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Mexico in Anime:

Participation, Creation, and Transformation in Mexico's Anime Presence

1. Introduction

My interest in *anime*'s presence in Mexico began when I first studied abroad in Mexico City on the 2018 Language for Business and Technology (LBAT) at Georgia Tech. Having taken on the medium as an obscure interest back in the United States, I was quite caught off guard to see it be so commonplace there. On class outings, I noticed anime t-shirts on people we passed in the streets. I saw anime characters [populating graffiti](#), [murals](#), and [shop signs](#). At the markets, seemingly every few stalls sold anime posters, clothes, and keychains (of varying levels of authenticity). When I first sought out a *manga* (Japanese comic) shop in the Condesa neighborhood in only half-serious hopes of finding some translations with which to practice my Spanish, I found there were not one, but *two* only a few blocks from my host house.



This experience led me to begin researching anime in Mexico, its history, adaptation, fandom, and occurrence in regular life. Through this investigation, I discovered that the medium's entrance into Mexico includes it being deeply molded by the country. Even official anime remediated through Mexico City is marked by Mexican culture, and outside of the realm of official properties, Mexican fans appropriate anime for their own artistic work. What results is an intercultural anime scene that, rather than leaving the original material pristinely intact, has a feeling of being simultaneously Japanese and Mexican. For my Global Media and Cultures final, I will be designing a contribution to this scene, a production bible for a theoretical anime-style series of my own creation, set in Mexico City and influenced by Mexican culture. Going forward, I hope to explain the precedent that has already been set for a project like this by outlining the artistic conversation my final will be entering.

2. Why Mexico?

I focus on Mexico for several reasons. The first is, of course, my personal encounter in 2018, which sparked my original curiosity. Second, Mexico is a massively important media hub for all of Latin America. It has the longest-standing history of network radio, film, and television- in fact being one of the earliest sites to get color television (Pino). It produces and exports many *telenovelas* (soap operas), one of the most iconic and popular Latin American media products within and outside of the continent. Mexico is the home of the largest Latin-American television group, *Televisa* (Fuentes-Luque).

More relevant to my particular studies, however, is Mexico (specifically Mexico City)'s function as a site of importation, adaptation, and distribution of foreign media products. From the early days of Hollywood, the US was collaborating with Mexico, as its neighbor, to create

movies dubbed into Spanish for the Latin-American market (Fuentes-Luque). According to author Camilo César Diaz Pino in his paper *At the Center of the Periphery: Remediating Anime to and through Mexico City*, “the majority of the media that is siphoned through Mexico City ... is not actually ‘Mexican’ ... in origin. It is, by and large, Anglo-American, West-European, Japanese, ... Korean, Turkish and Indian.” Mexico gains media influence not simply through producing content, but by cultivating and making accessible content for the rest of Spanish-speaking Latin America. This is true to the extent that the “neutral Spanish” used for many Spanish-language dubs- Spanish with allegedly no discernible regional dialect- is often easily recognized as actually Mexican Spanish (Fuentes-Luque).

3. Methodology

Living in Mexico City allowed me to carry out my investigation through several different methods, for the purposes of gaining both cultural context and creative inspiration for my production bible. My background research, from before my travels, was done through traditional academic scholarship. I found a (to me, surprisingly great) number of sources on anime in Mexico, detailing its history, describing its fan culture, interviewing fans, and giving examples of the creative content it has spawned. This research was bolstered by being able to explore the topic in person in Mexico City. At the beginning of my trip, I browsed many bookstores and libraries while receiving guidance from the employees, collecting additional sources on both of my research topics: anime and *brujería*. I visited several anime-related shops, including the notorious *Friki Plaza* multiple times, and frequently discussed anime with acquaintances at these locations and otherwise.

Throughout all of this, I documented my experiences through photography, again for a number of purposes: to provide evidence of anime's popularity in the country and the spaces it appears in, to document Mexican architecture, nature, and fashion to inspire settings and costumes in my production bible, and to collect examples of the aesthetics of *brujería* spaces, among others. Most important (in my opinion) to my studies on *brujería* were my interviews with the experts I met on my travels: Fernando Renteria, Cesar Bermudez, and Cutberto Enriquez. The former a horror-inspired artist and the latter two anthropologists with focuses on Mexican witch folklore, they shared with me their interests, knowledge, and thoughts on my exploration of the topic as someone from the United States. By speaking with them, I was able to learn more about the mythology as well as how it is viewed, studied, and used for art in modern-day Mexico.

