

Voltron (1984) and *Robotech* (1985) having been famously created through a combining and remixing of several anime source texts (Ruh, 37).

Practices such as these have been well documented in the field of anime studies by such scholars as Ruh, Napier and Clements — particularly with regard to the historical shifts that at one time enabled such assumptions of editorial authorship by translators, media buyers and distributors. The case studies these scholars concentrate on speak not only to temporal shifts in cultures of anime fandom and circulation, but also to value hierarchies with regard to the textual integrity and authorship of what was once almost wholly considered junk media in the West. Looking beyond anime and animated textualities in general, however, they also indicate the implicit, though seldom so flagrantly exerted, power of such intermediaries. Where instances such as those just discussed stand out for their evident deviation from their originary texts, such acts of cultural adaptation, editing and wholesale remixing are going on all the time, albeit in often more understated ways. Amid this, the wider systemic question I am interested in is in what ways such acts of re-production themselves become systematized and codified. That is to say, what are the cultures that surround and imbue them? Where anime scholars have then for the most part concentrated on this question in temporal terms, and with regard to the emergence of anime in English-speaking mediascapes, we might also consider in what way the cultural thickening represented by the media capital may itself come into play. Inversely, we may also think about how the cultures embedded in a media industry that is fundamentally driven in large part by re-mediation also in turn come to affect the wider nature of the media capital in question. Though Mexico City is then itself a powerful producer of "new" IP, I argue that this role, this positioning as a regional/linguistic media capital, has been fundamentally shaped by an industrial culture in which re-mediation looms large, and is more legible in its positioning as a node of

multi-lateral transnational negotiation than under older models of regional dominance and competition.

Mexico as Political Capital, Mexico as Media Capital

The study of the mutual and complex spheres of influence that bind cultural power to wider social structures comprises one of the major areas of interest in the wider field of media studies. This is particularly true of schools of thought informed by Marxist cultural criticism, which tend for their part to formulate something of a nuanced hierarchy between culture and political-economic structures. Within the dynamics of analysis established by Bourdieu for example, the relationship between dominant cultural and economic fields usually places the realm of hegemonic culture in a largely subservient and supportive position to that of dominant economic relationships.[13] Herman and Chomsky likewise note in what way media discourses and state political economies are intertwined — even and especially within systems that presume their separation on a structural level.[14] Thinking more specifically with respect to the positioning of states and state-entrenched institutions in the cultural field, much of the recent literature on the emergence of more pluralist modes of global media production and circulation concentrate specifically on the relationship of media industries and textualities with state actors, agendas and interests.

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[13] In discussing Bourdieu and Weber's approximations to the interrelationship of economic and cultural fields, Benson notes how:

> society is structured around a basic opposition between "economic" and "cultural" power, with the latter generally being weaker but, as in Weber, influential to the extent that it legitimates and masks economic wealth (464).

[14] Within their proposal of the propaganda model of neoliberal media, Herman and Chomsky contend that, though neoliberal media frameworks may not be state generated or dictated, the economic — and thus, political — interests of their production hierarchies tend overwhelmingly to align themselves with those of the oligarchic classes of metropolises the they reside within and represent (2).

It is with regard to such phenomena and their cultural, social and political impact that we may situate much of the literature discussing the emergence of newly prominent sites and instances of nation-branding, soft power, and the concurrent looming specter of cultural imperialism. In Al-Ghazy and Kraidy's work concentrating on Turkey's emergence as a major TV exporter in the Arab mediascape, this is referred to as "Neo-Ottoman cool" (2348). Japan's growth as a regional and global media exporter is similarly identified by Matsui as having been formally adopted by Japanese state actors under a policy dubbed "Cool Japan" (82-3). Other media exporting states such as Korea, India and the Arab emirates have likewise been observed to intertwine state-interested policy and cultures of media production and circulation. As the current global political and cultural hegemon, the United States itself offers some of the most expansive and well-studied instances of such intertwining, with a well-documented history of propaganda, state sponsorship and image-management, ranging from the explicit, as with the establishment of Radio Free Europe and Television Martí (Perry), to the more subtle, such as in US sponsored media outlets in the Middle East (Sienkiewicz, 1-2), and the outright sponsorship of pro-US Hollywood films by the US Army and other State institutions (Alford).

With respect to Mexico and Mexico City itself, this widely recognized and exploited intermingling of situated institutional media and political power suggests some correlation between Mexico's long and firmly held history as a prominent media exporter to the rest of Latin America and other dimensions of regional hegemony. That being said, Mexico's prominence in Latin America's cultural sphere in fact runs conspicuously counter to its geopolitical behavior throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries.

Mexico's republican history, especially following the Mexican Revolution (1910-1920) does not correspond with such expectations. Rather than resuming the wide-scale

imperialist role once ascribed to it by the Spanish crown (a role that as an administrative center, it was infrastructurally better equipped than most to fulfill), the Mexican state exhibited a much more isolationist tendency. Most of its border conflicts during this time would in fact take place to the north in response to the United States' own expansionist policies. While it might be tempting to dismiss this lack of imperial colorings as wholly a by-product of the United States' own imperialism (particularly in the Americas via the Monroe Doctrine), this disjuncture is just as much a facet of Mexico's own internal politics and history as it is a product of such macro-continental considerations. Indeed, if we consider the American continent's wider colonial history, Mexico seems to have had a substantial head start on the United States in laying the groundwork for both formal and cultural imperialism. Mexico after all once held a privileged placement in the administrative structure of the Spanish-American Empire.

Mexico City itself (taking advantage of pre-colonial social stratifications and infrastructures) comprised the military, political and commercial capital of the entire Viceroyalty of New Spain (Virreinato de Nueva España), a consolidated colonial territory running from north of Utah's Salt Lake at the 42nd parallel down to modern day Guatemala (Fig. 1). This power once ranged even further, extending well into South America up until the establishment of the Viceroyalty of Peru, likewise built upon the infrastructures and social hierarchies of a conquered indigenous capital city. Befitting such geopolitical centrality, Mexico City was endowed with a protagonistic role in the development of European-American colonial cultural institutionality. It not only served as the site of the first university in the Americas, but also the first mass-printing facilities and public library, alongside other institutions that would come to comprise what we now refer to as the modern public sphere (Ricard, 217). Mexico City's centrality as a point of resource circulation and commercial administration should likewise not be overlooked,

integrating not only the circulation of goods and people (and people regarded as goods) between Europe, Africa and the Americas, but also serving as a point of contact between the Spanish Empire and Asia, in effect turning Mexico City into one of the first administrative centers of a globalized economic system (Sempa).

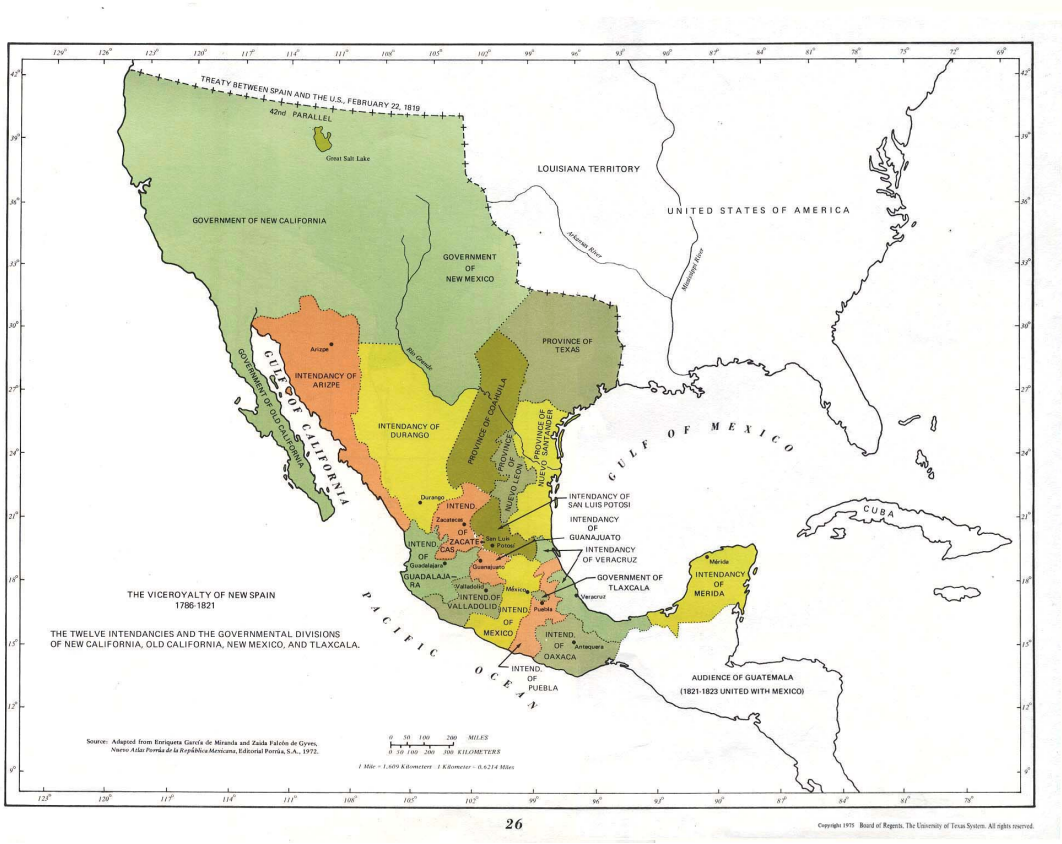


Fig. 1 — The Viceroyalty of New Spain. During its early independence, Mexico's territories would extend even further.

In the wake of Mexico's re-consolidation as, first, a short-lived monarchic empire (Robertson, 1944, 222) and then a republic, Mexico City's cultural prominence and positioning as a major circulatory hub would remain while the State of Mexico's geopolitical standing became mired in the conflicts inherent in newly-established independence. The consolidation of what would become the Mexican republic was a process beset both internally and externally by

the remnants of European monarchist political structures (Foster, 186), the loss of major territories during the Mexican-American War, and repeated attempts by France (supported by both the British and Spanish) to reintegrate Mexico into a clientalistic colonial dynamic (Foster, 185, Robertson, 1940). France's interventions were driven in large part by the same affordances that Mexico had retained as the heart of the Viceroyalty of New Spain. As emphasized by the stated grievances of the Convention of London (1861), which was subsequently used to justify the French invasion of Mexico, European interests there were colored by the need to facilitate both free trade and the unimpeded circulation of European citizens in the region (Foster, 185-6). European attempts to re-colonize Mexico were in effect then not only driven by the desire for access to the American continent's primary resources, but also constituted attempts to reincorporate a now-problematized network of circulation at one of its most prominent nodes of centralized administration. The same centrality that made Mexico valuable also made it vulnerable.

This vulnerability would be addressed at the geopolitical level most acutely in the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution, with the Estrada Doctrine (1930), a fairly straightforward policy that formed the core tenet of the Mexican state's diplomatic behavior up until the early 2000s. Variably condemned and celebrated as a fundamentally isolationist edict, the Estrada Doctrine stipulates that the Mexican government would adopt a neutral stance towards regime changes and other civil disputes in other states, making bilateral diplomatic policy changes only when directly affected by other states' actions. In other words, and to be somewhat reductionist, the Estrada Doctrine functioned as something of an antithesis to the Monroe Doctrine, promising political non-intervention to the international community, and expecting it in return. While the United States would variably regard the Estrada Doctrine as a bothersome impediment to its own

highly interventionist regional interests in the Americas (Leiken, 95-6), this self-imposed neutrality would carve out an interesting diplomatic profile for Mexico among the rest of the region. It effectively divorced Mexico's geopolitical interests from its continued positioning as a site of prominence and consolidation for the wider Latin American cultural landscape.

Film, Radio, TV and the *novella* Format: Mexico as Latin American Fulcrum

Throughout this time and in spite of its calculatedly diminished international geopolitical standing, Mexico remained a site of import in wider global networks of economic and cultural circulation. Though losing its uncontested status as the sole metropolis in the Americas sometime in the early 19th century (Bolton 119), Mexico City itself maintained much of the same structural positioning that once demarcated its role as a mediator between empire and Latin American coloniality – the difference now being that the center of empire in the region was shifting. The aftermath of both the Mexican-American War (1846-1848) and the US Civil War (1861-1865) left the United States in a position of both administrative and military re-consolidation in conjunction with massive territorial growth, allowing it in the decades to come to bring the neo-colonial underpinnings of its Monroe Doctrine to fruition via a concerted campaign of ventures setting up of clientalistic regimes in the still vulnerable territories of the debilitated Spanish empire (Gilderhus, 11). In something of a role reversal, it is precisely in California, one of several territories ceded to the United States in the Mexican-American War, that the most prominent of the United States' centers of global media power would later be established as well.

The 19th century was indeed a period of rapid vacillation between United States' and Mexico's relationship towards each other as states and centers of cultural influence. Shortly after

the consolidation of Mexico's independence from the Spanish Empire in 1821, Mexico and the US were already experiencing friction over the Mexican province of Texas, which had been engaged in various disputes with the central Mexican authority. Part of this conflict was demographic, with Mexican officials attempting to halt the wave of southern Anglo immigration to the region by, firstly, banning slavery, and secondly, imposing tariffs on American business interests (Santoni, 1511). These and other conflicts led Texas to declare independence as a Republic in 1936. Though it (along with France and Britain) recognized Texas as an independent state in 1938, The US would go on to annex the territory in 1845 with some Texan support, sparking the Mexican-American War. While this conflict sparked an understandable enmity between the two republics, it likewise accelerated processes of transculturation between them. The US territory suddenly incorporated indigenous, mestizo and European peoples who at one time had considered themselves subjects of both Spain and Mexico, and who still shared ties of commercial and cultural circulation with the same. It likewise lent the wider Mexican territory familiarity with 'gringo' culture through the state's occupation by US soldiers.

Enmity on a political level would be relieved somewhat by the United States' support of an independent Mexico during the Napoleonic installation of the Second Mexican Empire of the 1860s — an action understandably opposed by Mexico's republican government, but supported by its entrenched land-owning elites (history.state.gov). Though embroiled in its own civil conflict, the United States would at first tacitly, and (following the regaining of control over its southern territories) openly oppose the French occupation. This behavior was in accordance with the US Monroe Doctrine of 1823, which for its part signaled the United States' developing regional military agendas, as well as its neocolonial economic interests within the American sphere of geopolitical influence (Gilderhus, 11, 13).

With the reconsolidation of the Mexican Republic and its reform into the dictatorial regimes of the Porfiriato (1876–1880, 1884–1911), relationships between the two states would settle somewhat, with Porfirio Diaz's administration seeking to legitimize itself with the international community via both an earnest policy of European style modernization, and a stabilization of economic relationships, particularly with regard to foreign debt (Hackett, 52-53). These efforts, embroiled as they were internally with oppression and corruption, would result in both the diplomatic recognition of the regime and republic internationally, as well as leading to the further integration of Mexico and the US via a variety of business relationships and infrastructure – particularly rail lines (Buchenau, 500). Throughout this time, the Porfiriato would continue to adopt an entrenched nationalist policy, open to business, but unwilling to become a clientalistic state under the growing neocolonialist fervor of the US. This aspect of Mexico's foreign policy, demarcating a clear separation between business relationships and formalized political relationships, would indeed persist well beyond the end of the Porfiriato and into the post-revolutionary regime of the PRI (Institutional Revolutionary Party). As with the close ties that bound the Spanish Empire commercially, administratively and culturally to its American empire, so too did Mexican actors eventually come to assume a variety of intermediary roles between the United States and the wider Latin American region. Consequently, and while the Mexican state itself worked to remain free of a direct clientalistic relationship with the US, several members of the Mexican comprador class were only too keen to take strategic advantage of the US's rise as an economic and cultural hegemon and interlocutor. The relationships fostered by such actors worked in concert with Mexico's continued advantageous positioning from a networked point of view with regard to geographic placement and administrative affordances.

These interdependent factors would give Mexican media players distinct advantages amid the wider Latin American media field, making it so that Mexico would remain at the forefront of newly-developed media infrastructures and formats in the Latin American region as the electronic media age dawned. Under the Porfiriato, such developments consisted of the expansion and implementation of several networking infrastructures including roadways, steam and petroleum driven modes of transport, railways and telegraphy (Castro, 336). And while such structures were primarily envisaged as facilitators of resource extraction and circulation, they likewise contributed to both a greater consolidation of Mexico's internal connectedness (stratified along lines of class though this may have been in practice) and a reaffirmation of Mexico City as the primary fulcrum around which such circulation would function (Castro, 336). This relative technologization and centralization would mean that Mexico City itself was almost invariably the site where the trappings of the modern media landscape would be first experimented with and consolidated in the Latin American region. It was here where the first Latin American film industry was established, as well as the first state, university and privately-owned radio systems (Gallo, 119). By a narrow margin, it was also in Mexico City where the first Latin American television broadcast system was set up, accompanied both by some of the earliest implementations of color television technology anywhere, and among the earliest implementation of transnational institutional cooperation in the setting up of TV networks (Gonzáles de Bustamente, 5-6, Sinclair and Straubhaar, 21-2). On the labor front, and pre-empting what would become a more firmly entrenched division of labor under late capitalism, it was also here that we can locate some of the earliest examples of industrial outsourcing in television animation, as early as the 1950s (Sito, 251-2).

As Mexican dubbing luminary Mario Castañeda affirms, Mexico's early prominence in the Spanish-language dubbing industry likewise came about partly from Mexico's geographic proximity, which similarly granted it the opportunity to develop its local film industry with relative speed. This however was no guarantor of an exclusive, or even dominant positioning in the wider commercial landscape of film dubbing. As noted by Gunckel, it took some time for a codification of the Spanish media dialect and accent to occur, and for several years the issue of how or who would determine this consolidation was up in the air (333). Consequently, several players from a handful of Latin American states vied for lucrative opportunities to become the primary channel of English-to-Spanish dubbing in Lain America for given studios and tent pole productions. Buenos Aires in particular, whose own rate of infrastructural development at the time must not be overlooked, became a major player in this competition, winning contracts for such films as Disney's *Pinocchio* (1940). As Castañeda further notes, however, a major part of Mexico's early and definitive takeover of the vast majority of dubbing in Spanish America has to do with the active campaigning done by Mexican industry players in Hollywood, with such relationships building on each other to cement this supremacy. This active campaigning, in conjunction with the expedience and relative cultural familiarity of dealing with Mexican industry representatives from Hollywood studios' perspective (Gunckel, 326) extended to other areas of cross-linguistic re-production as well. Mexican-based industry players, for instance, played major roles in early experiments in the re-shooting of English Language films with Spanish-speaking actors during the years of early talkies. In a similar vein, one of the first films to be dubbed in Spanish at all was premiered simultaneously in both Los Angeles and Mexico (Gunckel 331).

The establishment of Mexico's radio and television broadcast systems likewise evidence the clear impact of its capital's role as a site of re-production and intermediation — not only with regard to its positioning between Latin America's cultural landscapes and others (mostly the United States), but also as a consolidator of the Latin American mediascape itself. In spite of their highly centralized state and party affiliations, the emergence and growth of Mexico's broadcasting systems were highly transnational affairs. This is thanks in part both to Mexico City's longstanding role as a fulcrum between Anglo- and Latin America, but also to the Mexican comprador class' evolution and diversification from primary resource management and the locally oriented commerce of consumer goods towards the circulation and management of media resources. It is such a transition, for instance, that gave rise to Mexico's oldest radio stations, launched in Mexico City in 1923 by businessman Ernesto Pugibet. Pugibet, a well-known eccentric and technophile, was primarily in the business of cigarette manufacturing, and launched his station CYB with French backing, ultimately dubbing it with the same name as his cigarettes, the aptly-named "El Buen Tono", or "The Good Tone" (Castro, 360).

The other major player in commercial radio at the time had an even greater long-term impact on the broadcast history of Mexico and Latin America (that was likewise affiliated with the tobacco industry), and similarly emerged from an entrepreneurial diversification of industry orientations, albeit one that was more natural than the shift from cigarette manufacturing to broadcasting. This station, CYL, is now the longest standing radio network in Mexico, and was likewise launched in Mexico City in 1923 (Meyaro Peréz, 247). CYL was formed as a partnership between the newspaper *El Universal* and La Casa del Radio (The House of Radio) — a business licensed to sell RCA radio sets and equipment for enthusiasts listening to the many experimental broadcasts being conducted during the late 1910s and early 1920s in Mexico City

(Meyaro Peréz, 247, Ferreira, 186). The owner of this business (and later the CYL) Raúl Azcárraga is of particular note because it is with he and his brother that the most powerful Mexican dynasty of broadcast magnates begins. Where Raul and Emilio then began their media ownership in radio, Emilio would later diversify to likewise purchase cinemas, and ultimately find his most prominent success in the establishment of Mexico's first (and for several decades, only commercial) television network, Televisa.

Televisa's transnational success is for its part well documented, particularly with regard to its major role in establishing and propagating the telenovela format (Straubhaar 2012, 154). As with its US equivalent the soap opera, the telenovela format was derived from the conventions, genres and commercial models of its radio-based antecedent, the radionovela. And while the telenovela is lauded (and sometimes reviled) for its global reach and impact in popular culture (Martínez, 49), its origins are just as much a product of transcultural influence, infrastructures and re-mediations as its eventual global exportation. In documenting both the commercial and cultural origins of the radionovela, Joe Straubhaar notes how both the commercial interests of sponsors such as Colgate-Palmolive and vernacular oral cultures coalesced simultaneously across several sites in the wider Latin American mediascape to create the radionovela (and eventually, the telenovela) format (150). Primary among these sites of early consolidation was Havana, Cuba, in which the practice of reading narratives aloud for laborers in cigar factories had already been well-established (154). As both radio and the radionovela spread throughout Latin America, Cuba benefitted from such oral traditions in conjunction with the consultation of US-based sponsors to become a dominant site of script generation and consolidation of commercial formatting, exporting many of its narratives to other States in the region. In the wake of the Cuban Revolution, however, the pool of producers, actors, directors

and writers aggregated by the Havana radio community eventually ended up in several other Latin American Media Capitals, including Brazil, Argentina, Venezuela, Colombia and Mexico (Martínez, 50).

Televisa, bolstered by this influx of professionals and already supported by a TV broadcast system with no other local competition until the 1990s as well as an existing culture of Mexican novela production, thus became one of the leading and most prolific producers of the format. It has subsequently exported its programming not just within the American continent, but throughout the globe, in markets as diverse as the Philippines, Morocco, Russia, Italy, Israel, and many others. As with Japanese anime, the telenovela has proven eminently spreadable. Like anime, it is a serialized but nonetheless primarily close-ended (and thus easily packaged) melodramatic format. Also like anime, it has found platforms of distribution in diverse television landscapes in large part thanks to its facility in connecting with markets that are often ignored or repudiated by "dominant" media producers and distributors in the Global North/West. Befitting its partial origins in the cigar factories of Cuba, the telenovela is a format primarily entrenched within the world of subaltern and/or marginalized identities — working-class women in particular. Televisa as such became one of many centers of media production in Latin America that functioned as a comprador of sorts, but not one necessarily beholden to the same colonial relationships that once bound center and periphery. Befitting the late-capitalist proliferation of sites of industrial importance throughout other relative regional peripheries, Televisa as such became for a substantial period of time an agent of more horizontal frameworks of media circulation. Again, like the initial distribution of anime before its eventual explosion as a major global media commodity, the telenovela, whether it be from Mexico, Brazil or Colombia,

developed along pathways of relative global peripherality before coming to the notice and demand of more hegemonic mediascapes.

The affinities held between anime and the telenovela work above and beyond their comparison as parallels. Throughout the early development of Mexico's TV broadcasting system, there was a significant cross-pollination of personnel and production cultures between Mexico City's film, television, and radio production cultures, as well as its dubbing industry. The labor of dubbing after all exists in the liminal space between audio and audiovisual production. Consequently, the work of dubbing often would effectively eliminate hierarchies and distinctions between these three media platforms in its processes of remediation. Dubbing studios, translators, directors, technicians, engineers and actors worked interchangeably between film and television projects, using the expertise and infrastructures developed in the world of radio. This hybridity lent itself to particularly multifaceted careers in the wider media community of Mexico City during its early years of Television, with industry players often transitioning between several positions in radio, television, film and dubbing (re)production. This same intermingling of media industries still holds true in Mexico City to a large extent in the present moment. Factors contributing to this hybridity include the nature of the work itself of course. The dynastic nature of Mexico's business community (with ownership and administration often passing from father to son) has created a media field with highly entrenched and concentrated industrial hierarchies. This aspect of the media culture reflects and works in concert with Mexico's entrenched single-party political system and its clientalistic industrial media affiliations. While this situation has more recently become diluted with a growing proliferation of industrial actors and transnational influences, it was held largely static between

the 1920s and the mid 1990s, and still plays a significant role in Mexico's current media systems and cultures.

Conclusions: Between Mediation and Remediation

As with other media imports, anime's history in the Mexican dubbing industry was thus shaped by an industrial environment in which the conceptual separation of importation and exportation was highly problematized by the wider role it played as an intermediary not just to the Mexican media environment, but to and within the wider Latin American mediascape in general. Whole generations of Latin American television and film audiences were thus absorbing the same voices (figurative and literal) interpreting a massive range and volume of media — swaths of textualities whose original provenance may have been from a variety of places, social contexts and authorial intents, but which were being compressed, both spatially and temporally, and mostly within the media industry community of one city. There is an implicit and substantial power embedded in this positioning. At the same time, it is one which has clearly been responded to via a great deal of compromise and consideration for its own position. Linguistically alone we may note how dubbing professionals working in Mexico City have consistently worked to limit the cultural odor of their work. There is very little if any distinctly Mexican jargon, cadence or local referencing inserted by this community into its works. This willingness to concertedly erase such markers in favor of the artificial and limited neutrality of media Spanish alone suggests that this is a community that is distinctly aware of its position as an intermediary, and how this makes it beholden to both ends of the circulation networks it traffics within.

The multiple industrial roles fulfilled by Producciónes Carlos Amador, its contemporaries, including Cinematográfica Interamericana, S.A (CINSA), and Servicio Internacional de Sonido, S.A. (SISSA) (both eventually bought out by Televisa) and their industrial progeny in the contemporary distribution/translation industries likewise evidence the extent to which the wider environment of Mexico City's media industries were formed and continue to function along extremely hybrid dynamics. Given this industrial landscape, we might then posit that the commercial prominence of translation has imbued the CDMX's media industry with a sort of double consciousness. That this should occur in a community as beholden to a history of mediation between center and periphery as Mexico City has been no surprise. It is interesting to note, however, in what way this consciousness seems not only to work along the bilateral axis of metropolis and periphery, but also along the multilateral dynamics of a wider Latin American mediascape.

This subjectivity — marked as it is by the semi-peripherality of intermediation — serves as an antecedent to a variety of ongoing phenomena with regard to media industrial communities and the relationships they are continually negotiating with each other. For some time now media scholars have been re-evaluating formerly unquestioned linear hierarchies of media production, circulation and reception. We have interrogated notions of authorial agency, the power dynamics of production and reception, and the ways in which directionalities of media flow relate to hegemony and cultural influence. Amid a global media environment of increasing deterritorialisation and abstraction of power, however, we may further note in what way the remediating role of the CDMX anticipates and illustrates other dimensions of potential influence and confluence. Mexico City emerged as a media capital already beholden to structures built in the service of external interests, whether those of Spanish imperialism or the United States' neo-

colonialism. By sheer hegemonic circumstance, Mexico City has had to set up its infrastructures and cultures of mediation in contention with or in the service of pre-established actors and systems. For newly emergent players in this increasingly consolidated global media system, this is even more the case. It is thanks to such saturation that we can see the almost structural necessity to strategically imitate industry leaders and obfuscate local cultural agendas in the face of the transnational market (Diaz Pino, 2017, 7). Even established media production cultures can themselves be seen to be shifting towards more ambiguous relationships between production and remediation. To what extent, for example, can we consider the current trend in IP repurposing and franchise culture to be itself an act of cultural translation and remediation?

