



Ca' Foscari
University
of Venice

Master's Degree programme
in International Relations
Second Cycle (D.M.270/2004)

Final Thesis

**Deciphering the World with
One Piece**

The power of manga in the study of international
politics

Supervisor

Ch. Prof. Antonio Zotti

Assistant supervisor

Ch. Prof. Rosa Caroli

Graduand

Ravaglia Benedetta

Matriculation Number 893705

Academic Year

2023 / 2024

INDEX

INDEX	1
EXTENDED ABSTRACT	3
INTRODUCTION	7
CHAPTER 1 LITERATURE, MANGA AND POLITICS	10
1.1 Pen and panel: investigating the international political effects of literature and manga	10
<i>1.1.1 The tensions between artistic expression and political power</i>	10
<i>1.1.2 A short review of literature's role in shaping political discourse</i>	12
<i>1.1.3 Literature's role in understanding cultural differences</i>	13
1.2 Literature, politics, and the specter of censorship	16
1.3: The artistic evolution and global influence of Japanese comics	19
<i>1.3.1 From Emakimono to Tezuka: the history and evolution of Japanese manga</i>	20
<i>1.3.2 Manga's aesthetic, expressive techniques and themes</i>	22
1.4 Manga genres	24
<i>1.4.1 Shonen</i>	24
<i>1.4.2 Shojo</i>	25
<i>1.4.3 Seinen Genre</i>	26
<i>1.4.4 Josei</i>	27
<i>1.4.5 Kodomo</i>	28
<i>1.4.6 Niche</i>	29
1.5 Manga's global reach and censorship	30
1.6 One Piece: The Manga of the wonder	33
<i>1.6.1 The Straw- Hat crew</i>	34
<i>1.6.1 The manga narrative</i>	36
<i>1.6.2 The success</i>	36
CHAPTER 2. WORLD GOVERNMENT IN ONE PIECE	38
2.1 The structure of One Piece's world government	38
<i>2.1.1 The de facto ruler of the world: Im-Sama</i>	39
<i>2.1.2 The de-jure rulers: the Five Elders</i>	40
<i>2.1.3 The Commander-in-chief: Kong</i>	41
<i>2.1.4 The Grand admiral of the marines: Sakazuki</i>	41

2.1.5 <i>The army: marines and the seven Warlords of the sea</i>	42
2.2 The dangers of absolute power	43
2.2.1 <i>The destruction of Ohara</i>	46
2.2.2 <i>Hannah Arendt and the “Banality of Evil”</i>	49
2.3 Absolute power in One Piece	53
2.3.1 <i>Justification of revolutionary power</i>	54
2.3.2 <i>Critics of revolutionary power</i>	57
2.4 Averting civilizational wreckage	61
2.4.1 <i>One Piece and humanitarian tragedies</i>	61
2.4.2 <i>One Piece and civilization breakdown</i>	65
2.4.3 <i>One Piece and human rights</i>	68
2.5 Cultural relativism	74
CHAPTER 3: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND WEAPONS IN ONE PIECE	81
3.1 Donquixote Doflamingo, Kaido and chemical weapons	81
3.1.1 <i>Chemical weapon: the smile</i>	83
3.1.2 <i>Chemical weapons are necessary deterrents</i>	84
3.1.3 <i>Chemical weapons as unconditionally unacceptable means</i>	90
3.2 Dr. Vegapunk and technology	100
3.2.1 <i>Technological progress and societal change</i>	103
3.2.2 <i>Governing technological developments</i>	113
CONCLUSION	122
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS	127
REFERENCES	128
<i>ARTICLES</i>	128
<i>LITERARY RESOURCES</i>	135
<i>ONLINE SOURCES</i>	135

EXSTENDED ABSTRACT

La tesi si propone di esplorare approfonditamente la stretta connessione tra letteratura, manga e politica, concentrandosi sul loro ruolo come potenti strumenti di soft power nel plasmare le narrazioni globali e nel guidare le trasformazioni sociali. Il concetto di soft power, introdotto da Joseph Nye negli anni '90, è diventato cruciale nelle dinamiche delle relazioni internazionali, poiché sottolinea l'importanza dell'attrattività culturale e dell'influenza ideologica per persuadere e attrarre altri paesi, anziché fare affidamento esclusivamente su coercizione o incentivi economici. Questa forma di influenza si basa su elementi intangibili come cultura, valori, politiche e istituzioni, contrapponendosi al tradizionale concetto di hard power. La diplomazia culturale, che sfrutta risorse culturali come musica, cinema, letteratura e arti visive per favorire la comprensione e la connessione tra le nazioni, costituisce una componente fondamentale del soft power.

Il Giappone, in particolare, ha adottato una strategia mirata all'uso del soft power nella sua politica estera. Vincolato dalla sua costituzione pacifista e da un pacifismo sociale radicato che limita l'uso di strumenti di hard power, il Giappone si è visto costretto a sviluppare una strategia più morbida, basata sull'utilizzo degli aiuti esteri, della diplomazia culturale e sull'attrattiva della sua cultura popolare per stabilire relazioni e proiettare influenza al di là dei suoi confini nazionali. In questo contesto, il governo giapponese ha riconosciuto l'appeal globale e il potenziale di soft power dei manga e degli anime, due delle sue esportazioni culturali più popolari e influenti. Sebbene la produzione, la diffusione e il consumo di queste forme d'arte siano principalmente guidati dalle forze di mercato e dai gusti dei consumatori, negli ultimi anni i diplomatici e i politici giapponesi hanno cercato di sfruttare il potere di manga e anime per migliorare l'immagine internazionale del Giappone e avanzare i suoi obiettivi strategici. Questo cambiamento strategico ha preso piede all'inizio degli anni 2000 con il concetto di "Gross National Cool del Giappone", che ha evidenziato il fascino mondiale della cultura pop giapponese, anche in un periodo di stagnazione economica nel paese. Questa narrativa del "Japan Cool" ha rafforzato il senso di orgoglio nazionale e ha confermato l'attrattiva globale delle esportazioni culturali del Giappone, offrendo un'opportunità unica per politici e diplomatici giapponesi di sfruttare manga e anime come strumenti innovativi di divulgazione e attrattiva globale. Di seguito verranno descritte la struttura della tesi ed i metodi di ricerca utilizzati così da fornire una panoramica completa degli argomenti trattati.

Il primo capitolo offre un esame approfondito della profonda influenza che la letteratura e il manga esercitano sul discorso politico e sull'evoluzione culturale. Inizia con un'analisi di come la letteratura ha storicamente plasmato le opinioni e affrontato le ingiustizie sociali,

tracciando l'evoluzione del manga dalle antiche narrazioni a un fenomeno globale. Poi si addentra nel ruolo della letteratura nell'espandere il discorso politico, nel radunare un'azione collettiva contro l'ingiustizia, nel ritrarre le lotte dei marginalizzati e nel catalizzare riforme sociali. Viene evidenziata l'evoluzione della narrativa contemporanea verso la messa in risalto della disuguaglianza economica, delle lotte identitarie e dei fallimenti politici, sottolineando la capacità duratura della letteratura di catalizzare la riforma radunando sogni collettivi attraverso la risonanza emotiva. Esamina i dibattiti sul potenziale della finzione di ispirare l'azione verso la giustizia o l'ingiustizia, confrontandosi con la critica di Habermas alla letteratura come "azione drammaturgia" che costringe il cambiamento di credenze anziché promuovere la comprensione reciproca. Si poi fa un esame sulle varie fonti e metodi di censura, illuminando le motivazioni per sopprimere le voci dissidenti e mantenere le strutture di potere esistenti. Passando al manga, il capitolo ne traccia la ricca storia, dai primi precursori come emakimono e kusazoshi all'espansione del dopoguerra guidata da artisti iconici e dall'emergere di generi influenti come shonen, shojo, seinen e josei. Il paragrafo si addentra nelle tecniche estetiche del manga, nella sua profondità espressiva e nell'esplorazione tematica attraverso lo sviluppo di personaggi complessi e narrazioni immaginative. Infine, il capitolo affronta le controversie sulla censura derivanti dai contenuti grafici e dai commenti sociali del manga. Si conclude con l'introduzione del manga "One Piece", descrivendone la trama, i personaggi e il successo.

Il secondo capitolo esplora le profonde connessioni tra il manga One Piece di Eiichiro Oda e le complesse questioni dei diritti umani, del relativismo culturale e del collasso della civiltà nella realtà. Al centro dell'analisi vi è il Governo Mondiale, un'entità autoritaria che incarna molti degli orrori perpetrati dai regimi oppressivi della storia. Viene descritta la sua struttura gerarchica, con con la misteriosa figura di Im-Sama al vertice del potere. Avvolto dal segreto, solo pochi eletti, tra cui i Cinque Anziani che agiscono come volto pubblico dell'autorità, conoscono la sua esistenza. Questa dinamica di potere nascosta solleva interrogativi sulla natura del governo e sulla responsabilità di coloro che detengono un'autorità assoluta. Un aspetto sorprendente del Governo Mondiale è l'appropriazione di simboli religiosi per legittimare il suo dominio. Il centro politico, Maria Giogia, è definito la "Terra Santa", mentre la classe dirigente - i Nobili Mondiali o Draghi Celesti - porta il titolo di "Santi". Questa fusione di potere politico e pseudo-autorità religiosa riecheggia pratiche storiche in cui i governanti rivendicavano un diritto o mandato divino, Le azioni del Governo Mondiale, specialmente i suoi più eclatanti abusi di potere, invitano ad un'analisi attraverso varie cornici politiche e filosofiche. Il concetto di "banalità del male" di Hannah Arendt offre una lente

convincente attraverso cui vedere i burocrati e gli agenti del governo. Molti di questi individui, piuttosto che essere ritratti come mostri sadici, sono raffigurati come persone ordinarie che commettono atrocità attraverso una cieca obbedienza e una mancanza di pensiero critico. Vengono analizzate le tragedie rappresentate nell'opera, i massacri di Flevance, God Valley, Lulusia e Ohara, i quali evocano paralleli con atrocità storiche quali l'Olocausto, le pulizie etniche in Bosnia, l'invasione del Kuwait e i bombardamenti atomici di Hiroshima e Nagasaki.. Vengono esaminate diverse teorie sociali e politiche - dal Panopticon di Bentham alle idee contrattualistiche di Locke e Rousseau - nel contesto delle strutture di potere presenti nell'opera. Sebbene fornisca importanti spunti di riflessione, One Piece sfida anche questi concetti attraverso la sua rappresentazione della resistenza rivoluzionaria, rappresentata da Monkey D. Dragon. Al centro dell'analisi vi è la tensione tra l'universalismo dei diritti umani e il relativismo culturale, come per esempio il relativismo culturale di Boas. Oda ritrae culture dall'etica divergente, come quella schiavista dei Nobili Mondiali o le tradizioni degli isolazionisti di Wano. Questi esempi sollevano interrogativi sulle sfide nell'applicare standard globali a contesti culturali diversi. Facendo eco ai dibattiti attuali, l'opera esamina potenziali riconciliazioni tra universalismo e rispetto delle differenze culturali innocue, come il "consenso per intersezione" di Taylor. One Piece diventa così uno specchio delle complesse negoziazioni necessarie per promuovere i diritti umani nel mondo reale.

Il terzo capitolo conduce un esame approfondito dei personaggi chiave e delle dinamiche all'interno della narrazione di One Piece, tracciando paralleli con concetti e problematiche del mondo reale legati a scienza, tecnologia e armamenti. L'analisi è strutturata in due sezioni principali dedicate rispettivamente all'uso di armi chimiche e degli sviluppi tecnologici.

La prima sezione si concentra sulla partnership tra Donquixote Doflamingo e Kaido, ex Signore della Guerra e Imperatore rispettivamente, incentrata sulla distribuzione dei Frutti del Diavolo artificiali noti come SMILE. Esaminando le loro origini, filosofie e psicologie, il capitolo rivela come le loro personalità sadiche allineate rendano la loro collaborazione disturbantemente naturale nonostante le loro posizioni opposte rispetto alla legge. La creazione e l'uso degli SMILE sono analizzati come una forma di arma chimica, con particolare attenzione ai loro difetti e all'indifferenza di Doflamingo e Kaido per la sofferenza che causano. Questa sezione passa poi a una discussione più ampia sulle armi chimiche, tracciando paralleli tra i fittizi SMILE e gli agenti chimici reali. Esplora come la rappresentazione del manga risuoni con eventi storici reali, come l'uso di armi chimiche in guerra e contro popolazioni civili. Le implicazioni etiche di tali armi sono sottoposte a scrutinio, con la narrazione che sfida le nozioni del loro uso come deterrenti evidenziandone

gli effetti indiscriminati e disumani. La seconda sezione si concentra sul Dr. Vegapunk, lo scienziato enigmatico di One Piece, e usa il suo personaggio come trampolino per discutere temi più ampi del progresso tecnologico e della sua governance. Le numerose invenzioni di Vegapunk, dai miglioramenti cibernetici all'intelligenza artificiale, fungono da rappresentazioni allegoriche degli avanzamenti scientifici del mondo reale. Il capitolo esamina come queste creazioni, nonostante i loro scopi benevoli, siano spesso cooptate da potenti entità come il Governo Mondiale per fini militari e politici. Questa parte dell'analisi attinge ampiamente dalle prospettive filosofiche sulla tecnologia. Si confronta con le opere di pensatori come Martin Heidegger, Andrew Feenberg e Langdon Winner per esplorare concetti come il determinismo tecnologico, la politica insita negli artefatti tecnologici e la necessità di un controllo democratico sullo sviluppo scientifico. La discussione evidenzia come One Piece, attraverso la sua narrazione, sfidi la nozione di neutralità tecnologica e rappresenti invece la scienza e la tecnologia come profondamente radicate e plasmate da contesti sociali, politici ed economici. Tuttavia, il capitolo nota anche che One Piece non presenta una visione puramente pessimistica della tecnologia. Personaggi come Franky, che integrano le innovazioni di Vegapunk nella loro identità in modo gratificante, sono discussi per illustrare come il manga esplori anche il potenziale della tecnologia per l'emancipazione individuale e collettiva quando appropriata e riadattata da coloro al di fuori delle strutture di potere dominanti.

INTRODUCTION

Can the world be seen through different eyes? Can the world be seen through other means, unconventional as they may be, but still be helpful to us in understanding the ever-changing theatre in which all of us are actors? Can "One Piece" be used as a case study to understand the world?

These are the questions I have been asking myself for a long time, as a student of the course "International Relations" and an avid manga reader since young age. These have given birth to the main aim of my thesis: using the internationally famous manga "One Piece" as a case study to analyze the international politics theatre.

Comics books, books, DVDs, films, and music are other methods of conveying the events of the present in a form that everyone can understand, and that can convey the Nations or individuals, ideas, values, and motivations without force. It is called the "soft power" of a Nation. The origins of soft power can be traced back to Nye's seminal work, "Bound to Lead: The Changing Nature of American Power," in which it highlighted the importance of cultural, ideological, and institutional appeal in achieving strategic objectives.¹ In other words, it has to do with the power to convince and coopt people using the intangibles — culture, belief, policy and institutions, not weapons. In the case of literature and the arts, this is often the salutation of cultural diplomacy, which is pursued by numerous other groups—from multinationals to NGOs/CSO. This kind of contact uses things like music, films, books, and art to aid in the coming together of individuals from different nations in the same of understanding culture. Literature and cultural exchange If in history words have demarcated weapons as vocalist, then literature is how countries peacefully deliver their thoughts, beliefs, and stories to the rest of the world.²

Like any country, Japan uses "soft power" in its foreign policy. Its circumscribed by a pacifist constitution and innate distaste for violence, Japan has had no choice but to route its power through softer channels-foreign aid, cultural diplomacy, and most recently the allure of its much-cited "soft power," neatly identified with an expanding global fascination with all things Japanese, such as university students in South Asia who study Game of Thrones in Japanese. That said, in this specific context, the Japanese government has long recognized the global appeal and potency of manga and anime, turning the nation into an international exporter of culture-and two of its most popular and powerful exports at that.

¹ Nye, Joseph (1991) *Bound To Lead: The Changing Nature Of American Power*, Basic Books, Chapter 1

² Sar, Vichana. (2023) «A Comprehensive Review on Literature: Hard Power, Soft Power, and Smart Power» *KDI School of Public Policy and Management*, pp. 1-49

Although the production, dispersion and consumption of these art forms have largely been shaped by market dynamics and audience tastes rather than government fiat, Japanese diplomats and policy makers have increasingly recognised the potential of manga and anime to boost Tokyo's image abroad and promote key strategic messages. Foreign Minister Aso Taro in 2006 stated that using these creative forms could be a way to attempt to court the favor of Japan's long-standing regional rival China, who has a cultured tradition, and deep-rooted dispute with Japan that comes from the two countries' shared historical past. Aso told students in Tokyo's Akihabara district, the heart of Japanese pop culture, that in the stores of China where young otaku fans of Japan shop, Japanese anime figurines are all over the place. This indicates that Japan has a strong influence on the younger generation in various countries, including China.³

The anime show *One Piece* is a great example of how this concept of soft power actually applies. The narrative is layered and engaging, complex world building has been elevated to art, the plot is a tedious mystery, and the themes are universal - and that is why this cultural phenomenon has become the international standard of Japan. This manga would later become one of Japan's greatest hits in story telling and an excess of sales goes to show that art can be appreciated worldwide and readers can get exposed to different social ideas in ways that were more friendly to the user. The contents of the work are to draw things in Japanese nature, things Japanese culture can be seen often, but that which was out of the picture so far as the difference between the other works more likely *Bruno* at the time to things that can be a reflection of modern society.

Chapter 1 will delve deeply into the way literature, and manga, broadly speaking, have underpinned the political debate and cultural development. The text starts out with some focus - where literature has a model for ideas, and correction of social inequalities his term. It discusses how literature can provide an outlet for the broadening of political discourse, act as a catalyst for mobilising mass resistance against oppression, reveal the hardships faced by minority groups, and inspire societal revolution. We recognize that contemporary fiction increasingly offers a way to think about the ways in which economic inequality, identity politics, and governmental policies fail people, amidst and alongside the ongoing debate over the power of literature to drive people and nations towards justice or to steer them in the opposite direction. This chapter is shedding some light on the social function of fiction, and how this can be distorted when fiction is censored. Exposes the hazards of propagandist writing and how it relates to the persistence of a traitors to the written word. This analysis

³ Er Lam, Pang. (2007) "Japan's Quest for "Soft Power": Attraction and Limitation" *East Asia*, Vol. 24, pp. 349-363

explores the extensive historical background of manga, its creative methods, and its incorporation into other aspects of society. It also delves into the continual conflicts between artistic freedom and restrictions imposed by censorship. The chapter establishes the foundation for examining "One Piece" as a case study that represents these dynamics.

The second part will analyse how Eiichiro Oda's manga reflects and critiques current political and social concerns by employing political theory and drawing connections to real-world occurrences.

We open the analysis with an overview of One Piece's totalitarian World Government, what it means to stand for "Absolute Justice," and the way that ethos resembles those of authoritarian regimes who twist principles of ethics to suit their needs. The chapter draws comparisons between events in One Piece and historical tragedies, linking the Buster Call on Ohara to genocide, the World Government's actions against the ancient kingdom to colonialism, and the World Nobles's enslavement to racism and crimes against humanity. The metaphorical occurrences are analysed in light of theories proposed by scholars such as Hannah Arendt about the concept of the "banality of evil" and frameworks related to human rights. The chapter delves into the Revolutionary Army's uprising against the World Government, examining ideologies around legitimate rebellion and the possible dangers of substituting one oppressive regime with another, drawing upon Locke's idea of natural rights. The text examines cultural relativism in the One Piece series by exploring its many civilizations, which question the Western concept of universal human rights.

The third chapter will conclude with a thorough examination of important characters and the dynamics present in the One Piece story. This study will make connections between these elements and real-world concerns pertaining to science, technology, and warfare. The text is divided into two primary pieces. The first segment analyses the use of chemical weapons by Donquixote Doflamingo and Kaido, namely their dissemination of synthetic Devil Fruits called SMILEs. It reveals their sadism and their capacity to feel no remorse by comparing the SMILEs to real-world chemical weapons, exploring their past usage and moral implications. In the second half of the chapter, it becomes about Dr. Vegapunk, this is a proxy for a thorough look into technology and government. Vegapunk's inventions, such as cybernetic implants and robotics are considered to be analogous to real-world technological advancement that is often kept secret and used by powerful organisations for military purposes. After deploying philosophical perspectives, the chapter covers technology as a political phenomenon, highlighting the case for democratic accountability. It is characterized by a

connection between science and technology and their contexts in a broader social, political and economic environment.

CHAPTER 1 LITERATURE, MANGA AND POLITICS

This chapter forms the beginning of larger inquiry into how literature and manga shape political discussions and cultural progress. This project then transitions into an analysis of how manga has moved from a storytelling tradition stemming from millenia old narratives to a world-wide phenomenon through an exploration into the history of manga and their development. This broad look sheds lights to the various genres and thematic layers present in both media, and the unique characters each contribute to narrative discourse. It also examines the way that literature and manga are forced to confront questions of censorship and how they neatly slot into different elements of society.