In summary, my investigation methods included traditional scholarship, anthropological observation, interviews, personal cultural analysis, and photo-based research. This hybrid method allowed me to explore my topics of interest in what felt like a holistic manner. My academic research taught me plenty of history, facts, and statistics, but living and observing in Mexico City allowed me a *feel* for the scene I was learning about. It also let me reaffirm that indeed, anime influence can be found all throughout the city in several areas of life; I was not making up that impression the first time I visited.

4. History of Anime in Mexico

Anime has been available in Mexico for at least 50 years. In 1964, Osamu Tezuka's *Astroboy* was the first Japanese anime dubbed and broadcast there (Villegas). It was followed through the 60's and into the 70's by Japanese TV programs (animated and live action) such as

Speed Racer, *Kimba: The White Lion*, *Ultraman*, and *Miss Comet*. A truly widespread anime fandom did not exist there, however, until the 1990's. *Global Craze* author Edgar Santiago Peláez Mazariegos proposes three causes: Japan's global pop culture boom in the 80's and 90's, changes to the Mexican telecommunications market in preparation for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), and Japanese toy company *Bandai*'s arrival to Latin America. While I believe these explain much of the growing availability of anime to average Mexicans, I would also like to add that much of anime's growth was due to fan efforts themselves. As will be explored later, Mexican fandom became a means of promoting anime and socializing with others, making word of mouth a strong factor in the medium's popularity. Additionally, the internet was becoming widely available during this time, making these fan activities easier and more accessible.

In the late 80's and into the 90's Mexico was making economic changes to involve itself more in the global economy, which culminated in the implementation of NAFTA. One of these changes was to reduce the state's participation in the economy, including telecommunications. As part of this reduction, the Mexican government-run television network, the *Mexican Television Institute (IMEVisión)* was privatized, making space for a competing network, *TV Azteca*, to launch in 1993 (Peláez Mazariegos, *I'll Do It Myself*). *TV Azteca* was the first challenger to the network *Televisa*'s two decades-long monopoly over Mexican TV, and it needed fresh content to compete.

In 1992, the Japanese toy company *Bandai* opened their Latin American branch in Mexico. That same year, *Bandai* approached *TV Azteca* with the request to televise the animated series *Saint Seiya*, from Japanese animation studio *Toei*, while they simultaneously launched their line of *Saint Seiya* toys. This prompted the creation of *TV Azteca*'s children's programming

block *Caritele*, on which host Adriana de Castro would promote *Bandai*'s products in between the airing of cartoons. This deal led to the doubling of *Bandai*'s total invoicing and subsequently, *Bandai* established its Latin American headquarters in Mexico and expanded to other Latin American countries. In 1996, *Bandai*, *Toei*, and *TV Azteca* repeated this success with the anime *Sailor Moon* (Peláez Mazariegos, *Global Craze*).

In 1998, in an attempt to cash in on the Mexican anime market and compete with *TV Azteca*, *Televisa* also began airing anime such as *Dragon Ball*, *Dragon Ball Z*, and *Ranma ½*. Then, in 1999, the channel imported the *Pokemon* television show and film (Peláez Mazariegos, *Global Craze*). With *TV Azteca* and *Televisa* both airing popular anime, in a media moment sometimes referred to as the “guerra del anime” (anime war) of the 90's, the medium became one with a very low barrier to entry (Pino). In his article for Bandcamp Daily, *The Influence of Anime on the Mexican Underground*, writer Richard Villegas describes the era as follows:

“The shows played daily across pillars of Mexican free-to-air television like *Televisa*, and later *TV Azteca*, piping Japanese animation into millions of households, completely free of charge. This made anime accessible to all, regardless of origin or economic status, and ingrained the art form into the collective consciousness of Mexico's youth.”