The majority of the work done in media these days is by necessity less of outright creation than of framing, administration and providing or controlling access. This is the work that has largely defined Mexico City's media industry, both internally and in terms of its wider global reach. That being said, the cultural impact of such work merits investigation, not only because of its immediate impact, but also because it reflects upon wider tendencies in the global field as a whole.

Chapter 3 — Anime Latino: The Layering of Meaning and Identities in Anime's Latin American Circulation

On July 15th 2011, after months of widespread anti-neoliberal political protest, marches and often violent confrontations, the streets surrounding the Plaza de Armas at the heart of Santiago, Chile would serve as the setting for yet another demonstration organized by a newly-active coalition of leftist tertiary students and their allies.[15] As part of this movement's long-lasting series of artistically-inflected performative protests for educational and legislative reform, this gathering would make use of a distinct rhetorical 'hook' in order to both characterize the event and lend it discursive coherence. In this case, the act consisted of emulating a climactic scene from the Japanese anime *Dragon Ball Z* (Latin American airdate 1999-2001). During this mass performance, participants were encouraged to concentrate their collective 'life-forces' into a *genkidama* (lit. "life-energy ball" or, as translated in the English dub, "spirit bomb"), a glowing spherical weapon forged within the show's diegesis from an amalgamation of shared vital energies, or *qi*.

[15] This student-led coalition is headed primarily by the CONFECH, (Confederation of Chilean Student Federations), a nationally-coordinated body of tertiary student unions, though it also integrates aggrupations of secondary school students and other community organisations (Villalobos-Ruminott, 2012).

In praxis, this performance would involve the crowd's interaction with a large physical prop, built as a stand-in for the energy ball — a massive white sphere made of plastic sheeting and supported by an internal polyhedral framework (Fig. 1). Held aloft by the demonstrators, this ball would circulate among the multitude, eventually coming to land on the lawn of the plaza itself. Those surrounding the ball's direct bearers stood with their hands similarly stretched up in an act of symbolic 'donation', endowing the genkidama with their "qi" in order to 'strengthen' it and make it 'grow'.

Figure 1 – Chilean protesters calling upon the genkidama

As understood by Pino-Ojeda, the use of *Dragon Ball Z* as a tool of political communication in this protest marks a nascent mode of cultural/political expression within the Chilean context, representing:

> […]an example of the ways in which new symbolic imaginaries, in this case derived from Japanese comics and animation, are coming to the Chilean cultural fore.[…] The collective nature inherent in the diegesis of the genkidama cements this evocation's discursive relevance within the strategies and goals of the movement, as does its generational relevance as a cultural product embedded in the childhoods of so many young adults in Chile. (Pino-Ojeda 2014, 135)

The politically motivated evocation of such a specific scene from a Japanese media text within the Latin American context evidences the extent not only of this text's cultural capital in Chile as a well-known cultural referent. It also demonstrates the extent to which the narrative and themes of this show have been absorbed within the Chilean popular consciousness, with a specific diegetic ritual and its ethical/ontological implications being precisely evoked and employed to highlight the protest movement's concrete demands for a return of collective identity and political power.

In anticipation of this massive protest performance, its organizers (CONFECH, a nation-wide confederation of Tertiary and secondary student union leaders) released several YouTube videos to both inform the populace of the protest and encourage them to attend. Prominently featured in these videos were a few scenes of re-purposed footage from *Dragon-Ball Z* itself, redubbed with new dialogue between the series' heroic protagonist, Goku, and the evil Frieza. In these videos, Goku of course encourages the protest and its political aims of establishing a universal, non-profit tertiary education system, while Frieza bemoans the student movement's aims. In a powerful rhetorical move, CONFECH added a great deal of legitimacy to this textual poaching by having these videos voiced by the actual vocal talent involved in the original Mexican Latin American dub of the show, with popular voice actors Mario Castañeda and Gerardo Reyero volunteering their time and labor in order to contribute to the aims of the

protest movement. Ultimately, Castañeda and Reyero's vocal contributions would be used in both these promotional videos, and the protest itself, with their performances played on loudspeakers over video footage of *Dragon Ball Z* during the genkidama's "evocation" by the crowd.

The act of cementing this textual evocation's authenticity and cultural capital via an appeal to Dragon Ball Z's Mexican vocal talent marks this as an instance of textual poaching in which notions of authorial agency, metatextuality and authenticity are made much more complex than we might initially imagine. For one part, the contact made between the student movement and these voice actors places the functional point of *Dragon Ball Z*'s textual origin not at its "true" home of Tokyo, or its original author, Akira Toriyama, but in Mexico, the media capital that served as *Dragon Ball Z*'s point of contact and re-mediation to the Hispano-American cultural-linguistic context. As an additional complication, the implication of Castañeda and Reyero within its poaching complicates the fan/creator dichotomy, making it so that supposed 'authors' become complicit in textual poaching themselves, which in turn puts the act's nature *as* poaching into some doubt, especially when dealing, as we are here, with multiple levels and modes of authorship and perceived ownership. The formation of such relationships between people as simultaneous fans, media producers, and politically-engaged citizens within transnational cultural-linguistic communities works to highlight significant wrinkles in traditionally understood models of mediation, distribution and audienceship.

This example, imbued as it is with issues of anti-neoliberal political action and specifically hailed Latin American anime fandom, may be one of the most visible and deliberate mobilizations of the quotidian integration Japanese media have had in the region's popular culture. It also however evidences the limitations of seeing this scope of cultural impact and

circulation as a binary dynamic between two monolithic entities, with Japan on one side of the equation and Latin America on the other. Scholars such as Derek Johnson (157) and Iwabuchi (2004, 58) have for their part emphasized in what way logics of transnational negotiation, institutional competition and cultural friction have played out with respect to the United States' role as a fulcrum for ostensibly wholly Japanese media's circulation in the wider world. In his own framework of media flow, Thussu has likewise underlined the limitations of spatial circulation as a metric for the cultural hegemonic underpinnings of global media distribution. As the role played by the distinctly Mexican inflection of *Dragon Ball Z*'s evocation in these Chilean protests suggests, Hollywood players are not the only re-mediating influences with the power to refract and/or exert "authorial" influence over Japanese media texts. For the Latin American region at least, such power may indeed be distributed across many stages and sites, including the influence of US-based distributors of course, but also players in the wider Latin American dubbing industry. As highlighted in previous chapters, Mexico City remains by some margin the largest and most powerful concentration of such players, albeit one which unlike Hollywood, sees itself less as an arbiter of the media markets it caters to than a player within a wider, more "horizontal" formalized system of flow. This positioning raises the question of the scope, power and identitary influence of this process of re-mediation.

In order to address both the latent, often unarticulated power and possibilities of this process, this chapter focuses on an examination of the way in which the circulation of cultural products necessarily create a layering of meaning, agency, and perceived identity. This can be understood as adding a palimpsestic perspective to the formation of cultural odor as theorized by Iwabuchi. Here I will be interrogating the notion of cultural meaning as embedded in cultural artifacts in particular — not only those with explicit and recognized ideological or textual value,

but also those which are the product of "neutralized" cultural work. These are material objects, textualities and labor whose cultural agency goes ignored, but that have cumulative resonances in the wider social landscape, shaping culture in the (mostly) unobtrusive, everyday manner identified by Raymond Williams as "ordinary" (92). By identifying these areas of influence within diluted, unrecognized, obfuscated and even self-negating power structures, my agenda here is to show how Mexico City functions as the primary gatekeeper to the wider Latin American mediascape. In doing so, I investigate in what way embedded practices in Mexico have shaped the wider nature of anime's shared cultural meanings in the region, and by extension, to what degree (if any) these texts may be understood as "Mexican" as well as Japanese.

In broaching this subject, my intent here is not to reify such influence nor downplay wider fields of discursive, economic and political power that shape the circulation of media between Japan and Latin America. Rather, in bringing up this node of situated remediation, I intend to speak both to ongoing and latent dynamics of meaning-making, interpretation, and conscious re-authoring of popular textualities. To add a wrinkle to De Certeau's conceptualization of the "guerrilla tactics" employed by popular and subaltern subjectivities in the face of hegemonic power, ideologies and textualities. Mexico City serves as a site of both popular and industrial remediation, and as such is beholden to its positioning on the one hand as a nexus of relative power as well as a subservient actor with respect to both other powerful institutional actors and the wider transnational community that is the Latin American mediascape. By looking at the inherent tensions and frictions that demarcate this position, as well as the ways in which it is both consciously and implicitly understood by its many interlocutors, much can be said to complicate many assumed binaries and hierarchies,

particularly with regard to issues of textual refraction and popular and/or subaltern hijacking and excorporation.

Layering Cultural Odors

In studying the increasing complexity of contemporary global dynamics of cultural flow, the problem of mapping and historicizing relationships of power, competition and incorporation has engendered a bevy of often overlapping approaches and neologisms seeking to identify trends and make them A) more manageable, and B) applicable to a broader range of case studies and dynamics..

Among perhaps more general conceptualizations of transculturation (the intermingling of cultures), friction (what actually *happens* when cultures intermingle?) and contact zones (where the cultural intermingling happens), we may consider the more specific notion of cultural odor. First theorized by Iwabuchi, cultural odor speaks broadly to dynamics of identity and cultural difference. It refers to those aspects of lived life, epistemologies, ideologies and various other artifacts of cultural identity that, while largely unperceived by members of societies that life within them, serve as markers of identification for those societies amid a wider social landscape.

Elsewhere I have written about the challenges faced by peripheral and semi-peripheral producers in attempting to enter already established global markets (Diaz Pino 2017, 7). In entering such fields, the challenge for such emergent players becomes one of both balancing the need for distinguishing themselves as viable alternatives to established actors while conforming to the embedded practices, expectations and structures that these same major players have shaped to primarily benefit themselves and their own agendas. For many emergent

players working from peripheral positions, the most viable strategy of breaking through into the global market becomes one of opportunistic integration. They create cheaper (often technically inferior) copies of established commodities, in the process enacting a variety of strategic self-erasures in order to avoid alienating (or at the very least, distracting) a pool of potential global consumers. Scholars working in the field of anime studies have variably attributed such strategic thinking to the conception of anime as a modern media phenomenon (Ruh, 223, Clements, 130). Molded from the outset as an economic and highly spreadable model of animation, with aesthetic, narrative and production practices highly shaped by the limitations and affordances of broadcast television. As Iwabuchi observes, these facets would more recently come to, perhaps ironically, become cultural markers themselves, serving to identify both anime specifically and its Japanese associations with distinct cultural odor amid the wider global mediascape.

In considering such markers of distinction, however, we may consider to what extent meaning is accrued not only at the level of travel from one cultural-linguistic context to another, but also to what extent this process of circulation has itself inscribed these texts with certain cultural markers. Processes of mediation are by nature ones of interpretation, packaging and both conscious and unintentional contextualization. Opportunities for such re-production are in turn amplified in the process of making a text travel not only across languages and cultural contexts, but also to media systems (such as the Spanish-speaking Latin American mediascape) which traffic across national linguistic and cultural spectrums. Such processes necessitate a model of interpretation that can account for not only continuities and distinctions between points of production and reception, but also the role played by remediators themselves in re-authoring and inscribing texts with further meaning. I see such processes not as displacing or obscuring

cultural odor (though they may often attempt to) but rather as being additive, creating palimpsestic textualities.

The work of translators, dubbing professionals and secondary distributors is inherently palimpsestic. It layers meanings and associations derived from local contexts, events and (imagined) communities onto already-formed cultural objects with their own referents and agendas. The manner of this layering and intermingling of course varies from context to context, as do the implicit power relationships embedded in these interactions. With respect to the specific context of Latin American remediation of anime textualities at least, I argue that the palimpsests this process produces defy more conventionally-understood notions of verticality with respect to media flow. By extension, it likewise problematizes the assumed power dynamics involved in the palimpsest as a general concept. Where conventional understandings of palimpsestic textuality suggest an overwritten text in which traces of an original or prior textuality can still be deciphered (often in recursive and/or ambiguous layers), the dynamics of this particular mode of over-writing complicate such dynamics. There is still erasure going on here, but as with many cultures of translation and dubbing, contemporary remediators working in Mexico City seek to downplay *their own* agency and authorship in these textualities as much as possible. In doing so, they produce palimpsests in which the topmost 'layer' of meaning-making seeks to be as invisible as possible (let's overcomplicate this metaphor to its absolute limit), only strategically obfuscating and refracting the meanings they have been laid over. Alterations seem to be predominantly focused on pragmatically packaging the cultural objects under their stewardship so as to fit as well as possible into the wider media cultural-linguistic neutrality of the Latin American Spanish (and sometimes, later the Portuguese) –speaking mediascape. Evidence for such a positioning emerges both from the final cultural products disseminated by

these remediation processes, as well as in the way professionals in these industries present themselves and their work in interviews, paratexts and other forums. As with any palimpsestic dynamic, the underlying agendas and success of this such auto-erasure are a contentious matter of course. While actors, writers and other remediators may seek to define their work as, ideally, invisible, they still have a vested stake in making their labor resonate within their industrial communities, as well as among the wider mediascape. Audiences for their part likewise have a role to play in determining to what extent such remediators are to be seen as curators, obstacles, or co-authors of their engagement with these texts.

These questions of agency, responsibility and self-positioning may be par for the course with translation industries and professionals in general — beholden as they are both to imperatives of textual, authorial, linguistic and cultural fidelity, as well as their obligations to the media communities they are embedded within. At the same time, pointed differences can be drawn between different industries and cultures of remediation depending on A) the direction taken by these cultural objects with respect to dynamics of media flow, B) the positioning of the particular media capitals and communities doing the remediation with respect to different dimensions of hegemony, and C) the media spheres and communities being catered to with these remediated cultural objects. With respect to this last facet (and as discussed in the previous chapter) the Latin American Spanish-speaking mediascape is distinctive for the ways in which it seeks to consolidate language via the de-facto enforcement of a neutral dialect, in effect making it so that at times even "locally" produced content, already produced in Spanish, will be re-dubbed for integration into the wider imagined community this audience comprises.[16] Within

[16] While this practice is by no means universal, it does occur in particular with media texts originating in the "Rioplatense" states of Argentina and Uruguay due to their distinctive accent and structure, as well as in Children's media, which in particular undergoes processes of standard linguistic codification.

such an environment, the usual issues and negotiations that take place in cultures of translation, dubbing and re-distribution become all the more scrutinized and codified, given that the audiences being catered to are not "local" in the conventional sense, but rather a universalized amalgam of "Spanish-America". For their part, these audiences have adapted to a codification of 'media' Spanish with neutralized expletives, references, analogues and humor. Vernacular language and idioms become softened if not outright erased, with a minority of certain inadaptable colloquialisms and stereotyped identities eventually becoming features of the total Latin American idiomatic-ideological landscape. This has the effect of shaping Latin American audiences' relationship both to media in general and each other's cultural identities via this almost prosthetic shared language and culture.

In cases such as these, and even putting aside more pointed instances of textual appropriation, adaptation, re-authoring and remixing, the mere act of strategic translation and minor reformatting, repackaging and re-contextualization that necessarily happens when media travel imbue them with multiple levels of cultural signification and specificity. Given the concentration of Latin America's industrial remediation communities among so few media capitals, this has had a cumulative historical effect in the wider shape of the Latin American media 'voice', imbuing it with a regional neutrality that nonetheless privileges certain kinds of vocabulary, inflection and linguistic structures over others.

Dialoguing and building on the work of Allison and Iwabuchi with respect to cultural odor, indigenization and "Westernization" of media properties, Johnson notes in what way the realities of contemporary industrial practice have built systems of media production, distribution and administration in which dynamics of a given cultural object's cultural identity, ownership and association have become much more complex than nation-based conceptualizations allow

for (162). In his own analysis of the *Transformers* franchise's origins in the 1980s and re-bolstering in the 2010s, Johnson notes in what way cultures of transnational production are an established, if variable phenomena, with practices of deterritorialized administration and especially self-erasure making it difficult to re-affirm models which assume a preponderance of soft-power dynamics (themselves highly entrenched in statist logics) in our discussions of global cultural circulation (163).

As such, and while the attachment of nation-branding and soft-power efforts continue to be a factor in global media circulation, we should be wary of overstating the extent to which their logics come into play in everyday life. There is after all a lot at stake for many players in such claims. Legislators, PR firms, and media producers dependent on national funding have a lot to gain from making strategic use of such associations (Black Epstein and Tokita, VIII). This is true both with respect to emphasizing in what way their own cultural output brand and promote the state, and inversely, in attempts to distinguish themselves from supposedly invasive competitors with "foreign" attachments and odors.

As with any dynamics of identitary demarcation, there is a degree of (often strategic) essentialism at play in such claims of cultural difference, invasiveness and odor (Davis, 176-7). These create binaries out of what may be in lived experience much more nuanced and indeed layered meanings and associations. Befitting the metaphor of cultural odor itself as it was theorized by Iwabuchi, cultural odor is highly mutable, polysemic and contextual. In looking at multi-tiered processes of circulation and remediation, I would further emphasize that it can in addition be additive, or (to borrow aural language) polyvocal, dissonant and at times harmonic. That is, palimpsestic. This aspect of cultural odor supersedes the underlying and all too prevalent implication in lay discussions of cultural difference that cultural association is somehow a zero

sum game: That something like the *Pokémon* franchise's "Japanese-ness" somehow lies in opposition, in inverse proportion, to its "American-ness". Such parameters ignore not only the transnational institutional hybridities that gave rise to this media phenomenon to begin with, but also the decades of occupation undergone by Japan in the aftermath of WWII. This of course says nothing of the substantial influences of Japanese aesthetics in the European art world's pivotal progression away from purely representational art towards subjective abstraction during the 19th century. This transculturally-driven evolution would in turn become a key facet of contemporary Western visual culture, and cartoon cultures in particular. The cultural markers and associations embedded in contemporary Japanese animation are at once then inherently transcultural, though of course the nature of cultural odor will mean that audiences themselves will not necessarily read them as such, especially if they are already living with them prior to contact with these texts.

Such variability still leaves the question open however of how exactly odors layer and intermingle in the process of remediation — particularly when taking into account, firstly, Japanese animated media producers' long established history of outwardly oriented production with an eye towards self neutralization and erasure through such aesthetic practices as mukokuseki (Iwabuchi, 2004, 58), and the Mexican dubbing industry's similar adherence to the neutrality of the wider Latin American mediascape. Even amid a set of players and practices that seek to minimize much of their own cultural odor however, audiences, the culture at large, and in certain special cases, even industry players have managed to identify and deploy cultural demarcators in order to create distinct subcultural identities, affiliations and interpretive frameworks. Anime has for its part played a major role in the generational identities and pop culture landscapes of Latin America since its first introduction to the region in the 1970s. At the

same time, however, the mode of influence it has adopted can be seen as distinct from that of other regions – particularly the Anglo-American cultural landscape. This distinction is attributable to a variety of factors. Many of these have to do with the relative peripherality of the Latin American mediascape for much of the history of global media distribution, and how this has in turn shaped the behavior and positioning of Latin American remediators. At the same time, and as I allude to in Chapter 1, this behavior may be more the rule than the exception in the overall global media field, with the Anglo-American field (itself the primary object of study for much of anime's global scholarship) perhaps representing the true anomaly, entangled as it has been with the trappings of metropolitan centrality. In looking at the way in which Mexican remediation of anime texts adds layers of odor which resonate in the wider Latin American media field, we may as such gain insight to similar processes at other pivotal entry points to regional mediascapes. In order to examine these relationships it is necessary, however, to look at a longer history of circulation between Japan and the Latin American cultural field.

The Failure of Self-Erasure and Cultural Odorlessness

As with the importation of other commodities and textualities, literature covering Japanese products' circulation to the Americas is by and large overwhelmingly focussed on the bilateral relationship between the Japan and the United States in the wake of the former's occupation by the latter. Given the firmly established dynamic of dependence and control held between these two during this time period, it is understandable that so much commentary and analysis should focus on such bilateralism. At the same time, this same relationship had ramifications beyond these two states. In the years following the setting up of a newly bolstered, export-oriented Japanese economy now integrated to the political-economic bloc of the "free world" (SELA, 12,

Warner Mettler, 209), the impact of Japanese commercial and cultural exportation to the wider American continent (as well as the wider "West") could no longer be seen exclusively in such bipolar terms. Increasingly, and in conjunction to long-held legacies of importation of elaborated goods from the US, Britain, France and Germany, Latin Americans were beginning to notice the presence of Japanese importation. It's in these early years of Japan's presence in the quotidian life of Latin Americans that we can situate the strongest impact of what in other localities was a very different kind of emergence. That is, where in the US Japanese products were initially regarded as imitative, lower tier, cheaper and by association of poorer quality versions of already available consumer goods, Their slightly later emergence in the Latin American market came with different associations. First and foremost, Japanese products came with a double foreignness and additive odor, with labels, tags and packaging in English script, bearing Japanese or English brand names, and bearing the legend: "Made in Japan", verbatim, in English (Figs. 2 and 3). Two odors, one relatively novel, and the other familiar, though with highly complex and contentious associations.

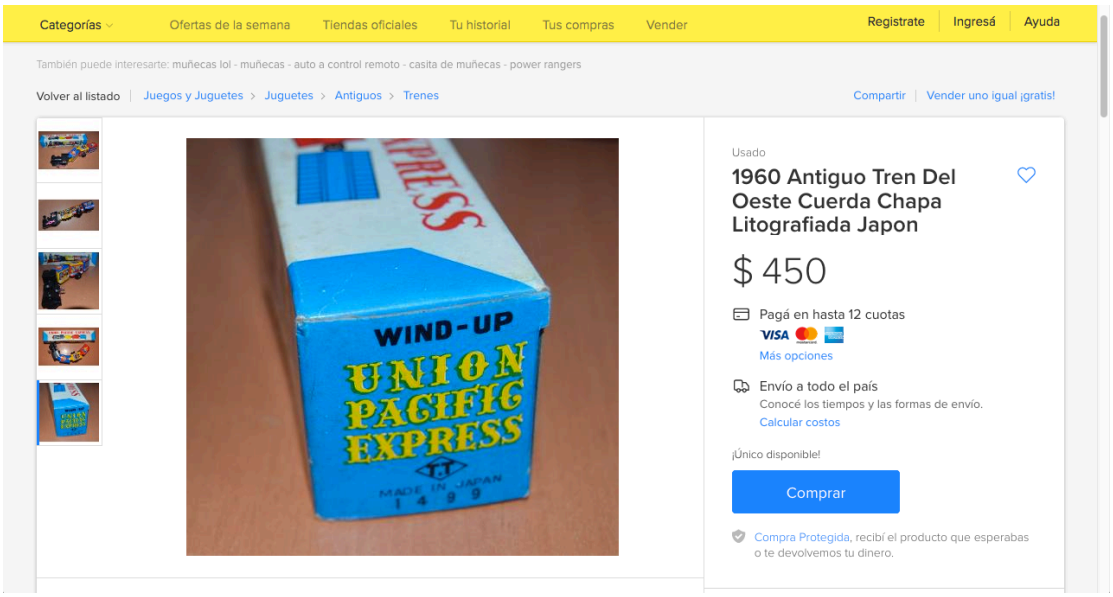


Figure 2 – an ad on mercadolibre.com (a popular Argentine consumer-to-consumer sales site) for a 1960 wind-up train toy. Note the English script and "Made in Japan" legend

Figure 3 – Note also the strong strain of Anglo-American representation

The perceived invasion of the English language and its gringo/yanqui idioms had been an ongoing debate in Latin American popular discourse for some time by the time Japan

emerged as a source of commodity imports in the region during the early 1960s. Discomfort and antipathy towards the preponderance of similar foreign-coded importation was at a zenith at this point, given the United States' own increasing profile as an interventionist power in the global stage, and in Latin America in particular. To this effect we may take as reference popular music at the time (particularly in the Caribbean) as well as comics and other venues of popular discourse. Japan's entrance into Latin American quotidianity had the potential to carry with it a variety of similar and contradicting associations, some novel or 'modern', and others heavily colored by the stigmas attached to its products layered cultural associations. Would Latin Americans see elaborated Japanese imports as simply extensions of their subservient position to the US economy? Or would this be seen as a novel, perhaps even refreshing emergence of an interlocutor not burdened by the baggage of (often internalized) Eurocentrism and neocolonialism? And what of the prior ideas and presences Japanese culture had in the region? As with the US, Japanese people had various long-established populations in Latin America, most notably perhaps in Mexico, Brazil and Peru, where their localized influence can still be found in such distinctively Peruvian dishes as ceviche and other maritime cuisine. Thanks in large part to essentialist and assimilationist state policies of Mestizaje (which tended to ignore any ethnic or cultural contributors to the national identity that were not European and to a lesser extent indigenous or black), such populations, along with many others, tended to be erased from both vernacular and institutional conceptions of national cultural citizenship (Chaves and Zambrano, 5). Consequently, it was primarily through such newly established channels of importation (along with received stereotypes and other ideas imported from the US and Europe) that contemporary conceptions of Japanese culture as a unified identity were first truly formed in the wider Latin American consciousness.

As with its emergence in the cultural spheres of other regions during the 20th century, Japan's first widespread quotidian presence in Latin America came as a result of its US-engineered development as a site of production and exportation of consumer goods. Particularly those elaborated in light industries such as plastics, textiles, small electronics, paper goods, specialized tools, etc. (Warner Mettler, 210). The seemingly ingrained culture of self-erasure and/or neutralization that has been observed as a trait of export-oriented Japanese cultural production has direct ties to the culture of material production established during the post-WWII period. As discussed by Megan Warner Mettler, from the late 1940s to the 1950s Japanese firms received explicit instruction and consultation from both private and state actors from the United States on how to integrate the existing industrial and commercial parameters of the US consumer base. And this is apart from the heavy subsidies received by these industries in the sourcing of raw materials such as cotton from the United States itself (214). Already from the outset of Japan's (re)birth as an exporter of consumer goods, its economy was consciously and explicitly engineered within the neo-colonial parameters of integration to an existing common transnational market, the fulcrum of which was the United States (SELA, 12). Where other participants in this global neo-colonial dynamic would serve as the source of raw goods (whether these be staples such as minerals, lumber and grain or luxury items like bananas and sugar), Japan was in contrast reconstituted as a "secondary" producer of elaborated goods.

This secondary status and its accompanying perceptions of inferior quality would be difficult to shake in the United States during the immediate post-war period. They were eventually overcome in the following decades, thanks in large part to concerted efforts by Japanese industry leaders to both seek consultation that gave greater emphasis on a culture of quality control, and orient more attention to the exportation not only of lower-investment

consumer goods, but also specialized tools and machinery such as watches, cameras and electronics. While the former did little initially to raise the profile of Japanese goods in the United States (Japan's primary export market due to protectionist European tariffs), the latter began having a major impact in the late 1950s and early 60s (Warner Mettler, 223). Unlike other exports, these were specialized and often niche products that consequently evaded accusations of undercutting local staple industries. They additionally targeted specialist and affluent consumers who would use both their material and cultural capital to raise the profile of Japan in general as a site of manufacture and technological innovation.