1.1 Pen and panel: investigating the international political effects of literature and manga

The paragraph examines literature's role in political discourse. It traces impactful writings driving reform by swaying opinion. It analyzes literature intersecting with politics through shared myths and ideals. Then, it explores fiction spotlighting inequality and identity struggles. It discusses literature fostering cross-cultural understanding via insights into diverse perspectives. It addresses totalitarian regimes manipulating literature to disseminate propaganda. It critiques tactics like omission and fabrication. The section acknowledges dissenting authors resisting through subversive works. It weighs debates on fiction's capacity to inspire action towards justice or injustice.

1.1.1 The tensions between artistic expression and political power

So, for the longest time, literature and politics have always been deeply connected. It is said that literary works can mould political movements and ideologies, while the political context can shape literature. Literature has been at the forefront of enlarging the political debate, mobilizing public action against marking and representing the struggles of marginalised people, and transforming society. Whether inciting revolution, social activism or worldwide ideological movements, writings have been powerful catalysts for change. The written word has long served to open minds and rouse human empathy, and from Thomas Paine's "Common Sense" which ignited the American Revolution to Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin," which channeled fury over slavery, literature has been a potent force behind progress, a sounding alarm for generations of reformers and activists. In a digital age,

contemporary literature is relevant globally and promotes critical thinking, humanises policy and amplifies the voices of those not heard. Historically, influential literary works that have served as a fire were those that articulated the dream, called out the injustices, and created a shared set of grievances resistant to the collective. Groundbreaking works like these continue to support advocacy at all levels by connecting us to struggles we need to care about, by insisting on intellectual rigour, and by pushing the boundaries of whose voices get heard. Despite medium and context change, the power of the written word remains sublime in its ability to influence thought, create empathy, and mobilize against oppression. Neo-literature, for its part, inherits this vast tradition of struggling for progress by pointing out emergent issues, by instituting an array of positions, by fostering common cause to struggles such as cleansing and liberation. Literature is deeply embedded in politics, and fiction is a major conveyer of lasting myths and values that may plant the seeds of sociopolitical movements in reality. This seminal investigation investigates whether political communication signals an orientation to an ideology through the language employed, but it also asks if it taps into more general power structures and the beliefs of citizens.⁴

Political philosophy has been the beneficiary from complexity narratives that reveal the intricacies of power hierarchies, social organization and governance issues. The greatest pieces, like Plato's "The Republic," stoked arguments about power, freedom, and the rule of law by questioning power with power. For example, the Enlightenment witnessed the synthesis of literature with political philosophy, as authors, through literary artifice, used literature as an expression of the political ideas of their time, and the purpose of literature as the advocacy of radical change in politics and social norms—for example, Jean-Jacques Rousseau's *Emile, or On Education* (1762), Voltaire's *Candide* (1759), and Montesquieu's *Persian Letters* (1721). into the influential myths, ideologies and ideals of so many generations. The analysis explains how literature serves as a mythical reservoir that is leveled to political circumstances, where parties apply cultural models and emblems tactically to voice interests in appealing to divine, emotional argument instead of logical or conscious.⁵

The evolution of contemporary fiction to focus on economic inequality and identity struggles emerging in the background. Contemporary authors echo the dystopian warnings of not just failed policies, but also call us to critically engage our own complicity and affirmative support of the disadvantaged. Their work speciously inspire collective dreams of improvement, stirring emotional responses.⁶ Indeed, literature has always been involved in politics by describing power relations and creating public conversations. Still, powerful texts have the

⁴ Gertz, Nurith. (1986) "Social Myths in Literary and Political Texts." *Poetics Today*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 621–39

⁵ Gertz, 1986, pp. 623-625

power to mobilize real-world sociopolitical movements with a longevity literature can only envy. Books like Harriet Beecher Stowe's "Uncle Tom's Cabin" helped the early Civil Rights Movement by showing enslaved men and women in their full dignity. Likewise, Mary Wollstonecraft's treatise "A Vindication of the Rights of Woman" laid the intellectual groundwork for first-wave feminism by arguing for gender equality. As Peter Speller outlines, literature symbolizes struggles over social meaning. Increasing the representation of diverse perspectives and identities in literary works should foster greater empathy between groups. Speculative fiction genres will also stimulate vital discussions regarding technological, environmental, and political trajectories. Experimental styles can reveal overlooked perspectives, aligning with literature's subversive potential.⁷

Digital connectivity enables decentralized grassroots collaborations on justice issues, overcoming past barriers to mobilizing international literary networks. But obstacles to presenting compelling stories remain, not least in the realm of digital distraction, and also in establishing credibility in the face of rampant misinformation. Nevertheless, literature has the potential to validate writers, unite them across rifts, elevate the silenced, and prompt a worldwide cooperative transformation. Despite its ever-expanding frontiers, literature retains its power to impact society and politics — if it can grasp opportunities presented by the likes of social media.⁸ The most enduring gift from literature over the years has been its inbuilt ability to be a fierce source of outrage against violations of rights, as well as a catalyst to foster dreams of reform through narrative. In 1776, Thomas Paine's pamphlet, "Common Sense," its seamlessly rational call to not only to but hold true to freedom for America, set off the fuse of Revolution. During Independence movement he uniting Indians cutting across caste, creed, religion using a moral philosophical base of war of independence which is soaked in spiritual content Rabindranath Tagore.

1.1.2 A short review of literature's role in shaping political discourse

Literature reflects politics and actively shapes political perceptions by delineating what ideas and voices are visible or sayable in society. As Rancière theorizes, politics determines the boundaries of discourse and experience. Literature contributes to this political act of framing reality by putting forth its meaning-making and hierarchy of voices.⁹ Epics like the Homeric

⁶ Irr, Caren (2011) "Postmodernism in Reverse: American National Allegories and the 21st-Century Political Novel." *Twentieth Century Literature*, vol. 57, no. 3/4, pp. 516–38.

⁷ Speller, John R. W (2011) *Literature and Cultural Politics*. Bourdieu and Literature, 1st ed., pp. 131–52.

⁸ Ibidem, 134

⁹ Rancière, Jacques (2004) "The Politics of Literature." *SubStance*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2004, pp. 10–24

tales or the emergence of literature as a distinct concept demonstrate how writing creates new paradigms that can defy old boundaries. The narrative "indifference" principle also points to literature's ability to promote democracy by giving presence to diverse subjectivities. Today as speculative fiction challenges assumptions, it follows the same trajectory of older traditions that question the status quo. Ultimately, literature perpetually transgresses the boundaries of perception and speech via formal innovations. It has an independent impact on questioning who is permitted to speak or be heard. Literature, therefore, is uniquely political for Rancière in its capacity to shape public consciousness or collective sensibilities. The essay suggests that for newly emergent perspectives and perspectives with little to no presence within the culture at large such as those held by Native Americans to take their rightful place among the community of diverse voices, these new voices must be heard. The form of literature reflects the role of literature itself as an agent of interpretation and reinterpretation of the limits between truth and power in any historical context.¹⁰

1.1.3 Literature's role in understanding cultural differences

It is literature that can promote amplifying cross-cultural understanding as well as empathy with entirely opposite political or social perspectives. The magic of literature, as a powerful storytelling tool, lies in taking us to different places and times, allowing us to see different cultures, beliefs and values. A review of published scholarly research reveals literature as an intermediary that promotes global understanding. Additionally, translated literature significantly aids in sharing narratives internationally.¹¹

Through literature, one can gain contrastive cultural perspectives. For all the open-minded narrative of literary blending, there is an equally rigid set of requirements in rigor demanded by social scientists wanting to talk about the cultural context in which international relations occur. In the case of fiction genres, authors provide rare windows into lives and mentalities across a spectrum of different communities, by weaving in heritage elements with immense finesse. Reading in cross-culture literature provides a stepping stone to understanding the roots, and implications of traditions in the formation of identities.¹² Literature also enables readers to understand and empathize with others from different cultures by providing fictional accounts in the stories. Fiction demonstrably and enduringly contributes to shaping our perceptions of the world, which is perhaps no shock for, as we have seen with works as

¹⁰ Rancière, 2004, p. 10-13

¹¹ Taras, Raymond (2013) "Why We Need the Novel: Understanding World Politics Through Literature." *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 185–95.

¹² *Ibidem*, pp.189

ancient as Uncle Tom's Cabin, it can also provide the impetus for social change. Novels reveal these fine cracks in the veneer of a people, promoting pluralism. Fiction: Finally, it offers the possibility of tying our shared humanity into that of other cultures.¹³ The global connections enabled through the translation of literature have a political significance, in overcoming the bound of language integration in the fact that is literature of different cultures. As works traverse translation landscapes, they bridge access to global literature, offering insights into social and historical contexts. This facilitates cross-cultural dialogue through profound shared understanding.

When manipulated for political ends, literature becomes a potent force in shaping public opinion, molding mentalities, and mobilizing behavior to support specific ideologies or leaders. Examining instances from Nazi Germany, Stalinist Russia, and North Korea, the discussion exposes the ethical concerns arising from the intentional use of literature to deceive and manipulate. The essay critiques totalitarian regimes' official literature for disseminating rigid dogmas, amplifying hatred, and demanding absolute conformity, highlighting how such propaganda erodes principles of sincerity and public trust. The piece further scrutinizes the tactics employed by propagandist literature—omission, exaggeration, and fabrication—resulting in a biased reality that impedes informed conclusions. Next, the chapter discusses how a singular propagandist voice is suffocating to intellectual liberty and how it obstructs pluralistic expression. Yet it also recognizes the tenacity of dissidents who have turned to subversive literature as an act of resistance, using lampoon as a form of media literacy - and decries magical thinking as our only defense against the political manipulation of literature. Political regimes have strategically employed literature as a powerful propaganda tool to influence public opinion and advance their agendas. Propaganda literature aims to directly impact individual beliefs, mold group mentalities, and mobilize behavior in support of particular ideologies or leaders by shaping narratives and portrayals. Although literature has great power to express various ideas in the world, discuss projects, and spread diverse ideas, if it is repurposed, it raises serious ethical issues of honesty, freedom of thought, diversity, and social integration.¹⁴ The ideal models of this are if not the totalitarian regimes in Nazi Germany and Stalinist Russia and North Korea that produced (and still produce) government-issued literature that pumps out imposed ideologies, spread hatred of supposed enemies, and deify ruling authorities, then the process in the seat of Empire itself. The literature also heavily idealizes the ruling regime - often with emotional appeals and mythical imagery - coercing citizens into total acquiescence and obedience. But the explicit deployment of

¹³ Ibidem, pp. 190

¹⁴ Van Dijk, Teun A. (2006) "Discourse and Manipulation." *Discourse & Society*, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 359–83

literature for calculated political deception serves to undermine the integrity and credibility of either. The narratives in most propaganda are constructed by omitting or exaggerating or fabricating to paint a false picture of reality that is useful to the state. Consequently, the proliferation of misleading accounts impedes audiences from developing reasoned, well-informed conclusions.

What is worse, one-man propaganda can only stifle opinion and variation, leaving no room for dialogue whatsoever. Resistant to authoritarian states, they compose works that question official narratives and censor messages that could destabilise the regime. Nevertheless, the imposition of a small set of sanctioned ideas by the government narrows intellectual freedoms and opportunities for pluralistic expression. Meanwhile, the lurid, frantically wild-eyed character assassination - designed to inflame visceral impulses of terror, rage, or group-think jingoism - only works to create even more division by casting the dissenting and the non-conforming as domestic threats.¹⁵

Breakthroughs in virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) are all set to reshape the way literature interacts with readers. Literature in the future might place the reader in an interactive narrative, in which they can live through real political decision-making processes, and feel the consequences resulting from different alternative decisions. This greater level of involvement also has the opportunity for desire to consider higher level political issues and discernment of consequences related to policies (and ways of solving problems).¹⁶ As our world becomes more interconnected, literature is expected to reflect a broader range of cultural perspectives and voices. Authors from marginalized communities will likely have increased opportunities to share their experiences, challenging dominant narratives and fostering empathy across cultural divides. This diversification of literature can contribute to a more inclusive and equitable global discourse on world politics. The advent of big data analytics and artificial intelligence opens the door to personalized content tailored to individual readers' preferences and interests. Even though algorithms can help pair readers with literature that fits their political opinions, there is one major downside: you run the risk of getting stuck in a literature echo chamber of only ever being exposed to things that align with your beliefs and not getting to experience a variety of viewpoints. Without getting path-dependent on too many personalized perspectives, it is the only thing that could keep an intelligent and inquiring citizenry even a small move or two closer to the truth. The challenges of traditional journalism in the digital age are discussed through a topical lens of literature and

¹⁵ Ibidem, pp.371

¹⁶ Belsunces, Andreu. (2018). *The Politics of Technology-Fiction*, URL: <https://lab.cccb.org/en/the-policies-of-technological-fiction/>

a shared 2.0 culture tenderness that provides analyses of the articles contents are reflected in ¹⁷ There would be a rise of long-form essays and investigative literature offering more intricate explorations of complex political problems than can be achieved in soundbites and headlines. Literary journalism might definitely lead to a more thinker-oriented and politicised approach. The rise of online communities and social media, in turn, has helped shaped literature from the ground up. And as a cultural force itself, cyberlit - web novels or serialized fiction - can be an even stronger source of political commentary and engagement. The world politics sphere can be so immense with platforms that foster a cross-cultural dialogue that brings together global citizens to partake in global affairs discussions to humanity itself. Literature could use transmedia storytelling to champion political process and social transformation. If Authors leveraged books, graphic novels, podcasts, and multimedia platforms, readers could play a role in a collective and global narrative that moves the needle on major global issues like Climate Change, Human Rights, and Peace building. However, the evolving landscape of literature and technology presents ethical challenges that must be addressed. Preserving the privacy and security of readers' data, combating misinformation, and maintaining intellectual freedom in the face of algorithmic content curation will be critical in ensuring literature's continued role as an independent and diverse medium for shaping the understanding of world politics.

1.2 Literature, politics, and the specter of censorship

While literature has historically influenced political thought and driving reform, some theorists argue that fiction lacks the power to create real social change. Specifically, Habermas contends that literature functions as dramaturgical action that coerces belief change rather than facilitating mutual understanding between author and reader. He sees novels as tools elite classes use to impose bourgeois values in the broader populace rather than channel the perspectives of diverse communities. Additionally, Habermas argues that the fictional nature of literature exempts readers from having to coordinate action, thereby rendering its rhetoric escapist and parasitic upon practical communication. As such, he presents firm barriers separating fictional works from practical discourse. This perspective is fundamentally incompatible with the idea of novels as vessels for affecting change, questioning the status quo, and advancing society. The clash of these approaches creates a very interesting tension that warrants speculation on the actual capacity for literature to shape political thought, as opposed to the impotent discourse it tends to exhibit on most other levels. We may learn

¹⁷ Ibidem

deeper insights into how fiction works to influence public values by unpacking Habermas's critique.

The relationship between literature and society is multidimensional and reciprocal. As one author argues, creative works serve as mirrors and guides for the values and lifestyles of the era in which they are produced. Literature reflects and records excerpt of prevailing ideologies, norms, and people of a time. Thus, it is a reflection on the positives and negatives of that society. At the same time, influential writings do the work of molding and educating societies in the press of ideas, the heat of debate, the revelation of deficiencies, the promise of better.¹⁸ Narrative techniques in literature allow authors to participate in political discussions by embedding social commentary within fictional works. As Fox (2012) explains, novels like Upton Sinclair's *The Jungle* used investigative journalism within an entertaining fictional format to ignite public outrage over issues like worker exploitation. Sinclair's book turned public attention toward squalid working conditions experienced by immigrants and paved the way for political leaders to respond with more progressive labor reforms and safety regulations. In this sense, circulating socially-engaged literature that was able to bypass such censorship typically played an outsized role in shaping popular political consciousness as a form of popularization, distributing otherwise marginalized viewpoints to broader constituencies. That is a good example to because although Sinclair and Harriet Beecher Stowe stories were a little controversial in the beginning they were at least based in some fact and brought the point of social injustice but they were done so in a manner that offered up some humanity. With large audiences for this work, the portrayal of less glowing standards obliged public officers to publicly confront this inequality, as the seasoned political scientist saw it.¹⁹ In contrast, Habermas theorizes literature as "dramaturgical action," which moves readers through rhetorical tactics rather than equitable communication. This suggests that fiction coerces belief change rather than reaching mutual understanding.

Habermas has claimed that within capitalist societies art and culture and art are torn apart from everyday life settings, and argues that literature, then, becomes a means for the elite to "colonize" its own population with the "bourgeois values" that they wish to spread throughout the world. Thus, instead of representing the different world-views of diverse communities, novels effectively talk only one worldview, that of the privileged class. Moreover, in his view, literary speech is devoid of any material enforcing power since it does not, at least in his

¹⁸ Keerthika, S. (2018). "Literature and Society: How Literature reflects society". *International Journal of Science, Engineering and Management (IJSEM)*, Issue 4, Vol. 3, pp. 471-372

¹⁹ Hengen Fox, Nicholar (2012). "A Habermasian Literary Criticism", *New Literary History*, No. 2, Vol. 43, pp. 235-254

paradigm, bind one to action. He argues that literary works liberate readers from the need to coordinate common knowledge or experiences by permitting them to escape into "world-disclosing" worlds. Because of this, Habermas describes literary language as a sort of "parasite" on practical communication, whose potential is limited by its very susceptibility to autonomy-emotion, for him, is more properly reserved for the contemplation and not for any serious motivation to social action. He keeps tight rhetorical walls between fictive and real speech.²⁰ Though literary advocacy as an agent of social change is being questioned misled, the tangible threat of censorship provides a real-world challenge to the potential for fiction to do good. So prevalent in history that literature that offended members of governments, religious organizations or simply the current mainstream will be censored and in many cases burnt. Censorship does not directly support dominant paradigms and those in power so much as it bans all other perspectives that challenge those narratives. This control of thoughts is the complete antithesis of what literature has so long been supposed to be: a carnival mirror that shows reality from different angles.

Moreover, it dampens the power of fiction to help societies evolve, be more inclusive and progress to new ways of thinking. Similarly, the workarounds to censorship that saved impactful works in the past from muzzling, meanwhile, have been replicated through modern technologies, providing the new realm where censored authors can be able to circumvent restrictions to communicate with other members of society. Just as many felt locked in a tug-of-war between powerful voices who would try hold that return at bay through censorship and those looking to move to new forums to get around prior suppression. A closer look at the sources and methods of censorship reveals to us its objectives but also the ideas it tries to silence. This background is important to understand the potential for censorship to overwhelm and the potential literature slowly over time to become a counter-regulation that contributes towards making politics really different.

Literature has always faced censorship from various sources, including governments, religious authorities, and societal norms. These groups have sought to regulate literary works they consider objectionable or risky to maintain political control, uphold moral standards, and suppress dissenting voices. Religious authorities like the Roman Catholic Church exerted strict control over literature, banning works that conflicted with religious doctrines.²¹ Authors who challenged religious orthodoxy risked persecution. Rulers and governments have also used censorship to perpetuate their power by suppressing literature that critiques the

²⁰ Hengen Fox, 2012, p. 235-240

²¹ Schmitt, C. B., Skinner, Quentin, Kessler, Eckhard, Krays, Jill (1991) *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 45-46

government, exposes corruption, or advocates political change. Authoritarian regimes, in particular, have prohibited works they perceive as seditious or revolutionary out of fear of potential uprisings.²² During colonialism, indigenous voices and perspectives in literature were suppressed by colonial authorities. This censorship maintained the colonizers' dominant narrative while marginalizing the oppressed.²³ Faced with potential backlash, some authors have resorted to self-censorship, tempering their messages to ensure publication. Though not externally imposed, self-censorship still limits the diversity of ideas and artistic expression.²⁴ In the internet age, governments impose online censorship. However, the decentralized architecture of the internet enables users to bypass censorship through proxies and encrypted tools. For example, when Syria blocked websites like Facebook, YouTube, and dissident news sources, the Alkasir tool allowed users to access over 4 million banned pages, undermining the regime's control over information.²⁵

Censorship presents straightforward challenges to this potential, but subtler controversies about ideology and manipulation surround discussions of the political impact of fiction: work that flirts with messages - explicit or implicit - in harassment genres such as dystopia, or literary political theory can often attract accusations of encouraging solidarity with extremists and promoting narratives. New research that had subjects read selections from well-known dystopian works showed it made them more willing to accept acts of extremity like smashing Capitol property, in the name of justice. The study contains some limitations, but they do seem to support development on how narratives may persuade and appeal through emotional salience. This raises complicated ethical questions about what the power of fiction when it comes to moving people to act for good or for ill. What could offer more promise than superficial condemnation, however, are evidence-based analyses of political fictions and the mechanisms by which they seem to persuade.

1.3: The artistic evolution and global influence of Japanese comics

This paragraph traces manga's evolution from 12th century emakimono narratives to modern global phenomenon. It examines seminal precursors like kusazoshi, otsu-e, toba-e and ponchi. Then it discusses post-WWII expansion of iconic manga magazines and artists driving

²² Getz, Arlene. (2022) *Number of jailed journalists spikes to new global record*, URL: <https://cpj.org/reports/2022/12/number-of-jailed-journalists-spikes-to-new-global-record/>

²³ Bhadra, Subhashish. (2023) *How colonial laws of censorship are still used by governments for moral policing*. URL: <https://scroll.in/reel/1048235/how-colonial-laws-of-censorship-are-still-used-by-governments-for-moral-policing>

²⁴ Day, Jonathan (2021) *What Is Self-Censorship? How Does It Kill Media Freedom?*, URL: <https://www.liberties.eu/en/stories/self-censorship/43569>

²⁵

international popularity. It analyzes manga's aesthetic techniques and thematic depth, especially regarding character development.