5. Anime Adaptation Practices

In her video for animation network *ChannelFrederator*'s anime subchannel *Get In The Robot*, Cristal Marie Calderón explains that much of the early anime that was popular in Latin America had little to do with what was successful in the US and Canada at the same time. While US and Canadian distributions of anime were often heavily edited, censored, and localized, Latin American distributions kept the series largely intact. Elements that were butchered in early

English-language versions were preserved in their Spanish-language forms, such as series length and episode order, Japanese names and honorifics, violence, and sexuality (including same-sex relationships). In contrast to the US, the majority of Mexico's media is imported, and thus its translation, and dubbing industries are well-established (Calderón). According to Pino, the loyalty to the sources was likely due to the Mexican mediascape placing less importance on cultural adaptation. Even where it cost more money to remain faithful to the original, such as preserving all original title sequences, the general practice was to keep as much intact as possible, because that was simply the norm. This authenticity made for substantially higher-quality products than those in the US.

It should be noted here, however, that this fidelity was not the case for *all* Latin American anime distributions. However, the changes some made may have also had something to do with their popularity, as well as the malleability anime was eventually treated with. Author Lucía Tania Cobos proposes a “latinization” that plenty of anime experienced in its importation to the continent, including the dubbing into Spanish of opening and ending themes. More radically, it occasionally included the insertion of Latin (or even solely Mexican)-specific jokes into dialogue. One example is in the Mexican Spanish dub of *Ranma ½*, in which voice actor Daniel Abundis improvised the line “¡Mis reinas, ya llegó su Luis Miguel!” (“My queens, your Luis Miguel has arrived!”), an allusion to the Mexican singer.

Another case is in the Mexican Spanish dub of *Pokemon* in which José Antonio, voice actor for the character of James, alters the ending of his team's battle cry. In the original dialogue, the team declares themselves fighting “para denunciar los males de la verdad y el amor... y extender [su] reino hasta las estrellas...” (to denounce the evils of truth and love... and extend [their] kingdom to the stars...). On several occasions, however, the actor would replace

“stars” with a Mexican-specific joke, such as “el Estadio Azteca... Sonora, Chihuahua ... Júpiter, Marte, los tacos de la esquina, la casa de mi abuelita...” (the Aztec Stadium... Sonora, Chihuahua... Jupiter, Mars, the tacos on the corner, my grandmother’s house...) (Cobos). The inclusion of these types of localized jokes for the series’ Mexican distributions also likely contributes to the blending of Japanese and Mexican influences in the Mexican anime scene.

6. Anime Fandom and Fan Promotion Efforts

In the 90’s and early 2000’s, the formation of an anime fandom in Mexico was properly taking place. Anime fans referred to themselves as *friki*, from the English *freak*, possibly in reference to the Japanese term *otaku*, a pejorative term for obsessive fans (can be of numerous media types, but typically just refers to anime outside of Japan). It became possible to purchase anime merchandise for a high price in Mexico City during this time as specialty shops appeared, including *La Casa de la Caricatura* (The House of Cartoons) and *Mundo Comic* (Comic World). In 2004, *Friki Plaza*; bustling with four stories of merchandise stands, a food court, and a gaming floor; would be established in the Mexican downtown area *Colonia Centro* (Enpoli).





Photos from my own visit to *Friki Plaza*

Mexican anime fans gathered and socialized at shops like these, discussing their favorite anime, sharing their theories, and simply meeting others with similar interests. Clubs were formed to buy and share products, such as merchandise, VHS tapes, and manga. Also during this time, comic conventions, which originally focused on American, European, and Mexican content, began featuring anime as well. Later, anime-specific conventions like La Mole, La CONVE, and Expo TNT would also be established (Villegas).

A prevalent DIY ethic was cultivated in these fan spheres, which extended to the output of amateur-made creative works. Fans created fanzines and informative blogs, such as the magazines *Domo* and *Conexion Manga* and the club/blog *Anime Project*. Some fans organized film and series screenings to increase their audience numbers in the hopes of encouraging more official attention to Mexico. Some reached out to Japanese producers, hoping to obtain new anime material (Peláez Mazariegos, *I'll Do It Myself*).