It just so happens then that the particular historical moment in which Japanese goods were introduced to Latin America was happening in the midst of a major advantageous pivot in the Japanese export economy and the image it honed. At the same time, Latin America was going through its own transformations, many of which would shape its peoples' disposition towards the wider global political and economic contexts. On the one hand, while certain states and regions were experiencing a growth and bolstering of the middle class, there was likewise a concurrent and overlapping region-wide condition of significant social-political strain. This situation would variably give way to several revolutionary armed conflicts, or more commonly, counter-revolutionary authoritarianism — either in the guise of entrenching already-established political hierarchies or through the rupture of democratic regimes and civic life. Japanese products arrived then amidst a period marked by both curiosity and hope as well as repression and enforcement of stratified social hierarchies.

All of this occurred of course prior to the importation of concertedly 'cultural' products from Japan such as anime or manga. Animated television in Latin America was at the time limited by the scarcity of television systems in general, with anime importation only really

taking off in the 1970s. Given such circumstances, why bring up this pre-history, prior to both the importation of anime to the region and its concurrent remediation? I make reference to these developments for two reasons. The first is merely in order to establish a firmer idea of the historical and social contexts that have accompanied the circulation of anime in Latin America. The second is as a way of arguing for the examination of latent and often unintentional associations between culturally laden objects (that is to say, anything that humans circulate amongst themselves) and the social groupings and subjectivities that not only produce them, but facilitate their crossing over of cultural boundaries.

That being said, there is plenty to read into the ways in which this seemingly neutralized, culturally odorless flow of consumer goods would shape the perception of Japanese culture in Latin America. There are after all considerable linkages between Japanese producer's export-oriented behavior across both cultural and material exportation. Not only because cultural producers imitated the successful policies of goods manufacturers, but also because Japanese cultural exportation was and continues to be highly entangled with materiality. As Christine Yano discusses in her work on the Hello Kitty phenomenon, the mascot-based product culture engendered by this and many other characters (categorized in Japan as kyarakutā guzu or "character goods") feeds into an economic model of deep interdependence between branded consumer goods and cultural products (47). These feed into and support one another synergistically with such success in the local Japanese consumer economy that kyarakutā culture has pervaded the wider cultural landscape, enacting what Lash and Lury might call the concurrent of "thingification" of media and the mediation of "things" (4). Mascots and personifications now abound for Japanese institutions in general, for everything from train stations (Morris H) to local police offices (Dawson, 176).

Wonderful Things: Japanese Identity in the Argentine Comic *Mafalda*

While this same tendency has in turn also shaped Japan's cultural and material exportation, there is something to be said for materiality itself — even without such particular associations — as a vehicle for cultural identity and perception. And indeed, such a perspective becomes all the more necessary when considering the interactions that occurred prior to Japan's growth as a global media exporter in the latter third or so of the 20th century. Interest in Japanese culture's influence in Latin American media and cultural landscapes has only very recently become a topic of interest in both lay and academic communities. Indeed. the vast majority of scholarship concentrating on linkages between Japan and Latin America is concentrated almost exclusively on either issues of bilateral trade/diplomacy, or the incorporation of Japanese diasporic communities into the Latin American populace. While this is understandable, this focus has created a relative paucity of work that looks at other areas of interaction. The further back in history we look, the more true this becomes. This doesn't have to be a problem however, as it speaks precisely to the agendas and perceptions going on between these two interlocutors at the time. There is investigative value in that. Further, if we can extrapolate upon Iwabuchi's assertion that there is indeed a dimension of embedded culture to be explored in the circulation of Japan's supposedly odorless material exports, then this relative preponderance of concerns over trade can be seen as a starting point, rather than an obstacle.

For at least a decade, Japan's near sole cultural presence in the wider Latin American mediascape was as a source of consumer goods and their promotion. Newspapers, radio ads, billboards, and later television commercials would, in addition to their payload of US and European products, increasingly feature Japanese products by employing the same Eurocentric identitary associations used by the wider field of aspirational advertising that accompanied other

goods (Fig. 4). And while these advertisements in and of themselves seem to reaffirm the cultural odorlessness of these products, they also reveal many of the same associations with quality and innovation Japanese producers themselves were beginning to take advantage of in other markets.

Figure 3 – Aspirational advertising from a 1971 Mexican magazine ad for Seiko watches

In addition to such artifacts, other areas of media discourse from the period give an even fuller account of the popular quotidian impact of this Japanese incursion to local markets. Among such commentary, one source in particular stood out, managing to explore a wide range of perceptions of Japan between 1964-65 from a Latin American perspective. Befitting the tenor of this investigative project, this source is a run of comics concentrating on Japan in the Argentine newspaper comic strip *Mafalda* (1964-73). *Mafalda*'s value as an artifact of the Argentinian experience of the 1960s and early 70s merits its own investigative project, chronicling the lived experience of an emergent middle class subjectivity in the years leading up to Jorge Videla's dictatorial coup and "Dirty War" (1976-83).

Given its years of operation and focus on child characters *Mafalda* can in many ways be read as a more politically engaged version of Schultz's *Peanuts* comic, exploring sociopolitical, quotidian and existential issues through the relative safety and assumed naiveté of child protagonists. Mafalda's author Quino (Joaquín Salvador Lavado) often used this positioning to explore the inequalities and hypocrisies of Argentina and the wider world's reality at the time, with a strong topical focus. These would include the Vietnam War, space exploration, fascism, communist China, the World Bank, and countries' rights to self-determination amid the global politics of the Cold War. Fittingly, this strip's characters would often serve as stand-ins for archetypes of social classes, categories and political tendencies. The eponymous protagonist is an urban, middle class girl, sympathetically portrayed as a proto-feminist, progressive voice of reason, with something of an acerbic, critical streak. Other characters include the naïve, affable Felipe, an everyman easily overrun by his more forceful friends, and Manolito, a capitalist mouthpiece whose father runs the modest cornershop and who aspires to be a giant of industry. Feminine characters include Susanita, a mirror of Mafalda's

progressive femininity, obsessed with motherhood and the trappings of bourgeois middle class life, and Libertad, a physically diminutive character who represented more staunch strains of leftism, and whose name and appearance are together a recurring, rueful joke. Her name translates as "liberty". This cast, rounded out by Mafalda's often bemused parents, allowed Quino to confront topics of the day from several positions and agendas, with Mafalda herself serving variably as both counterbalance and elaborator of the comic's own perspectives.

Mafalda's treatment of Japan's emergence as a commonly known source of Latin America's consumer goods occurs early on in the series' run, in 1965 (later compiled in 1966). This run of strips is initially signaled by Mafalda's stated desire to visit Japan someday on a scholarship when she grows up (Quino 1966, 64). At the time, the reasons for this choice are not elaborated on, but this ambition is reiterated several strips later, when Felipe notices that her family's transistor radio (one of the comic's most important props, through which Mafalda receives most of the news commented upon) is made in Japan. Felipe goes on to elaborate that his flashlight has a similar "made in Japan" label (in English of course), as well as his dad's lighter, camera, binoculars, and all of Felipe's battery-powered toys. Upon hearing this, Mafalda quickly checks her own bellybutton, exclaiming with relief that at least *it* doesn't say the same thing (Quino 1967, 1 Fig. 4). This reaction is fitting both with Mafalda's (the comic and the character's) cynical, often dark perspective of Argentina's position at the time as a peripheral state highly dependent on the importation of elaborated goods. In other strips from the same comic, characters respond with variably with bitter resignation and hostility at worst, and internalized self-othering at best to the realities of such political-economic tendencies. Mafalda for her part often laments and makes commentary of how often the English language and its accompanying Caucasian bodies are used in media to either feed a culture of aspirational

consumption, or simply obfuscate meaning (though she is not above doing it herself mischievously).

Figure 4 – Felipe shows Mafalda the "Made in Japan" label

Felipe's observation of Japan's prominence as an exporter of elaborated products ties explicitly to the values and aspirational mobility of Argentina's middle class at the time. One might then imagine that, given the *Mafalda*'s general tenor, the comic would opt to see this new entrant in the cultural landscape as yet another facet of Argentina's dependence and peripherality. This focus on quotidian consumer goods as a nexus for frustration over the national project speaks to still ongoing debates over dependency in Latin America more widely and Argentina during this time period specifically. This period was after a discursive and ideological turning point in development theory at the time — an epistemological shift that while seemingly remote from Latin American quotidianity, was in fact baked into popular perceptions of Latin America as a periphery. Modernization theory, the political-economic ideology affirming that peripheral or "underdeveloped" countries could only aspire to greater self-determination via the industrial strategies taken by richer more powerful states, was now being questioned along several axes an in many spheres of popular and institutional power. This criticism was particularly pointed in Argentina, home of one of the originators of dependency theory Raúl Prebisch, and a state that had recently undergone concerted campaigns of

industrialization. Only a few decades prior, Peron's administration had embarked upon a nation-wide plan of import substitution industrialization. Unable to make the investments required for heavy industries, this campaign focused primarily on "easy" or "soft" industries — the same consumer-oriented industries Japan would develop under US mandate in the 40s and 50s.

Maflada's expressed anxieties over import dependence speak not simply then to abstract or chauvinistic concerns over cultural or national integrity. They express a wider popular lament over the nation's (and region's) failures to "modernize" successfully. Japan's own successes in this same project are a further reminder of this positioning. In contrast to the "invasion" of the English language however, the comic's reaction of bemusement and anxiety to this emergence doesn't linger long. In the very next strip, Mafalda asserts that she has decided to get a scholarship to visit Japan when she grows up, because a "country that makes so many wonderful things must be something fantastic" (Quino 1967, 1, Fig. 5). It is at this point that the comic proceeds to let perspectives on Japan in general bounce around between the cast. Susanita, the feminine petty-bourgeoise, latches onto the perception of Japanese families' tendency to have "so many children" as admirable. Manolito confuses terms for flower arranging and ritual suicide, and Mafalda herself terrifies a passing woman with her squinty-eyed impression of the Japanese language, spouting off a litany of words she (and the reader of the time) would be familiar with, including Hiroshima, karate, geisha, and the company names Minolta and Hitachi, later lamenting: "And they speak so much of greater understanding between East and West" (Quino 1967, 3).

Figure 4 – Mafalda plans to visit Japan, Susanita marvels at Japanese fecundity

Figure 5 – Mafalda scares a woman

The evocation of these regressive stereotypes seems to subvert the more nuanced handling of Japan's emergence in Argentina's middle class quotidianity in the strips immediately preceding them. At the same time, they offer a potent image of this moment of transition, mashing together the development of Japan's new technologically-articulated image with older associations, many of which would have been reflections of received stereotypes transmitted to the Latin American context from media sources embedded in metropolitan media capitals. Shades of this contradiction — this friction between regressive stereotype and areas of cultural affinity — persist in the current Latin American mediascape's position towards Japanese and East Asian identities. *Mafalda*'s use of the "Made in Japan" label as a jumping off point for

these discussions demonstrates the impossibility of cultural "neutrality" as argued by Iwabuchi (2004, 57).

While the associations laden in material consumer goods don't necessarily have the same force of nation-branding, soft power or the ideological payload of "purely" cultural commodities, they do still carry within them a variety of other demarcators of meaning — something Iwabuchi himself identifies with respect to the ways in which certain products shape behavior (2004, 56). As I touched upon in Chapter 1, this is due both to the impossibility of erasing the entirety of the culture laden in any circulating commodity, as well as the fact that cultural producers themselves can't which aspects of their own culture will be perceived as foreign in any given cultural context. Such idiosyncrasies can as such run the gamut of depictions and treatment of gender, class, race, and perhaps even more potently, depictions and expectations of basic quotidian habitus. Such factors can have deep (though often difficult to quantify) social ramifications. For at least some of these, the additive effect of mass exposure over time will absolutely affect perceptions of the communities that produced and/or made these goods available in a given context. In cases such as this, attempts at self-erasure and cultural "neutrality" don't so much remove cultural associations as leave space for others to take their place. All that is required is for the wider culture to make the connection between these products and their trajectories in reaching the local context.

In this discussion I am as such making the argument not only for the shaping of Japan's perception in Latin America prior to the importation and recirculation of anime in the region. I am also affirming the potential for other modes of supposed self-erasure to 'fail' — not in the sense that they damage the end product itself or the associations it evokes in audiences and users — but rather with respect to the idea that texts can be transferred from one cultural context

to another without adding or altering meaning. This often indeed results in cultural flows that are quite productive for the relationship shared between a cultural product's originators, its remediators, and its consumers, fostering the potential for cultural affinity, admiration, or simple curiosity. In this sense, and given the fact that so much of this occurs inadvertently, and even counter to the mechanisms embedded in these products' remediation, we can see this as a mode of transculturation occurring through productive failure, only really consolidating into concerted social, political or cultural agendas once this unintentional groundwork has been laid.

Affinities in Layered and Latent Meaning

The case of the Chilean evocation of *Dragon Ball Z*'s genkidama speaks precisely to such dynamics, while at the same time helping us to identify in what ways these cultural associations with both the original text's narrative elements and other role played by remediators can be strategically evoked by local popular subjects and agendas. For such an anime-based social protest to succeed as a rhetorical tool, it was necessary for the text being referenced to have wide-spread relevance. And not just on the level of passing familiarity, but a deep enough engagement with the narrative and thematic content of this show to successfully associate the demonstration's performance with the discursive frameworks being evoked, as well as how these are being used to supplement the ideological agenda of the movement. To expect such a widespread and deep level of textual engagement with any text is a great deal to ask of any population, and the fact that, for example, even middle-aged talk-show hosts seemed to know what was going on in all this (*Así Somos*, 2011) seems to suggest that the protesters knew enough about both the text itself and its cultural impression in the Chilean imaginary to correctly

gauge what level of impact this demonstration could achieve. This would seem then to implicate not only the protesters as fans, but also a portion of the Chilean population at large.

The narrative implications embedded in the diegetic evocation of the genkidama in *Dragon Ball Z* touch upon a common thematic element in Japanese anime narratives — one that places individualist and collectivist discourses in tension with one another, in the end attempting to reconcile them within a single climactic act of righteous violence. More specifically speaking, these instances consist of presenting the narrative's hero and his/her (usually his) wider community with a situation in which the only solution is one in which communally-sourced resources must be symbolically amalgamated and voluntarily donated to the hero. These resources, be they in the guise of spiritual, magical or technological energy, are then subsumed within the ultimate control and responsibility of the individualized hero as a communal avatar, transforming them into a messianic wielder of said collective power. This trope can be seen reiterated in various permutations throughout the action-adventure shonen tradition in anime and manga, occurring at climactic moments in many the genre's most popular and long-running franchises, including the *Gundam* meta-series (1979-) the *Pokemon* feature films (1997-), *Digimon* (1999-) and *Naruto* (2007-). The success of the *Dragon Ball* franchise can itself be seen as a contributing factor to the trope's popularity, with Goku himself — being immensely powerful, benevolent, and quite literally resurrected — representing a paradigmatic example of such a messianic figure.

Within this thematic tendency, there is a clear discursive negotiation of separate ethical/moral frameworks and imperatives relating to the individual's place in communal life. On the one hand, it can be seen to address the narrative need to elevate the series' protagonist in the mode of a Campbellian hero in its guise as both "warrior" (Campbell, 311-2) and "world

redeemer" (322-3). This mode of narrative resolution is convenient both because of the legibility it lends to the role of the protagonist in traditional plot structure, but also because it is analogous to modern and postmodern entrepreneurial ideals of the individual as a socio-economic agent. On the other hand, the fact that this act relies so heavily not only on communal resources, but resources donated through mutual consensus and for collective benefit, suggests a distinctly anti-individualist bent, one that is more in line both with traditionally "non-Western" and "pre-modern" cultural rubrics — at least insofar as these are dichotomized by current hegemonic ideological structures. The tensions implicit in this discursive reconciliation between the individual and its wider collectivity within Japanese (post)modernity run analogous to processes taking place at the core of, as Thomas Looser suggests, Japan's negotiation of Western modernity. In his analysis of contemporary Japanese aesthetic trends — most prominently the eminently postmodern "superflat" movement — Looser observes how both Japan's artists and its intelligentsia have tended to adopt a certain discourse of nationally-entrenched cultural exceptionalism with regard to Japan's experience with modernity as an artifact of Western historical discourses. As he notes, "Japan in a sense has always stood outside the modern", or at least has perceived itself as doing so (96).

Latin American subjectivities for their part have likewise been heavily shaped by a contentious relationship to the modernity project, at times striving to integrate within it (Rodó, 31) and more recently, critiquing its structures and implicit hierarchies (Retamar, 4, Love, 145). This point of culturally peripheral affinity to the hegemonic North/West, tied as it is to its reaffirmation of collective ideological values, functions as the discursive anchor tying the Chilean evocation of the genkidama to the rhetorical imperatives of its anti-neoliberal protest movement. In attempting to create discourses which emphasize the need for returning to the

public domain that which has been made private, these protestors are committing an act analogous to the "textual poaching" Henry Jenkins describes, re-working possible interpretations of popular texts in order to fulfill specific priorities:

> In embracing pop cultural texts, the fans claim those works as their own, remaking them in their own image, forcing them to respond to their needs and to gratify their desires. ("*Star Trek* rerun", 490)

What is furthermore being 'poached' here is not only that which is tied to affective relationships toward the text itself, but also what the text becomes once it undergoes cultural re-contextualization — the meanings it accrues as a non-western cultural artifact distributed in a (peripherally) Western mediascape. The protest's textual evocation as such carries within it a poaching of the communally-oriented cultural imperatives that the genkidama represents. The 'text' being poached is not just *Dragon Ball Z* as a media object unto itself, but also *Dragon Ball Z's* distinct cultural odor, which in turn is shaped by the latent, presumably invisible agency of Mexican remediators.

In asking Mexican voice actors Mario Castañeda and Gerardo Reyero to participate in this protest by overdubbing footage of their characters with new dialogue pertaining to the protest's agendas and significance, this performance's organizers demonstrate the multipolar nature of *Dragon Ball Z's* authorship, and more importantly, its *attributed* authorship. They show in what way the affinities and strategic actions of popular subjects on the ground negotiate what we might assume to be barriers to cultural proximity (La Pastina & Straubhaar, 272). By latching onto the role and identities of these remediators, not only as authorial figures, but also allies in their strategic evocation of these textualities, these activists demonstrate poaching behavior that goes beyond a strategic reading of the "text". This behavior indeed comprises a

strategic reading of its means of production and circulation — a facet of contemporary convergence culture to be sure, but also one which speaks to much older desires for the recognition of communal ownership of shared stories in specific cultural contexts. It is *this* version of *Dragon Ball Z*, with *these* actors, and *these* accents (familiar and neutral as they are) that is being specifically evoked.

How 'Mexican' is Latin American Anime?

The specificity of this evocation of *Dragon Ball Z* leaves the question open of what, if anything, distinguishes this iteration of the show from the others that have circulated globally. Because while *Dragon Ball Z* is indeed one of the most successful anime franchises since the establishment of the of the artform, it would be difficult to imagine the same level of specificity, familiarity or resonance if it were to show up in demonstrations in the United States or Europe. And these are sites with sizeable anime fan communities themselves.

One distinguishing element might be in the framework of fandom at play in such demonstrations. The kind of fannish affiliation being evoked by this demonstration has less to do with the subcultural model of anime fandom explored by anime scholarship in the United States and elsewhere (Napier, 48) than with a much more quotidian, generationally affiliated evocation of shared identity and values. And while much has been written on affective relationships with anime in terms of either the explosive, widespread popularity of certain texts and franchises in the United States (*Pokémon* comes to mind) (Yano, 113) or as a site of subcultural cohesion, little has been said about the quietly pervasive presence established by Japanese cartoon media in many other media environments. In such mediascapes, anime has engendered a quotidian resonance with wider audiences that is seen neither as particularly invasive nor indicative of

obsessive niche interests. It is simply the everyday shared parlance of the culture at large — demarcating continuities and ruptures across generations, class, and parameters of access, but not necessarily through the perception of these texts as particularly foreign or exotic.

As Darling-Wolf notes with regard to the study of anime cultures in Europe, the lack of observation and emphasis given to this less scandalous dimension of anime's transnational dissemination is largely influenced by the fact that most studies of such phenomena are entrenched within English-speaking countries, and the United States in particular (104). It should be remembered, after all, that the Anglo-American media environment is one of only a handful of exceptions to a wider reality in which the majority of a given state's media intake will be sourced primarily from foreign production markets. Given the overwhelming dominance of Anglo-American productions in the global mediascape, it is understandable that the popularity of anime within its borders may as such be met with various permutations of xenophobia (Davis, 176).[17] For the same reasons, why would anime's presence within most *other* media environments be seen as particularly invasive then, when they are already overrun by 'foreign' texts? In a mediascape marked by a multiplicity of alien "fragrances", why should the scent of "Japaneseness" stand out in particular?

To this we may also add the impact of a much wider, more consolidated base of industry dedicated to remediation. One that, paradoxically, also functions with less resources dedicated to the re-adaption of these texts for local markets and parameters of propriety. That is to say, while the Anglo-American market for its part has firmly established industries of anime dubbing, these initially emerged largely fannish entities, separate both geographically and institutionally from the main machinery of the Anglo-American culture industries, Consequently,

[17] I reference the work of Bill Davis here not as an analytical citation, but rather as an example of the culture of xenophobia I refer to.

they grew largely in parallel to the main centers of industrial media power in the region, with the major centers of anime dubbing during the late 80s and 90s comprising New York, Austin, and Vancouver (Cubbison, 48).[18] In contrast, and as discussed in prior chapters, the realities of mass media importation to Latin America through Mexico, Venezuela and Colombia formulated a remediation industry that has from the outset been inextricable from communities of local production and distribution. This has had several effects: For one, it has placed anime texts in concert with the rest of the mediascape, "flattening" perceptions of foreignness and quality, as it were. They sound the same as any other audiovisual import, because they are channeled through the same production processes, and voiced by the same actors. Apart from voicing Goku, Mario Castañeda for instance is also well known for his work as the voice of Bruce Willis, Jim Carrey, Mark Ruffalo, and many other live action luminaries, as well as other iconic cartoon characters from anime, Western, and even local Mexican animation (Fig. 6).

Figure 6 – A fan-made image of Mario Castañeda's many roles in Latin American Spanish dubs

[18] It goes beyond the scope of this chapter to discuss the development of the Anglo-American dubbing industry in more detail, though this will be touched upon in Chapter 5. For further discussion of this history, see Cubbison and Ruh 2010.

A concurrent effect of this more integrated culture of remediation is a reduced emphasis on cultural and demographic adaptation. Where anime in the Anglo-American context has gone through a protracted history of heavy adaptation, remixing and appropriation by opportunistic local production companies, anime textuality in Latin America has historically been much more straightforward. In contrast, anime imported to the United states habitually goes through often rigorous processes of censorship and cultural adaptation, excising episodes, heavily altering character names, and digitally erasing instances of comedic nudity, violence and alcohol consumption (Okuhara, 206). In contrast, the anime remediated through Mexico reaches Latin American audiences in a much more 'authentic' state (Fig. 7), not only preserving shows' less puritanical elements, but also maintaining more distinctive elements of Japanese cultural odor, including character names, honorifics and cultural references.

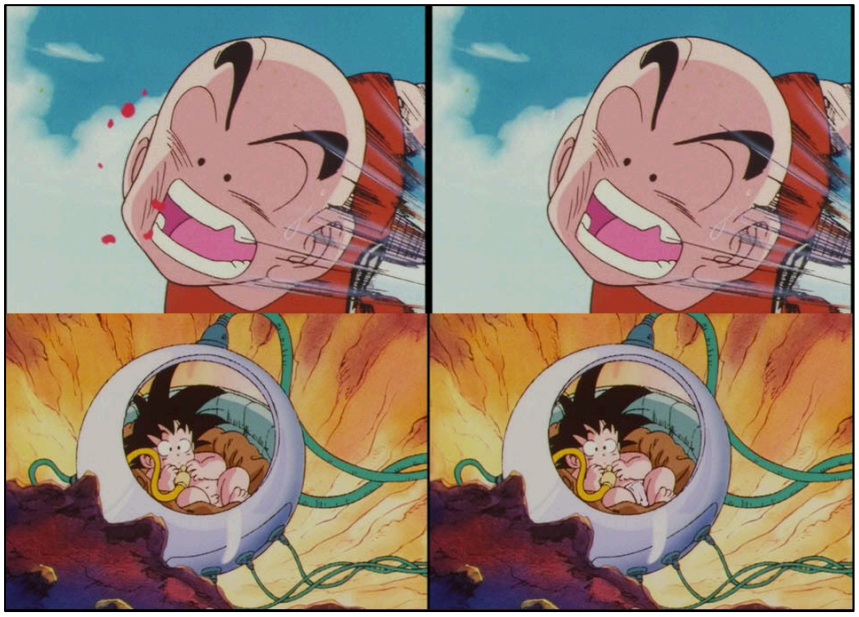


Figure 7 – Erasing gore and nudity from *Dragon Ball Z* for Anglo-American broadcast

While we might initially imagine that this lack of interference and censorship is at least in part attributable to a lack of investment in the process of remediation itself, other elements of this process seem to contradict this assumption. While it is certainly cheaper not to digitally erase blood, nudity and edit out alcohol consumption, Mexican anime dubbing companies frequently engage in practices that do require more investment than those enacted by their Anglo-American equivalents. In particular, we may note how Latin American Spanish dubs of anime tend to preserve and translate (as in, fully dub) title sequences and music — which in Japanese anime will often shift entirely as plots progress. It would be cheaper to simply use the original theme and song while ignoring new title sequences. It might in certain instances be even simpler to use re-edited show footage and wholly original title songs as Anglo-American dubs have often done. Nevertheless, the practice of following the conventions of the original texts persists, with sometimes surprising attention to fidelity in musical sequences and paratextual ephemera (details of which will be discussed in Chapter 5).

There is also a strain of cultural hierarchization at play in these differences that both integrates and goes beyond their treatment as commodities by actors across these centers of remediation. Most tellingly, we may see it in the way in which anime has been treated historically by Anglo-American remediators, particularly in the wake of an increasingly open market thanks to both the emergence of cable TV and decreased children's TV regulation in the 80s (Molotsky, Raiti). During this time, anime texts were often treated as objects with no inherent authorial value or integrity, but rather as raw resources to be remixed, reinterpreted and repackaged, often as entirely new composite texts (e.g. *Robotech*, *Voltron*). Palimpsests indeed (Ruh, 33). Along similar lines, we can consider in what way imported Japanese videogames in the 1980s and 90s such as *Final Fantasy II* (1991, originally released as *Final Fantasy IV* in

Japan) were translated following an informal doctrine dubbed “Woosleyism” (after translator Ted Woosley). These translations localized and recontextualized textual elements of these games to such an extent that wholly new meanings and characterizations were created — a practice regarded as pragmatic, but that, similar to the remixing of anime, effectively created or remixed these games into texts distinct from their Japanese originals (“Woosleyism”).

In such instances of Japanese media’s circulation to the Anglo-American media context, there is a clear and assumed power differential that plays out at the level of remediation. It produces media objects that follow a much more conventionally understood framework of palimpsestic textuality, with “explicit” meaning shaped and controlled by the top layer of textuality, while underlying glimpses, sometimes discordant or jarring, suddenly break through to the surface, recalling the conflict of utterances suggested by Julia Kristeva in her own evocation of the palimpsest as a recurring feature of all textualities as “the productive violence of the involvement, entanglement, interruption and inhibition of disciplines [and texts] in and on each other.” (“Palimpsest”).