1.3.1 From Emakimono to Tezuka: the history and evolution of Japanese manga

Manga is a unique form of Japanese graphic art, with a rich historical background rooted in diverse artistic traditions from the 12th century. Picture scrolls, called emakimono, were ancient ancestors to manga, by conveying narratives through sequential images centered around legends, folklores, and supernatural beings. Visual humor and graphical expressions hold deep roots in Japanese culture. During the Edo period (1603–1868), various genres of visual humor surfaced, providing essential building blocks for future iterations of sequential art. Some notable examples include kusazoshi, otsu-e, and toba-e, followed by the emergence of ponchi in the late nineteenth century.²⁶ Kusazoshi emerged as simple narratives delivered through picture scrolls, evolving rapidly to embrace broader topics and reach wider audiences. Initially intended for adult education, kusazoshi soon expanded to cater to women and children by incorporating elements derived from folklore, legend, and mythology. Due to their accessible and engaging nature, kusazoshi left a non indifferent impact on the generations of visual communicators.²⁷ Another component of the visual humor landscape during the Edo period was otsu-e, featuring a steady shift from purely religious imagery towards more profane and satirical renderings. Over time, otsu-e matured beyond their religious origins, incorporating topical matters and critiques of local customs and practices.²⁸ Toba-e entered the scene as another compelling contributor to the realm of visual humor in Japan. Developed by the famous thirteenth-century monk Toba Sojo, these whimsical compositions captured the human behavior and interactions through irreverent anthropomorphic figures and visual puns. Through their blend of irony and comedy, toba-e offered insightful perspectives on societal concerns, setting the stage for forthcoming visual narratives.²⁹ Finally, during the late Meiji and Taishō eras, ponchi started to appear. Often regarded as a direct ancestor to manga, ponchi showcases striking similarities to its successor, notably employing satirical commentary intermingled with humorous illustrations. Presented in single-panel and multi-panel configurations, ponchi captured the imagination of burgeoning audiences seeking fresh interpretations of familiar scenarios.

²⁶ Hirohito, Miyamoto, and Jennifer Prough (2002) “The Formation of an Impure Genre—On the Origins of ‘Manga.’” *Review of Japanese Culture and Society*, vol. 14, pp. 39–48

²⁷ Hirohito & Prough, 2002, p. 43

²⁸ *Ibidem*, p. 43

²⁹ *Ibidem*, p.44

Manga became an international phenomenon in the late half of the 20th century. This period they represented the pinnacle of decades of creative development, the emergence of iconic artists, and manga's global propagation as a cultural force. Post-WWII, the manga business saw growth and variety. Manga magazines like "Shonen Jump" and "Shojo Magazine" provided platforms for new authors to serialize hit series, with iconic titles like "One Piece," "Naruto," and "Dragon Ball" capturing millions of readers. The manga genre expanded significantly, appealing to diverse age groups through action, romance, horror, sci-fi, and more. Artists addressed complex societal and psychological matters, crafting appealing storytelling and pushing limits. Prominent creators like Osamu Tezuka produced thought-provoking manga exploring ethical and historical topics.³⁰ The manga's global reach grew through multimedia adaptations and introductions by innovative artists like Osamu Tezuka, Akira Toriyama, Rumiko Takahashi, and Naoko Takeuchi. Their iconic characters and plots resonated world-wide, fueling appreciation abroad. Manga's popularity expanded internationally via translation efforts, anime adaptations, online distribution, passionate fan communities, cross-cultural exchanges, academic study, and successful live-action movies. This exposure gave rise to Original Non-Japanese manga, works created outside Japan inspired by translated manga, produced in local languages.³¹ The literary and graphic style of the manga are a challengers for translators, who requires specialized training. Due to the pool of fans growing, there was the creation of dedicated gadgets, conventions and clubs, or cosplay, that highlight manga and anime's cultural impact beyond their Japanese origins, emphasizing translation and adaptation's role in driving global enthusiasm.³² Alongside this progression, shojo manga surfaced, addressing romantic themes targeted at adolescent females, with authors such as Machiko Hasegawa create works like *Sazae-san*, which highlighted ordinary suburban households.³³ As manga ascended from a domestic artform to a global multimedia phenomenon through the latter 20th century, its artistic and commercial success fueled significant crossover into numerous realms of Japanese society. Manga's stylistic conventions, archetypal characters, and cultural perspectives have permeated areas as diverse as fashion, tourism, academics, and socio-political commentary. For instance, iconic manga/anime series like *Sailor Moon* propelled "kawaii" aesthetics into mainstream style while driving fans towards locations featured in the stories.³⁴ Moreover, manga has provided commentary on sensitive issues like war memory and disaster response. Examining manga's

³⁰ Sell, Cathy (2011) "Manga Translation and Interculture." *Mechademia*, vol. 6, pp. 93–108.

³¹ Sell, 2011, 93

³² Sell, 2011, 95

³³ Cheng Chua Karl Uy (2015). "Boy meets world: the worldview of Shōnen kurabu in the 1930s", *Japan Forum* pp. 1-27

infiltration beyond entertainment into tourism, scholarship, and social dialogue illuminates its cultural centrality for comprehending modern Japan. Contextualizing societal integration within manga's global expansion spotlights interlinkages between commercial success and more profound symbolic influence. As manga warms its way into bookshelves to shape tourism destinations, scholarly discourse, and political cartoons, its industry reach enables reciprocal interactions with national identity and social institutions.

1.3.2 Manga's aesthetic, expressive techniques and themes

Manga's capacity to examine profound ideas through creative expression contributes to its global popularity. However, this artistic freedom has also led to controversies regarding censorship and regulation. The interplay between manga's visual artistry and thematic depth across mediums and cultures underscores its widespread influence in modern pop culture. Manga possesses a distinct visual aesthetic that plays an important role in immersing readers in imaginative settings. Exaggerated facial expressions enable manga artists to convey complex emotions by representing tears, open mouths, and wide eyes in bold, stylized ways. Visual magnification and simplification drawing on classic cartoon techniques communicate characters' inner psychological states. Innovative panel layouts also significantly impact narratives by directing the reader's attention. Variations in panel size and arrangement, such as narrow panels slowing pacing or full-page spreads highlighting climactic moments, enhance suspenseful storytelling.

Additionally, creative perspectives, including bird's-eye views or low-angle drawing, engage readers in detailed environments.³⁴ Manga utilizes visual techniques to convey movement, effort, and humor through animated speed lines, gleaming sweat droplets, and empty speech bubbles. Vibrant colors, heavy outlines, and gradient shading further intensify aesthetics, allowing manga art to flourish independently. Iconic manga artists have contributed to signature art styles' evolution linked to renowned series, fostering visual continuity across anime, film, and gaming adaptations. For instance, Osamu Tezuka's animation helped to shape Astro Boy's appearance, while Akira Toriyama's muscular designs define Dragon Ball's

³⁴ is a Japanese adjective that means "cute", "adorable". Since the 1980s it also refers to manga, anime, videogame or other fictional characters, and objects related to them in Japanese pop culture.

The kawaii subculture mainly involves preteens in Japan, with cute ways of dressing, speaking and behaving. Something kawaii must not only be cute, but also small, funny-looking, decorated, with an innocent, childish appearance, generally in "feminine" colors like white, pink and light blue. Kawaii characters have childish, innocent features, graceful looks, tiny essential proportions, big, sparkling, tender and expressive eyes and a lot of details.

³⁵ Mathews, S. J. (2016) "Study of Manga, Animation and Anime as an Art Form" *International Journal on Recent and Innovation Trends in Computing and Communication*, No. 6, Vol. 4, PP. 494-497

visually. Ultimately, manga's creative expressiveness through distinct visual elements strengthens its cross-media appeal and accessibility to diverse global audiences.³⁶ Character development gives figures the complexity to drive their narrative arc. By exploring their past, strengths, and flaws, writers understand the motivations behind every decision and transformation. Establishing evident character wants and needs launches the story, and allows the reader to empathize with the main character. Renowned authors made the center of their works good protagonists and antagonists. Readers bond by identifying with characters, connecting to their struggles, and experiencing visceral empathy, frustration, or disgust. These emotional stakes also help the character mature and evolve, realizing its flaws and try to overcome them or apologizing for past actions, as we can see in figure 1 and 2.



Figure 1 Horikoshi, Kōhei (2014-today) *My Hero academia*, *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, Chapter 1



Figure 2 Horikoshi, Kōhei (2014-today) *My Hero academia*, *Weekly Shōnen Jump*, Chapter 284

A manga example of bold character development is "My Hero Academia," a popular Shonen series. In its high-powered superhero society, Midoriya Izuku stands out as one of the few

³⁶ Mathews, 2016, pp. 494-497

born without super-powers. Despite this disadvantage, his immense drive to become the Number One Hero starts the story. His bully, Bakugo, initially mocks his powerlessness and discourages his ambitions with cruel threats. However, after almost 300 chapters, Bakugo gradually recognizes his past mistakes and mean behavior, demonstrating sincere growth. The emotional redemption arc of this complex character engages readers, and raised the popularity of Bakugou, transforming him from one of the most hated characters to one of the most loved. Characters act as vessels for psychological exploration within manga's layered narratives. No one is truly “good” or “bad”, they confront their internal struggles and the expectations of society in order to grow. For example, coming-of-age tales symbolically discuss about adolescent identity searches, like Naruto or Tanjiro that seek self-improvement while facing external threats. Romantic series feature shojo heroines navigating love's trials and triumphs as metaphorical journeys toward emotional fulfillment and inner growth. Similarly, dramas use flawed, hyper-intelligent antiheroes like Light, Lelouch, or the Evangelion pilots to wrestle with complex philosophical questions surrounding morality and justice. Manga creatively employs multifaced characters as foundations to construct imaginative frameworks examining universal experiences about the human condition.

1.4 Manga genres

This paragraph presents a selection of key manga genres, their defining features, and their enduring impact on popular culture.

1.4.1 Shonen



Figure 3 Galdieri, Vincenzo (2018) <https://www.hallofseries.com/dragon-ball/dragon-ball-naruto-one-piece/>

Shonen manga, translated as "boy's comics" in English, is a prominent genre within Japanese comics that focuses on young male protagonists and adventure, friendship, and personal growth themes. Although the target audience is adolescent boys aged 12-18, shonen manga appeals more broadly due to its action-packed narratives and universal themes. By examining popular shonen manga series and their recurrent character archetypes and visual styles, it is evident how this genre successfully captivates a wide international readership and maintains relevance in popular culture. Integrating shonen manga elements in education also provides insights into the intersection of traditional Confucian values and contemporary Japanese society.³⁷ Popular shonen manga series like *Naruto*, *One Piece*, *Dragon Ball*, *My Hero Academia*, and *Hunter x Hunter* discuss about themes of perseverance, camaraderie, freedom, personal growth, heroism, justice and pursuing dreams or potential through engaging narratives and relatable characters. They incorporate elements of the hero's journey, competitions, training sequences, and escalating power systems to maintain excitement and suspense. Shonen manga also utilizes striking battle scenes and dramatic facial expressions to heighten emotional investment and intensify conflicts. While sharing these characteristics, each series has a distinctive artistic style and approach that gives it a unique identity.³⁸ Shonen manga features several recurrent character archetypes, including the resilient and ambitious protagonist, knowledgeable mentor, steadfast allies, and formidable adversaries. Supporting roles are usually comedic relief, romantic interests, or tragic. Quality and cohesiveness remain hallmarks of esteemed shonen manga regardless of stylistic preferences.³⁹ The popularity of shonen manga has enabled the genre to attract devoted followers and generate substantial revenues, making it hugely significant to the manga and anime industries.

³⁷ Born, Christopher (2010). "In the Footsteps of the Master: Confucian Values in Anime and Manga", *ASIANetwork Exchange A Journal for Asian Studies in the Liberal Arts*, pp. 39-53

³⁸ Born, 2010, 42

³⁹ *Ibidem*

1.4.2 Shojo



Figure 4 Albert, Brianna (2020) <https://www.cbr.com/greatest-shojo-manga-decade-2010s-goodreads/>

Shojo manga, or 'girls' comics,' represents a captivating genre within Japanese pop culture targeting adolescent females. Initially presenting domesticity-focused romantic narratives when emerging in the 1950s, shojo manga creators gradually pushed boundaries by introducing progressive themes, complex heroines, and experimental artwork. The article "The Desire and Disgust of Sweets: Consuming Femininities through Shojo Manga" elucidates the symbiotic relationship between shojo manga and evolving sociopolitical dynamics, specifically scrutinizing the portrayal of sweets as signifiers of cultural and gender role changes.⁴⁰ The article charts shojo manga's origins and growth. While early shojo manga conformed to prevailing gender stereotypes of passivity and dependence, progressive authors amplified female protagonists' autonomy and voices. This laid the foundation for shojo manga to disseminate counter-narratives, contest rigid gender roles, and inspire young women to embrace their unique qualities. Incorporating imagery of sweets, especially Western-inspired pastries, cakes, and chocolates, shojo manga articulated aspirational messages of hope and desire.⁴¹

⁴⁰ Ting, Grace En-Yi (2018) "The Desire and Disgust of Sweets: Consuming Femininities through *Shōjo* Manga." *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal*, no. 54, 2018, pp. 52–74.

⁴¹ *Ibidem*, pp. 53

1.4.3 Seinen Genre



Figure 5 Greenough, Caleb (2023) <https://www.imdb.com/news/ni63921005/>

"Seinen" translates to "young man" or "youth" in Japanese. In manga and anime contexts, seinen refers to content designed for males aged approximately 18-40 years old. However, people beyond this age range can still explore and enjoy seinen, as interests transcend limitations.⁴² There are many popular seinen manga and anime like *Berserk*, *Hellsing*, and *Tokyo Ghoul*. Surprisingly, some superficially innocuous anime are categorized as seinen upon closer inspection. For example, *Rozen Maiden*, featuring elegant ball-jointed dolls engaged in combat for their inventor's affection, and *The Apothecary Diaries*, with a strong female protagonist, are both classified as seinen.⁴³ Although darker, skeptical narratives do emerge in shounen occasionally, horrific or gruesome titles predominantly fall under seinen. For instance, the violence in *Elfen Lied* contrasts starkly with the beloved mainstream Shonen Jump magazine, home to *Death Note*.

Meanwhile, the emotionally deep story of *Banana Fish*, about two young men overcoming substance abuse and criminal dealings, is categorized as shoujo, owing to the main characters' bond. Shounen anime like *Chainsaw Man*, *Hell's Paradise*, and *Jujutsu Kaisen* contain graphic imagery, explicit content, and challenging concepts rarely seen in mainstream shounen. Among them, *Chainsaw Man* courts considerable controversy given its provocative nature. Seinen anime favors condensed narratives with rapid plot development leading towards poignant conclusions, often within 12-24 episodes per season.⁴⁴ Visually, seinen anime tend to be more edgy, lifelike artwork rather than extreme exaggeration as seen in shounen. Seinen opts for realism and emotional depth instead. Marketing tactics and stylistic choices shape the

⁴² Daleziou, Madalena. (2023) *What Is Seinen Anime? Difference Between Shounen & Seinen Explained* URL: <https://epicstream.com/article/what-is-the-difference-between-shounen-and-seinen-anime-and-how-can-you-tell-between-them-full-details-and-explanation>

⁴³ Ibidem

⁴⁴ Ibidem

distinction between segments, but blind adherence to classifications risks neglecting captivating works worthy of appreciation.

1.4.4 Josei



Figure 6 McClain, Carrie <https://blacknerdproblems.com/5-messy-but-brilliant-josei-manga-titles-you-need-in-your-life/>

Josei productions steer away from fantastical elements seen in shonen/shojo, instead focusing on human connections and genuine drama.⁴⁵ Initially intended for a wider female readership, josei manga refined its target audience to late teenagers and college students over time, featuring increasingly sophisticated narratives on personal growth, relationships, parenthood and harsh experiences from addiction to domestic violence. Consequently, josei characters also fall within similar mature age brackets. Definitive josei criteria still need to be made clearer. Owing to its less commercial viability, pinpointing distinct attributes proves difficult, and josei sometimes intersects with niche genres like yaoi, yuri, and shonen-ai. Josei's visuals exhibit fluid blends of realism and stylization, incorporating exaggerated expressions seen in shojo manga. While not always explicitly highlighted, various acclaimed manga and anime belong under Josei-Nana, Paradise Kiss, Eden of the East, Princess Jellyfish, Usagi Drop, and Chihayafuru. Ranging from slice-of-life tales to action-packed mysteries, these showcase the narrative depth and complexity that resonates with viewers.⁴⁶ Josei also serves as an accessible entry point for individuals hesitant about conventional anime aesthetics by embracing femininity without relying on clichés.⁴⁷

⁴⁵ Donohoo, Timothy. (2021) *Josei Is Anime & Manga's Most Underrated Demographic* URL: <https://www.cbr.com/josei-anime-manga-underrated/>

⁴⁶ Donohoo, 2021

⁴⁷ Ibidem

1.4.5 Kodomo



Figure 7 Horuko Scalco, Veronica (2020) <http://lambidextre.over-blog.com/2020/08/manga-story-on-board-approfondiamo-il-kodomo.html>

"Kodomo manga" refers to Japanese comic books for young readers under 12, as "kodomo" means children. This contrasts with "shonen" and "shojo" manga aimed at teenage boys and girls, although some series labeled as both kodomo and shonen/shojo exist.⁴⁸ A well-known kodomo manga publication is "CoroCoro Comic," which debuted in 1977 and features famous children's titles like "Doraemon." CoroCoro Comic remains among the best-selling manga magazines ever, although similar kids' publications like "Televi-Kun" and "Pucchigumi" offer competition. Many formerly popular comics targeted at children ceased operations owing to dwindling readership. Surprisingly, despite the popularity of CoroCoro Comic properties like "Doraemon" worldwide, kodomo manga has gained limited traction in Western markets compared to manga for older audiences. Among the few showing interest is Viz Media, releasing English adaptations of franchises like "Pokémon," "Legend of Zelda," and "Splatoon".⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Immortallium (2020) *What is Kodomo Manga and Why You Should Know About It* URL: <https://immortalliumblog.com/what-is-kodomo-manga-and-why-you-should-know-about-it/>

⁴⁹ Ibidem

1.4.6 Niche



Figure 8 Wallace, Taynne (2023) <https://gamerant.com/unusual-manga-genres-not-common-anime/>

Apart from mainstream shonen and shojo, manga encompasses numerous genres and subgenres, including popular ones like romance, isekai, mecha, horror, and magical girl. Particular niches have smaller audiences, resulting in fewer anime adaptations. However, when adapted, it excites enthusiasts.⁵⁰ Some key niche manga genres are:

- Omegaverse – is a theme recurring in the manga that has its focus on homosexual relationships (also called "boys love" or "yaoi" maga); in this particular case, it is set in societies where humans live according to dominant hierarchies that categorize them into dominant "alphas," neutral "betas," and submissive "omegas," determining how they interact with each other romantically and sexually.
- Anthropomorphic Romance - Involving humanoid animal characters, this subgenre has limited anime representation beyond titles like BNA and Odd Taxi. However, the recent popularity of Beastars could pave the way for more anthropomorphic romance anime.
- Gender Bender - Popular despite scarce anime adaptation, gender bender tales feature cross-dressing disguises revolving around secrets, goals, or preferences rather than gender identity per se.
- Otome Isekai - As a subset of isekai, otome isekai protagonists navigate game-like settings pursuing heroic and romantic objectives. More prominent across manhwa currently, manga otome isekai also holds popularity.⁵¹

⁵⁰ Wallace, Taynne. (2023) *10 Unusual Manga Genres That Are Not That Common In Anime* URL: <https://gamerant.com/unusual-manga-genres-not-common-anime/#anthropomorphic-romance>

⁵¹ “Manwha” are the South Korean comics. They differ from manga in both visual style and themes: they have colorful, detail-oriented pages and the majority of them tend to focus on reincarnation-based stories or game-based stories

- Reverse Harem - Distinct from traditional harem manga, in which is the male lead who receives attentions from a number of females, reverse harem has a female lead pursued by multiple male admirers.
- Absurdist manga - Emphasizing life's lack of meaning via humorous psychological lenses, absurdist manga like *Nichijou* and *Pop Team Epic* showcase distinctive philosophies.
- Military Moe - Combining cute girl characters with militaristic backdrops, military moe spotlight camaraderie over violence, as seen in examples like *Girls & Panzer*.
- Magical Boyfriend - Bringing extraordinary male love interests into ordinary protagonists' lives, similar to *Twilight* or *Peter Pan*, magical boyfriend manga still needs to be explored in anime form, since the paper manga isn't popular.
- Shonen Ai & Shojo Ai - Providing wholesome LGBTQ+ representation without heavy explicit sexual content, unlike Yaoi and Yuri.