Another phenomenon of fan-creation that became prevalent in the late 90's, particularly with the growing availability of the internet, was that of *fan-translations*. These were unofficial subtitles, or dubs, of anime into Spanish, created by knowledgeable fans rather than official

sources. Such works were usually made with the intention of popularizing certain works in Mexico and making more obscure works available to non-Japanese (and/or non-English) speakers. Non-profit groups were typically the creators, and they distributed their translations free of charge. In the early years of fan-translation there were few legal copyright confrontations, perhaps because the fan-translation groups were generally not disrupting any existing market. However, as these groups continued to proliferate and prosper in later years, Japanese copyright holders began to crack down (Martínez García 2010).

According to *Domo* collaborator Rolando (no last name given), there was an agreement within most of the fan-translation groups that if the anime they were translating began legal distribution, the groups would stop their work. Still, it was not possible to avoid piracy completely, especially as the internet made it easier than ever to create and distribute illegal copies. This extended to all anime-related content, including fanzines. Says Rolando of piracy of *Domo*: “[the creators] never got any real idea of how many copies ... were out there. [They] did have some print runs of thousands of copies, but many times ... went to stores or events and they had more copies than the ones [they] printed” (Peláez Mazariegos, *I’ll Do It Myself*).

In the late 90’s, Mexican availability of anime from official sources began diminishing. Though it also greatly encouraged Mexican anime “boom” of the 90’s, it is theorized that the active anime fandom of that era actually played a role in causing this diminishment. Rolando believes that the proliferation of piracy, online and in real life, in fandom circles was the biggest contributing factor to lessening interest in Mexico from Japanese media companies. Victor, similarly, believes that the clubs that existed contributed to a culture of entitlement over products and allowed many to avoid paying for the media and merchandise they wanted.

As the 90's came to an end, the situation with anime on Mexican television became a bit complicated. This was the era when *Televisa* was airing many of its hit anime, while *TV Azteca* had gained the right to several Disney productions and shifted its focus to them and its original shows. Thus, anime simultaneously began to disappear from *TV Azteca*'s airwaves, greatly lessening the medium's availability on free-access television (Peláez Mazariegos, *Global Craze*). This lowered ease of official accessibility did not mean anime disappeared into nicheness, however. On the contrary, Mexican anime fandom was still going strong, with certain newer groups even succeeding where others had failed to create a stronger connection between Mexican fandom and Japanese media companies. The spirit of these efforts were similar to those of earlier fandom- promote anime products and foster fan communities in hopes of spreading it to a wider audience. Some, however, went a step beyond, going about these efforts at promotion in much more legally "legitimate" ways, and with impressive results.

One was the establishment of anime-related Mexican companies formed by fans. These included *Distribuidora AniMéxico* (DAM), a 2010-founded company that imports Japanese merchandise, and *KEM Media*, a 2013-founded company that promotes Japanese music and films. The founders of both companies established direct connections with Japan by demonstrating an understanding of both cultures involved. *DAM* worked with *Bandai* and *Tōei* to bring a line of collector's-only toys to Mexico, after explaining Mexico's anime demographics. *KEM Media*, similarly, worked with studio *Aniplex* to organize a Spanish-language screening of the film of the anime series *Puella Magi Madoka Magica*. *KEM* later also explained the distinction of Mexican Spanish to *Aniplex* when they viewed the film's Spanish dub, which was clearly not made in Mexico (Peláez Mazariegos, *I'll Do It Myself*). In working as mediators, these fans inserted their own, uniquely Mexican, voices into the contexts surrounding these

properties. Additionally, they ensured that the Japanese companies producing them have a better understanding of Mexico and its relationship to anime. They, too, play a role in the simultaneous adaptation of anime to Mexico and insertion of Mexico into anime.

7. Anime in the Mainstream

It is hard to find a consensus on the level of mainstream acceptance of anime and anime fandom in Mexico- both in my academic research and daily conversations with Mexicans in real life- and how it differs from the US. On the one hand, there is the term *friki*, which implies that anime has at least a minor stigmatized status in Mexico, like it has in the US. Additionally, there is the existence of social efforts such as clubs and the Marcha del Orgullo Otaku (otaku pride march), which happens in Mexico City, Toluca, Guadalajara, Monterrey, and Oaxaca (Romero Quiroz). These imply that being an anime fan is a divergence from the norm; otaku must find their identities, voices, and communities. One person my age compared the concept of being an otaku in Mexico to being “emo,” in that they are both counterculture identities.