The underlying logic of such assumptions of creative liberty by Anglo-American remediators of Japanese media may be tinged with traces of assumed cultural hierarchization, but it would also be reductive to assume that these dynamics were and are simply a question of bigotry or cultural/industrial chauvinism. While at the beginning of anime’s life as an export-oriented media industry we may certainly see evidence of clientalistic, quasi-colonial relationships between Japanese producers and Anglo-American remediators, by the 1980s things had changed substantially, giving space for other factors to emerge as major facets in the dynamics of their media’s circulation. Japan’s economy, global standing, and media industries (textual and well as technological) had placed it in a favorable position both regionally and

globally. At the same time, Japanese animation and game producers were eager to gain entry to the English-Speaking market and willing to follow the advice of experts, intermediaries, compradors and their own supposed subordinates in US-based branches of Japanese businesses. Responding to both concrete and assumed Anglo-American anxieties with regard to Japan's "invasion" of the US market in the consumer-goods sector, Japanese media producers acquiesced (and indeed, often pre-emptively structured their businesses and texts) in accordance with the imperative to remix, reshape and neutralize potentially detrimental cultural odors (Yano, 15).

Can we as such understand the affordances given to Anglo-American remediators of texts by their Japanese producers as an outcome of *internalized* colonial hierarchization? Perhaps such dynamics might have played a role, but as with other strategies taken by emergent and/or structurally subordinated actors, it is often difficult if not impossible to differentiate pragmatic decision making from ingrained cultural praxis. As with issues of entrepreneurial self-exoticism and the quotidian negotiations of patriarchal bargaining, asymmetric power relations are often reinforced by subaltern or structurally subordinate subjects in order to gain entry and ascend within established power structures (Kandiyoti, 274-5). Japanese media producers may simply have been more concerned with gaining access to hegemonic mediascapes that preserving the contested "integrity" of their work. This was work that was furthermore already in a state of precarity with regard to its assumed cultural and/or artistic value. Videogames have only recently begun to be regarded by the lay community as possessing any artistic merit at all, and animation has almost since its inception been trivialized as fanciful, inconsequential — often entrenched within the world of the everyday subalterity of childhood (Mittel, 2004, 62)

To such trivialization we may likewise add the implicit permutability of animation and videogames as media forms, thus inserting anime and Japanese videogames into a perfect

storm of assumed triviality, availability, spreadability, potential for commodification, permissiveness from IP owners, and an inherent relative disposition towards reconfiguration. Much like Hello Kitty itself, the media emanating from Japan between the 1970s and (roughly speaking) the late 2000s is notable precisely for its ability to be at once identifiable and co-optable by secondary commercial interests. It was at one marked (”fragrant”) and mutable to manipulation by localized remediators (de-odorized? perfumed?). It was in short the fodder of a variety of modes of palimpsestic practice, with much of its success during this time identifiable as residing in the tension (violence as Kristeva may put it, or friction as Tsing might) of this condition.

It just so happens that when anime reached Latin America, it did so in a very different position, still largely open to heavy re-editing on the transmission end, but landing in a media system that did not habitually partake in such practices. This was furthermore a media system both accustomed to and equipped for media importation to a largely flattened mediascape. As with the neutrality suggested by Japan’s entrance to the wider cultural landscape via consumer good exportation in the post-war period, what may as such be most “Mexican” about anime’s entry to the Latin American mediascape is how *little* it is altered, in effect treated in much the same way as any other media import. This is in and of itself distinctive. It likewise suggests why the cultures of anime audienceship have developed as they have across the Latin and Anglo-American mediascapes. Anime in the Anglo-American context lends itself to subcultural, cliquish fandom because it has been marginalized, both in image and practice. Its eventual fostering by fans-turned-remediators (as noted by Cubbison, 48-49) is a byproduct of audience engagement with textualities they saw as being misappropriated by the media industry and disparaged by a wider culture. In Latin America, anime, while still being largely seen like

other animated works as the domain of childhood, is held in this position not as an invasive or exotic entity, but one that, while certainly separate from Disney, Hanna Barbera and other Western producers, is still integrated more or less equally within the same field.

Conclusions: Mobilizing Embedded Latent Meanings

As with travelling texts themselves, media technologies, networks and environments are likewise palimpsestic: opportunistically accommodating, repurposing, ignoring, and reintegrating the infrastructures, peoples and nodes of connection they are imposed upon. Mexico City is one major living example of this, but so too is the totality of the United States itself, with many of its settlements, roads and infrastructures (Wright, Delin) inscribed upon pre-Columbian labor which was co-opted (often unwittingly) by the European continental expansion (Mann, 286).[19] It is in this overwritten, conflicted interplay that we can situate contemporary media systems, with their interdependence of formal and informal, sanctioned and unsanctioned industries, practices, networks and governances. Film and TV distribution is entangled with handicam piracy, hacked servers, leaked screeners, peripheral grey markets (both physical and online) and gift economies. Conversely, the formal global market reincorporates these entanglements into its wider agendas by taking its cues from trends in piracy, employing informal markets as pilot programs for risky textual exportations, and re-writing texts and franchises themselves to correspond to popular interpretations (Fiske, 17).

[19] As Mann notes, the Anglo-American inability to recognize in what way both the initial colonialism and Westward expansion of the US territories was facilitated by European co-optation of First Nations' technological and infrastructural developments hinges in large part on the epistemic inability to recognize technologies and human interventions in the environment as such. Pre-Columbian practices of environmental management were simply alien to European conceptions of property management, agriculture and animal husbandry to such an extent that that Europeans simply saw the benefits afforded by them as beneficial aspects of the landscape and climate itself (289-290).

The Chilean student protest movement's use of *Dragon Ball Z* as a tool of political discourse brought to light the depth and breadth of this text's affective impact on the Chilean population. It likewise demonstrates in what way contemporary audiences are both becoming aware of and mobilizing their power to assume communal ownership over textual meaning-making. Key in all of this are both the quotidian (as opposed to subcultural) nature of anime fandom in the Latin American context, as well as the perceived familiarity and accessibility of "local" authorial voices in the guise of accommodating Mexican remediation professionals. Both processes are at least the partial result of a history of media flow shaped by precisely timed and developed industrial growth and cultural contact across Japan, Mexico and the wider Latin American region. And while the effect of such modes of contact and interaction is for the most part latent, it emerges, as in the case of Chile in 2011, quite naturally, with the assumption that, yes, this specific text can be used, and yes, people will understand it as part of the wider shared social experience. Instances such as these serve to highlight why such areas as fandom, media distribution, and the growing cultural impact of anime texts serve not only to highlight ongoing cultural processes, but also have imminent value as a means of understanding the same fundamental structural phenomena touched upon in the investigation of big 'P' politics. As the ongoing Chilean protest movement exemplifies in several ways, dramatic precipitating events are often required in order to bring long-standing social processes to light. As our field reacts to such events, so too will it begin to shed light on previously ignored phenomena, interactions and structures.

Chapter 4 — In the Air and on the Ground: Asian Media's Circulation within Mexico City

In the previous chapter, I made the case for the often obfuscated, but nonetheless integral history of Mexican influence and identity embedded in anime's Latin American circulation. This influence, though itself beholden to a variety of broader industrial and cultural relationships, has nonetheless had deep resonances for both the importation of Japanese animation to the region, as well as the wider culture of media importation into and throughout Latin America's media capitals. Mexico City is of course not the only site of re-circulation in Latin America. Being the largest, and most established, however, it warrants a deeper exploration into the embedded cultures of remediation it has fostered. It is furthermore worth noting that Mexico City's media cultures and industries are themselves embedded within the largest concentrated media market of both the Spanish-speaking world and Latin America as a whole. The total population of the CDMX comprises roughly 23 million people, making it the clear cultural (as well as administrative) capital of a Mexican state that itself makes up a fifth of the entire population of Latin America (Worldatlas, CONAPEC). Only Brazil can boast a larger national media market in the region, and it operates predominantly within a separate linguoscape, thus de-centering it from the rest of the Latin American media environment. And while Brazilian

media may itself be popular in the Spanish speaking world, its TV shows and films have to go through the same processes of translation, dubbing and re-circulation as any other non-Spanish language media if they are to be integrate the mediascapes of their neighbors. This has by default positioned Mexico City as the single most powerful concentration of media industry, audience influence, and de facto regulation in Latin America.

In this chapter I look at the recent history and contemporary state of Mexico City as both a cosmopolitan, transnationally-oriented media capital, and as host to a variety of informal and often unsanctioned — but nonetheless highly institutionalized — embedded communities of media remediation, circulation and consumption. In doing so, I'll focus on how anime and other Asian media are reconfigured and made to circulate amid the embedded media production and distribution cultures of the CDMX — both formally and within unsanctioned remediation industries. In Chapters 2 and 3 I have already taken a more externally-oriented perspective of Mexico's growth as a regional media capital and the cumulative meanings accrued in the processes taking place in its embedded remediation communities. Such processes in turn demand a closer perspective of these same embedded communities. If, as I argue, Mexico and Mexico City's institutional and vernacular histories, material realities and cultural idiosyncrasies are in any way reflected in the wider Latin American mediascape, in what way do such influences come to integrate the media formats and texts that traffic through its various remediation industries? The shape taken by such influence would be contingent on the particular processes that media objects go through once they reach Mexico, the actors and institutions involved in their reformulation, and the frameworks and workflows developed for their recirculation. It is likewise contingent on cultural constructs of who the imagined audiences are for the product of their labor. Do these reflect wider regional or more local realities and/or imaginaries? And what

of the 23 million or so potential spectators and interlocutors that surround and integrate these institutions and actors? What are the dynamics shaping their access to and interaction with these texts? Further — given the vast multi-faceted modes of social stratification of Latin America as a whole and within Mexico City specifically — what other modes of institutionality play a role in granting access to and forming media cultures in this media Capital?

Conceptualizing the Subject and its Scope

Given the inevitable interplay between Mexico City's media industries and its large embedded vernacular media cultures, these areas of inquiry in some way all require a perspective that can account for this hybridity of both formal and vernacular institutions, behaviors, cultures of media (re)production and circulation, one that can look both in the air, as it were, and on the ground. In practical terms, this involves looking at both Mexico City's embedded industrial communities of media remediation and its informal media distribution systems — particularly those aimed at and accessed by the city's popular working (and semi-lumpen) class. I am especially interested here in looking at the interplay between the development of Mexico City's now long-established tradition of media dubbing and formal distribution, and the rise of its cultures of unsanctioned (though as I elaborate, equally formalized) cultures and industries of media piracy. I've opted to look at both of these cultural spheres in this single chapter for two reasons. The first is because I see them as integrally informing one another, in accordance with Brian Larkin's wider observations about the ways in which media piracy both develop their own infrastructures as parasitic offshoots of formal media industries even as they reciprocally foment their growth in local markets (290). The second is because, even setting aside such retroactive institutional relationships, these cultural spheres can be seen as different stages and orientations of the same

broader process, facilitating and shaping media distribution and access. By looking at both spheres in concert, and indeed as part of a broader overall culture of media reproduction and distribution, we can see commonalities, contrasts and points of intermixing that illuminate the City's broader mediascape and the role it plays in the wider Latin American region.

This bifurcated institutional perspective indeed speaks to a variety of interdependent dichotomies underpinning the dynamics, processes, industries and cultural aggrupations I highlight here. Prominent among these is the interplay between the local and the global/regional. This is a tension that plays out in several idiosyncratic ways within the wider Latin American mediascape, and which comes to a head in large media capitals such as Mexico City. Among Latin America's remediation communities this tension can be seen perhaps most clearly in the implicit but persistent imperative to both cater to and continuously re-create its particular amalgamated, transnational media audience. This audience is at once accessible as a whole via language and common cultural referents, while at the same time comprising a large, diverse, multinational Spanish-speaking population, with often wildly different local dialects and referents. This in and of itself is not so unusual for multinational-monolingual mediascapes, except for the fact that unlike many of its contemporaries, the Latin American Spanish-speaking mediascape is largely de-hierarchized with regard to nationality and the vernacular, corresponding to a more or less rhyzomatic mode of organization rather than one dominated by a single dominant cultural, social, or national affiliation.[20] In spite of its relative size and implicit power in this environment, Mexican Spanish has never really been mobilized to overtake the regional cultural landscape. Indeed, no one state in Latin America can really claim to uphold

[20] Though not a direct reference here, I'm evoking the idea of the rhizome as an organizing principle directly from its conceptualization by Deleuze and Guattari, particularly with regard to both the slippage I observe here with regard to different modes of institutionality and the Latin American mediascape's construction and management of its linguoscape (7).

"true" Latin American Castilian Spanish. As discussed in Chapter 2, this in turn has given rise to the compromise that is the Latin American Spanish used in regionally and globally-oriented media texts.

This refusal to even conceptualize such a hierarchy of language feeds in turn towards a well-established implicit assumption among Latin American audiences that even locally oriented media texts will more often than not assume this same frame of neutrality. In subsuming themselves within this cultural/linguistic compromise, texts have (perhaps counter intuitively, but nonetheless naturally) come to stand in for modes of textuality that carry the stigma of commercial and institutional culture, along with associations with a more cosmopolitan, mobile class, often to the exclusion of the vernacular, the popular, and the local. Such tension in turn reflects another dimension of binary categorization at play here between the assumed artificial and the authentic, as well as this binary's fraught relationship with the legitimate and illegitimate, which from different positions, can of course mean entirely different things. Media piracy looms large in the CDMX's mediascape, with physical media texts, be they audio, audiovisual or software-based, being widely available from a variety of sources with often only partial if any censure from legal authorities. This condition, thrusting what is in other environments assumed to be a prevalent albeit privately undertaken practice, is a full-fledged aspect of public civic life in Mexico City, and indeed the wider popular (that is to say in terms of class) landscape of Latin America as a whole, urban or rural. Within such a social context, the idea of legitimacy becomes less one of binaries than of hierarchies. Format, pricing, availability, speed of access with regard to release schedules, and many other factors can conditionally have a much greater impact than legality as a marker of a given texts' social legitimacy. And this is to say nothing of those who consume and/or make such texts available to others.

This breakdown of assumed categories and hierarchies of legitimacy is tied of course to much more serious fragmentations and dissolutions with regard to the social contract built between the populace and Mexico and Mexico City's legislative and legal institutions. These have been tainted by well-known corruption since the Porfirio Diaz regime (1876-1911) at least, and have more recently been further compromised by Mexico's problems with governing bodies' entanglement with organized crime syndicates. The latter for their part exist at a point of tension between clear abuse of the local citizenry and their positioning in several circles as a de facto government amid the failure or abandonment of certain working class and lumpen populations and locations. This reality is further complicated by the fact that Mexico has a long tradition of free association for workers of all strata, which has meant that marginal working people such as street vendors have been able to form incredibly well-organized and politically significant trade-unions and other local associations (Alba Vega and Braig, 132). This factor, alongside a compromised narco-state and the shadow economy and provisional governance of organized crime and localized grass-root community leadership (Becerra), creates an environment with a distinctive intermingling and blending of the vernacular with the institutional.

The way in which such bleed-through affects how certain sectors of Mexico City's populace have shaped their own popular media cultures complicates assumptions we may hold with regard to the limitations and affordances of certain kinds and levels of peripherality in the wider global mediascape. All too often, scholars and laypersons coming from and working within the vantage point represented by centers of economic and political power ascribe strata of relative social, economic and cultural peripherality with a stigma of assumed provincialism – a disconnection from the assumed center of the media/cultural world, which we assume ourselves to have relatively free, cosmopolitan access to. As I argue further in this chapter, I believe that

being at the center of this system quite often blinds us to the ways in which those nearer to the periphery may have a better, more comprehensive vantage point of its totality, and indeed may be less hampered then we ourselves are in terms of institutional access to many of its resources. In examining and working through the interplays I look at in this chapter between Mexico City as both bridge and endpoint of media flow, the question of semi-peripherality and what it means recurs as a focal point. This is particularly true with regard to what it has to say about the localized cultures of media consumption, production and circulation it necessitates and enables.

Asian Media in Mexico City

The basis for my work in this chapter is a mixed methodology consisting of archival research, formal interviews with dubbing professionals and retail workers, informal conversations with residents of the CDMX, and observation on the ground in Mexico City's retail media markets, including pedestrian arcade shops, kiosks, and open air markets. My investigation of Mexico's formal translation and dubbing industry was for its part conducted largely via archival work and conversations with members of these communities. Much of what I learned in about these communities was particularly facilitated by contact established with prominent actor/director Castañeda during my field research in 2016. It was also during this time that I conducted my on-site study of Mexico's locally-oriented informal networks of media distribution. My research of these communities took place predominantly in the neighborhood of Tepito's large open air market — notoriously one of Mexico City's roughest sectors, and home to a long-established proletarian market that traces its origins past the Spanish conquest to the pre-Columbian slums of Tenochtitlan (Sanguino). Tepito's market is infamous as one of the world's largest physical pirate media markets. My work in Tepito and Mexico City's wider scope of pirate media markets

follows in a long tradition of academic interest that in the Anglo-American humanities and social sciences extends at least to the 1960s. In terms of media scholarship specifically, Tepito has likewise been a persistent area of focus. My own field research here indeed tracks several of the aspects already examined by Ramon Lobato's work in *Shadow Economies of Cinema,* albeit almost exactly a decade later, and with a media field in which the role of online sources has only further complicated the supply chain. It has likewise been heavily informed by Andrew Konove's more recent work tracking Tepito's history in *Urban Politics and the Shadow Economy.* As I will elaborate later in this chapter, Tepito's idiosyncrasies both in terms of local geography and history are substantial factors in its stability as a market for such otherwise typically (very literally) marginalized and ambulant commerce. The ripple effects of both the Tepito market's persistence and the media practices it enables allows us to see in what way both this and the wider Mexican field of remediation, regardless of legitimation by metropolitan actors, functions from a position of conscious (semi)peripherality. It speaks to a field of media management, curation and circulation that is shaped by an inherently post-modern position, that is to say, in the sense that its communities have experienced modernity from a position of displacement, variably enmeshed and excluded from its logics.

Mexico City after all is very much a multilayered metropolitan in and of itself: a cultural thickening of old and new inequities, identities, architecture and ideological constructs inhabiting one city superimposed on another. The institutions, practices, and identities espoused by the modernity project have never been applied (or, perhaps more accurately, allowed to function) here as an ontological totality, in large part because Mexico has been obliged to exist as a ground of experimentation for the imposition of these logics. As I detail in Chapter 2, Mexico wasn't so much late to the game of modernity as it was one if its colonial prototypes.

Befitting this often turbulent role, Mexico City's experience with remediation and the negotiation of its variable peripheralities can serve as a tool and a precedent to the understanding of other social landscapes in which institutional modernity has been (or is in the process of) fracturing or seceding from popular life. Given the ever more apparent schisms of the modernity project in the wake of its neoliberal stage more globally, the ways in which this landscape has been navigated by Mexico City's media culture can serve as a precedent and point of comparison. This function is amplified when considering not just Mexico City's value as a capital of remediation in general, but also more specifically in the function it has played as a point of transculturation between Asian media texts and the wider Latin American mediascape. Its role in consolidating media from multiple cultural landscapes that have functioned and conceptualized themselves under matrices of cultural peripherality.

At the Center of the Periphery: Remediating Asian Media in Mexico City

As with the other chapters of this wider project, my examination of the entrenched media cultures involved here concentrates predominantly on the ways in which anime in particular has been remediated and made to circulate both beyond and within the CDMX. As with my use of it as a case study in other instances, my objective in doing so is to draw attention to the continuities anime's trajectory through Mexico City shares with a growing plurality of media importation to the broader Latin American cultural landscape, particularly Korean television, and to a lesser but still significant degree, Turkish and Indian media imports as well. I conceive of anime's treatment in these environments as both historical precedent and discursive anchor, a cypher that can be used to examine a much wider (and growing) field of non-Western media crossing into

and permeating the Latin American mediascape through Mexico and Mexico City's remediation industries.

It bears repeating that for decades, Japanese media was the most visible flow of importation in the Mexican mediascape that wasn't Anglo-American or European. And this flow wasn't limited to anime either, with the Mexican dub of the 1968 live-action series *Princess Comet* (Spanish title: *Señorita Cometa*, or *Miss Comet*) circulating throughout Latin America in the 1970s. This show is notable not only as an early example of Asian live-action television importation to Latin America, but also for the fact that its dubs' master tapes were lost in the damage caused to the Televisa broadcasting company's archives by Mexico's 1985 earthquake (Señorita Cometa). This loss has had the effect of creating a minor cultural schism in terms of this show's place in Mexico's popular memory, largely removing it as a cultural reference for younger viewers who otherwise might have been exposed to it through syndication (much in the vein of the evergreen *Doraemon* anime series, similarly from the 1970s). This same loss prompted a re-dubbing of the series for both broadcast and DVD re-release in 2014, though this time into a Latin American media environment in which East Asian bodies were much more ubiquitous.

While perhaps forgotten by younger audiences, shows like *Señorita Cometa* are significant for the precedent they offer in laying down the groundwork for the presence of such racial and cultural representation in a field still very much entangled in the implicit politics of white supremacy. Anime of course has a long history of running counter to expected hierarchies of media flow (Thussu, 12). Making the jump from this to live action Asian media imports is not an insignificant development however — particularly amid a wider Latin American cultural

landscape in which Asian people are still habitually, reductively, and unquestioningly referred to as “Chinos” (Chinese).

Anime’s spreadability has itself been attributed in part to its conception as a media form borne out of the need to export to and integrate within a global media landscape which has already been marked by hierarchies of whiteness (Iwabuchi, 2004, 66-67, Clements, 130). Being animated likewise helps anime’s crossing of cultural boundaries thanks to its function in flattening ‘distracting’ points of distinction and instead triggering empathic resonance in audiences for its characters through the construction of universalized, proto-human features. As Scott McCloud argues:

> Film critics will sometimes describe a live-action film as a “cartoon” to acknowledge the stripped down intensity of a simple story or visual style. Though the term is often used disparagingly, it can be equally well applied to many time-tested classics. Simplifying characters and images toward a purpose can be an effective tool for storytelling in any medium. Cartooning isn’t a way of drawing, it’s a way of seeing (31).

The “way of seeing” McCloud proposes here benefits abstracted media texts like animation, but likewise has been interpreted as a point of potential friction when dealing with physically embodied, live-action modes of representation. Though of course subject to wider processes of deterritorialisation, the globalization of world media doesn’t do away with colonialist cultural and racial hierarchies, and indeed quite often amplifies some of them even as it makes them intermingle. After all, how many points of cultural proximity (as identified by La Pastina and Straubhaar) are dependent on cultural constructs which are themselves mechanisms

of colonialist discourse and control?[21] As I've explored elsewhere and touched upon in this project, this aspect of global media circulation and emergence is likewise affected by pragmatic considerations. Established media actors — even those entrenched in peripheral and semi-peripheral markets themselves — may wish to avoid certain emergent or subaltern modes of cultural or identitary representation through simple risk aversion. By the same token, emergent players in the global media market quite often consciously subsume themselves within dominant market logics — burdened as these are with elements detrimental to their own representation — if it will allow them access to these dominant fields (Diaz Pino, 2017, 7-8).

The precedent anime offers to other modes and directions of Mexican and Latin American media importation should as such not be overstated on the level of contributing to cultural proximity or some nebulous notion of "Asianness" and its growing acceptance by Latin American Audiences, for instance. Where however I do argue for its impact is in the aperture it suggests in Latin America's — and specifically Mexico's — industries of global remediation, and how these treat media being imported from emergent global media markets and producers.

One of the primary takeaways I took from my investigation into Mexico's anime remediation processes is the fact that it comprises a sphere of labor that has never stood apart from the broader remediation community, or even indeed the broader media production community of the city. This may seem unremarkable at first glance, but it is a condition that stands very much apart from the ways in which anime and other cultures of dubbing have been treated in other media systems, especially those which exist in more hegemonic mediascapes, where importation of foreign language media is more of a rarity. The Anglo-American sphere in particular stands as a counter example, with multiple layers of separation standing between its

[21] As La Pastina and Straubhaar argue, the framework of cultural proximity they propose can work along several dimensions of affinity and familiarity, including those of gendered relationships, religion, and similarities and habitus, among many others (272).

anime remediation industries and its local production cultures. Not only has anime dubbing itself often been carried out in secondary centers of media production (Vancouver, Austin and Dallas for instance), but the vocal professionals involved are themselves often segregated professionally from other areas of performance. They are often celebrated within their own circles by all means, but are not nearly as well known or involved in as many facets of their local media industries as their Mexican equivalents.

In Chapter 3, I signaled to what extent certain Mexican vocal actors have become associated with the characters they interpret throughout the Latin American region. Because these same actors so consistently voice characters across a variety of media — Hollywood blockbusters, Turkish dramas, or children's anime — I argued that there is a secondary effect of hierarchical democratization at play across these different modes of textuality, a flattening effect of sorts, dampening to some extent whatever stigmas might have been associated with the cultural provenance of these texts. In Chapter 3, this lent Mario Castañeda association with not only the anime hero Goku, but also Jim Carrey or Bruce Willis. This same flattening effect, while most evident at the popular level in vocal performance, is consistent with the way in which these texts are treated at the level of production. The same professionals are putting in much the same work for televised anime and K-drama as they are for whatever major tent pole film is being imported from the United States, or Europe, or even indeed, whatever work they are doing for local productions. Furthermore, because these translations have to, firstly, adapt themselves for the compromise of dialects that is transnational media Spanish, and secondly, circulate on multiple platforms, including free to air broadcast TV, there is a further flattening effect at the level of performance, direction and language itself. These are major limitations, but it is within such parameters that Mexico City's remediation communities have developed. In doing so, they

have fostered a culture that is at once highly specialized and incredibly integrated with the wider production community.

This industry is sprawling, tight knit and formalized in terms of its industrial roles, institutional affiliations, communities and geographical reach. While its formal roles seem very well established, with clear and consistent pipelines of production, there is also a great deal of fluidity with regard to institutional relationships and how individuals build their careers within the community. Seasoned performers themselves quite often take on the role of directors, cultural adaptors, and even translators for a variety of projects, as well as maintaining careers in local live-action and animated television and film industries. This is what I find most interesting about this dynamic: the way in which it is integrally enmeshed with the city's wider cultures of production, with professionals such as actors, directors, musicians and screenwriters circulating rapidly between roles in the industry, working in both locally-originated and remediated projects. This integration extends to formalized professional networks such as trade unions as well, with most if not all dubbing actors belonging to the generalist ANDA (National Association of Actors) syndicate.

Given this overarching culture of integration and the multivalent careers it has engendered, the companies undertaking the administrative and creative task of translation and dubbing themselves are perhaps less important than the individuals involved and the relationships they have fostered with each other and IP holders. In my talks with actor/director Mario Castañeda, he affirmed that the gaining of particular projects was quite often an issue of personal relationships, and this bears out in the structure of the rest of the city's commercial remediation community. Translation and dubbing is undertaken by a variety of companies with different orientations, whether a branch of a local network, a foreign producer, or a pure

intermediary. These companies however act more as points of coordination than established hierarchies, given that the actual work involved outside of administration is carried out largely via freelance labor, and often in third party recording studios with their own technical staff. This places creative workers themselves in a position that is at once untethered at the level of individual employment, but nonetheless more or less stable amid the wider field, and flexible with regard to the projects they are permitted to take on. While many dubbing studios have emerged and closed in the last few decades, this system has made it so that the remediation community itself has remained remarkably consistent, given that its members have always circulated across multiple commercial institutional affiliations.