1.5 Manga's global reach and censorship

Manga censorship involves removing, suppressing, or restricting content from Japanese comics by authorities, institutions, or individuals. This alters the series' accessibility based on perceived obscenity or offensiveness. Censors target specific images and text for elimination during editing or post-publication. Although prevalent in North America, censorship also occurs within Japan, notably when content transitions from manga magazines to compiled tankōbon (paper version of manga, distribute into shops) volumes. High-profile examples include hits like *Dragon Ball*, *Death Note*, and *Naruto*. These cases illuminate censorship's impacts on fans and librarians.⁵²

Dragon Ball, by Akira Toriyama, attracted substantial North American fandom despite facing censorship and eventual school banning due to violent and sexual content. However, resultant reader opposition and advocacy led to broader public debates about creative freedom and appropriate restrictions. Similarly, *Death Note* by Tsugumi Ohba and Takeshi Obata provoked challenges for excessive violence and dark themes, although it remained available with toned-down religious dialogues. Indeed, recent incidents of students facing consequences for *Death Note*-inspired journals reflect ongoing tensions in school libraries.⁵³ Masashi Kishimoto's *Naruto* series underwent heavy content censorship, especially for violent scenes and substance depictions. Uncensored access now relies on unofficial fan translations called scanlations,

⁵² Rahbar, Victoria. (2022) *Familiarizing Oneself with Manga Censorship* URL: <https://www.oif.ala.org/familiarizing-oneself-with-manga-censorship/>

⁵³ Ibidem

raising ethical concerns about creator compensation. Addressing consumer demands, some publishers release uncensored revised editions, like *Fullmetal Alchemist: Gold Edition*. Controversies stem from graphic violence, sexual depictions, and social commentary. Creators and publishers confront internal and external censorship pressures – from self-regulation to government policies and distribution terms. Perspectives diverge on manga's potential real-world behavioral or attitudinal impacts, with critics warning of harm while supporters celebrate imaginative possibilities. Ongoing research explores media's influence, yielding complex insights into the triangular dynamics between manga content, censorship, and social implications.⁵⁴ Some visual examples further demonstrate manga censorship rationales and methods:



Figure 9 Arakawa Hiromu, (2001-2010) *Fullmetal Alchemist Monthly Shōnen Gangan Chapter 31*

In *Fullmetal Alchemist* Chapter 31, Viz Media's early English release transforms the cross into a bigger piece of concrete. This exemplifies common visual cuts targeting potentially religious-like content.



Figure 10 Kishimoto, Masashi (1999-2014) *Naruto Chapter 110 and Anime Episode 65*

In a *Naruto* scene, the anime adaptation omits explicit visuals of a blood splatters, toning down the manga's brutality for younger audiences.

⁵⁴ Ibidem



Figure 11 Gotōge, Koyoharu, (2016-2020) Demon Slayer, Episode 38

For Chinese distribution, the Demon Slayer anime visually expands female characters' necklines to be less revealing. This illustrates censorship tailored to different cultural norms. Manga's examination of sociocultural issues inevitably cause controversy yet also drives its global appeal. Series analyzing complex themes like identity, sexuality, mental health, religion, and violence resonate with fans seeking creative depth while confronting barriers rooted in cultural taboos. For example, LGBTQ+ representations connect with marginalized youth but trigger censorship in conservative countries. Similarly, manga's anti-establishment ideas empowers fans to challenge norms, provoking establishment backlash as fan communities propagate manga's reach worldwide through distribution and cultural dialogues, tensions surface between exported liberation and imported offense. Ultimately, unresolved conflicts underscore manga's double-edged capacity as soft power - conveying both cherished values and divisive ideas. Global fame magnifies domestic controversies, while foreign objections validate manga's cultural influence. This cyclical dynamic propels manga's rise, even as it invites recurring critiques. Early anime imports like Star Blazers and Robotech introduced Americans to Japanese manga and anime's unique visual energy and transmedia storytelling. Blending vibrant graphics, genre diversity, and integrated narratives across animation, comics, and merchandising, these works sparked widespread interest in exploring

more authentic, unedited Japanese content. This created demand for access to anime, preserving original cultural elements despite localization efforts to minimize differences.⁵⁵

1.6 One Piece: The Manga of the wonder

"One Piece" is a shounen manga, serialized by Weekly Shounen Jump since 1997, created by the mangaka Eiichiro Oda. Up to May 2024, it counted a total of 1117 manga chapters, 1108 anime episodes, 15 movies, 13 TV specials, 2 short movies made in 3D, 1 original net anime, 1 original anime video, and a live-action series. It is, without a doubt, a colossal work, known by every manga fan. And, in 2024, still not close to an ending.

"One Piece"'s plot is fairly simple: Monkey D. Luffy is a cheerful, and ambitious young boy who wants to become the King of the Pirates and find the legendary "One Piece". So, he sets sails into the feared "Grand Line" and starts forming a crew.⁵⁶ But, in order to understand more about this work, it is imperative to look at its world-building. Based on fans speculation, One Piece should be set during the Sixteenth Century, our Age of the Pirates.

"Wealth, fame, power... Gold Roger, the King of the Pirates, attained this and everything else the world had to offer" With these words, One Piece began. Gol D. Roger was a man who managed to do the impossible: arriving at the last island in the world and finding a legendary treasure, the "One Piece". Henceforth, he became the "Pirate King", the most powerful man in the world. However, he let himself be captured by the Marines and condemned to death. On the gallows, he pronounced his lasts words: "You want my treasure? You can have it! I left everything I gathered together in one place! Now you just have to find it!". These words sprung everyone into becoming a pirate in order to find the legendary "One Piece" and becoming the King of the Pirates: it was the birth of the Golden Pirate Era. Twenty-two years later from this even, the 17-years-old Monkey D. Luffy set sail in order to become the next King and, during his adventures, he find his precious crewmate and form the "Straw-Hat Pirates".

⁵⁵ Mckevitt, Andrew C. (2010) "You Are Not Alone!": Anime and the Globalizing of America." *Diplomatic History*, vol. 34, no. 5, 2010, pp. 893–921

⁵⁶ Oda, Eiichiro (1997-today) "One Piece", *Weekly Shounen Jump*

1.6.1 The Straw- Hat crew



Figure 12 Oda, Eiichiro (1997-today) "One Piece" Chapter 976

Although Luffy remains the story's protagonist, his crewmates are equally crucial. Roronoa Zoro, the crew's swordsman, brandishes three katana on his quest to become the world's greatest swordsman. Zoro's fighting skills are matched only by his strict sense of honor and unyielding loyalty, making him a stable presence within the group. Also, albeit not in an official way, he is considered the vice-captain of the crew because he was the first to join Luffy.⁵⁷ Nami, the crew's navigator, dreams of creating the most accurate world map. Her exceptional cartography skills, resourcefulness, and cunning ability to navigate perilous waters contribute significantly to the crew's journey.⁵⁸ Usopp, the crew's sharpshooter and storyteller, dreams of becoming a brave warrior of the sea, on par with Helbaf's Giants. His sharpshooting skills are only matched by his fear of the unknown, making him the comic relief of Luffy and a loved character by the fans.⁵⁹ Sanji, the crew's cook, aspires to discover the legendary All Blue, a sea with fish from all corners of the globe. Beyond his culinary expertise, Sanji wields powerful martial arts and upholds a chivalrous demeanor that adds comic-based duels against Zoro.⁶⁰ Tony Tony Chopper, a reindeer with the ability to transform due to consuming a Devil Fruit, dreams of becoming a doctor capable of curing any ailment. His childlike innocence and kind-hearted nature endear him to the crew, bringing warmth to their adventures.⁶¹ Nico Robin, the crew's archaeologist, seeks to unravel the mysteries of the Void Century and the True History. Her proficiency in reading Poneglyphs, ancient

⁵⁷ Oda, 1997, Vol. 1, Chapter 15

⁵⁸ Oda, 1997, Vol. 9, Chapter 77

⁵⁹ Oda, 1997, Vol. 3 Chapter 23

⁶⁰ Oda, 1997, Vol. 7, Chapter 56

⁶¹ Oda, 1997, Vol. 14, Chapter 43

inscriptions, positions her as a crucial asset in the crew's quest for knowledge.⁶² Franky, the crew's shipwright and engineer, is a skilled craftsman who designed and built their ship, the Thousand Sunny. His dream involves sailing to the farthest reaches of the sea on the ultimate ship, showcasing his passion for shipbuilding.⁶³ Brook, the crew's musician, is a living skeleton thanks to the Revive-Revive Fruit. He yearns to reunite with his long-lost crewmate, the whale Laboon. He is the oldest member of the crew and a skilled jokester.⁶⁴ Jimbei, the crew's helmsman and a Fish-Man Karate master, aims to achieve unity between humans and Fish-Men. His wisdom and strength make him a valuable addition to the crew, contributing as a symbol of unity within the diverse crew of the Straw Hat Pirates.⁶⁵ A visual representation of them can be seen in figure 12.

While the Straw-Hat are considered the story's protagonists, they aren't the only ones worth mentioning. Almost every other character could be put into one of these categories: Pirate, World Government, and Revolutionaries. Pirates are people like Luffy, who dream of becoming Pirate King, or criminals who do not respect the laws set by the World Government. While they do not have their power structure, five pirates' crew are considered the best and stand above the others: the Four Emperors and the King of the Pirates.⁶⁶ World Government is a federation of over 170 affiliated nations that govern most of the world. It can make laws, have them respected, and punish the ones who broke them. It is composed of the Marines (that is the army), the World Nobles (a small elite of people), and the agents of the World Government.⁶⁷ The Revolutionaries are an association founded by the father of Luffy, Monkey D. Dragon, that has the objective to free every nation from the rule of the World Government and to overthrow the World Nobles. To do so, they tend to incite revolutions in the countries they found themselves in and help the citizens of oppressed countries⁶⁸

1.6.1 The manga narrative

The manga delves into several profound themes and motifs that enrich the narrative and emphasize with readers and viewers. Firstly, each crew member harbors a unique and determined "dream," leading to the significance of pursuing one's aspirations, no matter how ambitious. The second theme is "freedom". Luffy wants to be King of the Pirates since it

⁶² Oda, 1997, Vol. 19, Chapter 202

⁶³ Oda, 1997, Vol. 45 Chapter 439

⁶⁴ Oda, 1997, Vol. 47, Chapter 459

⁶⁵ Oda, 1997, Vol. 63, Chapter 615

⁶⁶ Oda, 1997, Vol. 5, Chapter 43

⁶⁷ Oda, 1997, SBS Vol. 8

⁶⁸ Oda, 1997, Vol. 90, Chapter 905

means becoming the freer man in the world. The Revolutionary Army is fighting for freedom against oppressions. One Piece analyzes multiple concepts of freedom, both gaining and losing. Friendship is a cornerstone in "One Piece," with the bonds between the Straw Hat Pirates and their allies taking center stage. Even in the face of insurmountable challenges, their unwavering loyalty portrays the series' powerful exploration of friendship and unity, highlighting the strength derived from these connections. Moral ambiguity adds a layer of complexity to the world of "One Piece," with characters' ethics being depicted in shades of gray rather than a simplistic black-and-white dichotomy. Pirates, who are supposed to be evil, are sometimes kind and compassionate, while Marines, who are supposed to be good, can become cruel and merciless. The exploration of morality in this manner challenge traditional storytelling norms. Justice takes on various forms in "One Piece," from the Marines' pursuit of absolute justice to Dragon's quest for justice. The clash of these differing ideologies is a recurring theme, offering a thought-provoking exploration of the nature of justice within the series. Legacy and inheritance play a significant role in the character development of many individuals. Characters struggle with familial legacies and the burdens or responsibilities they inherit, and their choices in response to these legacies shape their compelling character arcs. At its core, "One Piece" is a celebration of adventure. The series embraces the thrill of exploration, discovery, and the unknown, inviting audiences to join the characters on a journey filled with excitement and the promise of new horizons.

1.6.2 The success

The success of "One Piece" is born from a convergence of factors resonating with a global audience. Eiichiro Oda's storytelling, adventure, mystery, and character drama, lies at the series' core. The overarching quest for One Piece and intricate plotlines and conspiracies ensure sustained engagement.⁶⁹ The diverse and relatable characters, notably the Straw Hat Pirates, contributes significantly to the series' appeal. Each character possesses distinct dreams, backstories, and quirks, creating a dynamic ensemble that resonates broadly. Universal themes such as friendship, freedom, and the pursuit of dreams provide potent messages connecting audiences of all ages.⁷⁰ Mystery and world-building play crucial roles in "One Piece." The intricate details surrounding the Void Century, Poneglyphs, and True History add depth and intrigue. The expansive world, exemplified by the Grand Line and a multitude of different islands showcases Oda's imaginative powers. The emotional depth of

⁶⁹ Diaz, Ana (2023) *Everything you need to know about One Piece before watching the Netflix show* URL: <https://www.polygon.com/entertainment/23845804/one-piece-explained-anime-manga-netflix-live-action>

⁷⁰ Diaz, 2023

"One Piece" is profound, exploring themes of triumph, loss, and sacrifice. Cultural references, wordplay, and humor contribute to its global appeal, with Oda's ability to balance humor and seriousness creating a well-rounded experience. The manga sold over 523 million copies worldwide as of December 2023; it has consistently performed well in both Japan and international markets. Its longevity, with over 105 volumes published by 2023, contributes to its record-shattering sales.⁷¹ The manga has been exported to more than 30 countries worldwide, while the anime itself has been transmitted to almost every country in Europe, Asia, America, and Africa.⁷² Overall it is one of the most profitable franchises ever, with earnings given by all its media of about \$20 billion estimated as of 2019.⁷³ The live-action series on Netflix, launched in 2023, has garnered positive reviews and high acceptance scores. "One Piece" has transcended its origins as a manga and anime series, achieving the status of a cultural phenomenon that has captured the admiration of celebrities worldwide. Notable figures from various industries have openly expressed their affection for the series, further highlighting its global appeal.⁷⁴

⁷¹ Anime News Network (2018) "Top-Selling Manga in Japan by Series: 2018" URL:

<https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/news/2018-11-29/top-selling-manga-in-japan-by-series-2018/.140163>

⁷² Hallmark, Kyle (2016) *One Piece manga enters "Vs Four Emperors Arc"*, URL: [animenewsnetwork.com](https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/news/2016-07-29/one-piece-manga-enters-vs-four-emperors-arc/.118163)

⁷³ Cocchini, Giovanni (2019) *One Piece ha appena sorpassato Il Signore degli Anelli come incasso complessivo*, URL: <https://anime.everyeye.it/notizie/one-piece-appena-sorpassato-il-signore-anelli-incasso-complessivo-370545.html>

⁷⁴ Tarun (2023) *5 Hollywood Celebrities Including Dua Lipa and Travis Scott Who Are Huge Fans of One Piece* URL: <https://fandomwire.com/5-hollywood-celebrities-including-dua-lipa-and-travis-scott-who-are-huge-fans-of-one-piece/>

CHAPTER 2. WORLD GOVERNMENT IN ONE PIECE

This chapter examines the One Piece manga using political theory frameworks. It applies political theoretical frameworks to the analysis of the One Piece manga. Key aspects such as the world government system, the conception of human rights, and some significant plot events are examined. Additionally, other organizations present in the work are considered.

2.1 The structure of One Piece's world government

The primary governmental agency, serving as the main antagonist against Monkey D. Luffy and a multitude of other characters, is the World Government. The World Government is a federation of 170 nations that has expanded its influence over most of the One Piece world.⁷⁵ Nations affiliated with the World Government retain the ability to govern their internal affairs but must heed the World Government on international issues and pay a tax, known as the "Heavenly Tribute," for protection and recognition.⁷⁶ However, not everyone approves of their political ideals; individuals like Monkey D. Dragon are against them. The government adheres to the concept of "Absolute Justice", emphasizing that eradicating evil and enemies as the main priority, even at the expense of innocent lives or through immoral acts. This approach is guided by the motto "the end justifies the means," a doctrine followed by the majority of the Marine Corps.⁷⁷ It maintains a precise and unquestionable chain of command, with the World Nobles being the main body wielding the most power. The World Nobles, also known as the Celestial Dragons, constitute the world's ruling class and are direct descendants of the First Twenty families that established the World Government, over 800 years before Luffy's adventure. Although most Nobles may not engage in international politics, they still exploit their "birth rights" by using the Marine force at their discretion and conquering nations. A prevalent theme within the World Government is holiness. Mary Geoise, its political center, is called the "Holy Land." The Five Elders reside in the "sanctuary," and all World Nobles have the title "Saint" preceding their names.⁷⁸

⁷⁵ Oda, 1997, Vol. 41 Chapter 398

⁷⁶ Oda, 1997, Vol. 90 Chapter 909

⁷⁷ Oda, 1997, Vol. 45 Chapter 432

⁷⁸ Oda, 1997, Vol. 25 Chapter 233

2.1.1 The de facto ruler of the world: Im-Sama

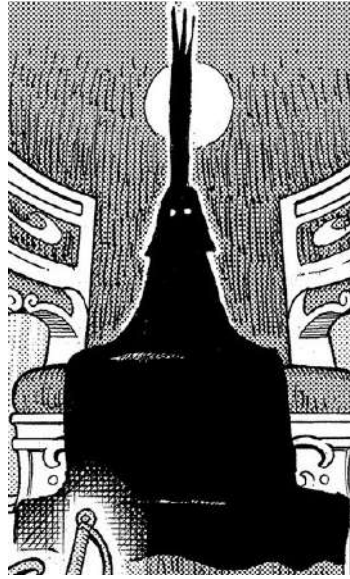


Figure 13 Oda, 1997, Vol. 90, Chapter 906

Only known through its silhouette and making brief appearances in a handful of chapters, Im-Sama is the ruler of the entire world, occupying the Empty Throne. Im-Sama is the most influential figure in the manga, possessing absolute power and capable of accessing all resources at the World Government's disposal without scrutiny. Their existence remains a closely guarded secret, known solely to the Five Elders among the higher-ups of the World Government. Although Oda has recently unveiled this character in the storyline, their motivations, the journey to becoming the Ruler of the World, and ambitions remain mysterious. As of now, the only fact is the absolute power held by this figure, that no one dares to challenge.

2.1.2 The de-jure rulers: the Five Elders



Figure 14 Oda, 1997, Vol. 25, Chapter 233

For an extensive period, the Five Elders were perceived as the sole rulers of the world. They wield nearly boundless power, including absolute command over every agency within the World Government. They have attained a quasi-mythological status, attributed to their seclusion in Pangea Castle, the epicenter of political power. Among the authoritative figures in the manga's world, only a privileged few are privy to their existence, including the most potent pirates, high-ranking Revolutionaries commanders, and senior Marine officers. However, with the revelation of Im-Sama in Chapter 909, it has been established that Im-Sama is the one issuing orders, while the Five Elders follow their commands. This revelation reshapes the understanding of the world's power dynamics, challenging the perception of the Five Elders as the ultimate authorities.

2.1.3 The Commander-in-chief: Kong



Figure 15 Oda, 1997, Chapter 0

The Commander-in-Chief Kong emerges as the initial power figure not belonging to the World Nobles within the World Government. Limited information is available about the extent of his political powers, with only the knowledge that he holds authority over the Marines, Cipher Pols, and the Seven Warlords of the Sea. The Grand Admiral of the Marines is required to report to him, but Kong, in turn, is accountable to the Five Elders.

2.1.4 The Grand admiral of the marines: Sakazuki



Figure 16 Oda, 1997, Vol. 66, Chapter 650

The Grand Admiral, also known as Fleet Admiral, holds the highest rank in the Marine Corps, commanding authority over every facet of the Marine Corps and the Cipher Pol. The Cipher Pol comprises secret World Government agencies specializing in espionage, assassination, and information gathering, effectively functioning as a secret police force. However, despite significant influence within the military structure, the Fleet Admiral lacks authority within the

broader World Government hierarchy. The Fleet Admiral, currently Sakazuki, is subordinate to the Commander-in-Chief Kong and the Five Elders. Despite this subservient role, he remains one of the most prominent political figures due to the fact that he command the world's largest army.

2.1.5 The army: marines and the seven Warlords of the sea



Figure 17 Oda, 1997, Warlords: Vol, 8 Chapter 69. Marines: Vol. 1 Chapter 2

The Marines serve as the military force of the World Government and stand as the most significant military presence in the world of One Piece. Their primary responsibilities encompass maritime law enforcement and naval warfare operations, as well as protections of the civilians. While they maintain a presence in all four seas, most of their forces are concentrated in the Grand Line, with Marine Headquarters serving as their central base of operations. Enlistment into the Marines follows a relatively straightforward process: individuals approach a ranking officer, typically one of the Base Commanders, and seek approval for enlistment. The enlistment process is open to individuals of any age, gender, or nationality. However, to ensure the integrity of their ranks, a thorough background check is conducted to prevent individuals with criminal backgrounds from being included. This approach ensures a diverse and capable force committed to upholding maritime law and engaging in naval warfare operations across the vast world of One Piece.