On the other hand, Pino argues that anime does not have quite the same scandalous quality in Latin America that it does in the US, and cites some convincing evidence. For one, he explains that in a mediascape already colored with foreign influence, anime did not stand out in quite the same way that it did in the US. While American anime fandom had a tendency to be “subcultural and cliqueish” because of anime’s marginal status, in Mexico the medium was much more an accepted element of regular life.

Says Pino, “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.” In my day-to-day, in-person experiences in Mexico cited above, this did seem to be the case.

Anime’s reception in the US vs. Mexico was always going to differ, simply due to each country’s vastly different mediascapes. The majority of the US’s media products are original, and consequently, rising popularity of foreign media such as anime and *k-dramas* (Korean dramas) in the US has been met with some concerns of “cultural invasion” (Pino). Even academic scholarship that seeks to understand it often approaches the topic from an exoticizing perspective, “how can ‘we’ understand ‘them?’” (Annett). In Mexico, there is less reason for Asian media in particular to stand out as noteworthy.

The ubiquitousness of anime in Mexico helps the medium lend itself to the creation of blended Mexican and Japanese cultural products. When anime is something that the average person is at least passingly familiar with, and is no more sacredly preserved in its original form than the other plethora of imported products, then it becomes simply another icon to use in daily life. Therefore, it begins to be used for local purposes- for [restaurants](#), [posters](#), stores, music. [One Punch Man sells Mexican street food](#), [Sailor Moon’s theme song is at home in cumbia style](#). As it is appropriated in this way, it becomes associated in the minds of many as much with Mexico as with its native Japan.



A *Pokemon*-themed motorcycle I came across on a walk

Pino speaks of an attitude towards anime that existed in the US in the 80's, in which "...anime texts were often treated ... as raw resources to be remixed, reinterpreted and repackaged ... (e.g. Robotech, Voltron)." He compares anime as a whole to the character Hello Kitty, a malleable and trivial icon that can be commodified for any use she is needed for. He contrasts it with the apparent Mexican attitude toward adapting anime, in which "what may as such be most 'Mexican' about anime's entry to the Latin American mediascape is how *little* it is altered." While I understand this viewpoint when applied directly to the distribution of the series themselves, I want to state that I myself don't believe it applies to all of anime's Mexican presence. If anything, I think the description Pino gives of American attitudes toward anime can also perfectly describe the casual Mexican usage of anime characters and imagery in daily life.

An extreme example of both this culturally appropriative spirit and the integration of anime into everyday Latin American life is given in *At the Center of the Periphery*. On July 15th 2011, a student protest for educational and legislative reform in Santiago, Chile, made reference to a scene from *Dragon Ball Z*. One in a series of artistic performances the protests had involved,

this one called for participants to pass a prop- “a massive white sphere made of plastic sheeting and supported by an internal polyhedral framework”- across the top of the crowd, eventually landing on the lawn of the Plaza de Armas, in whose surrounding streets the protest was taking place. In this performance, the prop was a stand-in for a *genkidama* (“life-energy ball”), a bomb-like weapon from *Dragon Ball Z* formed by combining fighters’ *qi*, and like in the show, participants were encouraged to concentrate their “life-energy” into it. During this protest, audio played from a series of videos on YouTube which had also been used to promote the event. These videos used re-purposed, re-dubbed *Dragon Ball Z* clips, and [in them, Mario Castañeda and Gerardo Reyero \(Mexican official dub actors recruited by the protest’s organizers\) lend their voices to a heroic, pro-protest Goku and villainous, anti-protest Freiza.](#)

The success of this protest as a rhetorical tool was reliant on a widespread familiarity with not just the existence of the property *Dragon Ball Z*, but its narrative intricacies, so the scene being referenced is recognizable. Pino reports that even middle-aged newscasters at the time appeared to understand what the protestors were alluding to. He goes on: “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.”