Amid all this fluidity, there is still a clear workflow in place, with perhaps the most ambiguity lying at the level of initial sales of media products themselves. Usually the most tenuous aspect of the work undertaken by dubbing studios is in establishing initial contact with buyers or sellers of media, after which reputations, personal contacts, recommendations and affiliation with key projects become their primary means of continuing their business. On more than a few occasions, these contacts become all a given actor needs to establish a new studio, as so many of the process' participants are willing to work on the basis of personal recommendations and handshake deals. It is perhaps for this reason that different remediation communities across Latin America's media capitals can be seen to develop institutional affiliations with particular producers oversees. Santiago in Chile, for instance, has managed to corner a substantial corner of the 'edutainment' reality television market for such networks as TLC and National Geographic.

Once bought, a given project is then given to language translators, who then hand it off for a separate process of adaptation. This step consists of taking the text and direction given

in the translated screenplay and making it fit the context of the footage provided. This involves much compromise and accounting for timing, syllable matching, cadence, preservation of detail, and negotiation of cultural referents (Costa). After this, the finished screenplay is then handed over to the director and performers and mixed down alongside the texts' original non-vocal soundtrack and whatever music has been translated concurrently by commissioned lyricists. Throughout this process, the translator and adaptor need to be available in order to consult when things inevitably go awry in the recording studios. Given the collaborative nature of most of the process, it is as such understandable that so much of it is concentrated in the metropolitan area of Mexico City, to say nothing of the fact that so many of these workers are concurrently working outside the dubbing industry in other capacities within the city's production industries.

Given this workflow, recording studios themselves often come to comprise hubs of circulating actors, directors, adaptors, sound technicians and other professionals. Translators for their part are perhaps the least geographically tethered group working in the CDMX's remediation community, with some living well away from the city in other locations throughout the country, or even outside of it. This is understandable for several reasons. The bulk of their work doesn't require them to work in close physical proximity to their colleagues, with the exception of being available to clarify and establish consistency alongside people working on the level of technical adaptation and direction. Because of both this and the fact that they work so early along in an individual text's production pipeline, they are more likely than other professionals in the field to maintain transnational relationships with studios and dubbing companies in other countries, sometimes working for agencies based in Venezuela, Colombia or Chile, among others. Finally, as translators, they often understandably have particular affiliations with the languages, cultures, genres and fandoms associated with the provenance of the media

they translate. This separates them to some degree socially from the rest of the dubbing industry, which is itself more enmeshed in locally-sourced productions as well. Such separations are of course not necessarily always the case, however. While some prominent anime translators such as Brenda Nava (*Dragon Ball Z, Sailor Moon, Digimon*) are quite active in their position as transnational bridge figures, openly professing their fandom of anime manga and general Japanophilia (Toscano and Nava), others, such as Eduardo Garza (*Naruto, Pokemon*) seem to have become translators as an extension of their work as local performers, directors and adaptors.

In fitting with the flattening effect of the industry as it integrates Western media, anime and other cultural products, similar processes are at play with respect to the importation of more recent genres, such as Korean or Turkish drama. Korean dramas themselves have proven particularly successful in Mexico, gaining traction here much earlier than in other markets such as Chile, Peru or Brazil, where they have since similarly found success (Wongjun, 73). In Mexico, Korean dramas gained a level of popular impact in their first few years of importation, following the initial broadcast of the show *Todo Sobre Eva* (*All about Eve*, 2000) in 2002 on the State-owned network Mexiquense TV (García, "¿K-dramas en Español?"). In Chile, K-drama achieved similar amounts of popular impact around a decade later, despite first importing them around the same time as Mexico. The first hit series here was *Los chicos son mejores que las flores* (*Boys over Flowers*, translated as "Boys are better than flowers", 2009), screened in 2012 (Wongjun, 73).

Its placement in Chile is noteworthy for two reasons, the first of which is its concurrent broadcast on both the broadcast channel Mega and the cable network Etc. TV, both owned by the Bethea group. While Mega is a generalist station, Etc. TV has for most of its

history specialized largely in the syndication of popular anime series, suggesting a clear market association made by its leadership between anime and this area of programming. This corresponds with the longer history of anime's association in Latin America with the telenovela and drama formats.[22] It likewise may take its cues from the deep integration of the K-drama industry with Japan's comics and anime cultures as well, given that several Korean dramas have been adapted from Japanese manga. *Boys over Flowers* is indeed one instance of such adaptation (Sang-Hee).

The second reason this placement is worth considering is that it may have led to the emergence of Turkish drama in the Latin American mediascape a few years later, given that the first instance of this flow of importation was likewise transmitted on Mega, with the series *Las mil y una noches* (*One Thousand and One Nights*, 2006-2009) first screening in 2014, to be soon followed by the equally successful *¿Que culpa tiene Fatmagul?* (*What fault is it of Falmagul?*, 2010-2012) in 2015, as well as many others ("Las Novelas Turcas"). Though first translated and dubbed in Chile for broadcast on Mega, these Turkish shows soon found traction elsewhere in Latin America, including Mexico, where they have remained popular (Fig. 1). Seen along such institutional processes and tendencies, the importation of anime remains a pivotal, persistent feature of the wider Latin American mediascape, if not necessarily creating apertures with regard to audience cultures, than certainly with respect to the institutional role it plays in demonstrating to remediators themselves in what way a plurality of media importation can be built and find success. I have thus far been unable to find sufficient information about the trajectories taken by Indian film and TV dramas to and through Latin America, but I suspect here too such apertures may be relevant. Regardless of the particular methods though which these texts have now

[22] This is something discussed further in Chapter 5 with regard to anime's earliest framing in Latin American paratexts.

managed to gain popular traction in the wider Latin American mediascape, their existence here speaks to a cultural plurality that was once much rarer, and indeed only sporadically emergent, save for anime, which has been circulating amid these same circles since the 1970s.

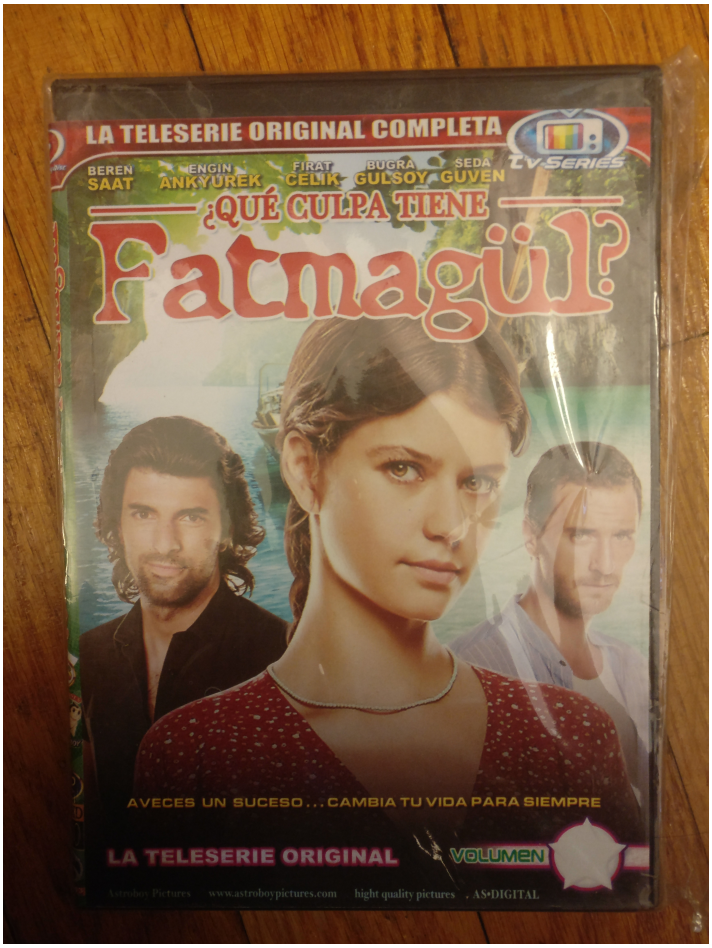


Fig. 1 — A copy of *Fatmagul* obtained in Mexico City's Tepito market

The methods and logics of anime and other non-Western media's circulation through and to Mexico City are marked by an assumed, and indeed quite formalized dynamic of conditional, sporadic attachment to and distancing from particular commercial actors and institutions. This is a project-based, gig economy underpinned and held aloft by a largely self-

organized and closely-associated community of professionals. Their geographical concentration and integration into the wider production culture of Mexico City only further cements such associations, with a few of them establishing somewhat dynastic relationships within the field, as couples who are colleagues themselves raise children who end up working in very similar areas of the industry. Televisa and Grupo Salinas may be regional, and indeed global media giants, but a great deal of what they produce and broadcast to their local market is dependent on such vernacular collaborative relationships fostered by and within Mexico City's remediation communities.

There is an implicit tension here between institutional might and its actual function on the ground that is mirrored at the lower, less legitimated levels of Mexico City's wider culture of media distribution. The work done here by the city's translators, adaptors, directors, actors and media buyers doesn't just flow outwards internationally after all. A great deal of it is envisioned for local consumption and circulation. And as Lobato notes, the material circumstances of a great deal of the local audience means that much of this consumption will be carried out via the secondary market of media piracy (86). That being said, there is a whole other stage of remediation going on for both this market, and the rest of the Latin American population undergoing similar material circumstances.

Media Piracy, Unsanctioned Access, Cloned Media

Mexico City's inwardly-directed media market is one marked by a culture of assumed, quotidian ambivalence with formal institutionality. This is natural, considering the material and social circumstances of even its more established citizenry, and it carries over to the way in which media, particularly physical media, is treated on the level of street commerce. Mexico City's

Tepito market may be the most well-known concentration of the city's media piracy, but it exists at a lower level throughout the metropolitan area, in kiosks, on blankets, on subways, and in stands with varying levels of permanence. The media that can be found here says much of what is both in current demand and what remains as a cultural fixture well past its initial release. With regard to anime, I saw several multipacks of *Dragon Ball Z*, *Digimon* and *Naruto* episodes, sometimes packaged in compilations together, and also sometimes even in compilations with Western animation, including *The Simpsons*. It wasn't until I visited Tepito that I saw the full variety of what was available in the city.

Tepito may very well be the most famous neighborhood in Mexico City. It is certainly its most infamous, one of several *barrios bravos*, or fierce neighborhoods – a source of pride for its native inhabitants even as it suggests a culture of foreboding to outsiders. At least, this is how the neighborhood is consistently presented through the majority of lay media concentrating on it as a subject (Matloff, Carey). Tepito's reputation and history are deeply enmeshed with its market, which in the late 19th century was a source of major anxiety for a government keen to participate within the modernity project, and to whom it represented all that was shameful and dangerous about urban poverty (Konove, 149). The market's positioning as a place of commerce for the marginalized is a holdover from the city's pre-Hispanic social structure, holding the nickname "Baratillo" (flea market or junk shop) during the colonial era and well into the Porfiriato era (1876-1911, Konove, 144). During the mid 20th century, it would become site to anthropologist Oscar Lewis' work on the "culture of poverty" model in his volume *The Children of Sanchez*. Concurrently, the market transitioned from simply selling second-hand, contraband and possibly stolen goods to "fayuca", the sale of electronics and other hard to obtain products that were often imported via unsanctioned channels (Aguiar, 557). During the 1990s, this line of

importation extended to videos and DVD. This, in conjunction with the neighborhood's long-held reputation as a haven for petty and organized crime has lent it a salacious reputation that recalls the anxieties it triggered for Mexican social critics of the 1890s. It doesn't help that it has become all the more famous in recent years for its association with Mexico's descent into a narco-state and the syncretic Catholic offshoot religion Santa Muerte, which was born here (Roush, 129).

In 2002, just as K-drama was first finding an audience on Mexican television, a group of local business owners commissioned the Giuliani Partners as consultants in order to implement the same methods employed by the ex-New York Mayor during the 1980s to 'clean up' Mexico's delinquency (Davis, 639-640). This was an effort that focused specifically on both Tepito and the wider city's culture of unsanctioned commerce. It was however hampered somewhat by the fact that, unlike New York, Mexico's unsanctioned fayuca markets and salespeople had historically been incredibly well organized into politically powerful syndicates (Alba Vega and Braig, 132-133). At present, Tepito persists as a market catering to the local marginalized community, albeit with community peacekeepers, a pretty laid back police presence, and semi-regular slum tourism (Dürr and Jaffe, 115-116).

What I found most distinctive about it upon first seeing the market in person was its completeness. Its clear role as a fixture in thousands of people's quotidian lives, with clothing, toys, food, small home goods, even pharmacies and tattoo parlors all visible at the outer borders of the market proper. I was also impressed by its size. The market itself is indeed so large that upon first encountering it, I was initially afraid that recent changes in distribution systems had compelled physical media sales to decrease, with vendors perhaps switching to other merchandise. While I had been to plenty of DVD, CD, and even a few Blu-ray merchants

throughout the central city so far — even coming out of Tepito's subway station — the market proper didn't seem to have much in the way of vendors, nor much of a selection. The few stands I saw here all had the typical eclectic mix of Hollywood blockbusters, popular children's cartoons and perennial favorites that I had already seen throughout the city, and indeed in other Latin American pirate markets. The majority of the stands in this area housed clothing, small home goods and electronics. Given the way Tepito's media market had been described both to me personally and in prior literature, I was growing fearful that the local physical media market had finally been overtaken by online alternatives, with the only specialty DVD stands comprising a couple of smaller stalls selling porn, with one of these doubling as a hot dog stand. Working my way deeper to the enclosed indoor area of the market, I came across a variety of Tepito's more traditional fixtures: several tailors and cobblers, electricians, drapers, haberdashers and leather shops. Also here were abundant and well-provisioned stands selling equipment for live audio setups. P.A systems, stereos, microphones, mixers, lighting, and stands. The way that businesses of the same type were all concentrated together recalled the commercial logic of the city center as a whole. It indeed reminded me of the historical districts of many other Latin American cities, where one could habitually see a culture of both rivalry and mutual support amongst neighboring businesses.

It was only once I crossed the enclosed square on the other side of this building (the same housing project studied in Lewis' *Children of Sanchez*) and made my way to the deepest part of the market that I ran into the media section proper. My initial misgivings were corrected here all too thoroughly, with several corridors sprawling out in several directions, all dedicated to some combination of video and audio digital media. As with the similarly grouped businesses I had just run into, this section of the market was clearly and deliberately organized along the

same market logics of the historical center, with several corridors of media stalls, many of which sold the same material, albeit often with different packaging, configurations, and prices. The stalls themselves, typical of open air markets, were unnamed. Alongside their offerings though, signage (both screen-printed and hand-written) announced areas of specialization, prices, and pronounced what was being sold as “Clon DVD”, or “cloned” DVDs. This choice of label was ubiquitous, and when approached, most vendors would refer to their materials with the same terminology. This rhetorical bent, while not necessarily deliberately so, neutralizes and normalizes this mode of commerce and its practices. “Cloning” is the term used in Latin America to refer to the copying of any given data stored on a physical platform on to another, whether it is a hard drive or a disk. Its use here then places emphasis on the technological aspect of the process, as well as its implicit fidelity to the original.

These are positioned not as mere “copies”, potentially inferior to the original, but “clones”, implicitly suggesting that while not original, they are every bit the same in terms of quality. It is for the most part an honest use of the term, except for the fact that when examined many of these disks deviate from sanctioned video disk materials in multiple ways, depending on the individual object and the decisions made by its producers. Several of the disks for instance had been made from films and shows yet to be released on any kind of physical consumer media, so there are no menus, extras or optional materials to copy. There is indeed no formatted, curated data set to ‘clone’. In software terms, these can by definition not be clone media. In other instances, technological limitations necessitate the strategic excising of certain elements. Commercial DVDs for instance are often encoded onto double layered disks, which can hold much more information but are both rarer and more expensive per unit than typical blanks, not to mention the fact that they require DVD-writing hardware that is likewise rarer and more

expensive. The Clone DVDs sold in Tepito will often preserve the menus from the originals while excising as many extraneous materials as they need to in order to fit the data onto the less expensive single layered DVD disks.

Throughout such processes, the individuals and groups responsible for curating, producing and packaging these products evidently often source their content from a variety of different sources — a practice just as potentially problematic to companies concerned with the protection of their IPs' integrity as the immediate loss of profits represented by piracy's granting of access to these materials. Workers in the pirate DVD industry as such consistently integrate third-party DVD menu templates, edited and remixed promotional materials, and fan-made subtitles. They sometimes even play a role in altering the content of films and TV shows enclosed on these platforms, integrating video and audio materials from different sources of extraction. This is especially true with regard to materials such as handicam theatre recordings of films, which will sometimes have visuals and audio taken from different instances of recording in order to create a higher quality whole from parts which may have individual failings and inconsistencies.

Regardless of its technical applicability, the insistence of Clon DVD's use as the pirate DVD market's standard terminology suggests a level of attempted image control that speaks to the underlying institutionality inherent in Tepito and Mexico City's wider shadow economy of media distribution. This institutionality, derivative in some ways, as Larkin notes, of the same logics that shape the overground media market (290) likewise organizes the infrastructures and business practices of the Tepito market.

The market's curation of content indeed follows several other industrial principles also adopted by sanctioned physical media retail locales. While circulating in the media section of the

market, the logic of how it was organized (similar in some ways to a shopping mall) became more apparent. The largest and most ubiquitous DVD/CD/Blu-ray stalls had a generalist bent, much like those I had seen elsewhere in this city, but with much more variety. They offered a selection of popular Hollywood classics, packs of several episodes or seasons of telenovelas, a few recent local films, children's programming of various types, and a few popular anime and K-drama titles. Video media was often displayed alongside similarly diverse offerings in music, among which DVD or CD MP3 compilations were prominent. Multipacks of films grouped roughly by interest or genre were also ubiquitous in these stalls. These were much like the DVD multi-film packs sold in pharmacies and convenience stores elsewhere in the world, with the caveat that there was of course no implicit barrier separating which intellectual properties could or would interact. This was especially notable with regard to children's animation, where media from Disney, Pixar, DreamWorks, Blue Sky and Sony all coexisted on the same curated compilations (Fig. 2).

Fig. 2 — Compilations of different children's films

Other stalls specialized more acutely on either films or television. The most elaborate of the locales I encountered was one of the latter, and was an imposing presence, holding sway in what appeared to be the center of the media district of the market as a whole. Its presence as a central location was underlined by several factors, including its relative size (taking up twice the real estate of most other video stands), its placement in a corner locale of one of the largest pedestrian corridors of the marketplace, and its large, elaborate signage – a mix of both handwritten pricing information and branded photographic material, mostly from HBO. The resources behind this locale were made evident by its offerings: many tables, all packed with multi-episode (often season-arcing) boxes of current, prestige and/or classic television from a premium cable or streaming subscription's worth of sources. HBO programming was prominent, as were offerings from Showtime, IFC, AMC and Netflix. Prestige local series were likewise on display, as well as several classic anime series, including *Heidi*, *Marco*, *Ann of Green Gables*, and many others. What was perhaps most striking about this stand's offerings were the boxes themselves, all uniform in size, shrink-wrapped, priced with conventional retail stickers, and printed in full color with their original commercial artwork (or close to it – see Fig. 3). There were none of the usual sleeves or jewel cases to be seen — these were clearly meant to be premium offerings, at least for the context. This status was reflected to some extent in the pricing, though given the variable quantity of each box's contents, it was not enough of a difference so as to be on a wholly different tier of pricing from the media being offered by other locales. Shows here were organized on several packed folding tables primarily by genre, as well as (uniquely to this location) their respective networks/producers. Anime and children's media made up their own distinct sections among this, with prestige series from Nippon Animation bridging the gap.

The overall effect of the curation and packaging was so effective that I was briefly confused as to the "legitimacy" of the products on offer. Unlike the majority of the packaging elsewhere, the boxes here seemed to be wholly sourced from actual licensed DVD and home video packaging, with only incidental external details betraying their contents as clone media. Often this evidence would manifest in the fact that several longer individual seasons were broken up into several multi-episode packs, with only hand-written numbers informing this on otherwise identical season-specific boxes. In other cases, this was relayed by the package artwork, which at times could be seen to include details and characters from the wrong season of the show being sold. Upon opening the packages of course, their provenance becomes even more evident, with individual disks printed on commercially available DVD-Rs and stored in either individual paper envelopes or thin DVD jewel cases in their respective cardboard boxes.

Fig. 3 — note that this box for Season Five of *Game of Thrones* features cover art on the back depicting characters who were written out of the show in its first season.

These ambiguities notwithstanding, the selection, curation, and packaging of these shows evidences an effort to, as with the terminology chosen, legitimate these objects by appealing to market principles established in the overground marketplace, presenting them in such a way as to allow them to be stored and presented in home contexts in a more user-friendly manner. As I've learned myself through both the fruits of this research and years of personal experience with physical pirate media markets, organizing piles of enveloped half-labeled DVDs can be an undertaking. Given their adoption of standard sized packaging, the media offered by this and other more specialized stalls not only lends itself to be stored in attractive uniformity by itself, but also alongside official licensed releases of DVD and Blu-Ray media.

The principles followed by this stall were in keeping with strategies followed by Tepito's other higher end media shops. As a general trend, the most specialized stalls I encountered were not just those which had the most considered curation of materials, but also the most elaborately presented and packaged offerings. Among these were a small number of stalls dedicated to art cinema, international films, and documentaries. These had material on sale similar to that which might be found in a cult movie rental shop of the 1990s (Fig. 4), including lots of mid-century European film, and lots of covers taken directly from the Criterion Collection. Another of the stands I entered offered an interesting mix of niche interest specializations: art cinema, LGBT, and gore, divided accordingly across three groups of display racks (Fig. 5).

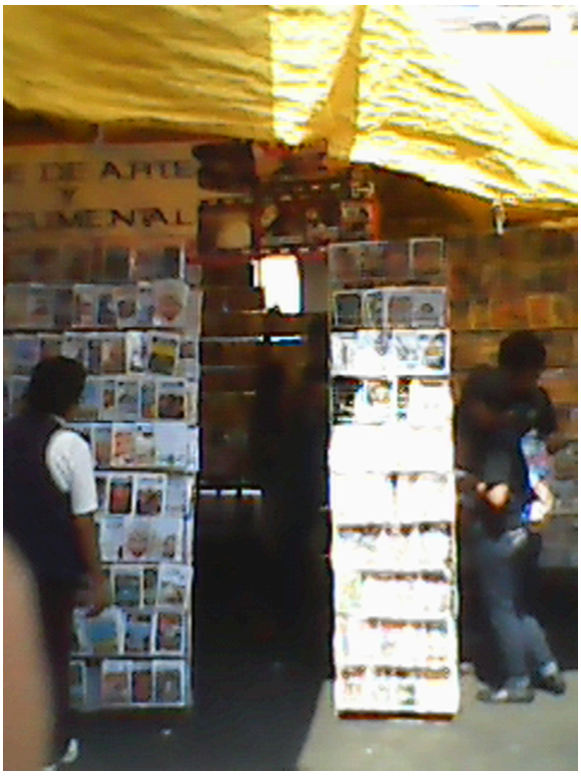


Fig. 4 — one a of a handful of specialist art film stalls

Fig. 5 — a stall featuring various niche interest sections

As could be expected given the general tendency to emulate dominant market logics, Asian media and anime's presence across all these shops corresponded closely with their incursion in the Mexican and Latin American cultural context more widely. Studio Nippon's shows could be found in the family TV section in the stall selling TV box sets, *Naruto* and *Dragon Ball Z* could be obtained as multi-episode packs in more generalist stores, and Korean and Turkish dramas could be found in several formats alongside US TV dramas and local telenovelas in several mid-tier stalls and other shops specializing in television.

More specialized, niche interest or art-house anime series and films could likewise be found alongside Japanese auteurs like Kurosawa and Ozu in the art cinema shops. Specialized stalls focusing more exclusively on Asian media were rare, though I did run across one particularly high-end shop offering both anime and K-drama together. This business was run by a married couple, who had been in this location for around 9 years as of 2016, adding K-drama to their inventory in 2009. Eric, the husband of the pair, was particularly forthcoming, providing me with a brief chronicle of their history in the market, and informing me of his supply chain, which signaled a more or less fluid marketplace with several independent or semi-independent entrepreneurial suppliers. Far from undermining his business, Eric informed me that that the recent growth of online media distribution was a huge boon to his business, making things easier to source and providing more avenues to access materials. He and his wife had lived through the emergence of the DVD and Blu-ray markets, which similarly facilitated his business along several fronts.

Both Eric and his wife were manning the shop at the time, and were well versed in the material they sold, which they were able to recommend based on both their own tastes and its relative popularity. By the standards of the market their products were of especially high quality.

Whereas their more accessible fare was sold in the basic clear plastic sleeves and color inkjet paper inserts found in surrounding stands, they also sold many Blu-ray copies of especially well-regarded or popular films and series. These featured particularly detailed and well printed labels, with color-printed disks and high-resolution, fully translated cover art. They were accordingly packaged in blue semi-transparent sleeves made of thick, durable plastic (Figs. 6 and 7).

Fig. 6

Fig. 7

Eric and his wife's expertise was not an isolated instance. Several vendors were willing and able to recommend anime, K-drama and other material based on both their own tastes and what had been moving particularly well. My own experience with trends in both academic and journalistic anime film and TV criticism aligned with much of what they had to say, with critical darlings like Makoto Shinkai and Mamoru Hosada well represented among the shops and conversations I was able to have with anime vendors. They were likewise keen to recommend particular K-Dramas, which of course were more popular, being a fixture of the Mexican TV landscape with wide demographic appeal.

One common thread I attempted to keep an ear out for was what would happen when vendors didn't have a particular film or series in stock. Given what Eric had told me with regard to the vendors he was in contact with, I was interested in learning more about how this step of the process worked, while at the same time being wary that the further up the supply chain I observed, the more likely I was to unwittingly rub up against less welcoming communities than those encountered so far. From what I was able to learn through both observation and conversation, the physical supply chain was not so long, with the majority of the disks themselves being formatted and copied from digital masters not more than a neighborhood or two away, in blocks of private garages and storage units. It was here that multiple towers of PCs churned out copy after copy of DVDs, CDs, MP3 DVDs and Blu-ray disks. From all appearances, this material was being produced in turn under the very loose direction and/or sanctioning of local cartels, under the direct supervision (and subtle branding) of semi-independent "authors" or "production companies" of sorts (Figs. 8 and 9). These groups were the ones responsible for sourcing the initial media, usually from the internet (though also sometimes through other supply chains), formatting it onto DVD software templates with chapters and

sometimes extras, copying it onto disks, and packaging it. The most rudimentary examples comprised nothing more than an unlabeled disk in a clear plastic sleeve with a printed paper label. In the retail market, these sold very cheaply, usually in deals of 3 to 10. Others, as with the box sets and Blu-ray films discussed above, are of course much more elaborate, with prices still befitting their intended consumption by working class and marginalized communities.