The Seven Warlords of the Sea are seven of the world's most feared pirates who allied with the World Government. In return for leniency in their criminal activities and protection from pursuit by the Marines, these pirates were obligated to obey the orders. The rationale behind establishing this group was to allow the Warlords to engage other pirates without imposing a strain on the resources and workforce of the Marines and changing the political backgrounds of the world. Regarded as one of the "Three Great Powers," alongside the Marines and the Four Emperors of the Sea, the equilibrium among these forces played a pivotal role in ensuring global peace and averting an all-out war between Marines and pirates. However, as of chapter 956, the Warlord system was dissolved, and they reverted to ordinary pirates.

2.2 The dangers of absolute power

The concept of absolute power and its detrimental consequences is a subject that political philosophers and theorists have extensively explored.

The World Government's willingness to eliminate even respected leaders like King Cobra and attempt to assassinate potential whistleblowers like Iceberg echoes with concepts proposed by scholars such as Hannah Arendt's, especially her observations of how totalitarian regimes seek to eliminate dissent and enforce a monolithic worldview. Furthermore, the existence of covert entities like Cipher Pol No. 0 (CP0) and their involvement in aiding nefarious individuals and activities is similar to Arendt's warnings about the erosion of moral and ethical boundaries in the pursuit of absolute power. Just as Arendt's work serves as a cautionary tale about the grave consequences of unchecked power and blind obedience, the World Government in One Piece stands as a potent allegory for a totalitarian regime that wields absolute authority without oversight or accountability, trampling on individual freedoms and human rights in its ruthless pursuit of control.

One example that underscores the World Government's absolute power is the mysterious figure Im, who assassinated Nefertari Cobra, the beloved king of Alabasta. This act showcases the World Government's willingness to eliminate even respected leaders who defy their authority, demonstrating their disregard for national sovereignty and human life.



Figure 18 Oda, 1997, Vol. 107, Chapter 1084

Another instance is the Cipher Pol No. 9's (CP9) attempted murder of Iceberg, a prominent shipwright and leader of the Galley-La Company. This covert operation, sanctioned by the World Government, aimed to eliminate a potential whistleblower who possessed knowledge that could potentially damage their organization, indicating the lengths they would go to maintain secrecy and control.



Figure 19 Oda, 1997, Vol. 29, Chapter 345

Their involvement in aiding the actions of the Celestial Dragon, Carlos, against Princess Shirahoshi confirm the World Government's utter disregard for ethical boundaries in pursuit of their objectives.



Figure 20 Oda, 1997, Vol. 90 Chapter 907

These examples paint a grim picture of a world governed by an oppressive regime that wields absolute power without any meaningful checks or balances. The World Government's actions

are driven by a ruthless pursuit of control, with no regard for human rights, individual freedoms, or the well-being of the populace they claim to govern. However, as much as this example represents the World Government, one of the most important events that sanctioned the World Government's pursuit of absolute power was the "Destruction of Ohara."

2.2.1 The destruction of Ohara

The Buster Call on Ohara is one of the most impressive descriptions of the abuse of absolute power and disregard for innocent human life in fictional narratives. This extreme military operation sanctioned by the World Government in the One Piece universe draws profound parallels to some of the darkest events in recorded history involving indiscriminate violence against civilian populations. Oda's portrayal highlights the horrific potential for authoritarian regimes to wield unchecked force in order to suppress knowledge and consolidate control, echoing scholarly analyses of the dehumanizing effects of such actions. As depicted in the manga, the Buster Call was a top-secret offensive involving the mobilization of the full might of the Navy's elite forces against the island of Ohara.⁷⁹ Despite the scholars' peaceful pursuit of uncovering the hidden history of the Void Century, the World Government deemed this knowledge dangerous and ordered Ohara's complete obliteration under the pretext of eliminating a perceived threat to its dominance. This is similar to Foucault's examination of how power structures aim to control dominant narratives and construct regimes of truth that serve their interests.⁸⁰

The violent bombardment from the government's battleships razed Ohara to the ground, killing countless innocent civilians, including children and the very scholars whose pursuit of knowledge was deemed a threat. As survivor Nico Robin recounted, "The bombardment was so intense that the island itself was starting to crumble." This wanton destruction and disregard for civilian lives resonates profoundly with the strategic bombing campaigns of World War II, analyzed by Tami Davis Biddle, which often involved the deliberate targeting of urban civilian centers under questionable military justifications.⁸¹

⁷⁹ Oda, 1997, Vol. 41, Chapter 391-398

⁸⁰ Patton, Paul (1989) "Taylor and Foucault on Power and Freedom." *Political Studies*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 276.

⁸¹ Biddle, Stephen, and Ivan Oelrich (2016) "Future Warfare in the Western Pacific: Chinese Antiaccess/Area Denial, U.S. AirSea Battle, and Command of the Commons in East Asia." *International Security*, vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 7-48.



Figure 21 Oda, 1997, Vol. 27 Chapter 395

Much like the Allied bombing campaigns against German and Japanese cities in World War II described by Biddle, the pretense of the Buster Call as a military necessity quickly dissolves under scrutiny. The World Government's decision to utterly raze Ohara to the last stone displays a similar indifference to weighing the proportionality of force against the value of human life. The specific pretext - that such extreme measures were required to safeguard state secrets and the sanctity of the "true" historical narrative - resonates with the motives driving some of history's worst instances of cultural genocide and oppression of scholars. The Nazi regime's systematic eradication of respected intellectuals, writers, and academics who challenged their ideas parallel the World Government's crusade to violently suppress any questioning of its version of the "truth." Moreover, the stated motive behind the Buster Call—to suppress the mere pursuit of historical truth and knowledge—draws parallels to some of humanity's worst acts of cultural genocide, censorship, and oppression of intellectuals. An example is the Nazi book burnings of the 1930s, which was aimed to control cultural memory by systematically destroying literary works deemed "un-German." At the same time, regimes from antiquity to modern times have persecuted scholars, artists, and writers and destroyed cultural artifacts in order to rewrite official historical narratives to suit their ideological agendas.⁸² As scholars like Stephen Biddle and Ivan Oelrich have explored, the ability to

⁸² Mathew, Raisun. (2019) "Authoritarian Censorship: A Psycho-Historical Study Based On Brecht's 'The Burning Of The Books.'" *Literary Endeavour*, 2019, pp. 534–37.

control and deny flows of information has become a pivotal aspect of modern warfare and state power projection in the digital age.⁸³ The World Government's efforts to permanently silence the scholars of Ohara and suppress the discovery of the Void Century's history reflect the ruthlessness with which authoritarian regimes seek to shape reality and dictate the truth. The lasting psychological impact on survivors like the young Nico Robin adds another layer of horror to the tragedy of Ohara. Numerous studies have shown that survivors of bombing campaigns and indiscriminate violence often face lifelong trauma, including post-traumatic stress disorder, depression, and anxiety disorders.⁸⁴ Yet, Robin's resilience, her unwavering determination to uncover the suppressed truth about the Void Century, represents the enduring power of the human spirit to overcome oppression and give voice to subjugated histories. The World Government's decision to commit such an act against Ohara places them in the same ethically rotten mindset as the regimes who perpetrated historic atrocities under the military "necessity" of total war.

The Buster Call's complete erasure of Ohara and its people encapsulated also non-combatants and innocent people. The aerial bombings of Guernica during the Spanish Civil War were among the first instances of deliberately targeting an undefended civilian town from the air on a massive scale. As Paul Preston describes, it represented "the first destruction of an undefended civilian target by aerial bombardment," with thousands killed through saturation bombing intended purely to "spread terror through the nation."⁸⁵ While some cities attempted civil defense measures like air raid shelters and early warning systems, the citizens of Ohara were given no chance, facing total annihilation without warning. The World Government displayed a complete disregard for innocent lives. By exploring the fictional atrocity against Ohara through a historically grounded lens, Oda illuminates how even the most outwardly powerful regimes are ultimately frail towards the truth and human dignity. The Buster Call can also be viewed through Michel Foucault's theories on power structures and the construction of "regimes of truth" to serve dominant narratives.⁸⁶ The World Government's desperate attempt to rewrite history by purging Ohara exemplifies the lengths authoritarian powers will go to control and reshape knowledge into an instrument of control over the masses. Any perspectives, discoveries, or insights that conflict with the official orthodoxy and threaten the existing power hierarchy must be pre-emptively stamped out through overwhelming force if necessary. However, dissenting artifacts and subjugated knowledge

⁸³ Biddle, Oelrich, 2016, pp. 27-33

⁸⁴ Biddle, Oelrich, 2016, pp. 17

⁸⁵ Messenger, David A (2021) "Local Government, Passive Defense and Aerial Bombardment in Barcelona During the Spanish Civil War, 1936–9." *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 56, no. 4, pp. 1084–101

⁸⁶ Patton, 1989, pp. 274-276

like the Poneglyphs represent an existential threat to such regimes of enforced "truth." The World Government's fear that the discoveries of the Ohara scholars could unravel the foundational lies underpinning their reign echoes how modern authoritarian states have cracked down on academics, censored research, and undertaken campaigns of disinformation and revisionism.⁸⁷ From Moscow to Beijing, current events show how little some have learned from history's darkest chapters. Oda's imagery of the incinerated libraries and archives of Ohara also cannot help but evoke the purposeful cultural devastation wrought by totalitarian purges and occupations like Nazi book burnings, the sacking of Abbasid Baghdad, and the looting of Timbuktu's priceless manuscripts.⁸⁸ Humanity's great tragedies in such acts of arson against knowledge can perhaps only be measured in the unfulfilled potential lost to the ashes, achievements, and revelations humanity will never realize.

2.2.2 Hannah Arendt and the "Banality of Evil"

The World Government in One Piece parallels Hannah Arendt's argument about the "banality of evil" and absolute obedience to authority as the series explores the dynamics that can lead ordinary individuals to commit atrocities and the dangerous consequences of blind obedience to authority.

The concept of the "banality of evil," introduced by Arendt in her book "Eichmann in Jerusalem: A Report on the Banality of Evil," is born from her analysis of the trial of Adolf Eichmann.⁸⁹ Arendt observed that Eichmann was not a sadistic monster or an ideological fanatic but rather an ordinary individual who committed atrocities through blind obedience to orders and a lack of critical thinking regarding his actions.⁹⁰ This concept challenges the notion that perpetrators of evil acts must necessarily be evil or psychopathic, suggesting that ordinary individuals can become part in grave injustices through adherence to authority and bureaucratic processes. Many government officials and agents of the World Government in One Piece are depicted as bureaucrats and administrators who carry out their duties with a sense of detachment and routine, often without considering the moral implications of their actions. They indulge in cruelty and oppression simply because their position allows them to do so, treating the subjugation of others as a matter of routine.⁹¹ An example is the incident involving Saint Charloss, a Celestial Dragon who shot and attempted to enslave a bystander

⁸⁷ Oda, 1997, Vol. 22, Chapter 202

⁸⁸ Oda, 1997, Vol. 41, Chapter 394

⁸⁹ Arendt, Hannah (1963) *La banalità del male: Eichmann a Gerusalemme*, The New Yorker, 1963, pp. 1-30

⁹⁰ Arendt, Hannah (1973) *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Harcourts Brace, pp. 290-302

⁹¹ Arendt, 1973, pp. 290

simply for inadvertently getting in his way. This act of violence was carried out with casual indifference as if it were a mundane task rather than a grave moral transgression. The Celestial Dragons' actions are often portrayed as a result of their privileged upbringing and the societal structure that enables their behavior rather than any deeply held beliefs or malicious intent.⁹²



Figure 22 Oda, 1997, Vol. 51 Chapter 499

Arendt's observations on the role of obedience to authority in facilitating evil acts are also reflected in the portrayal of the Marines. The Marines are presented as a hierarchical organization that demands unwavering obedience from its members, regardless of the moral implications of their actions.⁹³ Characters like Akainu exemplify this blind obedience, the Fleet Admiral of the Marines, who shows a willingness to sacrifice innocent lives and commit acts of cruelty in the name of "absolute justice." Akainu's actions, such as his attempt to kill his comrades who refused to go to war during the Marineford arc, mirror Arendt's observations on how individuals can become complicit in atrocities by surrendering their moral agency to authority figures.⁹⁴

⁹² Ibidem, pp. 292

⁹³ Oda, 1997, Vol. 1, Chapter 1

⁹⁴ Baehr, Peter (2007) "The 'Masses' in Hannah Arendt's Theory of Totalitarianism." *The Good Society*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 12–18.



Figure 23 Oda, 1997, Vol. 57 Chapter 556

Similarly, characters like Coby and Helmeppo, who initially join the Marines with noble intentions, struggle with the conflict between their morals and the organization's demands.⁹⁵ This reflects Arendt's argument that even individuals with good intentions can enter in a system that prioritizes obedience over ethical considerations. While the "banality of evil" and obedience to authority are central themes in portraying the World Government, it is essential to note that Arendt's work also addressed the role of ideology and propaganda in facilitating atrocities.⁹⁶ In *One Piece*, the World Government's actions are often justified through the rhetoric of maintaining "justice" and "order," similar to the propaganda used by totalitarian regimes to rationalize their actions. The World Government's efforts are exemplified by characters like Spandam, the former chief of CP9, who exhibits a deep-seated belief in the righteousness of the World Government's actions, even as he engages in morally reprehensible behavior.⁹⁷ This parallel highlights how ideology and propaganda can obscure the reality of evil acts, allowing individuals to rationalize their involvement in atrocities.

By drawing these parallels, *One Piece* offers a commentary on the human capacity for committing evil acts under the guise of authority and order. It serves as a reminder of the

⁹⁵ Oda, 1997, Vol. 59, Chapter 579

⁹⁶ Weinert, Matthew (2012) "Hannah Arendt in a Global Age: Political Evil and International Theory ." *Human Rights & Human Welfare*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 1-14

⁹⁷ Oda, 1997, Vol. 37, Chapter 355

importance of critical thinking, moral courage, and the willingness to challenge unjust systems, even in the face of overwhelming power and authority. While *One Piece* is a work of fiction, its exploration of these themes are linked with Arendt's real-world observations and insights, contributing to a broader understanding of the human condition and the dangers of complacency in the face of injustice. Moving on to the impact of blind obedience to authority on the ability to commit atrocities, Arendt's perspectives and Stanley Milgram's experiments offer further insights. Milgram's experiments on obedience to authority revealed that a significant proportion of people are willing to obey authority figures, even when their actions cause harm to others.⁹⁸ This phenomenon has been attributed to various factors, including the influence of situational pressures, the desire to maintain self-esteem, and the use of rationalizations to justify immoral actions. The experiments demonstrated how individuals could be coerced into inflicting harm on others simply by following orders from an authority figure, even when they experienced distress or moral qualms.⁹⁹ The willingness to obey authority figures and engage in harmful acts under their instruction is a recurring theme in the portrayal of the World Government's agents. The Marines, in particular, are depicted as being indoctrinated from a young age to follow orders without question, leading them to suspend their moral judgment and participate in oppressive actions as long as they are acting under the orders of their superiors.¹⁰⁰ The Marines' unwavering obedience to the World Government's orders, combined with the government's rhetoric of maintaining "justice" and "order," creates an environment where atrocities can be committed with a sense of detachment and normalization.¹⁰¹ However, it is essential to note that while Milgram's experiments and Arendt's theories provide valuable insights into the psychological mechanisms underlying atrocious acts, they also have limitations and do not fully explain the complex dynamics involved in perpetrating atrocities. Critics have pointed out that the idea of "just following orders" can be offensive to survivors and may provide an excuse for perpetrators of war crimes. Others, like Berkowitz, emphasize the role of personal motivations and beliefs in perpetrating atrocities rather than solely obeying orders.¹⁰² Recent studies have also highlighted the importance of dispositional factors, such as individual beliefs and motivations, and situational factors. This suggests that the willingness to perpetrate atrocities is influenced

⁹⁸ Milgram, Stanley (1965) "Some Conditions of Obedience and Disobedience to Authority." *Human Relations*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 57–76.

⁹⁹ Milgram, 1965pp. 63

¹⁰⁰ Oda, 1997, Vol. 44, Chapter 422

¹⁰¹ Milgram, 1965, pp. 67

¹⁰² Ravenna, Marcella (2011) "Quando Individui Ordinari Compiono Atti 'Mostruosi'. Relazioni Tra Banalità Del Male, Obbedienza All'autorità, Realizzazione Della Shoah." *Rivista Internazionale Di Filosofia E Psicologia*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 96–113.

by a combination of situational and dispositional factors rather than solely by obedience to authority.¹⁰³ Furthermore, it is crucial to consider the relationship between perpetrators and victims. Dehumanization, or the denial of humanity in others, can significantly justify harmful actions. This was particularly evident in the case of the Nazi perpetrators, who did not perceive their victims as fully human.¹⁰⁴

2.3 Absolute power in One Piece

However, there is a question still un-answered: can an organization that had absolute power be “good”? The answer, in *One Piece*, is analyzed through the eyes of the Revolutionary Army. The Revolutionary Army is dedicated to overthrowing the World Government and abolishing the worldwide oppressive class system. The Revolutionaries, led by Monkey D. Dragon, the father of Monkey D. Luffy, oppose the World Government's systemic abuse of power and corruption.¹⁰⁵

As a threat to the World government's dominance, the Revolutionaries were branded as dangerous criminals. They operate mainly in the shadows, establishing clandestine bases and cells worldwide to undermine the World Government's control incrementally. Though their full strength remains unknown, the Revolutionary Army is a formidable force that could upend the global balance of power if successful in their aims. Their clash against the World Government creates an undercurrent of tension that influences many events in the *One Piece* world.

¹⁰³Gibson, Stephen (2018). “Obedience Without Orders: Expanding Social Psychology’s Conception of ‘Obedience.’” *British Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 58, no. 1, pp. 1–39.

¹⁰⁴Passini, Stefano, and Davide Morselli (2009) “Authority Relationships Between Obedience and Disobedience.” *New Ideas in Psychology*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 96–106.

¹⁰⁵ Oda, 1997, Vol. 12 Chapter 100



Figure 24 Oda, 1997, Vol. 80 Chapter 803

The World government's institutionalized system of class discrimination, with the nobility class of World Nobles lording over and exploiting those of lower social tiers, mirrors the forms of entrenched injustice and systemic oppression that anti-colonial, Marxist, and feminist revolutionaries have sought to upend. From the perspectives of thinkers like Frantz Fanon, Karl Marx, and radical feminists, the Revolutionary Army's struggle against such an oligarchic world order built on the oppression of the majority could be framed as a righteous campaign for the emancipation of the global proletariat and historically marginalized groups. Moreover, if the World Government has indeed extinguished all remaining democratic institutions, civil liberties, and avenues for dissent across its global dominion, philosophies rooted in conceptions of natural rights and the social contract could potentially justify revolution as a reclamation of freedoms and autonomy stripped by an absolutist authority.

2.3.1 Justification of revolutionary power

Philosophers and political theorists have extensively debated the justification for revolutionary power against oppressive authority throughout history. While violence is generally abhorred, various thinkers have toyed with the question of when forceful rebellion

can be morally and ethically justified in the face of severe injustice and tyranny. One of the most influential frameworks comes from Enlightenment thinkers' conception of the social contract and natural rights. John Locke argued that governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, existing to protect inalienable natural rights to life, liberty, and property. If a government fell into tyrannical oppression that violates these rights, Locke contended that the people retain a moral right to resist and replace that unjust authority through forcible revolution.¹⁰⁶ Expanding on this, Jean-Jacques Rousseau theorized that legitimate political authority stems from the "general will" of the people, who surrender some freedoms to the state in exchange for protecting their remaining rights. If a government violates this social contract and no longer represents the general will, Rousseau argued that the people have grounds to resist and replace that government.¹⁰⁷ These principles influenced revolutions like the American struggle against British rule. Other thinkers defended revolution as a means for subjugated peoples to achieve national self-determination against oppressive colonial rule. Frantz Fanon, a French West Indian psychiatrist, philosopher, and revolutionary from the island of Martinique, viewed revolutionary violence as a "cleansing force" necessary for the colonized to reclaim their human dignity from the dehumanizing conditions of colonial subjugation.¹⁰⁸ Central to his critique was the notion that the colonial system inflicted profound psychological and existential harm on the colonized subject. He argued that the colonizers maintained their dominance through the systematic dehumanization, cultural imposition, and erasure of the colonized peoples' identities, rendering them "beings of no significance" and denying their humanity, culture, and dignity. This violence was not limited to physical force. However, it encompassed a psychological and existential dimension aimed at eroding the colonized subject's sense of self, identity, and agency, leading to a state of "mental pathology" and an "inferiority complex."¹⁰⁹

Further arguments for revolution stem from more progressive perspectives that view it as a catalyst for overturning oppressive systems of injustice, inequality, and class domination. Marxists viewed the violent proletarian revolution as a regrettable but ultimately necessary step to overthrow the capitalist ruling class and bourgeois economic exploitation.¹¹⁰ From such

¹⁰⁶ Morkevicius, Valerie (2013) "Why We Need a Just Rebellion Theory." *Ethics & International Affairs*, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 401–11.

¹⁰⁷ Morkevicius, 2013, pp. 405

¹⁰⁸ Fashina, Oladipo (1989) "Frantz Fanon and the Ethical Justification of Anti-Colonial Violence." *Social Theory and Practice*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 179–212.

¹⁰⁹ Makusha, Michaela (2021) "Frantz Fanon: The Revolutionary Who Wrote a Revolution." *Durham University History in Politics Journal*, pp. 64–67.