It is noteworthy that what gave the edited video its “authentic” feeling was the lended voice talents of the Mexican dub actors. To begin, it demonstrates Mexico’s centrality as the remediator of anime to the rest of Latin America. Additionally, it grants Mexico’s *Dragon Ball Z* dub a certain authority. The “source” of the characters that give their support to this campaign is no longer necessarily Japan, or the manga author Akira Toriyama, but Mexico and the actors that

reside there. The video gives the illusion- if it can be called that- that *Dragon Ball Z* has given some authorial approval to the protest. The extent that this can even be said to be incorrect is debatable, when Mexico has had such a substantial role in making the series available to Spanish-speaking Latin America, and, relatedly, had a profound influence on the property. Considering this, Pino points out that the textual poaching (Jenkins) occurring here is no longer just in the hands of audiences; at this point, those involved in the property's formation are also implicated. "Multiple levels and modes of authorship and perceived ownership" are at play.

8. Anime-Inspired Mexican Art

Outside of references to anime in real-life contexts and Mexican marks on official and unofficial anime products, anime has influenced a large quantity of Mexican original art. This can be seen in the yearly poster created for each iteration of Expo TNT. Each year, a public competition to design the poster is held, and many have resulted in intriguing visual combinations of Mexican and Japanese culture. For example, the poster for the 19th Expo is drawn in a recognizably manga artstyle. The woman in the image wears an Aztec ceremonial outfit, and is framed by both a Japanese *Edo* period dragon god and the Aztec god *Quetzalcoatl* (Romero Quiroz).



[Poster](#) for the 2010 TNT Expo convention



[Twitter promotional image](#) for 2022 TNT Expo convention

Some Mexican artists even created their own Japanese-inspired Mexican manga, like I am aiming to do with my project. First, the publishing company *Edito Poster*, aware of the allure of the manga artstyle for Mexican audiences and hoping to stand out among other comics distributors, published *Tetsuko: La Chica de Acero* (Tetsuko: The Girl of Steel) in 1997 and *Chicas Trabajadoras* (Working Girls) in 1998. Both featured a combination of Western and Japanese influence, the Japanese including the artstyle and Asian elements such as martial arts. A few years later, in 2004, the company *Editorial UFO* began running the magazine *Yaoi*, which featured Mexican-made comic stories inspired by the Japanese genre of the same name. Japanese *yaoi* focuses on male homosexual relationships, and is typically aimed at a female audience. These Mexican comics imitated anime's narrative and artistic styles, but adapted the plots to fit a Mexican context. Notably, all of these takes on manga were aimed at adult audiences, which demonstrates the varied demographics of anime in Mexico at the time (Peláez Mazariegos, *Global Craze*).

Today, anime continues to inspire not only consumption but creation from fans. In *The Influence of Anime on the Mexican Underground*, Villegas describes a contemporary subculture within the Mexican underground "that pops up everywhere from electronic music niches to campy queer circles," that being an anime-inspired music scene. In this world, anime's influence appears in both the actual music itself- sampled anime theme songs and lyrical anime references- and the aesthetics- cosplaying performers and anime-style album art. This influence makes sense. Much of Mexico's underground creators are of the generation that grew up with free-access anime, so it is safe to assume the medium evokes a lot of nostalgia.

Says Villegas: "Step into any record store today, and you're guaranteed to find a fully stocked J-pop aisle, the love for which has also stimulated a growing future funk scene

nationwide.” *J-pop* is short for Japanese pop, and *future funk* is an internet-popular music genre greatly inspired by (and often sampling from) it. Additionally, future funk videos notably make frequent use of old school anime aesthetics. Villegas continues: “...and right up until the Covid-19 pandemic sent nightlife into indefinite hiatus, the FrikiPerreo party series was rapidly gaining a cult following in Mexico City’s [famously queer] Zona Rosa district, with a unique blend of Top 40 hits, old school classics, and cosplaying drag queens.” *FrikiPerreo* is a scene that combines, of course, *friki* culture with the dance scene *perreo*, referring to a sexual club dance that focuses on the hips (Perreo). I did not fully believe in this alleged FrikiPerreo scene, until I and my roommate saw with our own eyes a float celebrating it in the Mexico City Pride Parade.