Fig. 8 — cartoons characters are often used to demarcate the work of certain clone DVD producers. Here Fred Flintstone…

Fig. 9 — …and here, Astro Boy

Amid my interaction with the market's workers and proprietors, I became increasingly interested in the wide variety of texts made available, sometimes running into exceedingly rare material, hard to find even in online spaces, offered alongside films and shows one might expect to find in any reasonably well-curated specialty video shop in the Anglo-American context. In a few instances I indeed came across interactions between vendors and customers that suggested an even greater level of access to rare media texts than that offered by mainstream commercial outlets (whether based in English or Spanish speaking communities). While already offering a wealth of rare and hard to obtain material, specialty vendors seemed only too eager to accommodate requests to find material that wasn't on display. If they hadn't heard of it, they would ask customers to write it down for them, and to come back in a few days for it. These interactions were particularly interesting to me, because it was here that I saw one of the more pointed breaks between the market culture fostered here and that found in the mainstream retail environments being emulated in so many other ways. These exchanges (which in my experience, never involved down-payments or increased pricing) evoked a relationship between vendors and customers that recalled the larger culture of small-scale business in the open-air market environments of Latin America, an assumption of interpersonal responsibility, reliability, and access. A request for an out of print French film seemed to be treated no differently than a request for a particular electronic component, album, or style of clothing elsewhere in the Tepito market. That customers came knowing to ask for these media texts likewise suggests to me a culture of audienceship that is itself particularly specialized and well versed.

These interactions, coupled with the more esoteric offerings of many of these businesses, compel me to consider to what extent Tepito's marketplace circumvents both the limitations imposed by sanctioned commercial strategies (even as the market emulates these

same environments in other ways), as well as the affordances this market has with regard to curation and preservation of less marketable media goods. Lobato's own comprehensive analysis of much of this same subject matter frames the media piracy going on in Tepito as an extension of a logic of access, both in the face of lack (or resources, options), and with regard to materials that would otherwise not be accessible to anyone, let alone Tepito's residents (86, 90). During conversations with other CDMX residents, I learned that film students and other media aficionados from outside Tepito proper would similarly frequent the market for this same reason. Tepito as such, at least to some communities, represents a point of access to a pool of resources more available here than elsewhere, a hub of cosmopolitan media access in the middle of the most famously marginal neighborhood in the city. Here again is a point of tension between the material realities of peripherality and precarity, and the ways in which entrenched communities have fashioned their own institutional frameworks that not only respond to these conditions, but indeed sometimes overtake the overground in the access they grant to certain resources and points of cultural interconnection. These emergences are the cultural face of the phenomena Alba Vega and Braig identify as Mexico City's globalization from below (130).

Conclusions: Cosmopolity from Below

The incremental stratification of access to cutting edge communications technologies and networks that has occurred in the last several decades has created a re-entrenchment of old notions of cultural access and exchange. Whereas the superiority of the North/West was once assumed on the basis of inherent racial/moral/societal traits, today there are more subtle, but still pointedly chauvinistic assumptions at play with regard to how people in different places and circumstances interact with the wider world. There is a strong articulation in these assumptions

between marginalization and provincialism — that those with limited resources will necessarily have less access to culture as a whole, particularly remote or esoteric culture. While this may have been true in several other environments, it has never been entirely applicable to marginal communities in urban locations. It is here after all that the goods aimed at the more privileged are often manufactured, elaborated, or simply circulated. Amid a digital culture, it is all the more likely that such goods can and will be likewise copied, reproduced, repackaged and re-curated to fit within the realities of this other market.

The Latin American mediascape, while still provincial in many ways, with lingering prejudices and stereotypes, has also been marked by the subjective shift inherent in peripherality — an imposed consciousness of oneself as displaced from protagonism in one's own social systems and subjectivity. In spite of its historical dependency and submission to AngloAmerican and European media industries, formats and hierarchies, Mexico City's media industry (and the Latin American mediascape as a whole) has also been historically more likely than the US and other net-exporters of media to integrate texts from a variety of cultural and linguistic contexts. This is in large part due to the robust and very well established translation, dubbing and redistribution industries that have emerged thanks to Latin America's long history as an import-dependent media market. It's one half of a set of dynamics that cyclically reconfirm their own nature, with locations with strong local industries less likely to accept imports (or at least new directions of importation), and import-dependent sites more likely to accept new avenues and modes of importation, through sheer necessity on the one hand, but also opportunism on the other. This relative flexibility, this necessary willingness to experiment with new pathways of flow and nascent global players in the global media market, has had the more integral effect of not just affecting Mexico's translation, dubbing and import/export media industries, but also its

local audience cultures and secondary markets and shadow economies. Amid this environment, anime's long-held presence as the sole area of popular Asian media importation to the region feels less like an exception to dominant flows of media than an anticipation of a broader process that was bound to happen, given the right circumstances.

Chapter 5 — Triangulation: Anime's Circulation to Latin America through, around and in the wake of the US Mediascape

A large part of the motivation behind this project's focus on the role of Mexico in the circulation of Asian media in Latin America is rooted in the need to contribute to a wider wave of scholarship seeking to break from dualistic imaginaries of cultural flow and power. This investigative tendency — sometimes overt but often implicit — pushes against the tempting but ultimately reductive impetus to consider only the beginnings and endpoints of media circulation, overlooking the various relationships and institutions that shape media flow along the way. The need to avoid such omissions becomes all the more pressing when we consider that it is precisely in such relationships that the contemporary structures of global media hegemony are made most visible on an institutional level. That is to say, where once debates over cultural imperialism in global media circulation concentrated predominantly on the circulation and impact of metropolitan media in peripheral and emergent mediascapes, such conversations have grown more complex with the development of new perspectives with regard to audiences, as well as the shifting realities of the global media market itself. And while the increasing multi-directionality and plurality of the contemporary global media landscape might suggest an overall flattening or cultural democratization of the field, the channels, rationales, standards and institutions driving

this growth have by and large worked in concert with entrenched systems of stratified economic, political and cultural power.

This has in turn re-situated debates over cultural empire and hegemony, emphasizing the need not only to track where media texts go and what they do once they get there, but also why and how they circulate the way they do to begin with. Amid the chaos and opportunism of the current global media market, we should likewise consider the structures that have allowed such an opening up to take place, and in what ways they feed into other institutional power structures.

During the last few decades, global media scholars have accordingly sought to complicate perspectives once firmly-rooted in the trappings and discussion of Anglo-American media hegemony and imperialism. In doing so, they have had to navigate difficult disciplinary and ideological terrain, negotiating and balancing two imperatives. The first seeks to account for a global field with both a variety of newly emergent players as well as many that have existed for decades, but have been largely ignored by scholars concentrating on the flow of media along "vertical" channels of power. The second seeks to account for the ongoing asymmetries, frictions and transculturations of a global media landscape that is still very much predominated by the North/West/Centre. And while not contradictory, these agendas have created a dialectic vacillating in its extremes between deterministic fatalism in the face of metropolitan cultural empire, and a celebratory illumination of the subversive potential implicit in the emergent activity taking place within peripheral sites and cultures.

Amid this investigative landscape, much of the most revelatory work undertaken in recent global media scholarship has in turn focused on manifestations of popular power and collective culture in the face of hegemonic structures. While immensely valuable, this focus has

also led to some distinctly dangerous territory with respect to its ideological and rhetorical implementations outside of academia. Because while this analysis was more often than not undertaken with the full knowledge and recognition that such emergences respond to and often become re-incorporated into hegemonic structures, this recognition of a growing plurality and multi-vocality in and of itself is something that can (and has) been continually co-opted by those who wish to obfuscate structural inequities, exploitations and exclusions.

As Naomi Klein notes, this behavior, while persistent, was particularly prevalent in the 1990s, with both corporate actors and NGOs seeking to expand the reach of capitalist structures via the apparent temptations and benefits of global corporate citizenship. Such behavior took the form earlier on of explicit cultural imposition of "American" values via advertising, political restructuring, and a renewed espousal of a privatizing modernity project (337). When this met with understandable negative reactions from many of their interlocutors however, the strategy became one of self-professed multi-vocality and diversity. This really just meant though that the same homogenizing values were now presented through a wider diversity of bodies, cultural trappings, and localities, all of which were depicted as sharing the same desire for participation in the benefits of market-based circulation and contact — an effect Vandava Shiva calls "mono-multiculturalism" (Klein, 339-340). Within this tendency, the emergence of new participants within the global order is celebrated, so long as they agree to play by pre-established rules, and to the benefit of already-powerful actors. While there is as such immense value in the recognition of emergent players, modes of textuality and subaltern and popular power, there is a concurrent need to situate such phenomena within the entrenched power structures they are responding to, perpetuate, and integrate. The reification of resistance, survival and popular power cannot be an end unto itself.

This need for the recognition of a wider field has been both a motivating factor and a source of re-evaluation throughout this project — one that has in several instances led me to question the parameters of my investigation here. Within this project, I've quite literally mapped power onto the geopolitical structures of states, cities and their entrenched industries and spheres of influence. In order to break with Anglo-American dialectics with respect to anime, I focus instead on this medium's circulation in another region. Similarly, in order to look at the Latin American cultural context beyond its condition as a site of US cultural imperialism, I look to its condition as an importer of Japanese media. This deviation from a focus on the United States and the Anglo-American mediascape's impact in such dynamics is useful as a premise, but it becomes nothing more than a side-step without a recognition of both: the various continuities and trans-regional dynamics at play in such circulation, and the role played by wider power structures in such interaction between industrial actors, regulators and audiences between Japan and Latin America.

Both the United States and the Anglo-American mediascape have loomed imposingly at the boundaries of this entire project, continuously serving as both reference points and factors to the histories, structures and processes that shape anime's circulation through Mexico to Latin America. And while on the one hand I often feel that in doing so this project has succumbed to the same re-inscription of Anglo-American cultural centrality identified by such scholars as Annett and Darling-Wolf's discussions of anime circulation, it would on the other hand be disingenuous to ignore these effects. Such is the condition of subaltern analysis. The sites in question can't be understood purely on their own terms, because these terms are in a constant state of reactive redefinition (Chakrabarty, 5). This is true of hegemonic subjectivities as well,

but they and those who study them have a persistent habit of ignoring the ways in which they *don't* encapsulate universal experiences of the world (Dabashi).

It is with the intent of acknowledging this peripherality even as we work to discursively de-center ("provincialize" as Chakrabarty puts it) the cultural metropolis that this chapter then seeks to look at the flow of anime textualities to and through Latin America — this time with an eye to how these have been variably affected by the interference, impact and proximity of the Anglo-American mediascape. To do so, I'll be looking at the trajectories taken into the Latin American mediascape by a handful of anime media texts and franchises, tracking their circulation and seeing in what way it has been shaped by a wider field over which the Anglo-American media industry and market looms large. The nature and extent of this field's influence in such trajectories has ranged wildly, habitually taking up a protagonistic position, or simply shaping trajectories of media flow with its mere presence, size and embedded institutional influence. Accordingly, this chapter follows a historical trajectory of anime's circulation to Latin America that maps onto the major institutional shifts altering the nature of such trajectories. I see this as falling roughly within three broad periods of anime importation to the continent, all of which can in some way be drawn in relation to the period prior to, during, and in the wake of the establishment of a neoliberal model of global media distribution and broadcasting. The periods I look at take place roughly between the late 1970s until the early 1990s, the 1990s proper, and the late 1990s onwards, with significant comingling of industrial and institutional logics blurring the territory between each.

In trying to make sense of how each of these historical periods was marked by different modes and logics of Latin American anime importation, I'm attempting to make sense of their trajectories by noting how these sit in relation to the influence exerted by the Anglo-

American mediascape. Underlying this agenda is an engagement with the geometries of power embedded in Doreen Massey's work on globalization (24-25). This conceptualization offers mappings of hegemony that recognize that globalization is, for all its universalizing logics, a process that often serves to further stratify existing social systems, and that the connections it offers are not necessarily democratizing. This is a sentiment reiterated by Mattelart's work on the wider historical development of communication networks (9). In this chapter, this mapping of power dynamics consists of looking at the ways in which these asymmetric industrial fields, networks of media distribution, and cultural dominance that mark the American continent's mediascapes shape the trajectories taken by cultural objects to and within them. To that end, I build on Thussu's directional conceptualization of media flow here in order to more fully illustrate the various caveats, institutional relationships, and fields of influence that serve to shape the how and why of media objects' circulation and popular impact. As Thussu affirms, directionality of flow (in accordance with or counter to) relationships of cultural/political power is an insufficient metric to judge the emergence of new modes and spheres of media power amid a consolidated global field in which the North/West/Center already owns and controls so much (27). As Thussu suggests, while directionality of flow matters, it is just as important to think about how and why such pathways have opened up, who pushes for these apertures, why they take hold, and who benefits from them. It is similarly important to understand in what way the wider field, its logics, its affordances, lingering roadblocks, affect the shape taken by these pathways.

In order to examine the nature of such trajectories, I've opted throughout this chapter to illustrate the particular pathways of flow I am observing — their directionality, their motivation, and how they respond to wider contextual factors — through visualizations based in

geometric imagery. For largely unrelated pathways taken by a single media object or group of objects, I talk of parallel media flows. For the circulation of an object driven by its divergence from one endpoint to another, I make reference to the notion of tangential flow. Finally, for instances of media flow where the object has been altered or recontextualized due to the systemic influence of a powerful external agent, I've opted for the term parabolic flow. All of these pathways are affected in different ways by various institutional factors, and all of them consist more of an illustrative tool of underlying dynamics than a firm affirmation of the relationships at play. In employing such visualizations, I am indeed attempting to reconcile Massey's spatial mapping of contextual power dynamics with Thussu's examination of how media objects circulate amid a field affected by these same dynamics. By building such a framework, I believe we can achieve a firmer basis of systemic analysis with regard to media flows — particularly those which occur in those transitional periods that demarcate the emergence of new global media capitals, and/or the forging of new relationships between sites of cultural production, consumption, and remediation. Examples for these modes of cultural flow will be elaborated on as required by the case studies in question.

Multiple Trajectories into Latin America: 1976-1992

Prior to the widespread success of a few key anime texts in the 1990s, anime's trajectory in Latin American popular culture was split roughly along three tendencies of importation, distinguished by both the relationship they fostered with audiences, and the trajectories they took in order to reach them. The first and perhaps the most widely evoked among the first generation of Latin American anime audiences was in the realm (perhaps surprisingly to the Anglo-American context) of "quality" television, aimed at shared family viewing. This tendency was due to a

small but significant stream of imports that began in the 1970s from "World Masterpiece Theatre". This was a programming block originally produced for and aired on Japan's Fuji TV network, established in 1969 and composed of adaptations of 'classic' children's or family-oriented literature. Programming for this block was commissioned from several studios including Mushi Production, Zuiyo Eizo, and then Nippon Animation, which would be in charge of producing programming for this block for the majority of its existence, from 1975 until 1997. It was for this slot that *Heidi: Girl of the Alps* (1974) was first produced, marking it the first anime to receive widespread popularity in Latin America once it was imported in the late 1970s. *Heidi*'s success across several of Latin America's broadcast systems was commensurate with its similarly widespread popular impact in the European market and the Middle East (Darling-Wolf, "The "Lost" Miyazaki", 501), not to mention its similarly warm reception in Japan itself. *Heidi*'s first run throughout several Latin American markets indeed became appointment television for family audiences throughout the region, so much so that it has continued to run in syndication on and off for several decades now, up to the present day. Following the success of this series, several imports of literary adaptations would follow, including *Maya the Bee* (1975) *Marco: 3000 Leagues in Search for Mother* (1976) and *Little House on the Prairie* (1975-6). While none of these successors rivaled *Heidi* in terms of immediate impact, several would likewise become syndicated mainstays of Latin American children's and family-oriented programming throughout the following decades. In contemporary Latin American texts looking back at this period's popular median consumption, these anime in particular show up as markers of quotidian family life and children's culture, not only for their popularity, but also their enduring ubiquity. Figures 1 and 2, for instance, are stills taken from Episode 4 (2008) of the Chilean drama *Los 80* (2008-2014), a program concentrating on the social experience of the country during Pinochet's

dictatorship. This scene depicts characters watching the show *Marco* in 1982, suggesting the show's popular currency, both diegetically and as an intertextual cultural touchstone.

Fig. 1 — Anime as a marker of Chilean children's popular culture in *Los 80*

Fig. 2 — Anime as a marker of Chilean children's popular culture in *Los 80*

While this first tendency vacillated between family and children's programming, the second was more firmly centered around child audiences, particularly boys, via action and sports-centered melodrama. This later stream of imports is exemplified by shows such as the fantasy/sci-fi series *Saint Seiya* (1986-1989, dubbed as *Los Caballeros De Zodiaco*) whose pivotal role in the regional market I'll expand upon shortly, and the sports drama *Captain Tsubasa* (1983-1986), re-named *Super Campeones* for the Latin American market (L.A. airdate 1994-1995). This was the area of anime's popular impact that most resembles the demographic engagement anime would take on in the region from the mid 1990s onwards, and likewise the tendency that most resembles the wider social positioning of anime in the global market at the moment.

While never really taking hold in the Anglo-American anime market as a wider genre, sports-based shows Like *Captain Tsubasa* (soccer) and *Slam Dunk* (1993-1996, basketball) have been a staple of global anime culture since its earliest years, with the lone US-based standout success being *Speed Racer* (1966-1968), which arrived very early in the US's history with anime, in 1967. The sports melodrama and its close cousin the "tournament fighter" (of which both *Dragon Ball Z* and *Saint Seiya* can be seen as loose derivatives) planted the archetype for much of the boy-oriented anime to follow, and were usually melodramatic in nature, rife with fervent ambitions, strained but ultimately reaffirmed team relationships, often bitter rivalries and other explorations of male homosociality. This is significant to their Latin American presence, as these shows in particular very often mirrored the formats and emotive storytelling of other single-season live-action television drama formats, such as the telenovela. This resemblance, I argue, played a strong role in their popularity and ease of insertion to the Latin American television landscape, as well as many others. This connection indeed bears out in the early

framing of anime by broadcasters for the general public. During the first month of *Heidi*'s broadcast in Mexico in July of 1978 on Canal 4 for instance, Newspaper TV schedules referred to the show as a "telenovela" (Fig. 3). By December 1978, this description had been elaborated upon as a "children's telenovela" (Fig. 4). It may be noted that the "children's telenovela" is an actual subgenre within the format — one worth examining further with regard to its role as a bridge between adult-coded and kid-coded TV formats in the Latin American TV landscape.

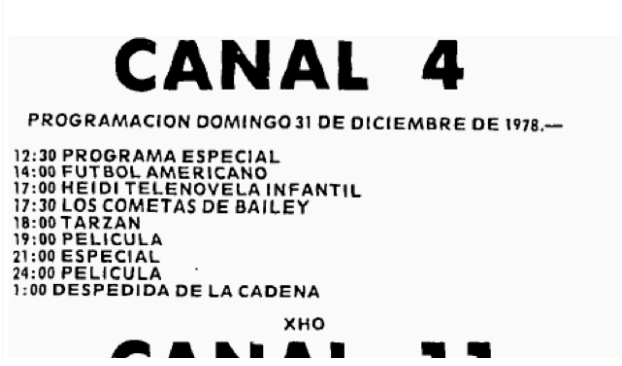
CANAL 4

DOMINGO 9 DE JULIO DE 1978

12:30 EL MARAVILLOSO MUNDO DE LOS ANIMALES. (COLOR)
14:00 ARCHIE. (COLOR)
14:30 LOS COMETAS DE BAILEY. (COLOR)
15:00 TELENOVELA: "HEIDI" (COLOR)
15:30 DISCO 78. (COLOR)
16:00 PELICULA: "ESTA CALLE ES NUESTRA" (COLOR)
18:10 PELICULA: "NEVADA SMITH" (COLOR)
20:35 PELICULA: "LA MASCARA DEL SOL" (COLOR)
22:15 PELICULA: "QUIEN MATO A LA MODELO" (COLOR)
24:00 EN CONTACTO DIRECTO. (COLOR)
0:30 DESPEDIDA DE LA CADENA.—

CANAL 11

Fig. 3 — *Heidi* as telenovela (*El Torreon*, 9 July, 1978)



CANAL 4

PROGRAMACION DOMINGO 31 DE DICIEMBRE DE 1978.—

12:30 PROGRAMA ESPECIAL
14:00 FUTBOL AMERICANO
17:00 HEIDI TELENOVELA INFANTIL
17:30 LOS COMETAS DE BAILEY
18:00 TARZAN
19:00 PELICULA
21:00 ESPECIAL
24:00 PELICULA
1:00 DESPEDIDA DE LA CADENA

XHO

CANAL 11

Fig. 4 — *Heidi* as "children's telenovela" (*El Torreon*, 31 December, 1978)

The framing given to *Heidi* and other anime of the time suggests that anime was beginning to take on this role as well to some extent, given these shows' clear points of affinity with the telenovela format. The affirmation of Heidi's telenovela-like traits by this Mexican broadcaster moreover takes on the same "flattening" effect I argue for in Chapter 3 with regard to anime's treatment by dubbing companies as just another import, rather than the exceptional import they have been treated as in other markets. This framing served to make anime textualities in Latin America a quotidian popular phenomenon, integrated within the same categories of TV programming that were used to define the most idiosyncratic (though still highly trafficked and transnational) of Latin American TV genres.

It is worth underlining that by and large, none of the anime texts that found widespread appeal within these two tendencies in the Latin American regional market during this time were ones that gained much prominence in the Anglo-American mediascape. Indeed, the vast majority of the anime that circulated in Latin America between the 1970s and early 1990s had little to do with what was finding success in the US or Canada at the same time. The exception to this were the shows reconfigured for the US market by the Harmony Gold (of *Robotech* fame), and even these found limited success compared to those which arrived directly from Japan.

Some of the division in these trajectories of circulation is attributable to what Mittell has referred to as the "Saturday Morning exile" of animation that happened in the Anglo-American television landscape during the 1960s, sequestering what might have been family-oriented animated programming to the Saturday morning slot, which at the time was perceived as a dead zone deemed unprofitable by networks keen to sell advertising (2003, 34). This had the wider effect of creating a broadcast environment in which all animation would by default be

excluded from slots deemed more appropriate for communal family viewing — a phenomena that made it hard for programming such as *Heidi*, *Marco*, *Anne of Green Gables* (1979) or other 'quality' family-oriented anime to find a place on Anglo-American TV. And this is setting aside the already entrenched notions of Japanese products' inferiority that had taken hold of the Anglo-American public prior to the technology boom of the 1970s, as discussed in Chapter 3 (Warner Mettler, 223). As Darling-Wolf observes, the relative expense of animation importation from the US, coupled with the lack of local production cultures in children's media led to a substantial wave of global anime circulation in the 1970s.

It was during this time and under these circumstances that many of the animation luminaries later recognized by US-based critics and scholars in the 1990s and 2000s would establish themselves in the industry (Darling-Wolf, "The "Lost" Miyazaki," 501). It is worth underlining then that while anime importation in Latin America and elsewhere was being marked by notions of quality and affiliation to respected cultural canons even as it made its first inroads to the region, this was perhaps paradoxically due to its simultaneous perception elsewhere as a technically "inferior" product, catering to audiences and audience aggrupations of secondary consideration within many commercial markets. The shutting out of such programming from the lucrative Anglo-American market made it all the more accessible economically to the sites where it later found a great deal of popular traction.

Shows such as these, imported to Latin America from Japan along trajectories independent from the overt influence of Anglo-American media market, can be as such seen as functioning along a mode of media circulation functioning roughly in "parallel" to those brought into the Anglo-American market (Fig. 5). They might occur amid the same wider global market of media distribution, but because of differences with regard to their respective cultures of

spectatorship, systemic mechanisms and affordances as consumers, distribution companies embedded across the Americas made very different decisions during this time with respect to which, if any, anime texts would enter and integrate their spheres of influence. While Anglo-American distributors tended to gravitate towards the boy-focussed action-adventure and sci-fi programming that most corresponded to similar trends in local children's programming production and consumption, Latin American distributors and broadcasters had other realties to deal with. They had less resources, and fewer programming slots to fill on less frequencies, as well as less local production, thus calling for and allowing more generally-oriented shows like those produced for World Masterpiece Theatre. Anime importation in these two contexts as such fulfilled sometimes related, but often entirely divergent needs, travelling due to independent, parallel relationships and organizational infrastructures.

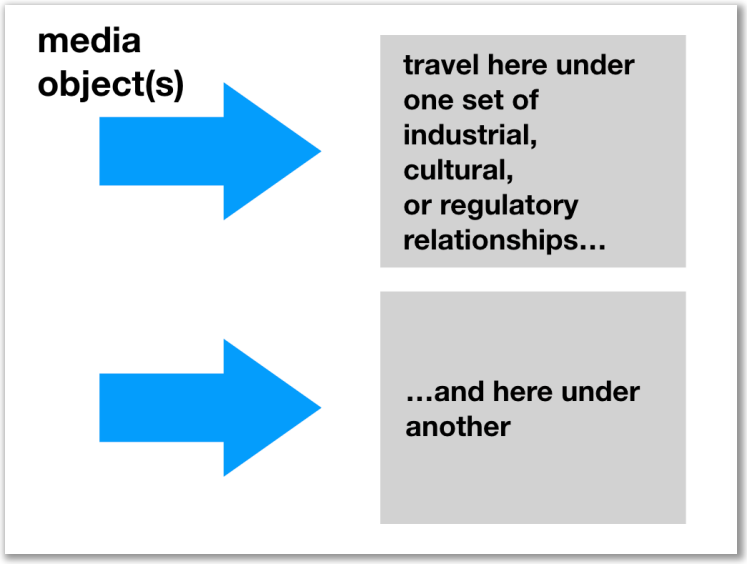


Fig. 5 — Parallel trajectories of media flow

Across such separations, there is still plenty of room for complication with regard to how and why these media objects integrate their respective endpoints. While parallel flows of media often correspond to models of bilateral interaction across states and media systems, they are still complicated by the existence of regional mediascapes/linguoscapes, as well as the roles played by sites of remediation. While the notion of independence across these flows then speaks very simply of two or more unrelated pathways of circulation, such pathways are still subject to (sometimes related) processes of asymmetric negotiation and reformulation, with the key distinction between them being that one pathway doesn't directly obstruct, reshape, or facilitate the other.

The third category of anime importation to Latin America during this time is that which was directly derivative of US importation for its own markets, in effect adding an extra step of translation, remediation and redistribution. During the 1970s and 80s such shows were far outnumbered by those which were imported independently, but a handful did nonetheless arrive and become successful, largely thanks to the distribution agreements held at the time between several US broadcast networks and many based in Latin America. It was through such channels that Latin America would receive the CBS import of *Speed Racer* (originally titled *Mach Go Go Go,* 1967-1968) as *Meteoro*, scarcely a year after it was initially produced in 1968. It was likewise through such relationships that the United States' own first anime import, *Astroboy* (Tetsuwan Atomu) would be imported in 1974. It is perhaps telling that neither of these US-directed pathways of circulation opted to employ wholly Mexican dubbing companies, jumping instead between Mexican, Puerto Rican and Argentine dubbing studios for different blocks of episodes — something quite unusual for shows which were imported directly to Latin America from Japan. Harmony Gold, the US-based company famous for its re-configuring of anime texts

into often wholly new series, likewise distributed many shows in the region during the 1980s and early 90s. Most famously this included *Robotech* (1985), which was adapted from three unrelated series in order to have enough episodes to run in syndication: *Super-Dimensional Fortress: Macross* (1982-1983), *Super-Dimensional Cavalry: Southern Cross* (1984) and *Genesis Climber: Mospeada* (1983-1984) (Furniss, 206). This line of importation also almost gave Latin America its first contact with the *Dragon Ball* franchise, importing the original series under the name *Zero y el Dragon Magico* ("Zero and the Magical Dragon," 1993-1994). This proved to be an anomaly amid such dynamics, however, as the Spanish dub maintained the same names and title changes of the Harmony Gold import, but only used the same censored footage for episodes 1-5. After this, Latin American distribution would switch to Bandai, who would source their footage from the original uncut Japanese version, obtained from the show's producer itself, Toei Animation.