¹¹⁰ Morkevicius, 2013, pp. 405

vantage points, far-reaching social revolution by rekindling grassroots popular power represents the only enduring way to liberate oppressed groups and reorganize society along more egalitarian lines.

The rise of a totalitarian World Government that dominates all of humanity and crushes individual liberty on a global scale would represent an immense threat to the fundamental rights and dignity of human beings. In this scenario, according to converging philosophical traditions, the armed revolutionary force would become not just permissible but an inescapable moral imperative to overthrow such a tyrannical authority by whatever means are necessary.

The primary basis for this revolutionary justification traces back to the Enlightenment philosophy of natural rights and social contract theory. If a global governing power endeavored to grasp absolute control by trampling on citizens' inalienable rights, Locke maintained that "the state of war is thereby unavoidably re-established between the subjects and the Head."¹¹¹ Revolution would emerge as a natural right and moral duty when the rulers contradict the purpose for which they were initially granted authority through the people's consent. More radically, Fanon's psycho-existentialist view casts the struggle of oppressed peoples to violently reclaim their autonomous personhood from neo-colonial domination as a supreme act of "self-recovery" -an existential imperative beyond mere temporal politics.¹¹² Fanon saw revolutionary violence as serving several essential purposes in decolonization for three reasons. First, it represented the collective catharsis of the colonized, allowing them to shed the psychological shackles of colonialism and reclaim their agency and self-worth. He described this process as the "sloughing off of the colonial mentality" and the "rebirth" of the colonized subject. Second, revolutionary violence fostered a sense of solidarity and collective identity among the colonized, uniting them in a common struggle against their oppressors and creating a shared sense of purpose and "national destiny." Third, revolutionary violence served as a means of dismantling the colonial system and its structures of oppression, paving the way for constructing a new, liberated society free from the vestiges of colonial domination.¹¹³ Overthrowing a totalitarian regime that reifies human beings as mere subject-bodies to be controlled would represent a battle not just for political freedom but for the reclamation of human identity and full humanity itself.

According to dependency theory, armed revolutionary struggle by the oppressed against the global capitalist system's structure of domination that keeps developing peripheral nations

¹¹¹ Goldstone, Jack A (1980) "Theories of Revolution: The Third Generation." *World Politics*, vol. 32, no. 3, pp. 425-53.

¹¹² Goldstone, 1980, pp. 426

¹¹³ Fashina, 1989, pp. 187-189

subjugated as feeders for the hegemonic core becomes a moral imperative to end their economic and human bondage. Some theorists have even enshrined revolution as an ethical duty rather than a moral option. Hannah Arendt argued that 18th-century revolutions birthed a new form of participatory political legitimacy through widespread constituent violence, making rebellion against any authority denying such participatory rights obligatory.¹¹⁴ Should a totalitarian World Government actualize a global dystopia annihilating human rights, freedoms, and autonomy, the schools of revolutionary thought says: morality itself would call for a revolutionary uprising to smash such an inhumane system by any means necessary. Revolutionary violence would be permissible in that titanic struggle against centralized oppression, but an ethical responsibility - the reclamation of human agency, dignity, and universal human potential.¹¹⁵ Even more recent thinkers like Michael Walzer have sought to rigorously circumscribe the conditions under which revolutions may be morally justified, requiring concrete evidence of enduring tyranny violating fundamental human rights and realistic prospects for radical reform.¹¹⁶ Ultimately, while some schools of thought offer moral justifications for overthrowing oppressive regimes, most recognize the immense dangers revolutions pose in potentially unleashing greater violence, chaos, and injustice than the ills they aim to resolve. As such, the ethics of revolutionary power hinge on judging each specific circumstance through a tragic calculus weighing the severity of current oppression against the likelihood of successfully replacing it with a more just order rather than descending into cycles of retributive brutality.

2.3.2 Critics of revolutionary power

Noble ideals of freedom, justice, and equality often drive the quest for revolutionary change and overthrowing oppressive regimes. However, history has shown that the acquisition of power by revolutionary forces does not necessarily guarantee the realization of these aspirations. There are numerous instances where revolutions have devolved into new forms of authoritarianism, perpetuating the cycle of subjugation and exploitation they initially sought to abolish.

One of the most prominent examples of a revolution that descended into authoritarianism is the Cuban Revolution of 1959, led by Fidel Castro and the 26th of July Movement. While the revolution succeeded in overthrowing the repressive regime of Fulgencio Batista, the consolidation of power by Castro and his allies gradually eroded democratic institutions and

¹¹⁴ Goldstone, pp. 431

¹¹⁵ Goldstone, pp. 442

¹¹⁶ Morkevicius, 2013, pp. 401–403.

civil liberties.¹¹⁷ The initial promises of freedom and self-determination were replaced by a centralized dictatorship, with Castro ruling as an uncontested leader until his resignation in 2008. While the revolution initially brought about positive changes, including land reform and improved healthcare and education, it also suppressed political opposition and human rights abuses. Political power became concentrated in the hands of a small group of revolutionaries, with little tolerance for dissent or alternative ideologies.¹¹⁸

The Chinese Cultural Revolution, initiated by Mao Zedong in 1966, is another illustration of the potential for revolutionary forces to become oppressive. The Cultural Revolution, in particular, was a period of widespread social and political chaos, with Mao encouraging the youth to challenge authority and purge society of "counter-revolutionary" elements. Millions of people were persecuted, and the country suffered significant economic and social setbacks.¹¹⁹ Aimed at purging capitalist and traditional elements from Chinese society, the Cultural Revolution quickly spiraled into a period of chaos and violence, with Mao's Red Guards persecuting perceived enemies of the revolution, including intellectuals, party officials, and even Mao's colleagues.¹²⁰ The revolution, intended to empower the masses, ultimately resulted in widespread human rights abuses, economic stagnation, and the consolidation of Mao's cult of personality.

The Iranian Revolution of 1979, which overthrew the Western-backed monarchy of Shah Mohammad Reza Pahlavi, is another example of a revolutionary movement that ultimately failed to live up to its promises of freedom and democracy. Despite the diverse groups involved, the Islamicists, led by Ayatollah Khomeini, systematically consolidated power through a series of measures aimed at institutionalizing the Islamic Republic governed by Sharia law. This process involved sidelining and antagonizing leftist, socialist, and nationalist factions that had played a role in the revolution. The Islamicists deliberately provoked confrontations, such as the hostage crisis at the American embassy, to undermine rivals and reinforce their anti-imperialist credentials among the populace. While the revolution was initially driven by a diverse coalition of secular and religious forces, the rise of Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini and the establishment of an Islamic theocracy marginalized secular elements. They imposed strict religious doctrine on Iranian society.¹²¹ The revolutionary fervor that had united Iranians against the Shah's regime was ultimately co-opted by the

¹¹⁷ Woolsey, T. S. (1986) "The Consequences of Cuban Belligerency." *The Yale Law Journal*, vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 182–86.

¹¹⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 183

¹¹⁹ Pye, Lucian W (1986) "Reassessing the Cultural Revolution." *The China Quarterly*, no. 108, pp. 597–612.

¹²⁰ Heberer, Thomas (2009) "The 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution': China's Modern Trauma." *Journal of Modern Chinese History*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 165–81.

clerical establishment, leading to the suppression of dissent, restrictions on personal freedoms, and the marginalization of women and religious minorities. What began as a liberating and exhilarating event culminated in the rise of a contradictory theocratic regime that combined modern trappings like elections with harsh repression and the subjugation of democratic principles initially espoused by the revolutionaries.¹²²

These historical examples illustrate a recurring pattern in which revolutionary movements, driven by ideological fervor and a desire for radical change, often fail to uphold the principles of democracy, human rights, and individual liberties they had initially championed. Critiques of violent revolutions have also highlighted the inherent contradictions and ethical dilemmas involved in the pursuit of revolutionary change through violent means. Philosopher Michael Walzer argues that "The deliberate killing of innocent people is always wrong, even in cases of revolutionary struggle against oppression."¹²³ This ethical stance challenges the notion that the ends justify the means and questions whether the use of violence and terror can ever truly lead to a just and equitable society. Moreover, scholars have pointed out that the very nature of revolutionary movements often fosters a mentality of "us vs. them," which can perpetuate cycles of oppression and marginalization. As political scientist Theda Skocpol notes, "Revolutions are not only struggled for power but also battles over the meaning of social reality -- how people will henceforth be defined and defined themselves".¹²⁴

The potential for abuse of power by revolutionaries is also explored in fictional narratives, such as the manga "One Piece." Sabo deliberately harming the World Nobles, making them starve, can be interpreted as a form of passive aggression and a demonstration of the potential for revolutionaries to become oppressors themselves.

¹²¹ Vakili-Zad, Cyrus (1990) "Organization, Leadership and Revolution: Religiously-Oriented Opposition in the Iranian Revolution of 1978-1979 ." *Conflict Quarterly* , pp. 1–21.

¹²² Moghadam, Val (1989) "One revolution or two? The Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic ." *Socialist Register*, pp. 74–101.

¹²³ Morkevicius, 2013, pp. 402

¹²⁴ Goldstone, pp. 437



Figure 25 Oda, 1997, Vol. 107 Chapter 1083

Critics of violent revolutions have argued that such upheavals inevitably lead to the concentration of power in the hands of a new ruling class, which may prove no less oppressive than the regime it replaced.¹²⁵ These critics advocate for gradual, peaceful reforms and strengthening democratic institutions as a safer path to societal progress.¹²⁶ However, proponents of revolutionary action contend that non-violent methods are often ineffective against deeply entrenched and oppressive regimes that refuse to relinquish power. They argue that revolutionary violence, while regrettable, is sometimes necessary to overcome tyrannical systems and pave the way for establishing more just societies.¹²⁷ Whether revolutions are justified or inevitably lead to new forms of oppression is a complex and contentious debate.

¹²⁵ Weber, Thomas (2003) "Nonviolence Is Who? Gene Sharp and Gandhi." *Peace and Change/Peace & Change*, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 250–70.

¹²⁶ Evans, Brad. (2009) "Revolution without Violence." *Peace Review*, 21 (1): 85–94

¹²⁷ Zagorin, Perez (1973) ""Theories of Revolution in Contemporary Historiography."" *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 88, no. 1, pp. 23–52.

History provides examples of revolutions that resulted in more democratic and equitable societies, such as the American and French Revolutions. However, it also shows cases where revolutionary movements, after attaining power, became oppressive and authoritarian. A key factor may be whether the revolutionary movement maintains a commitment to democratic principles, respect for individual rights, and openness to diverse viewpoints after taking control. Establishing robust systems of checks and balances, fostering a culture of government accountability, and allowing a vibrant civil society can help mitigate the risks of authoritarianism and protect the gains of the revolution. Pursuing revolutionary change involves balancing the legitimate desires for justice and freedom against the potential for those ideals to be corrupted by unchecked power.¹²⁸

2.4 Averting civilizational wreckage

The tragedies depicted in the world of *One Piece*, perpetrated by the World Government, serve as an allegory for the real-world atrocities committed by authoritarian regimes throughout history. The World Government's actions in Flevance, God Valley, Lulusia, and Ohara exemplify the grave consequences that can arise when a governing body wields unchecked power and disregards the fundamental rights and dignity of its citizens. These fictional events mirror the systematic dehumanization, persecution, and genocide of targeted groups, as well as the wanton aggression against sovereign nations and the indiscriminate use of force against civilian populations

2.4.1 One Piece and humanitarian tragedies

The systematic persecution and eventual extermination of Flevance's citizens, known as the "Amber Lead" people, bear a chilling resemblance to the horrors of the Holocaust. Just as the Nazi regime dehumanized and scapegoated entire ethnic groups based on their perceived racial inferiority, the World Government targeted and massacred the Amber Lead victims, viewing them as a threat to be eliminated. The ghettoization and ultimate annihilation of Flevance's populace evoke the grim memories of the Jewish ghettos and concentration camps, where millions of innocent lives were mercilessly extinguished in the name of a twisted ideology of racial purity.

¹²⁸ Morkevicius, 2013, pp. 403



Figure 26 Oda, 1997, Vol. 76, chapter 762

The events at God Valley, where the inhabitant's people were systematically targeted and slaughtered by the World Government's forces, draw parallels to the brutal ethnic cleansing campaigns witnessed in various parts of the world, most notably the atrocities committed during the Bosnian War in the 1990s. The indiscriminate killing of civilians, including women and children, evokes the memories of the Srebrenica massacre, where Bosnian Serb forces systematically executed thousands of Bosnian Muslim men and boys in what was supposed to be a UN-protected safe area.¹²⁹ This genocide sent shockwaves across the world, representing one of the worst cases of mass murder in Europe since World War II.¹³⁰

¹²⁹ Kalyvas, Stathis N., and Nicholas Sambanis (2005) "Bosnia's Civil War: Origins and Violence Dynamics." *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis*, pp. 191–230.

¹³⁰ Hoare, Marko Attila (2014) "Towards an Explanation for the Bosnian Genocide of 1992–1995." *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 516–32



Figure 27 Oda, 1997, Chapter 1095

The ongoing assault on Lulusia can represent the 1990 Iraqi invasion of Kuwait, highlighting the cyclical nature of conflicts driven by territorial ambitions and violations of international norms. The indiscriminate bombing of civilian areas mirrors the scorched-earth tactics used in Kuwait, deliberately decimating urban centers in grave breach of the laws of armed conflict. The forced displacement of civilians evokes the plight of Kuwaitis who fled violence and deprivation during the Gulf War.¹³¹ Targeting essential facilities like hospitals and schools flagrantly violates humanitarian laws protecting civilians. This erasure of the social fabric eliminates the immediate crisis and undermines prospects for future reconciliation. The parallels with past atrocities underscore the urgency of upholding the rules-based international order and preventing such egregious violations from becoming normalized.¹³²

¹³¹ Rakos, Richard F (1993) "Propaganda as Stimulus Control: The Case of the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait." *Behavior and Social Issues*, vol. 3, no. 1-2, pp. 35-62.

¹³² Greenwood, Christopher (1992) "New World Order or Old? The Invasion of Kuwait and the Rule of Law." *the Modern Law Review*, vol. 55, no. 2, pp. 153-78



Figure 28 Oda, 1997, Vol. 105 Chapter 1060

The Buster Call, a devastating military assault that led to the annihilation of the entire island of Ohara and its civilian population, evokes the horrors of indiscriminate violence and the use of disproportionate force against civilian targets. The devastation wrought upon Ohara, with entire cities reduced to rubble and countless innocent lives lost in an instant, mirrors the catastrophic consequences of the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki during World War II.¹³³ The the detonation of nuclear weapons claimed over 200,000 lives and left vast swaths of the cities obliterated. Like those tragic events, the Buster Call on Ohara flagrantly violated the principles of distinction and proportionality enshrined in international humanitarian law.¹³⁴

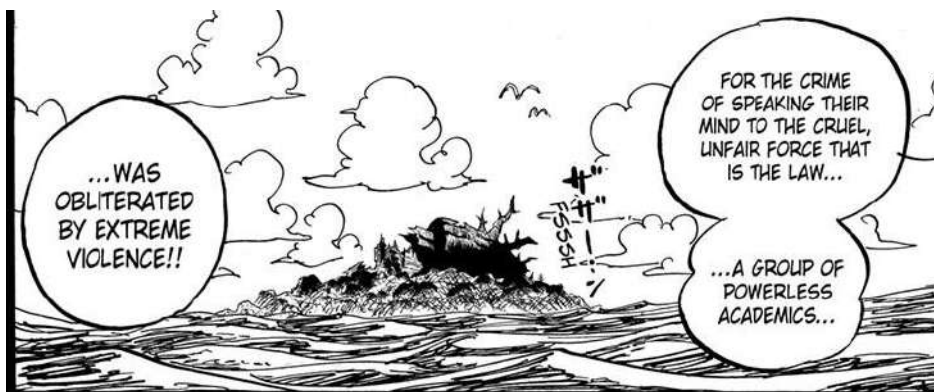


Figure 29 Oda, 1997, Vol. 105, chapter 1066

¹³³ Tomonaga, Masao (2019) "The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: A Summary of the Human Consequences, 1945-2018, and Lessons for Homo Sapiens to End the Nuclear Weapon Age." *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 491–517

¹³⁴ Yagami, Kazuo.(2009) "Bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Gar Alperovitz and His Critics." *Southeast Review of Asian Studies*, vol. 31, pp. 301–07.

One of the most noticeable aspects of these fictional tragedies is how they reflect the recurring cycles of violence, oppression, and disregard for human life that have plagued human societies throughout history. From the systematic dehumanization and genocide of targeted groups to the wanton aggression against sovereign nations and the use of indiscriminate force against civilian populations, these narratives underscore the grave injustices and atrocities that arise when hatred, intolerance, and the pursuit of power take precedence over human rights and the sanctity of life.¹³⁵ In each of these tragedies, the common thread that emerges is the devastating impact on civilian populations. Innocent lives were lost, families were torn apart, and entire communities were uprooted and displaced, forced to flee their homes in search of safety and refuge. The trauma and psychological scars inflicted on survivors are often profound and long-lasting, leaving indelible marks on individuals and societies alike. These fictional narratives serve as allegories for the real-life atrocities that have plagued humanity throughout history, highlighting the devastating consequences of prejudice, intolerance, and the pursuit of power at the expense of human lives and dignity.

By examining these fictional narratives through the lens of real-world atrocities, we can gain a deeper understanding of the forces that have perpetuated cycles of violence and suffering. Through this understanding, we can strive to build a more just, compassionate, and peaceful world where the lessons of history serve as a constant reminder of the path we must never tread again. The prevention of such civilizational breakdowns and the unraveling caused by the abuse of power has long been a preoccupation for political and social theorists. Thinkers like Jeremy Bentham, Michel Foucault, Montesquieu, John Locke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau have proposed various mechanisms, concepts, and theories to address this challenge. The events unfolding in *One Piece* offer a compelling lens through which to examine these philosophical frameworks, revealing both resonances and contrasts between the fictional narrative and the theoretical constructs proposed by these influential thinkers.

2.4.2 One Piece and civilization breakdown

The prevention of potential "civilizational breakdowns" or unraveling caused by the abuse of power has been a longstanding concern in political and social theory. Various thinkers and philosophers have proposed mechanisms, concepts, and theories to address this challenge throughout history. Among the most influential is Jeremy Bentham's conceptualization of the Panopticon and Michel Foucault's notion of panopticism. Bentham's panopticon was an architectural design for a prison that allowed for continuous surveillance of inmates by a

¹³⁵ Yildirimtürk Bayraktar, Fetine. (2021)"Ethnic Conflict Movements: The Case Study Of Bosnia And Herzegovina." *Anadolu Ve Balkan Araştırmaları Dergisi*, vol. 4, no. 7, pp. 113–32.

central authority. The fundamental principle was that the mere threat of constant observation would deter inmates from misbehaving, thereby promoting order and reducing the need for harsh punishments.¹³⁶ Bentham envisioned the Panopticon as a means of exerting control over potentially disruptive elements in society, thereby preventing civilizational breakdowns. Foucault expanded on Bentham's concept, interpreting panopticism as a broader metaphor for the mechanisms of power and control in modern societies. He argued that panopticism represented a system of surveillance and normalization that permeated various institutions and social structures. It aimed to produce docile and productive individuals through constant observation, hierarchical control, and the internalization of societal norms. Foucault contended that panopticism manifested a broader shift in the exercise of power, moving away from overt physical coercion towards more subtle and insidious forms of control.¹³⁷

Other notable theories addressing the prevention of civilizational unraveling caused by the abuse of power have emerged throughout history. One influential theory is the Separation of Powers and Checks and Balances principle, proposed by Montesquieu in 1748. This theory advocates dividing governmental powers into separate executive, legislative, and judicial branches to prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful. Each branch serves as a check and balance on the others, promoting accountability and curbing excessive authority.¹³⁸

The Social Contract Theory, developed by thinkers like John Locke in 1689 and Jean-Jacques Rousseau in 1762, offers another perspective. This theory holds that the state's authority is derived from the consent of the governed. Suppose the government fails to protect the natural rights of its citizens. In that case, the people can revolt and establish a new social contract, thereby preventing the perpetuation of abusive power structures. The principles of Federalism and Decentralization, championed by the Founding Fathers of the United States in the Federalist Papers of 1788, advocate for distributing power between a central authority and regional or local governments. This power distribution prevents the concentration of power in a single entity, mitigating the potential for abuse.¹³⁹

While there are apparent similarities between the events in *One Piece* and the theoretical frameworks proposed by thinkers like Bentham, Foucault, Montesquieu, Locke, and Rousseau, the fictional world also presents unique challenges and nuances that diverge from these theories. The presence of resistance movements like the Revolutionary Army and the

¹³⁶ Brunon-Ernst, Anne. *Beyond Foucault*. Routledge, 2016, pp. 1-13

¹³⁷ *Ibidem*, pp. 1-10

¹³⁸ Maley, William (2002) "Twelve Theses on the Impact of Humanitarian Intervention." *Security Dialogue*, vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 265–78.