Villegas discusses a number of anime-influenced artists that have become popular in the Mexican underground music scene. One such artist is *Elvakeroporno* (the porno cowboy), who is well known for his anime parody songs. A famous piece of his is “El Corrido de Death Note,” which tells the story of the murderous protagonist of the anime *Death Note* in the style of an old-fashioned Tejano cowboy ballad. *Army of Skanks* is a reggaetón band, rapidly growing in the Mexican festival scene (and also the name of my neighbor’s wife in the US, which cannot be a coincidence, and I believe speaks to their fame). Their songs are full of Japanese media references, from anime and video game sound samples to whole-work parodies, such as their songs *Perreame Konnichi Wa!* and *Pikachu Quiere Perrear*. Their performances contain visual references as well; Villegas opens his article with an account of their concert featuring “twerking Kirbys.” All these artists demonstrate their ability to take anime and use it for both personal and cultural expression, creating media that is at once profoundly Japanese and profoundly Mexican.

9. Conclusion

The production bible I will create for my final GMC project is not *quite* as transformative as some of the works listed above. Still, I see my work as allowing me to join a creative subculture in which anime is an artistic tool as much as a medium of entertainment. Mexican fans have certainly appropriated it as such; fandom spawning blog writers, voice actors, zine creators, fan-translators, and cosplayers. Plus, most fascinating to me, musicians, and visual artists who made their own Mexican manga. These works, along with the “latinization” in certain Mexican Spanish anime dubs, demonstrate the concept of not just bringing anime into Mexico, but adding a Mexican twist to anime. This is the concept I hope to apply to my project, and why I think the creation of a(nother) anime-influenced, Mexican-set piece fits well into this already established framework.

The works from this movement I am taking the most inspiration from are, of course, the consciously culturally-blended artistic creations, such as the anime-inspired music, TNT Expo posters, and Mexican manga. That said, the more incidental contributors to the creation of this culture- Latinization in certain dubs, anime visuals used in everyday Mexican circumstances- are important to the whole as well.

The anime to be outlined in this bible, *The Student Mage*, will draw from anime and from Mexican culture. It will be set in a fictionalized version of Mexico City, with architecture, colors, and food inspired by the area. The overarching plot, as well as episodic plots, are inspired by Mexican archetypes and folklore. The premise is based on *brujería*, the Mexican concept of witchcraft, and surrounds two young women, Angustias and Varicela, trying to master it with different approaches. Their ideologies are loosely based on conflicting ideologies in Mexican history as well, Angustias harboring a more Eurocentric, Catholic-inspired worldview, and

Varicela drawing more from indigenous beliefs and practices. Individual episodes will also reference folk stories from different regions of Mexico, including *El Callejón del Beso* and *La Mulata de Córdoba*. In this way, the anime will have Mexican narrative roots in a way that parallels those Japanese ones that many anime have.

The anime will also feature Japanese influence, partially through the narrative structure, which will be inspired by *magical girl* anime of a similar genre to this one. The story will be told largely episodically, with a different mini-plot and folk story explored every episode, as is the case with anime such as *Sailor Moon* and *MushiShi*. As is also the case with those anime, *The Student Mage* will have an overarching plot that comes together by the end of the season. The series will be illustrated in a visual style with some anime influences (though, admittedly, one closer to the simplified styles of comedy anime like *Mob Psycho 100* and *Osomatsu-san*). Finally, the main characters will be based on popular anime tropes. Angustias will play the role of plucky, determined protagonist (in the vein of *Naruto* and Deku from *My Hero Academia*). Varicela will be her moodier counterpart as well as the *tsundere*, someone who is outwardly aggressive with a sweet interior (roles occupied by Sasuke and Bakugou in the former respective series).

As I have detailed above, anime's presence in Mexico is distinct from that in the US. It is more ubiquitous, which allows it to occur in contexts that are not strictly relevant to television. Additionally, from its introduction to the country, Mexican distributors and audiences have left their marks on anime's presence in Mexico, through the products themselves, the visuals of the products appearances in daily life, and through anime-influenced supplementary art. What results from this Mexican influence is the (intentional and unintentional) formation of an anime scene that combines Japanese and Mexican culture and needs. I believe that my Global Media and

Cultures final will fit well into the artistic conversation that has formed here over the past three decades, and hopefully have some enjoyable surprises to add as well.

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