This reversion of anime texts' distribution away from US-based intermediaries and back towards more direct lines of importation and redistribution through Mexico speaks to the anomalous nature of such distribution up until the mid-1990s. The logics governing what anime *was* across these two mediascapes seemed somewhat bifurcated up until this time, and it would take a new wave of anime importation to shift anime's cultural positioning in Latin America to something more akin and responsive to the Anglo-American media industry logics of children's TV in general. Simply put, it seems as if the Latin American children's media market had yet to go through the concerted, demographically driven and largely toyetic transformation that the US mediascape had imposed upon itself. This would change with the cultural rupture represented by the neoliberalization of the wider Latin American media market during the 1990s, but there were still a handful of years in which Latin American anime importation was still running largely in

Parallel to that of the United States before Japanese and US-based media companies cracked the code of anime's global neoliberalization. During this time, Latin America was taken over by a wave of much more commercially-directed anime fandom, that nonetheless was still running largely independently to Anglo-American anime cultures of spectatorship.

Los Caballeros de Zodiaco vs. *Dragon Ball Z*: Parallel/Tangential trajectories, 1992-1999

Though Japanese had already found several waves of success in the Latin American media market by the early 1990s, the importation of *Saint Seiya* (1986-1989) redubbed *Los Caballeros de Zodiaco* ("Knights of the Zodiac") in 1992 marked a distinct shift in both the popular and industrial positioning of anime imports to come. Where *Heidi* and *Marco* had been literary, family-oriented melodrama, *Los Caballeros de Zodiaco* was in the vein of shows that could much more firmly be seen as catering to children and adolescents — especially boys. While this was nothing new in and of itself, *Caballeros*' commercial success and popular impact in this field would make it the first truly merchandisable media franchise to arrive in Latin America from Japan, anticipating the success of both *Dragon Ball Z* and *Pokémon* – both similarly boy-targeted properties. In this sense (as well as others I'll detail shortly), *Caballeros de Zodiaco* can be seen as the flagship Latin American anime import of the early neoliberal era.

Textually, *Saint Seiya* displays many of the same postmodern proclivities for transcultural hybridity shown by other shonen anime of the 1980s and 90s, such as the *Dragon Ball* (1984-) or *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (1994-) — franchises which took their cues from Early Chinese literature and gnostic Christianity respectively. *Saint Seiya* for its part suffuses a fantasy sci-fi action-adventure narrative with the superficial trappings of both Greek Mythology and Christianity. Its plot follows the titular Seiya, an orphan adolescent boy who becomes involved

in a conflict between gods while serving the reincarnation of the Greek goddess Athena (Fig. 6). Early on in the show, he and several other orphans obtain supernatural powers, gaining "sainthood" as Athena's servants, and are tasked with defending Athena and the world at large from the machinations of other corrupted warriors, an evil pope, and other similarly reincarnated Greek gods. Like many other popular Japanese texts, Saint Seiya makes use of Western mythologies, religions and folk culture with pointedly de-contextualized, syncretic abandon, seeking to evoke the power, awe, and exoticism implicit in these cultural trappings without necessarily being interested in their grounded contexts (Napier, 424). Throughout its diegesis and aesthetics it blends classical Greek mythology and astrological references with Roman Catholic institutional trappings and hierarchies, alongside Zen Buddhist notions of reincarnation and even Shinto animism.

Fig. 6 — *Saint Seiya*, in Spanish: *Los Caballeros del Zodiaco.* Seiya the protagonist stands just right of center, next to the goddess Athena.

Saint Seiya arrived in Latin America via the same institutional linkages that would later bring *Sailor Moon*, *Dragon Ball Z*, *Digimon*, and dozens of other anime properties. A key factor in this particular trajectory was its production, like these other series, by Toei Animation, one of the anime industry's power house studios, responsible for other such globally-trafficked franchise productions as *Devilman* (1972, re-adapted for a Netflix series in 2018), *Yu-Gi-Oh!* (1998) and *One Piece* (1999-). Toei's size and extensive content library allowed it to establish a subsidiary company, Cloverway Inc. in Long Beach, California between the years 1991 and 2007 (Anime News Network, "Cloverway, Inc."). While based in the United States and serving as a point of distribution for US-based buyers, Cloverway's impact on the adaptation of media was felt much more acutely in its dealings with the Latin American market. Whereas Cloverway only participated in the adaptation stage of only one property in the United States, it played a significantly larger role in the translation, dubbing and re-packaging of Toei's shows for the Latin American market, often coordinating these processes itself, or even enacting them in-house prior to its frequent collaborations with the Mexico City-based dubbing firm Intertrack. *Saint Seiya* itself was translated, dubbed and re-packaged in-house at Cloverway for its 1992 release, using a pool of vocal talent that was already established in the wider Mexican dubbing community, and which would continue to participate in other anime dubbing projects for years to come under different company affiliations.

This instance of importation can as such be conceived as running in either a parallel (see Fig. 5) or tangential (Fig. 7) trajectory with respect to its relationship to the Anglo-American market. It is parallel in that it manifested as an instance of flow in which the media object in question never really came under the direct purview of the Anglo-American mediascape as a site of remediation. In contrast, it can likewise be seen as tangential in the sense that it was directed

by a company that was in fact based in the United States, and which appears to at least have had initial ambitions as an active remediator of Japanese media for the Anglo as well as Latin American mediascapes. In this way, we can conceive of *Saint Seiya* as a media product around which ambitions had perhaps been built for the wider American continent, but which ended up redirected primarily to Mexico.

Tangential pathways of circulation are often a product of both the inherent opportunism of commercially-driven media circulation, and the fact that newly forged pathways of flow may just as often fail as succeed in generating continuous business. The infrastructural investment and/or institutional relationships forged in such circulation can however often be redirected to new or secondary markets, which may themselves become sites of more success than that achieved in the original intended target. *Saint Seiya* for its part corresponds to such dynamics, as do other anime texts that followed in the wake of the institutional relationships this diversion of flow established. Similar dynamics can be seen at play with regard to the recent wave of importation of Turkish drama into the Latin American region. This pathway of flow began as the importation of a single Turkish show for broadcast on a secondary Chilean broadcast network, but soon found itself recirculating across several Latin American broadcast and cable systems, many of which have a much larger market than the original path of circulation would seem to offer (Ahora Noticias). Tangential flow can then be seen as one way in which the risk and chaos inherent in the global media market manifests, forming unexpected and sometimes fundamental cultural connections across cultural landscapes that may have once had very little to do with one another.

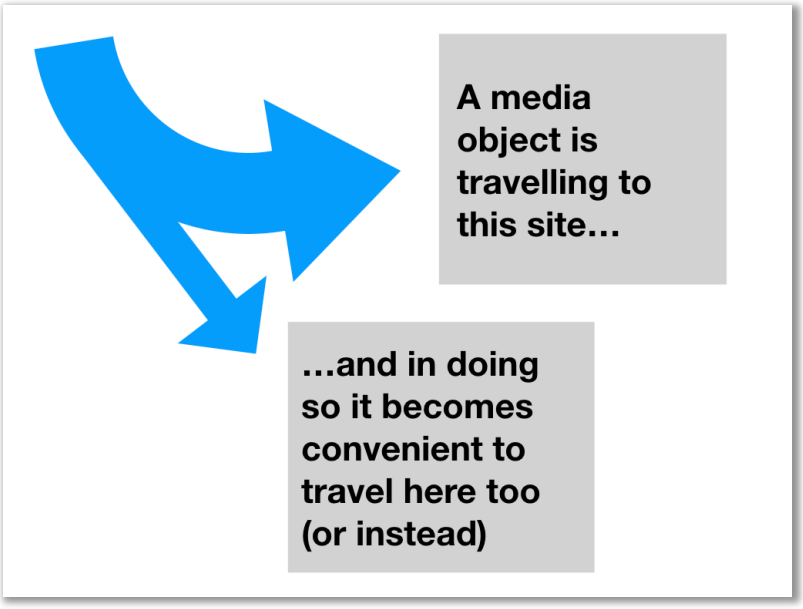


Fig. 7 — Tangential media flows.

That Toei should establish this outpost in 1991, one year prior to the Latin American release of *Saint Seiya* — up to that point the most market-oriented and toyetic anime franchise to see success in the region — is telling. This time period coincides with a substantial shift with regard to anime producers' behavior as media exporters, adopting a much more proactive approach with regard to which of their products would be promoted to importers as well as how they would be handled and promoted. It was indeed during the early 1990s that there was a much greater convergence between Japanese texts seen as flagship successes in the Japanese market itself, and those which would find success internationally. This pivot also coincided with a period of time crucial to the wider Latin American cultural experience, given that multiple countries in this shared mediascape were either coming out of dictatorships, radically liberalizing their broadcast media systems, or both. In Mexico in particular (often the site of initial experimentation for anime imports in the region) *Saint Seiya* also happened to play a role in the establishment of its current two-conglomerate broadcast system. In 1990, the Mexican

government decided to dissolve its state-controlled national broadcast network, Imevisión, leaving its now dispersed channels to either form small regional networks, or operate independently. This was a major development in the wider Mexican television landscape, as Imevisión was up to this point the only major network counterbalancing what would otherwise be a monopoly broadcast system headed by Televisa. Among the channels left to operate independently by Imevisión's dissolution were three based in the CDMX itself, 7, 13, and 22. 7 and 22 soon ceased their own independent transmission and began simply retransmitting the feed from Channel 13, with 22 later spinning off as a culturally focused station under the provision of Mexico's Secretary of Culture. Channel 13 for its part would continue to operate, albeit with severely depleted resources, and with no real edict apart from its own survival as a commercial station. While still government owned, it was in a state of institutional limbo, waiting for a buyer. This came in the guise of the Salinas Group, headed by Carlos Salinas Pliego, dynastic owner of a chain of home electronics retailers, among several other holdings. Salinas and his fellow investors would eventually buy channels 7, 13 and several other regional government-owned stations in 1993, consolidating what now stands as Mexico's 'other' major broadcast network, TV Azteca. Channel 13 would become its flagship station, eventually redubbed Azteca 1.

TV Azteca's commercial strategies during the early years of its existence mirror those taken by the United States' Fox Network around the same time, relying on flashy, irreverent programming and reliably commercial syndicated imports. It likewise pushed for innovation in the staple telenovela format in much the same way Fox sought to develop sharper, more cutting sitcoms and satire (Gómez, Miller and Dorcé, 49). This strategy corresponds to the wider dynamics of ruptured and/or emergent media landscapes in which providers and platforms can be

seen to both seek innovative flagship programming even as they opportunistically scramble to fill airtime with material obtained as cheaply, easily, and plentifully as possible. Similar situations marked the early cable TV landscape, as well as the early consolidation of online media distribution libraries for streaming platforms (Diaz Pino, 2017, 1).

When TV Azteca bought Channel 13 in 1993, it had been broadcasting *Los Caballeros de Zodiaco* for nearly a year, though the show had not yet made a significant popular impact, tucked away as it was in a 6 AM slot. This inherited series was however commensurate with the commercial strategy the channel would take going forward, so in 1993 it was consolidated with other children's TV into a block called Caritele, in which *Caballeros* soon became the flagship series (Frias Davalos). In the following years, the popularity of this series and several others broadcast by TV Azteca would come to overtake the Mexican children's broadcast field in general, prompting more established rival Televisa to seek out its own flagship anime imports. This moment came to be referred to in popular circles as the "anime wars" of the 90s, and they would have a ripple effect throughout the Latin American mediascape, driving an increase in anime importation throughout the region.

Televisa for its part eventually found its own flagship series in 1997 via another Cloverway import — the sci-fi sequel to the action/fantasy/tournament fighter *Dragon Ball*, *Dragon Ball Z*. Elsewhere in this project I have already discussed the plot details and social impact of this show in the wider Latin American popular consciousness. In short, this show was a true media phenomenon, playing a major role in defining the popular generational identity of its audience, and cementing the commercial viability of (certain kinds of) anime as evergreen syndicated programming. Dragon Ball Z's success for Televisa's Canal 5 was such that, since its initial broadcast, it has only ever been off air from the station between the years 2000 and 2003

(Doblaje). *Dragon Ball Z*'s success in Mexico and the wider Latin American mediascape corresponds with similar success in several other media markets. This includes the United States, which got its version via the Texas-based distributor FUNimation in 1996. While this chronology might suggest that, as with *Zero y el Dragon Magico,* The Spanish dub might have taken its cues from the US import, this proved not to be the case, with both series treated as largely independent entities in their respective markets. As with the result of many other parallel lines of importation, however, the Latin American version of the series is much more faithful to the original than FUNimation's, which opted both to censor potentially problematic content (nudity, blood, alcohol consumption) as well as to enact a variety of cultural translations and reframings of the show's paratexts in order to make it seem more overtly violent and boy-coded (see Figures 8 and 9).

Fig. 8 — The original Japanese Dragon Ball Z title card – the same one used in for the Latin American dub

Fig. 9 —FUNimation's title card for the English-Language version of *Dragon Ball Z*

One of the wider impacts of the Mexican broadcast "anime wars" of the 1990s amounted to a decisive shift away from the previous culture of family-oriented anime consumption, towards one that was much more in line with the general franchise-driven trends in children's programming that had been growing in pervasiveness since the 1980s. Anime texts had proven themselves in this market as capable of launching children's media franchises every bit as popular and commercially viable as those coming in from the United States. This was a shift that went hand in hand with the aperture of Latin America both culturally in the wake of a wave of internal political conflicts, as well as economically, with the imposition of a variety of shifts liberalizing several national economies. In the level of bilateral relationships between Latin America and Japanese media producers and distributors, this emergence likewise anticipated by

several years a very similar phenomena in the Anglo-American children's media landscape, albeit with a slightly different roster of anime properties. While *Dragon Ball Z* has become a very successful franchise in the English-speaking world, *Saint Seiya* wouldn't be imported to the United States until 2003 on Cartoon Network, and even then the series was substantially censored and was never released in its entirety (Anime News Network, "*Saint Seiya*"). This aperture would likewise open up the Latin American market for a new, much more developed mode of hybrid importation, having now set up a culture of anime consumption in the region that was much more legible to the logics of the Anglo-American children's media market. To that end, and only a year after *Dragon Ball Z* was imported, Televisa would follow up with a show just as successful, but this time directed by media entities with a much stronger presence in the American continent.

Pokémon **as a Japanese/Anglo-American Media Phenomenon: 1999 onwards**

By sheer revenue produced, there is no question of *Pokémon*'s primacy as not just the most successful anime or videogame franchise, but also the most successful media franchise, with combined retail and media sales reporting in excess of US$55 billion as of March 2017 (The Pokémon Company). In addition to its massive presence in the total global mediascape, what may be most interesting about the *Pokémon* phenomenon is the way in which it marked a point of transition in the perception of anime texts as globally trafficked properties. *Pokémon*'s success has fundamentally shifted the status that anime properties have been conferred in this respect, especially in the realm of children's television. With respect to its Latin American presence in particular, the franchise is likewise notable for the way its trajectory deviated from the modes of circulation I've discussed so far — not only affected by the general structural influence of the

Anglo-American media market in its circulation, but indeed its very inception as a globally-trafficked media property.

Given its highly curated roll-out in the Anglo-American market, the version of *Pokémon* that arrived in Latin America would of course be that which had been previously reconfigured for the US market. As a consequence of this, virtually every aspect of *Pokémon*'s arrival to Latin America in 1998 (dubbed in the CDMX but first aired on Chilean TV) was shaped in some way by its Anglo-American iterations. Character names and idiosyncratic terminology all used the versions created by and for Nintendo of America. Slogans, visual identities, logos, songs, all likewise took their cues from the Anglo-American version (Fig. 10). Following this same dynamic, the Latin American version likewise inherited the same sets of censored and omitted content, most notoriously an episode that induced seizures in many Japanese children (Rife), but also a few other episodes and scenes that have been omitted from the Anglo-American 4Kids dub for issues of sexuality, offensive depictions of race, and gunplay (Cooper). Toys proved an interesting hybrid, packaged in English/Spanish language boxes and blister packs, while certain talking toys betrayed their origins by repeating dialogue from the original Japanese show, thus revealing several layers of palimpsestic meaning. Unlike its predecessors *Saint Seiya* or *Dragon Ball Z*, or even its close successors *Digimon* (1999-) and *Shaman King* (2001-2), *Pokémon* represents an instance of anime's popular impact in Latin America that cannot be understood without factoring in the transnational institutional relationships linking firstly Nintendo to the Anglo-American media market, and secondly the Anglo-American media market to Latin America.

Fig. 10 — A VHS tape for a set of episodes from the first Season of *Pokémon*, produced for the Mexican market in 1998. Note the font and character names, all devised for the US version. Likewise note the logo for 4Kids (the company adapting the show for the English-speaking market) sitting alongside the Nintendo seal on the back of rear box art.

The *Pokémon* franchise's emergence and circulation in the Western mediascape has been thoroughly documented and discussed in both academic and lay circles, and with good reason. In spite of anime's presence in the global imaginary since the artform's own early television history in the 1960s (Ruh, 223), for many the *Pokémon* phenomenon represents the true emergence of anime culture into the Western mainstream. This is especially true in the US, where, as I've detailed, anime's cultural presence had up until this point been variably relegated to either subcultural consumption, denigrated as cheap airtime filler, or employed as re-

configurable raw material for derivative media texts.[23] Given anime's much more recognized presence in other mediascapes since well before this property's Western emergence in 1998, it would be tempting to write off perceptions of *Pokémon*'s importance as one of many instances of US perspectives taken as a synecdoche for wider regional or global cultural experiences. At the same time, however, and because of its success in both the US and the late 1990s, *Pokémon* and Nintendo benefitted from both the potential amplification inherent in the Anglo-American mediascape's massive sphere of influence, and the institutional honing of neoliberal transmedia franchise logics. Nintendo's growth as a globally-oriented multimedia company with deep ties to the Anglo-American mediascape made it so that there was very little chance of any media property associated with it trafficking internationally without at least some US input. Latin America was a steady market for anime, but a secondary consideration for a company that trafficked primarily in videogames. There was no way Nintendo would risk this already locally lucrative franchise by exporting it along parallel pathways to Anglo and Latin America. *Pokémon*'s adaptation into a globally-oriented commodity in the mid-late 90s indeed represents the culmination of decades of coordinated efforts and frequent missteps by Japanese media industry actors in establishing a firm foothold in the Anglo-American market. Since at least the 1970s, Japanese businesses had sought to forge stable media presences in US media industries, not, as Iwabuchi states, "to kill or capture the American soul but, on the contrary, to capitalize on and extend Hollywood's global reach" (2004, 65).

Where previous instances of anime's entrance to the US in particular were for the most part a product of expanding markets and emergent platforms that necessitated competitively

[23] Saban's *Power Rangers* (1993-) comes to mind in particular as an immediate precedent to the *Pokémon*'s popularity in US and later global markets as a similarly popular toyetic franchise with Japanese origins, albeit one that was, firstly, live-action, and secondly, yet another remixed, recontextualized, and highly localized text that used its *Super Sentai* source material more or less as raw footage integrating a derivative end product (Johnson, 163).

priced texts, *Pokémon* benefitted from decades of institutional trasnationalization, neoliberalization and experimentation with multi-platform franchise negotiation and localization by Nintendo itself, as well as Saban, Sega, Bandai, and others. Companies based on both sides of the Pacific had up until this point variably benefitted from the circulation of anime texts in the Anglo-American mediascape. In spite of their success, and in spite of the relative respectability they had achieved in other markets, Japanese animation up until the mid 1990s still maintained the persistent stigma as a second-tier category of product in the Anglo-American consciousness, inferior technically, and generally responding to, rather than establishing, trends in the animation field. While children up until this point were only too familiar with the products of Japanese labor on screen, authorship and control of intellectual property was persistently held by Anglo-American actors: Directing franchises wholesale from companies based in the US and Canada, working as the public faces of transnational partnerships (Johnson, 171-172), or using Japanese media properties as fodder for their own palimpsestic works (Cubbison, 48).

While profitable for many, this dynamic had firmly established an asymmetric relationship between Japanese producers and Anglo-American buyers and intermediaries — one in which the integrity of anime texts was consistently compromised, and Japanese producers and artists were treated almost colonially as suppliers of raw product for Anglo-American elaboration and direction. In this ancillary and largely responsive, clientalistic position, Japanese media companies, despite their own ambitions and innovations, would be persistently held in a dynamic that reflected who they might have been much earlier on in their own history, but that no longer corresponded to the growth in infrastructure, industrial reach, or professionalization they had seen since. As such, and despite anime's regional and global reach up to this point, Japanese media companies were still struggling to overcome their perceived status as what Luo,

Sun and Wang refer to as "Emerging Economy Copycats" or EECs in the Anglo-American market (49). It was indeed this same positioning that drove down the relative price of the media they produced, and allowed it to travel so widely to emergent and peripheral media markets, such as those of Latin America. *Pokémon* as such emerges as a concrete instance of, if not an outright reversal of this dynamic, than the establishment of a new mode of negotiation and integration of Japanese industry players into the Anglo-American mediascape. While they were obliged to hinge the global success of their work on their integration into and correspondence with the Anglo-American culture industries, they could now do so while exerting much more control over the cultural goods they produced.

While much of the English-speaking popular culture at large would be blindsided by this emergence, this was the materialization of a process that had been developing for years, and indeed may have simply been waiting for the right confluence of institutional affiliations and cultural providence. By the late 1980s, Nintendo had already sought to expand its video game franchises into the Anglo-American children's TV market with two shows produced more or less simultaneously. The first, *Captain N: The Game Master*, (1989) was a crossover series of sorts featuring several characters and settings from Nintendo (and Konami) titles. The second, *The Super Mario Bros. Super Show!* (1989) was a combination live-action/animated program made in the style of US compilation/variety shows. Both featured plots and character designs in their animated segments largely determined by the formats and practices already established in the Anglo-American 80s children's television landscape. Notably, and much like many of these franchise-driven shows (*ThunderCats* 1985-1989, *He-Man* 1983-1985, *GI Joe* 1983-1986, *My Little Pony* 1984-1987) both *Captain N* and *Super Mario* also displayed many of the subtle aesthetics and cost-cutting features of TV-oriented anime. This makes sense, because these

shows were in fact all animated in Japan. Early in the 1990s other major media franchises likewise emerged through the collaboration of Japanese and Anglo-American media players and the hybridization of Japanese media properties. The many *Sonic the Hedgehog* cartoons come to mind as an example, as does Saban's live action and long-running *Power Rangers* (1993-) franchise and its less successful progeny: *Ghost Rider* (1995) and *Big Bad Beetleborgs* (1996-1998).

Pokémon, informed by such precedents and benefiting from Nintendo's long-running institutional bifurcation between Japan and the US, was a different beast altogether. Where *The Super Mario Bros. Super Show!* was seen by Nintendo as an opportunistic endeavor to advertise their games and maintain characters in the public eye (and indeed was almost wholly envisioned by parties outside of even Nintendo of America), *Pokémon* was already being shaped as a synergistic multi-platform media franchise before being circulated outside Japan, having already developed its two Game Boy titles, a popular manga series, card game, and its anime series before arriving to the United States. Iwabuchi for his part has highlighted to what extent the *Pokémon* anime series was, from the outset, a deeply transnational product — not simply employing the already-European coded aesthetics of "mukokuseki" anime character design, but also seeking to downplay Japanese cultural signifiers and "Americanize" its cultural signifiers (2004, 66).

Despite such concerted efforts to downplay *Pokémon*'s Japanese cultural specificity and/or odor, it is worth noting though that the *Pokémon* anime, due precisely to its widespread success and status as a breakthrough in the US market, remains the source of several of the most referred-to examples of clumsy localization. Memes of and references to unsuccessful and or palimpsestic instances of cultural translation abound in online social spaces even now, made all

the more relevant by *Pokémon*'s continued cultural currency and status as a generational touchstone (Fig. 11).

Fig. 11 — *Pokémon*'s Brock offers the other characters his homemade "jelly-filled donuts", though they are clearly identifiable as onigiri, this is a now memetic instance of palimpsestic cultural translation (Baird).

All the same, and unlike many other instances of two-step exportation in which the US became an intermediary and site of re-mediation for other media markets, it could very well be argued that *Pokémon* was from its outset as a global media phenomenon already a partially Anglo-American product. *Pokémon* was not only facilitated in its circulation by Nintendo of America and its various partners, but also largely directed and shaped by these players as well. Some conflict and negotiation would still of course be part of this process, but this still produces an environment in which what were (and have been) seen as entrenchedly "Japanese" cultural

products have increasingly become transnational objects, catered to and shaped by the Anglo-American marketplace. This dynamic somewhat mirrors the relationship once so established between US-based franchise "authors" and Japanese producers of toys and animation footage itself. At the same time, the reconfiguring of the processes and hierarchies involved have also meant that its Japanese players have increasingly found ways of both reaping larger proportions of the resulting dividends, as well as achieving greater recognition and power over how these objects are conceived and administrated.[24]

While this shift in anime's integration and agency with respect to the Anglo-American market would provide greater inroads for other anime franchises during the late 1990s and 2000s, it had the simultaneous effect of likewise making Anglo-American industry actors take on a greater responsibility for the distribution and success of their investment. The success of *Pokémon* in the US and beyond would as such have a ripple effect both temporally and spatially. One substantial consequence of the Anglo-American marketplace's sudden scrambling for the 'next big thing' from Japan was the sudden shift not only in the potential marketability (and price) of anime programming on the global market, but also how such products would arrive to and circulate within Latin America. From this point on, the nature of anime importation to the region would be heavily shaped by if, when and how a given show or franchise had previously circulated in the Anglo-American market, and whether these US or Canadian-based distributors had gained some measure of success with it.

The type of programming that distributors were now willing to invest in would itself likewise be highly affected by the precedent set by the *Pokémon* franchise's genre trappings. For

[24] In the case of *Pokémon* for instance, the initial character designs themselves were one point of friction, with US-based members of Nintendo of America apparently wanting to sex-up the overall character designs, doubtful as they were of Japanese "cuteness" as a draw for US audiences. Iwabuchi's writing on *Pokémon* makes the dichotomy between Japanese "cuteness" and American "coolness" a central point in his discussion of this franchise's cultural identity (2004 2, 66). This bears out in interviews given by Game Freak's Satoshi Tajiri ("Special Dialogue").

its part, while the largely episodic and ultimately open-ended *Pokémon* anime series itself was much shallower than the melodramatically inflected *Dragon Ball Z* and *Caballeros del Zodiaco*, it did fit firmly within many narrative traditions of the shonen anime field, combining elements of sports and tournament fighting with the merchandisable and toyetic cuteness of mascot-character based series (Yano, 11). To this, *Pokémon* adds an overt element of collecting and acquisition that is at once incredibly conducive to consumption, and proved successful enough to create an opportunity and demand for a variety of similarly-inflected series featuring regular encounters with citified supernatural creatures. Perhaps most notably among these was Bandai's *Digimon Adventure* — a series based primarily around the handheld *Digimon* digital pet that was itself envisioned as a boy-coded counterpart to the wildly successful *Tamagotchi* (Fig. 11).