¹³⁹ Grant, Ruth W., and Robert O. Keohane (2005) "Accountability and Abuses of Power in World Politics." *American Political Science Review*, vol. 99, no. 1, pp. 29–43.

decentralized power structures in the world of One Piece challenge the notion of a singular, all-encompassing panoptic system as described in Foucault's panopticism. While the World Government attempts to exert control through surveillance and normalization mechanisms, it faces significant opposition and challenges to its authority from various fronts.¹⁴⁰ The imbalance of authority and the lack of accurate civilian control and freedom of speech undermine the principles of checks and balances advocated by political philosophers like Montesquieu. The influence wielded by entities like the Celestial Dragons and the suppression of dissenting voices suggests a breakdown in the accountability and power distribution system. However, it is essential to note that the world of One Piece is a fictional construct, and the dynamics at play may not always adhere strictly to the theoretical frameworks proposed by thinkers like Bentham, Foucault, Montesquieu, and others. The series often employs exaggerated or fantastical elements for narrative purposes, which may translate differently to real-world applications. Nonetheless, the parallels and contrasts between the events depicted in One Piece and these theories offer valuable insights into the challenges of maintaining stable and just societies and the consequences of unchecked power and oppression.

One of the central tenets explored in One Piece is the idea of individual freedom and the pursuit of one's dreams, contrasting with the notion of total subjugation under a panoptic system. Characters like Luffy, the protagonist, and his crew members actively resist the World Government's attempts to control them, challenging the notion of absolute power.¹⁴¹ This resonates with social contract theory, where individuals can revolt against a government that fails to protect their natural rights.¹⁴²

Furthermore, "peer accountability" can be seen in the interactions between pirate crews and other entities in One Piece. While not bound by formal accountability mechanisms, these groups must maintain their reputations and credibility within their respective spheres of influence, lest they lose the cooperation and respect of their peers. This form of accountability is exemplified by the interactions between the Straw Hat Pirates and other pirate crews or organizations they encounter.¹⁴³ Additionally, the concept of "market accountability, wherein entities are held accountable by investors, consumers, and market forces, can be observed in the dynamics surrounding the Underworld, a vast network of black markets, and illicit trade in the One Piece world.¹⁴⁴ Organizations and individuals involved in these underground

¹⁴⁰ Oda, 1997, Vol. 34 Chapter 323

¹⁴¹ Oda, 1997, Vol. 1 Chapter 1

¹⁴² Yildirimturk, pp. 116

¹⁴³ Gustavsson, Sverker, et al. *The Illusion of Accountability in the European Union*. 2009, Routledge, Chapter 2

¹⁴⁴ Grant and Keohane, 2005, pp. 36

economies must maintain a certain level of trustworthiness and reliability, lest competitors ostracize or target them.

Ultimately, while the World Government in *One Piece* exemplifies the dangers of unchecked power running amok, the series presents alternative visions of governance and resistance movements that challenge centralized oppression. The Revolutionary Army, for instance, champions meritocratic ideals and freedom from oppressive hereditary nobility systems, embodying principles of equitable distribution of power and rule by popular consent.

Furthermore, islands like Dressrosa under Riku's benevolent monarchy embrace transparent governance focused on citizens' welfare, demonstrating that righteous leadership can emerge even within a hierarchical system when abetted by checks on authority.¹⁴⁵ The philosophical discourse and the literary narrative underscore the timeless need for vigilance against power's corrupting influences. Constructive leadership demands embracing open debate, empowering institutions, and serving the greater good rather than petty self-interest. While utopian visions of perpetual harmony may prove elusive, the ongoing struggle to strike balances and uphold democratic checks remains a civilizing force of progress.¹⁴⁶

2.4.3 One Piece and human rights

Literature, films, and other forms of imaginative storytelling can transcend cultural barriers and resonate with audiences profoundly. By exploring themes of human struggle, oppression, and the pursuit of freedom, these works can create empathy, raise awareness, and ultimately inspire individuals to champion the cause of universal human rights. *One Piece* consistently promotes the idea that all sentient beings possess inviolable human rights, irrespective of race, origins, or any other distinguishing factors, even though the World Government has never made a public law regarding human rights.

An example is the storyline revolving around the Sun Pirates, led by Tiger. Tiger's unwavering determination to liberate enslaved individuals from the clutches of the World Nobles highlights the notion that every person, regardless of their background or circumstances, deserves freedom and fundamental human rights. His actions challenge the oppressive system that deprives individuals of their inherent dignity and autonomy.¹⁴⁷ Another significant instance is Monkey D. Luffy's defiant stance against St. Charles, a World Nobles member who attempted to enslave and mistreat individuals based on their perceived social status. Luffy's decisive retaliation against the noble's actions emphasizes that no individual should be

¹⁴⁵ Oda, 1997, Vol. 71 Chapter 706

¹⁴⁶ Lindo, Héctor. "The Perils of Unchecked Power." *El Faro*, 15 Mar. 2021, elfaro.net/en/202103/columns/25336/the-perils-of-unchecked-power.

¹⁴⁷ Oda, 1997, Vol.63 Chapter 620

subjected to such inhumane treatment, regardless of their societal standing or position of power.



Figure 30 Oda, 1997, Vol. 51, chapter 502

Additionally, the character of Big Mom, a mighty pirate captain, showcases her aspirations to create a utopian society known as the "Promised Land," where all races and individuals can coexist in harmony, free from discrimination and oppression. This vision challenges the prevalent prejudices and inequalities that permeate the world of One Piece, highlighting the importance of upholding universal human rights.¹⁴⁸ Through these examples and numerous others, One Piece consistently reinforces the message that all sentient beings, irrespective of their origins or perceived societal status, possess fundamental human rights that should be respected and protected. The series challenges oppressive systems, discrimination, and the denial of fundamental liberties, encouraging readers to embrace the principles of equality, freedom, and the inviolability of human rights for all.

At the core of One Piece's narrative lies the pursuit of individual freedom, which aligns with Locke's natural rights philosophy. Locke argued that individuals possess inherent and inalienable rights, including the right to life, liberty, and property, which exist independently of any governmental authority.¹⁴⁹ However, One Piece's representation of freedom diverges from Locke's philosophical framework in its more anarchistic and uncompromising approach.

¹⁴⁸ Oda, 1997, Vol. 85 Chapter 850

¹⁴⁹ Doernberg, Donald L. (1985) "We The People": John Locke, Collective Constitutional Rights, and Standing to Challenge Government Action." *California Law Review*, vol. 73, no. 1, p. 52.

While Locke emphasized the importance of consent and the right to revolt against tyrannical rule, the series portrays the protagonists as seeking to dismantle the entire system of governance and establish their version of freedom, often through violence.

This departure from Locke's emphasis on a legitimate social contract highlights One Piece's more radical stance on individual liberty. One Piece also explores themes of oppression, discrimination, and the violation of fundamental human rights, which resonate with the principles enshrined in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and subsequent United Nations conventions. The series depicts the World Government as a corrupt and tyrannical regime that subjugates its citizens, engaging in practices such as slavery, torture, and arbitrary imprisonment, which directly contravene Articles 4 and 5 of the UDHR. The mistreatment of certain races, such as the fishermen and the inhabitants of Ohara, further underscores the violations of the principles of non-discrimination. Articles 1 and 2 of the UDHR outline one divergence between and equality.¹⁵⁰ Furthermore, One Piece's depiction of the pursuit of freedom and justice aligns with the spirit of the UDHR's preamble, which recognizes the "inherent dignity and equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family."¹⁵¹

One notable divergence between One Piece and the works of Locke, as well as international human rights conventions, lies in the series' portrayal of violence and vigilantism. Real-world conventions emphasize the importance of resolving disputes peacefully and upholding the rule of law; the Straw Hat Pirates frequently resort to physical force and extrajudicial actions to achieve their goals.¹⁵² While narratively compelling, This depiction of justice through might and vigilantism contrasts the principles of due process and fair trial rights enshrined in international human rights law.¹⁵³ One Piece's representation of human rights and individual freedoms often takes on a more idealized and romanticized form, focusing on pursuing personal dreams and rejecting societal constraints. While this narrative approach resonates with the spirit of individual liberty, it fails to grapple with the complexities and nuances of balancing individual rights with collective responsibilities and societal order, as acknowledged in various human rights instruments.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵⁰ United Nations. (2000) "*Universal Declaration of Human Rights*." URL: www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights.

¹⁵¹ Alston, Philip (2006) "Reconceiving the UN Human Rights Regime: Challenges Confronting the New UN Human Rights Council." *SSRN Electronic Journal*, pp. 1-39

¹⁵² Uzgalis, William. (2001) *John Locke*. Stanford Encyclopedia of Psychology, pp. 1–33.

¹⁵³ Donnelly, Jack. (1984) "Cultural Relativism and Universal Human Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 4, p. 400.

¹⁵⁴ United Nations. "Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 29

Furthermore, the scope of One Piece's exploration of human rights is primarily focused on civil and political rights, with limited engagement with economic, social, and cultural rights as enshrined in instruments like the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights (ICESCR). While the series touches upon poverty, discrimination, and marginalization issues, it does not delve deeply into the interconnected nature of human rights and the importance of ensuring access to adequate living standards, education, and cultural life.¹⁵⁵

Drawing upon the universal aspirations for liberty, equality, and the rejection of oppression, One Piece resonates with the spirit of classical texts and international conventions on human rights. The series' ability to engage diverse audiences across various cultural contexts and artistic mediums highlights these themes' enduring relevance and cultural significance.

Applying universal principles in a diverse society presents significant challenges, as exemplified by the "Fishmen Island" thought experiment in Oda's work. The island is a microcosm highlighting the complexities and difficulties of realizing such principles within diverse societies.¹⁵⁶ Additionally, One Piece's portrayal of themes like slavery and racial discrimination provides insightful commentary on the challenges of upholding universal human rights. The Fishmen Island thought experiment is a metaphor for the challenges of applying universal principles within a society. Fishmen Island is an underwater realm inhabited by the fisherman race, a sentient species distinct from humans. The island represents a microcosm of the broader world, complete with its governance, cultural norms, and societal dynamics. However, the island's isolation and the fisherman's unique biology and customs create a setting that diverges significantly from human societies. One of the central dilemmas presented is whether and how universal principles should be applied to a society that differs so fundamentally from our own. For instance, the fisherman's unique physiology raises questions about the applicability of human-centric rights and moral status concepts.

¹⁵⁵ Alston, 2006, pp. 3

¹⁵⁶ Oda, 1997, Vol. 61-66 Chapter 603-653



Figure 31 Oda, 1997, Vol. 8, chapter 70

Furthermore, the fishermen's societal norms and practices, though integral to their culture, may conflict with the principles of equality and non-discrimination enshrined in international human rights instruments. One Piece's portrayal of the fish's struggles against human oppression and exploitation also raises questions about applying universal human rights principles. The fishermen have historically faced enslavement, subjugation, and discrimination at the hands of humans, echoing real-world instances of racial oppression and the denial of fundamental rights.¹⁵⁷ This narrative arc highlights the tension between the purported universality of human rights and the reality of systematic violations of these rights based on perceived racial or species differences. The depiction of the fishermen's plight resonates with the concerns raised by cultural relativists, who argue that universal human rights embody a Western, individualistic ideology that threatens to supplant the traditions and

¹⁵⁷ Shestack, Jerome J (1998) "The Philosophic Foundations of Human Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 201-34.

values of non-Western cultures.¹⁵⁸ The fishermen's resistance to human oppression could be interpreted as rejecting the imposition of alien values and demanding the recognition and respect of their distinct cultural identity.

While the idea of universal moral imperatives is appealing in principle, the series highlights the complexities that arise when applying such principles to diverse societies with unique histories, cultural contexts, and value systems. The portrayal of the fishermen's struggles also underscores the ongoing relevance of debates surrounding the moral status of non-human beings and the boundaries of moral consideration. As Singer argues, any attempt to ground moral status solely on characteristics possessed by all humans inevitably leads to the inclusion of specific non-human animals within the sphere of moral consideration.¹⁵⁹ One Piece's depiction of the fishermen's sentience, culture, and capacity for suffering challenges readers to re-examine their assumptions about the basis for moral status and the scope of moral obligations. While the manga does not provide definitive answers to these questions, its narrative explores the tensions and challenges inherent in the pursuit of universal human rights. Ultimately, the "Fishman Island" thought experiment and One Piece's portrayal of themes like slavery and racial discrimination offer valuable insights into the difficulties of applying universal principles within diverse societies. The series highlights the complexities of attempting to reconcile purportedly universal moral imperatives with different peoples and communities' unique cultural contexts, value systems, and lived experiences. While pursuing universal human rights is a noble endeavor, One Piece serves as a reminder that realizing these ideals in practice requires a nuanced understanding of the challenges involved and a willingness to engage with the perspectives and concerns of those whose experiences differ from ours.

Through its portrayal of Fishman Island and the struggles of its inhabitants, One Piece highlights the inherent tensions between the universality of human rights principles and the realities of diverse societies with deep-rooted conflicts and power dynamics. It serves as a reminder that applying these principles requires a delicate balance between upholding universal standards and addressing different communities' unique contexts and interests.¹⁶⁰

As Thomas Pogge argues, postulating human rights involves "declaring that every society ought to be so organized that all its members enjoy secure access" to the objects of those

¹⁵⁸ Cranston, Maurice (1983) "Are There Any Human Rights?" *Daedalus*, vol. 112, no. 4, pp. 1–17.

¹⁵⁹ Blumenson, Eric D (2014) "Four Challenges Confronting the Concept of Universal Human Rights." *SSRN Electronic Journal*, pp. 1-27

¹⁶⁰ Shestack, 1998, pp. 212

rights.¹⁶¹ However, as Oda's storytelling demonstrates, achieving this ideal is complex. The Arlong Park arc depicts the Fishmen, long subjugated by humans, striking back through enslavement and oppression of their former oppressors. While Arlong's actions violate core human rights, his grievances highlight how "radical economic deprivations and inequalities...engender great vulnerabilities to civil rights violations". Oda presents a morally complex situation where the universal ideals of equality and freedom clash with the harsh legacy of subjugation. Overcoming such prejudices is vital to realizing human rights, but also immensely challenging. Oda illustrates the difficulties in achieving Pogge's vision of institutional schemes providing "secure access" to human rights through such storylines. Arlong's bitterness and the minks' marginalization exemplify how "social obstacles" can prevent groups from truly enjoying rights even when legal frameworks exist.¹⁶² While condemning grave injustices, Oda depicts the tensions that arise as ideals of equality confront "deeply ingrained social attitudes" forged through historical wrongs. This echoes the UN's vision in Article 28 that human rights involve "claims on the 'order,' or institutional structure, of any comprehensive social system." Establishing just institutional orders alone is insufficient; continual effort is needed to reshape societal attitudes and overcome injustice's lingering effects. Notably, Oda avoids resorting "to sensationalism or gratuitous violence" in depicting oppression. His storytelling exhibits a "nuanced understanding" befitting the moral complexities involved in realizing human rights universally across diverse societies.

2.5 Cultural relativism

The concept of rights and ethics varies significantly across the diverse cultures depicted in One Piece. The World Nobles, descendants of the Twenty Kings who founded the World Government, adhere to a supremacist ideology that grants them absolute authority over all races they consider inferior. They are permitted to commit atrocities without fear of repercussions, exemplified by their practice of enslaving populations and brutally punishing any perceived insolence. This disregard for fundamental human rights starkly contrasts modern ethical principles.¹⁶³

On the isolated island of Wano, the shogunate system implemented by Kurozumi Orochi and backed by Kaido upholds an oppressive regime akin to feudalism. The inhabitants are deprived of fundamental freedoms, civil liberties are nonexistent, and dissent is crushed

¹⁶¹ Pogge, Thomas (2000) "The International Significance of Human Rights." *The Journal of Ethics*, vol. 4, no. 1/2, pp. 45-69.

¹⁶² Pogge, 2000, pp. 50-56

¹⁶³ Oda, 1997, Vol. 51 Chapter 497

through fear and violence. Ethical norms are dictated by the ruling class's whims, fostering an environment devoid of individual autonomy or dignity.¹⁶⁴ The Fishman District on the Grand Line presents a microcosm of racial discrimination and marginalization. Despite being sentient beings, fishmen and merfolk are treated as second-class citizens, denied fundamental rights, and subjected to harsh living conditions imposed by human supremacists. This blatant breach of ethical principles fuels resentment and perpetuates a vicious cycle of prejudice.

In contrast, many cultures among humans in the One Piece world appear to uphold more conventional moral values and acknowledge fundamental rights, at least in principle. However, the prevalence of piracy, slavery, and unchecked violence by both the World Government and criminal organizations suggests that ethical norms are frequently disregarded in practice, leading to widespread suffering and injustice. These divergent conceptions of rights and ethics often clash, giving rise to conflicts that drive much of the narrative. For instance, the Straw Hat Pirates' opposition to the World Nobles' cruelty and their efforts to liberate oppressed populations from tyrants like Orochi and Arlong exemplify the moral crusade against unethical practices. The Marines' unwavering commitment to enforcing the World Government's laws further exacerbates these tensions even when they violate ethical principles.

Franz Boas' concept of cultural relativism, introduced in the late 19th century, challenged the universalist notions of human rights that emerged from Western philosophical and political thought. Boas argued that anthropologists should approach cultures without preconceptions, recognizing that beliefs and values are relative to specific cultural contexts.¹⁶⁵ This critique of universalism has significant implications for the discourse on human rights.

The world of One Piece presents numerous instances where cultural practices clash with conventional Western notions of human rights, prompting reflection on the validity and applicability of universal human rights standards.

One prominent example is the celestial dragons. Their aristocratic status grants them the authority to engage in practices that would be considered egregious human rights violations, such as enslaving and mistreating civilians. This exemplifies the relativist argument that human rights are not universal but determined by society's cultural norms and power structures.¹⁶⁶ Similarly, the culture of the Amazons on the island of Amazon Lily is built upon a matriarchal system that subjugates men.

¹⁶⁴ Oda, 1997, Vol. 79 Chapter 793

¹⁶⁵ Hahn, Hans Peter (2023) "On The Changeful History of Franz Boas's Concept of Cultural Relativism." *EAZ – Ethnographisch-Archaeologische Zeitschrift*, vol. 57, no. 1, pp. 1-12

¹⁶⁶ Shing Bun Chan, Benedict (2011) "An East And West Debate On Human Rights." *Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Maryland*, pp. 1–213.

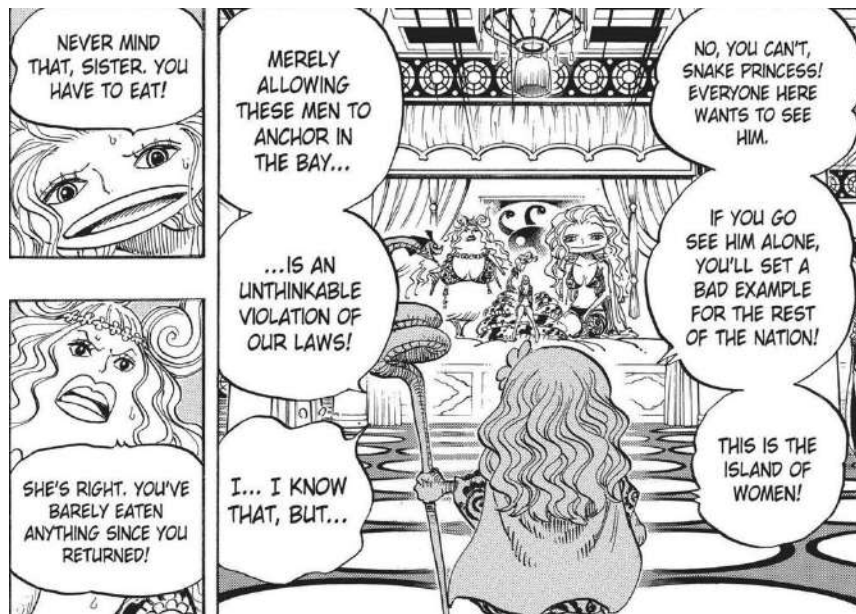


Figure 32 Oda, 1997, Vol. 59, chapter 582

While this challenges Western notions of gender equality, it is a deeply ingrained cultural tradition that the Amazons consider valid and just. This scenario illustrates the difficulty in applying universal human rights standards to cultures with fundamentally different values and belief systems.¹⁶⁷ It also highlights the risk of cultural imperialism, wherein the imposition of external values can be perceived as a form of oppression or erasure of cultural identity.¹⁶⁸ However, *One Piece* also presents instances where cultural practices are portrayed as unequivocally unethical, suggesting that some universal moral standards may exist. For instance, the World Nobles' practice of enslaving and torturing civilians is consistently depicted as abhorrent and unjustifiable, at least by everyone who is not part of the World Government.¹⁶⁹ This aligns with the anthropological perspective that certain fundamental human rights, such as prohibitions against violence and oppression, may be universally recognized.¹⁷⁰

Furthermore, the series often portrays characters who challenge oppressive cultural norms, suggesting that individuals can transcend the confines of their cultural backgrounds. Jimbei, for example, rejects the discriminatory practices of the World Government and joins the Straw Hat Pirates, embracing more egalitarian values.¹⁷¹ This reflects the anthropological view that individuals can critically evaluate their cultural contexts and adopt alternative value

¹⁶⁷ Davis, Joseph E. (2008) "Culture and Relativism." *Society*, vol. 45, no. 3, Apr. 2008, pp. 270–76.