Fig. 12 — Bandai's *Tamagotchi* (left) and *Digimon* (right) digital pets.

In subsequent years, the Latin American anime field would vacillate between imports with variable ties to the Anglo-American market, at times importing shows that had already proved themselves in the US and Canada, and at others serving as a site for experimentation with properties that themselves would later receive English translation, repackaging, and content censorship. *Digimon Adventure* arrived to Latin America after its US premier in 1999, taking on the US version's truncated name (*Digimon* rather than *Digimon Adventure*) and some paratextual framing in advertisements, but with virtually every other element adapted from in the Japanese original rather than the heavily edited US version. Inversely, the supernatural tournament fighter *Shaman King* (2001-2002) was imported to Latin America first in 2002 via the Fox Kids cable platform, only to be later brought to the US in 2003 and similarly edited down and repackaged to meet both US content standards and the Anglo-American children's media market's format expectations. Throughout these trajectories, and thanks to the growing intermingling and convergence of the Anglo and Latin American Mediascapes (Gómez, Miller and Dorcé, 45), such modes of cultural adaptation, censorship and repackaging remain a point of difference between Spanish and English-language adaptations of anime texts. Even in media environments such as Fox Kids which cut transnationally across Spanish and English Language demographics (even within the same states), Spanish and English language treatments of anime texts are distinguished by their separate approaches to cultural adaptation. Where Anglo-American adaptations targeted to children and adolescents seek still to quell cultural difference, Latin American remediators (and audiences) remain much more willing to take markers of foreignness as a natural facet of these texts, integrating them into their quotidian consumption.

Anime's circulation to and through Latin America has now moved beyond an era in which the Anglo-American media field could be seen as a separate, external agent, in large part because anime is now recognized as a viable commodity by Anglo-American industrial actors. Alongside this emergence US media companies have concurrently now developed deeply ingrained ties to (and subsidiaries in) Latin American media systems. As a product of these two intertwined processes, anime's circulation in Latin America now more than ever cannot be understood without factoring in the institutional impact of the Anglo-American market. In this sense, I imagine the flows of anime (even and especially flows operating independently of direct Anglo-American institutional affiliation) as being subjected to a parabolic, almost gravitational pull from the AngloAmerican cultural/commercial field (Fig. 13). Such parabolic flows are most visible when observing the flow of cultural objects from one periphery to another via infrastructures, relationships or other broader systems built by or for actors embedded in centers of hegemonic power. Because these same factors are so prevalent throughout the global mediascape, such dynamics are indeed more the norm than the exception. After all, almost all kinds of cultural flow are subject to some degree of influence from systems established in the service of hegemonic structures. The parabolic effect of anime's circulation to Latin America can in this way be seen less as an idiosyncratic phenomenon than a case study illustrating similar (though perhaps less evident) processes of systemic influence going on in other instances of media circulation across peripheral and semi-peripheral markets and media cultures.

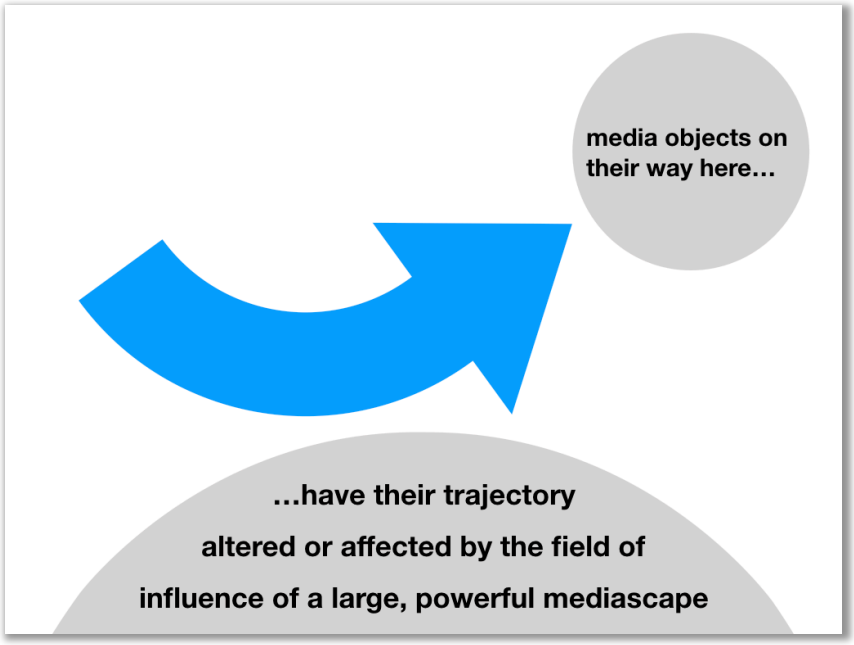


Fig. 13 — Parabolic trajectories of media flow

Towards the future: inter-penetrative flows?

Between the years 2013 and 2015, Netflix's US-based media library had two versions of the show *Digimon* available for streaming (le Vine). The first, *Digimon: Digital Monsters*, was already familiar to US audiences, having already had a substantial impact in fomenting Anglo-American anime fandom during the late 1990s and early 2000s. The second, *Digimon Adventure,* was being legally circulated in the US for the first time outside of hardcopy video distribution. Both were in fact the same show to a certain extent: *Digimon Adventure* the original Japanese text, *Digimon: Digital Monsters* the English language adaptation repackaged, reconfigured, and culled of certain content. Why both? *Digimon Adventure* is not a show that was ever intended to cater to animation connoisseurs or even necessarily subcultural enthusiasts of anime. Given its lack of English-language soundtrack, it was likewise an inadequate choice to fill out the children's TV library. What it did have was a Spanish language soundtrack. This was the

Digimon that participated in Mexico's "anime wars", and that was distributed throughout the 2000s in the wider Spanish-speaking world. And between 2013 and 2015, it coincided in Netflix's curated categories alongside both Netflix's anime offerings and its Spanish-language library. This leads me to believe that Netflix's licensing of this series was a bifurcated strategy, on the one hand appealing to curious or devoted fans of subtitled anime, while on the other catering to a Latin American audience that continues to grow in both size and commercial importance within the wider Anglo-American mediascape. This tendency indeed lends doubt to what were once much more rigid separations between Latin and Anglo-American media systems, audiences and institutions.

As with any transcultural encounter, the integration of the Anglo and Latin American mediascapes has cut both ways. Whereas its impact was felt first and more completely in the Latin American cultural sphere, the pervasion of Spanish and Latin American media forms has in fits and starts come to occupy an increasingly visible role in the Anglo-American mediascape as well. And where certain texts such as *Ugly Betty* (2006-2010) or *Jane the Virgin* (2014-) are largely incorporative in their cultural domestication of the trappings of the telenovela for Anglo-American consumption, others have taken a different tack. These have integrated the same platforms and industrial models, but with no intention of integrating the same cultural-linguistic field. Rather, they seek to cater to an entrenched and growing Spanish-speaking Latin American audience that happens to reside in the same space as Anglo-Americans.

Broadcast and cable television manage to separate these worlds somewhat through the allegorized spatial territory of the TV channel. But on streaming platforms such as Netflix, Amazon and Hulu, these boundaries are less self-evident, buried as they are in algorithmic content curation, geoblocking and regional licensing boundaries. These are the same platforms

that are increasingly pushing for the further transculturation of media forms that were at one time understood to exist within much firmer boundaries of language and national affiliation. Netflix for its part has commissioned 30-plus anime series for 2018 (Vincent). Are these even anime anymore? A purist rejection of these series' legitimacy under this rubric falls apart when we consider that even the first anime series were often funded at least partially by Western media distributors (Ruh, 209). Anime's history as a distinct media form has always been a highly transcultural, transnational affair. And while anime producers may have quite willingly immersed themselves within the commercial logics of Anglo-American hegemony, the balancing act going forward will be in taking advantage of this wider field while maintaining the cultural/industrial identity that made their texts viable commodities and cultural products to begin with.

In taking notice of which properties are being commissioned for emergent platforms, we can see in what way contemporary industrial actors are responding to a variety of affordances and industrial strategies. Primary among these for anime textualities we may note the potential for mobilizing nostalgia, and/or the re-evocation of promising properties that were never given an opportune chance to excel. Alongside this we can also consider the franchise potential in re-circulating IP that found prior success in different markets. Netflix's licensing and production agreements with regard to *Voltron*, and *Saint Seiya* reflect precisely such logics, as does the behavior of Cartoon Network's revival of the cult classic *FLCL* (2000-2001). And while it would seem as if these agreements are a simple perpetuation of the same clientalistic dynamics that marked much earlier relationships between Anglo-American distributors and Japanese studios, the question of who the audience for these commissions are has become much more complicated

by the fact that these platforms can no longer see themselves as entrenched within a single cultural or linguistic mediascape.

As with the case of Netflix's twinned *Digimon* series, the bifurcation of anime's parallel trajectories to either the Anglo or Latin American mediascapes, each with its own relationship to anime culture in general, has at a systemic level itself come crashing together amid an ever-consolidating global media market with increasingly transnationally-oriented platforms of distribution. This suggests to me something we might describe as an interpenetration of mediascapes and flows, not fully intermingling, but crossing through each other even as they maintain certain distinct boundaries -- another "crystal frontier", as Carlos Fuentes puts it. Amid Netflix's new commissions for 2018 is a revival of *Saint Seiya* entitled *Knights of the Zodiac: Saint Seiya* (Biery). Who is this series for, and what industrial logics are dictating its production? Given the purposeful polysemy of contemporary media promotion and demographic targeting, there are a variety of ways this decision could be framed. What remains clear, however, is the increasingly transcultural nature of the field in question, having to account now not just for the increased authorial agency of Japanese producers, but also the integration of Latin American sensibilities, professionals, fandoms and institutional media frameworks within ostensibly Anglo-American spaces and infrastructures.

Phenomena such as these demonstrate in what way both old structures of colonial transculturation and newer logics of transnational corporate integration lead to instances of cultural reflux, ceding certain — often unexpected — areas of influence even as they seek to expand their own power. Once such boundaries are breached, even secondary positions within these avenues of the public sphere can eventually take on significant roles in the wider culture's development. And while entrenched powerful actors can and will act to maintain standards of

differential access and representation, once fractured, these borders can't so easily be reestablished. The boundaries separating the Latin and Anglo-American mediascapes have always been highly permeable. Now that the Anglo-American mediascape is itself ceding to the influx of media from a greater variety of systems, — eager to profit through their remediation itself — it must likewise contend with histories, practices and identities that have always been a part of its systems, but have never had this much power to shape the future of its institutions. Such processes are further complicated by the fact that these integrations are happening not only between this sphere and its many peripheries, but also laterally across these peripheries themselves. Actors working from positions of entrenched metropolitan power will no doubt continue to try to preserve the political and economic asymmetries they benefit from and depend on. All the same, the cultural fields they navigate look to be increasingly shaped by the frictions of an Anglo-American sphere that has itself become ever more greatly integrated by the peoples it has historically imposed its interests upon — peoples who are furthermore now becoming all the more aware not only of their own positioning, but also of each other.

Conclusion — Towards a Broader Perspective of Transperipheral Culture

This dissertation has examined anime's circulation to Mexico City and throughout Latin America as an entry point to several interrelated cultural phenomena, all of which relate in some way to media flows that work outside of or around more commonly understood dynamics of global media hegemony and asymmetry. Firstly, it tracks anime's development as a category of cultural commodity shaped largely by its secondary status in the global media market. This position has prompted anime culture to most easily and potently circulate within emergent, peripheral and semi-peripheral mediascapes. By following its trajectory to the Latin American mediascape in particular, I have likewise made the case for a perspective of this region as a media community in which Mexico plays a pivotal role, while nonetheless eliding its potential positioning as a center of regional cultural hegemony. Throughout its discussion of the role played by Mexican remediators in anime's Latin American circulation, this project has sustained a focus on media flow as a dimension of cultural, economic and political power, connecting the long history of anime's integration in the Latin American cultural sphere to the emergence of new voices, bodies and cultural referents from other localities, including Korea, Turkey and India. In doing so, it has been my intent to present anime's trajectory to Latin America as a case study that may serve as an antecedent to the exploration of the infrastructures, institutional

relationships and dimensions of labor involved in both forging and managing media flows from these emergent regional actors as well.

While the Latin American region as a whole has experienced a great deal of growth with regard to media access and the development of local production cultures, it remains a market highly shaped by a culture of media importation. And while the relatively recent development of a more polyvocal field is encouraging with regard to the region's growth as a more integral, less provincialized mediascape, it is nonetheless still subject to the asymmetric cultural dynamics of its position within a global empire centered in institutions embedded in the global "North", and the United States in particular. As an exception to the dominant cultural flows and power geometries that typically accompany this region's peripheral positioning, anime's channels of circulation to Latin America serve as both prototype and potential archetype to the growth of other communicative networks. Not just in Latin America, but across all manner of situated relative peripheries.

Like Latin America's own telenovela format, anime has found the global success it has largely as a facet of its own denigration as a cheap, second-class commodity on the global stage. This same position drove producers of anime to do whatever they could to make the product of their labor as spreadable a commodity as possible, sometime in ways that fed into positive perceptions of quality, and sometimes in ways that simply made it a convenient alternative to the pricier output of more established production centers. This convenience, along with its often robust quality as children's programming made anime spread quickly in many secondary media markets, several of which were situated in peripheral and semi-peripheral localities (Sayfo, 87). The cultural impact of anime in such mediascapes was indeed often so significant that its narratives, characters music and other facets came to integrate the quotidian cultural landscapes

of these locations as a whole. This is, furthermore, a level of deep integration that stands in contrast to the more subcultural followings of anime in more metropolitan markets during this same time period.

Anime's peripheral spreadability in this way shares many resonances with that of the telenovela. Like telenovelas, anime are often packaged as self-contained, single season narratives. Both have likewise developed aesthetics and industrial practices highly shaped by the limited resources of early television production cultures in states considered secondary media markets (Havens, 53). Both make use of melodrama and commonly reiterated tropes to build expectations and resonate affectively with audiences. Finally, both anime and telenovelas are largely targeted towards often overlooked and trivialized audiences, generating all the more devotion among these communities because of it. Anime itself, as a child-oriented media form, has more recently accrued the added benefit of generationally-affiliated fandom. The potency of this affective relationship to certain anime texts in this regard is indeed so strong in certain communities that Mexican screenings of the latest iteration of *Dragon Ball* are now drawing audiences to bars that typically screen soccer and boxing matches, with the mayor of Juarez now promising to screen the series finale of *Dragon Ball Super* (2015-2018) in the city square (Noticias Ya).

Befitting its points of similarity with the telenovela's spreadability, anime culture has found its primary point of entry to Latin America through the work of remediation communities situated in the single most prolific site of telenovela production itself, Mexico City. Anime's trajectory through Mexico City as such speaks as well to this media capital's own function and position within the Latin American mediascape. While Mexico comprises the largest single market and most powerful embedded site of Latin media production, the particularities of its

history as a conduit of imperial power in the Americas have nonetheless left it less as a regional hegemon than a leader among equals as far as media cultures are concerned. Given the broader postcolonial history of Latin America as a postcolonial aggrupation vacillating wildly between cultural/linguistic cohesion and vast heterogeneity, Mexico's established position as both one of the regions' predominant centers and entry points has nonetheless lent it a degree of power over the shape of Latin America's wider media cultures and institutions. This power is subtle, and seldom deliberately mobilized, but it has nonetheless exerted a considerable amount of influence over the development of the Latin American media 'voice' — the linguistic compromise represented by the Spanish media dialect propagated throughout the region.

A comprehensive understanding of media's circulation to and within Latin America must as such account not only for the various frictions and negotiations taking place between exporters, buyers and local audiences, but must also factor in the production cultures of Latin America's various embedded networks of remediation. It should in turn also account for how these actors integrate and respond to the imagined community that comprises the pan-Latin American Spanish-speaking mediascape. As touched upon in Chapter 3, this multifaceted network of sellers, buyers, clients and creative workers is shaped by a dynamic of flow that is eminently horizontal with regard to its reflection of cultural, political and economic power (Thussu, 23). While certainly never achieving a total erasure of asymmetrical interaction, the realities of both relative peripherality and the presence of a much wider Latin American market have created a Mexican remediation network that has never attempted to claim cultural protagonism over the region. Quite the opposite, it has indeed participated in actively diminishing its own cultural presence in imported texts to the extent that even locally-distributed

media have become integrated into the structures of Latin American media's wider neutralized Spanish dialect and accent.

In their importation of anime texts, Latin American remediators came to form a distribution network with other media professionals who likewise found their voice in the global media market by positioning themselves through, if not subservient strategies, than certainly ones that were willing to adapt themselves to their clients' realities. Anime producers have indeed worked along these lines since the artform's earliest inception as a globally trafficked commodity (Clements, 130). Thanks in large part to these dynamics, I see the presence of anime in Latin America as adopting a much less invasive dimension than it otherwise might have taken — one that has in turn allowed for anime textualities themselves to more easily integrate and shape the region's popular culture and discourse.

As the Latin American media field has grown itself into a substantial area of export-oriented media production, so too has the Japanese animation production community entered into a period of mainstream acceptance and viability as a generator of possibly multi-billion dollar intellectual properties. The growth of both of these production communities has in turn invited the attention, investment and collaboration of Anglo-American media industries. These processes of integration have only further accelerated the growth and sophistication of local production industries, while also allowing for the experimentation of new means of incorporation of Japanese and Latin American textualities within the Anglo-American mediascape itself.

(Re)defining Peripheries

The depth of this continuing integration between Anglo-American industry players and those based in Latin America and Japan raises the question of how the latter have continued to

function amid a global media landscape in which old divisions of center and periphery can no longer be so easily mapped onto national boundaries, (post)colonial relationships and formal blocs of influence. This is nothing to say of the complications wrought by the myriad ways in which media labor in general is being affected by deterritorializing processes. Amid a cultural field in which transnational media labor is increasingly becoming more the norm than the exception (particularly with regard to animation), can we really speak of defined peripheral media communities anymore?

The question itself may be somewhat facetious, but given the ways in which neoliberal practices have sought to alienate production processes and workers' relationships to one another across all areas of economic activity (and indeed social life), the ability to recognize and address deterritorialized transnational peripherality is becoming increasingly important. It has value both for understanding the current state of the field, as well as in advocating for its most disenfranchised groups. To the question of deterritorialization in general, I respond by reiterating and elaborating upon what I stated in my introduction — that peripherality's function on a macro-social level is just as much about embedded histories of asymmetrical identitary and epistemological relationships as it is about political-economic dynamics. While peripheral actors and localities may as such rise in their economic standing and political self-determination over time, they often are only able to do so through mechanisms that reinforce the same systems and dynamics that once held them in subservient positions (Diaz Pino, 2015, 238). A subjective position shaped by long-held and/or traumatically enforced notions of subalterity will absolutely be affected by a sudden rise to prominence, power and increased economic stability. There is no guarantee however that this shift will erase or even diminish the self-perceptions, ideologies, and/or social dynamics that were established in their prior condition. This is especially true when

economic dividends have been won through the strategic mobilization of the affordances provided by one's own subalterity. Economic and political peripherality can certainly be overcome, but its cultural dimension has to be looked at more agonistically. Such is the case with anime, which, having now become much more respected and even admired amid the wider animation mediascape, has been definitively codified by its growth as a once-peripherally situated media form. On need only observe its embedded visual aesthetics to confirm this with their persistent adoption of the racially problematic practice of mukokusekiseki, which has for its part has now been assumed as an almost integral aspect of the form.

With respect to the question of how the growth and stratification of globally powerful industrial players in Mexico City affect this dissertation's perspective of it as a peripheral media capital, I likewise posit that plutocracies are not an exception to peripheral dynamics, but one of their more important facets. As I likewise stated at the outset of this dissertation, peripherality is an interrelational dynamic, shaped not only through external asymmetries of power, but also by internal social stratifications. Given the fact that Mexico as a whole has persistent structural problems with regard to both wealth distribution and corruption, the increased concentration of wealth and power among Mexico City's embedded comprador classes functions only to further entrench local asymmetries and peripheral logics.

By the same token, and as touched upon throughout this project, while much of the media circulation that takes place in Latin America is initially driven and directed by deeply entrenched and stratified comprador classes, the role these play in the cultural life of the Latin American mediascape is much less monolithic than we might assume. While the total economic and political power wielded by these plutocrats may be largely uncontested on a structural level, the fact that it is situated in and dependent upon a context of relative peripherality negates their

total immersion in Wood's conception of a Transnational Capitalist Class (9-10). That is to say, while Latin America's media-trafficking comprador classes may not themselves be peripheral subjects in terms of political-economic standing, they, like the rest of the region's population, are still subject to the logics, negotiations, and identitary conflicts that distinguish peripheral localities as macro-social cultural thickenings (Hepp and Couldry, 38). The Chilean punk band Los Prisioneros once mocked Chile's own plutocrats by asking them that, if they were so enamored with Europe and the US, "why don't thy just stay there on their next vacation?" ("¿Por Qué No Se Van?"). The bite in the question comes from the fact they know the answer all too well. While peripherally-embedded comprador classes might have substantial ties to the global "North" — owning vacation homes and sending their children to be educated there — they also know that they could never integrate these metropolises satisfactorily enough make up for the loss of relative power they hold in their peripheral homes. Despite the often obscene disparities these actors benefit from and uphold, they are just as embedded in peripheral frameworks as the disenfranchised classes they work to exploit and suppress.

The reason then I have been so persistent in speaking of Mexico City as a peripheral media capital in spite of both its regional power and prolific cultural output is because it — like so many other more recently emergent media capitals — is still subject to the logics and relative structural positioning of the periphery. And while Japan for its part has certainly superseded the economic and political trappings of peripherality in many ways, its outward-facing industries have likewise been fundamentally marked by a position of cultural peripherality. In order to trade globally, they have been obliged to self-erase — to pragmatically look at their own subjective position as an Other, in order to enter the hegemonic global system. As noted by Iwabuchi, this position is marked by a tendency that sees Japanese industrialists less committed

to gaining control than economic benefit, holding an advantageous position within the global environment, but even now only having a small amount of cultural protagonism within it (Iwabuchi, 2004, 65).

Regardless of the precise power geometries in which Japan and Mexico find themselves at the present moment, the longer history of interaction they share via the importation of anime to the Latin American mediascape nonetheless speaks to networks of media flow forged while both were still developing, and during which both could much more firmly be seen as emergent actors in the likewise incipient global television media market. It is in such liminal conditions that I see the greatest possibility for opportunistic cross-cultural contact, and it is within such networks of media flow that other emergent and peripheral actors can find examples for how to forge their own incipient relationships.

Towards Transperipherality

During the throes of Latin America's wave of counter-revolutionary dictatorships during the 1970s and 80s, the Argentine activist and musician Mercedes Sosa posited the question of whether the South was possible at all ("¿Será Posible el Sur?"). Typical of her rhetorical style, this question is multivalent, on the one hand asking if the South's lived experience amid its injustices and atrocities could be encapsulated in human understanding, while on the other hand questioning if the South itself can exist as a cohesive category of subjectivity. The question of how to build alliances and common agendas in response to global imperialism was one of the primary problematics to arise in the wake of decolonization and the advent of postcolonial criticism. It's one that has been confronted through various strategies and agendas by Rodó, Fanon, Césaire, Fernández Retamar, Spivak, Chakabarty, Dabashi and a multitude of other

thinkers, most of whom themselves arrived to mainstream avenues of academic discourse and institutionality from peripheral localities and subaltern subjective positions.

In her chronicle of the history and impact of the Tricontinental movement (a network of activists, revolutionaries and social critics active throughout what we now call the Global South), Anne Garland Mahler identifies in what way the idea of collaboration between Latin American, African and Asian decolonizers came about through the necessity of building political movements that were able to respond to imperialism along parameters that went beyond racial or regionally-delineated political blocs ("Introduction", see Fig. 1). Formalized under the OSPAAAL (Organization of Solidarity with the People of Asia, Africa and Latin America), the movement was first established during the Tricontinental Conference of 1966, held in Havana and attended by delegates from eighty-two nations of Africa, Asia and Latin America. While flawed in many ways, the Tricontinental was one of the first formalized coordinations of actors intent on achieving local decolonization through the globally-coordinated exchange of material resources, logistical support and expertise. Their objectives for cross-cultural contact likewise went beyond the container thinking of the nation, extending to a conceptualization of global peripherality that included the 'internal' peripheries of the metropolitan First World — focusing in particular on the racially oppressed and dispossessed ("The Colored and Oppressed").

Fig. 1 — A poster celebrating the 15 year anniversary of the OSPAAAL and the Tricontinental

Key within their rhetoric was what Garland Mahler identifies as a "horizontalist" tendency of communication and cultural exchange — one that sought to find common ground and agendas in similar experiences as exploited and marginalized subjects within the dominant world order. This horizontalist approach is one that she sees as informing both the wider scope of black internationalism, as well as a variety of more recent counter-hegemonic popular movements responding to capitalist globalization ("Conclusion"). The idea of horizontality has indeed been independently evoked in a variety of contestatory subaltern political frameworks. In Argentina for instance, it was a tenet proposed by the collectivist response to the state's 2001 neoliberal financial collapse (Sitrin). As I've touched upon in this project, it is likewise useful as a conceptual tool to imagine cultural relationships that run "across", or "around" matrices of hegemonic power.

The perspective of this dissertation has in large part been envisioned as a means of exploring and identifying the potential for such horizontality in latent cultural relationships — ones that function largely at the unobserved level of quotidianity. While such relationships are often difficult to connect to more visible social and political processes, As Raymond Williams notes, it is in the "ordinary", the quotidian, that cultures are negotiated and built (3). In arguing for the transperipheral nature of anime's circulation and cultural impact in Latin America, this is then not to say that I am making the case for a mode of cultural exchange that serves as an analogue or extension of the logics employed by the Tricontinental, or indeed the wider decolonization movement. As I've noted throughout this project, most, if not all of the cultural flows I've looked at here were indeed the result of opportunistic commercial exchanges occurring in the wake of the establishment of the same global capital system that was being combatted by so many of these postcolonial movements. By the same token however, I am immensely interested in how these cultural exchanges foment institutional networks and points of cultural affinity that may allow Latin American peoples to further develop a sense of cultural identity that can move beyond the fatalistic parameters of the modernity project and its futile pursuit of European ontologies.

For over five centuries, Latin America has been made to see itself as an appendage of, first European, and then Anglo-American power. As the vernacular Mexican lament goes: "So far from God and so close to the United States!" And while Latin American subjectivity as a whole will probably never entirely shed this deeply engrained positioning as a collective Other, the emergence of new pathways and means of cultural exchange with other localities that have likewise gone through similar ontological displacements is, if nothing else, a refreshing shift in the range of cultural referents and interlocution available in the region. These exchanges,

quotidian as they are, also have the potential to feed into more substantial areas of mutual exchange, whether it be economic, infrastructural, and/or discursive. Depending on the shape taken by these cultural flows in the popular consciousness, they might even manifest in contestatory political frameworks, as seen in the instance of *Dragon Ball Z*'s evocation by Chilean anti-neoliberal protesters. Regardless of the precise direction taken by these exchanges, the growth of transperipheral networks of popular communication are a hopeful indicator of the excorporative potential of late capitalist frameworks, lending the "guerilla tactics" of popular subjects all the more strength through their ability to become interlocutors not just with empire, but also each other.

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