¹⁶⁸ Good, Colleen (2010) "Human Rights and Relativism." *Macalester Journal of Philosophy*, vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 27–52.

¹⁶⁹ Oda, 1997, Vol. 52 Chapter 503

¹⁷⁰ Davis, 2008, pp. 271

¹⁷¹ Oda, 1997, Vol. 71 Chapter 707

systems.¹⁷² These examples demonstrate the complex interplay between cultural relativism and universalism in One Piece. While the series acknowledges the validity of diverse cultural practices, it also suggests that certain fundamental human rights should be respected universally. Strict universalism, rooted in Western philosophical traditions, may lead to the imposition of external values on non-Western cultures, echoing historical instances of cultural imperialism and neo-colonialism.¹⁷³ An absolute adherence to cultural relativism could potentially justify human rights violations under the guise of cultural tradition, impeding progress toward protecting fundamental human dignity.¹⁷⁴

One potential solution is the "overlapping consensus" model proposed by philosophers like Charles Taylor. This approach recognizes the diversity of cultural traditions while seeking common ground on fundamental human rights principles through intercultural dialogue and mutual understanding. A more inclusive and universally applicable human rights framework may emerge by engaging in open discussions and examining different cultures' underlying values and concepts.¹⁷⁵ This model acknowledges the validity of cultural relativism while also upholding the universality of core human rights principles, fostering a more nuanced and contextual approach to human rights implementation.

The Wano arc highlights the contrast between the island's isolationist policies and the concept of universal human rights.



Figure 33 Oda, 1997, Vol. 82, Chapter 819

¹⁷² Hahn, 2023, pp. 2

¹⁷³ Good, pp. 30-40

¹⁷⁴ Davis, 2008, pp. 273

¹⁷⁵ Shing Bun Chan, 2011, pp. 20-30

The series also portrays cross-cultural solidarity and understanding, where characters from different backgrounds unite against injustice and oppression, transcending cultural boundaries. This suggests that while cultural relativism is a valid consideration, certain universal principles may resonate across cultures, such as the rejection of extreme cruelty and the desire for fundamental freedoms.¹⁷⁶ The debate around cultural relativism and the universality of human rights has significant implications. Cultural relativists argue that imposing universal values and norms on diverse societies can be seen as cultural imperialism, disregarding rich cultural traditions and practices. They contend that human rights should be interpreted within specific cultural contexts. Conversely, universalists assert that denying fundamental rights under the guise of cultural relativism perpetuates oppression, discrimination, and human rights violations.¹⁷⁷ One approach emphasizes the universality of core rights like the right to life, freedom from torture, and non-discrimination while allowing flexibility to accommodate cultural practices not fundamentally violating these core principles. There have also been efforts to foster cross-cultural dialogue, recognizing human rights as evolving, dynamic principles enriched by diverse perspectives.¹⁷⁸ While Bielefeldt proposes an "overlapping consensus" - recognizing human rights' limited scope as political/legal standards rather than comprehensive worldviews. This allows different traditions to appreciate and commit to human rights from their perspectives without entirely abandoning cultural practices or beliefs. Human rights embody normative claims that challenge cultures to reform for equality, dignity, and freedom without wholesale rejection of cultural identities. This encourages dynamic engagement between human rights and cultural contexts.¹⁷⁹

The concept of cultural relativism is further exemplified by the diverse practices and beliefs surrounding the concept of "justice" within the One Piece universe. Different cultures and individuals have vastly different interpretations of what constitutes justice, ranging from the rigid, authoritarian justice system of the World Government to the more individualistic and situational approach adopted by characters like Monkey D. Luffy.¹⁸⁰ From a cultural relativist standpoint, these varying conceptions of justice can be seen as equally valid within their

¹⁷⁶ Holder, Cindy, and David Reidy (2013) *Human Rights*. Cambridge UP, Chapter 3, pp. 59-75

¹⁷⁷ Binder, Guyora (1999) "Cultural Relativism and Cultural Imperialism in Human Rights Law." *Buffalo Human Rights Law Review*, vol. 5, no. 5, pp. 211-21

¹⁷⁸ Mende, Janne (2019) "Are Human Rights western—And Why Does It Matter? A Perspective From International Political Theory." *Journal of International Political Theory*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 38-57

¹⁷⁹ Bielefeldt, pp- 114-117

¹⁸⁰ Oda, 1997, All of the opera is concerned

respective cultural contexts, even if they diverge from universalist notions of justice and equality before the law.

However, it is essential to note that cultural relativism does not necessarily imply moral relativism or a complete rejection of universal human rights principles. Boas acknowledged that while cultures should be understood and respected, certain practices or beliefs that cause significant harm or violate fundamental human rights should not be tolerated.¹⁸¹ In *One Piece*, this line is often blurred, with instances of cultural practices that could be considered harmful or oppressive from a universalist perspective, such as the World Government's use of slavery and the mistreatment of certain races like the fishermen. The implications of these cultural divergences within the fictional world of *One Piece* mirror the ongoing debates and challenges faced in the real world. Just as the Straw Hat Pirates navigate the complexities of different cultures and value systems, we, too, must grapple with the tensions between respecting cultural diversity and upholding universal human rights standards.

The diverse cultures depicted in *One Piece* exemplify this tension between cultural relativism and universalism. The series portrays various societies with customs, traditions, and belief systems. Another example are the Skypieans of Skypiea, who live in a highly advanced society governed by religious beliefs and traditions.¹⁸² These cultural differences are not merely superficial but often involve fundamental divergences in values and norms. The concept of justice, for example, is interpreted differently by different cultures in *One Piece*. The Marines, representing the World Government, uphold a particular notion of justice based on their laws and values. In contrast, the Revolutionary Army led by Monkey D. Dragon seeks to overthrow the World Government, viewing their version of justice as oppressive and unjust.

¹⁸¹ Shing Bun Chan, 2011, pp. 16-20

¹⁸² Oda, 1997, Vol. 26 Chapter 239

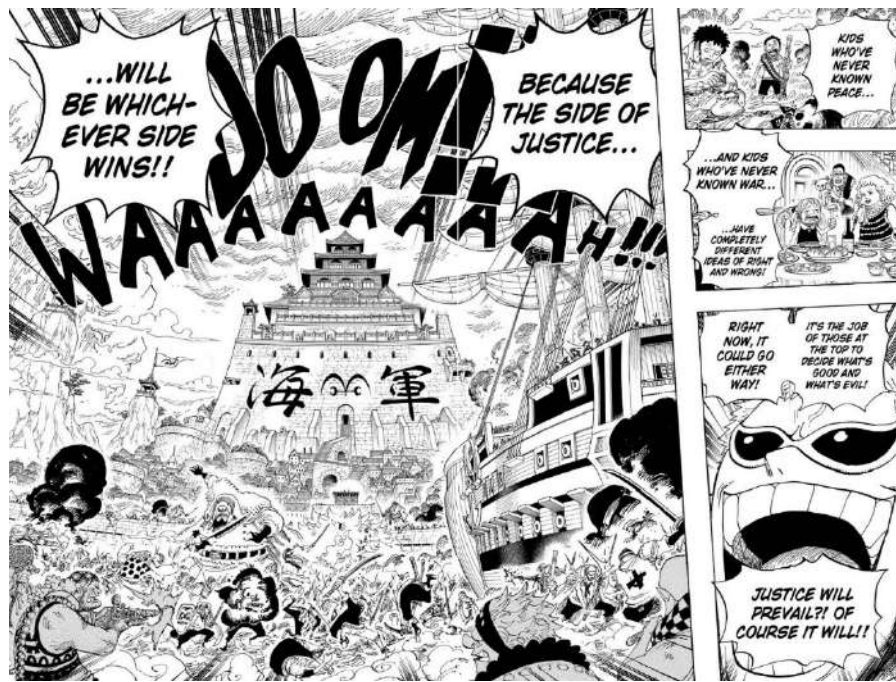


Figure 34 Oda, 1997, Vol. 57, Chapter 556

From the perspective of cultural relativism, these divergent conceptions of justice are equally valid within their respective cultural contexts. However, the universalist approach to human rights would argue that certain fundamental rights, such as freedom from oppression and self-determination, should be respected across all cultures. The implications of these cultural divergences within the world of One Piece are significant. On the one hand, respecting cultural relativism and allowing different societies to maintain their unique traditions and values could foster diversity and coexistence. However, unchecked cultural relativism could also lead to the perpetuation of oppressive practices and the violation of fundamental human rights within particular cultures. In the real world, this tension between cultural relativism and universalism has been a subject of ongoing debate in anthropology and human rights discourse. While recognizing the importance of respecting cultural diversity, many scholars and activists have argued for universal human rights that should be upheld across all cultures. The challenge lies in striking a balance between respecting cultural differences and upholding fundamental human rights and freedoms.

CHAPTER 3: SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND WEAPONS IN ONE PIECE

This chapter conducts a comprehensive examination of key characters and dynamics within the One Piece narrative, drawing insightful parallels to real-world concepts and issues. Structured into two main sections dedicated respectively to the use of chemical weapons and technology.

3.1 Donquixote Doflamingo, Kaido and chemical weapons

The partnership between Donquixote Doflamingo and Kaido—former Warlord and former Emperor, respectively—revolves around distributing artificial Devil Fruits known as SMILEs. Given their positions on opposite sides of the law, this buyer-seller dynamic seems perplexing. However, a deeper examination of their backgrounds, philosophies, and psychologies reveals aligned sadistic personalities that render their collaboration disturbingly natural.

Doflamingo's aristocratic lineage as a Celestial Dragon breeds in him an ingrained sense of superiority and divine right to rule over commoners as he sees fit. Even after a reversal of fortunes forced his family into an impoverished life among the masses, Doflamingo retains these arrogant attitudes. He displays open contempt for authority figures like Fleet Admiral Sengoku, flouting orders from the World Government when they no longer serve his interests. He leverages his formidable strength granted by the String-String Fruit to instill fear, further cementing his perspective of might making right.¹⁸³ Evidence of his sadism emerges in his treatment of subordinates and victims alike, manipulating them towards horrific fates for his twisted amusement. Doflamingo demonstrates acute psychological cruelty by deceiving King Riku and forcing him to slaughter his citizens, all while falsely posing as Riku sympathetically. Production of the defective SMILE fruits that forcibly transform consumers into laughing buffoons follows this pattern of using his power to spread suffering, indifferent to the consequences.¹⁸⁴

¹⁸³ Oda, 1997, Vol. 70 Chapter 706

¹⁸⁴ Oda, 1997, Vol. 76 Chapter 762



Figure 35 Oda, 1997, Vol 24 Chapter 234

Kaido shares a similarly detached, sadistic disposition stemming from a lifelong familiarity with brutality. Raised on a battlefield, violence represents normalcy rather than an ethical dilemma for him. He treats subordinates and would-be crewmates with heartless cruelty, resorting to torture and forced labor in attempts to break their spirit and bend them to his will. Kaido embraces suicide attempts and welcomes formidable foes seeking his demise, suggesting boredom with reality and a warped perception that only death brings meaning or glory. His respect remains strictly reserved for legendary figures like Whitebeard and Oden, whose demises left a profound impact on history.¹⁸⁵



Figure 36 Oda, 1997, Vol 104 Chapter 1049

Kaido scorns the right to rule based on birthright rather than combat strength and military power. This explains his amassing of Ancient Weapons and single-minded pursuit of paving the way for the world's largest war to challenge the global order. Distributing SMILE fruits, regardless of their defects, aligns with this goal by forcibly expanding his crew and fighting strength. Neither Kaido nor Doflamingo shows the slightest concern over the SMILE side

¹⁸⁵ Oda, 1997, Vol. 79 Chapter 795

effects, condemning victims to a lifetime unable to express sadness or anger.¹⁸⁶ One could argue that these pirates view the SMILE defects as a benefit rather than a drawback. Transforming once-normal people into literal laughingstocks spreads psychological suffering, again aligning with their shared sadism.

3.1.1 Chemical weapon: the smile

The chemical weapon created by Donquixote Doflamingo and the scientist Ceasar Clown, consumed by the Beast Pirates under Kaido, is called "SMILE" and is an artificial Devil Fruit. However, what are "Devil Fruits"?

Devil Fruits are mysterious fruits scattered across the globe, bestowing their eaters with permanent superhuman abilities and an equally enduring inability to swim. Unless one is born with inherent supernatural powers, consuming a Devil Fruit is the sole method to acquire such extraordinary abilities, and no one knows how they come into creation. Each Devil Fruit offers a unique power to its consumer, ranging from the seemingly simple ability to stretch like rubber to potent powers capable of wreaking large-scale destruction, such as creating earthquakes. Remarkably, no two Devil Fruits share the same power; each is unparalleled in its abilities. These fruits fall into three broad classes: Zoan, enabling a user to transform into an animal or an animal hybrid; Logia, granting the power to create, control, and transform the user's body into a natural element; and Paramecia, presenting an extensive array of peculiar abilities that do not fit into the other two categories. Wielding the potency to elevate individuals to extraordinary levels, Devil Fruits have played a pivotal role among the people. Their rarity and the enhanced abilities they confer make Devil Fruits highly coveted, with single specimens fetching staggering sums, sometimes valued at hundreds of millions of Belly (the currency of the manga).¹⁸⁷ As evident, mass-producing these types of fruits has the potential to revolutionize the warfare landscape in the world, offering the prospect of transforming conventional armies into superhuman forces.

Given the rarity of Devil Fruits and the uncertainty surrounding their type until consumed, the creation of SMILEs holds significant importance despite specific differences from the original fruits. SMILEs are crafted using a chemical called SAD, which utilizes the Lineage Factor – the blueprint of life discovered by Dr. Vegapunk, allowing the manipulation of organism genetics. By transmitting SAD into fruits to create SMILEs, the Lineage Factor aims to modify the user's body, imparting specific animal characteristics. This explains why only

¹⁸⁶ Oda, 1997, Vol. 104 Chapter 1049

¹⁸⁷ Oda, 1997, Vol. 1 Chapter 1

Zoan-type SMILEs can be produced.¹⁸⁸ However, the SAD formula remains incomplete, resulting in a remarkably high-risk factor for SMILE fruits. There is a mere 10% success rate in providing artificial Zoan-like enhancements, leaving 90% of consumers without any powers and subjected to adverse effects. Triumphant SMILEs, while replicating the weakness of real Devil Fruits by impeding the eater's ability to swim, have an additional side effect: they eliminate the eater's capacity to express negative emotions, forcing them to maintain a constant smile and laughter, irrespective of their actual feelings. In the figure, it is possible to see the difference between an actual devil fruit and a SMILE.

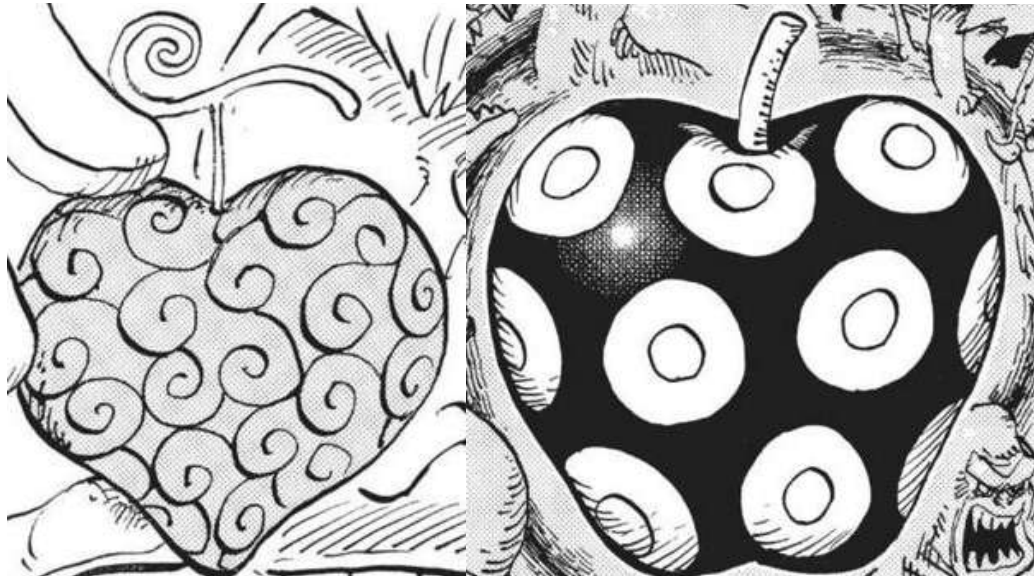


Figure 37 Oda, 1997 Devil fruit (left): Vol. 77 Chapter 765 SMILE (right) : Vol. 69 Chapter 689

3.1.2 Chemical weapons are necessary deterrents

Doflamingo's character is focused in the pursuit of absolute power and control, traits that are often associated with authoritarian leaders and dictatorships. His role as a former member of the World Government's Celestial Dragons further reinforces his position of privilege and entitlement. Ilchmann and Revill note that the use of chemical and biological weapons is often motivated by a desire for power and control, stating: "Secondly, the aims and targets of 'new wars' are different to 'old wars' where territorial gain was achieved through military means. By contrast, in 'new wars' violence is directed against civilians to establish control over territories for purposes of access to state or political power for certain groups...".¹⁸⁹ Doflamingo's use of chemical weapons can be seen as an extension of his pursuit of power and dominance over the people of Dressrosa as well as maintaining his reputation in the black

¹⁸⁸ Oda, 1997, Vol. 99 SBS

¹⁸⁹ Ilchmann, Kai, and James Revill. (2013) "Chemical and Biological Weapons in the 'New Wars.'" *Science and Engineering Ethics*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 753–67.

market. The methods employed in acquiring and deploying chemical weapons are reminiscent of the clandestine operations and illicit networks often associated with the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. He leverages his criminal organization, the Donquixote Family, to procure and develop these deadly agents, circumventing international laws and regulations. This mirrors the activities of rogue states and non-state actors who engage in the covert development and trafficking of chemical weapons, posing a grave threat to global security.¹⁹⁰



Figure 38 Oda, 1997 Vol 68 Chapter 673

Kaido, instead, used those weapons to amplify his crew's powers since he firmly believed in how strength should determine one's worth.

¹⁹⁰ Pearson, Graham S., and Peter Mahaffy. (2006) "Education, Outreach, and Codes of Conduct to Further the Norms and Obligations of the Chemical Weapons Convention (IUPAC Technical Report)." *Pure and Applied Chemistry*, vol. 78, no. 11, pp. 2169–92.



Figure 39 Oda, 1997 Vol 82 Chapter 824

The possession of chemical weapons served as a means to deter internal dissent and uprisings, instilling fear and compliance among the populace through the threat of indiscriminate violence. This approach aligns with the concept of "deterrence by punishment" in strategic studies, which posits that the threat of severe retaliation or the imposition of unacceptable costs can dissuade adversaries from taking undesirable actions.¹⁹¹ Doflamingo's chemical weapons, with their indiscriminate and horrific effects, represent the ultimate form of punishment, capable of inflicting devastating consequences on those who defy his rule. In Doflamingo's and Kaido's cases, the mere possession of chemical weapons and the implied willingness to use them against the citizens of Dressrosa or Zou constituted a potent deterrent aimed at suppressing any challenges to his authority.

¹⁹¹Bowen, Wyn, et al. (2020) "The Obama Administration and Syrian Chemical Weapons: Deterrence, Compellence, and the Limits of the 'Resolve Plus Bombs' Formula." *Security Studies*, vol. 29, no. 5, pp. 797–831.

Furthermore, Doflamingo's pursuit of chemical weapons resonates with the logic of nuclear deterrence during the Cold War era. The concept of "mutually assured destruction" (MAD) relied on the possession of overwhelmingly destructive nuclear weapons by opposing powers to prevent conflict, as the costs of retaliation would be unacceptably high.¹⁹² The "deterrence by denial," which involves denying the adversary the ability to achieve their objectives through the threat of overwhelming force, is reflected in Doflamingo's belief that his chemical weapons can suppress any rebellion or challenge to his dominance.¹⁹³ However, deterrence theory also highlights the importance of credibility and communication in effective deterrence strategies. Scholars such as Thomas Schelling have emphasized that for deterrence to work, the threat must be perceived as credible by the adversary. The potential consequences of defiance must be communicated.¹⁹⁴ Doflamingo's actions, driven by a desire for power and control at any cost, suggest a disconnect from the moral and ethical considerations that underpin the principles of deterrence.¹⁹⁵ Moreover, *One Piece* questions the credibility and communication aspects of Doflamingo's deterrent threat. Effective deterrence requires clear communication of the potential consequences and a credible commitment to follow through on the threat.¹⁹⁶ However, Doflamingo's erratic and ruthless behavior, coupled with his disregard for international norms, undermines the credibility of his deterrent, potentially inviting external intervention or retaliation.

While acknowledging the potential deterrent value of chemical weapons from Doflamingo's perspective, *One Piece* offers a critical examination of this stance. Through the actions and ideologies of the Straw Hat Pirates and their allies, the narrative challenges the notion of relying on weapons of mass destruction to maintain power and stability. The series portrays the use of chemical weapons as an indiscriminate act, causing widespread destruction. The horrors inflicted by Kaido's regime, including the exploitation of the Smile Devil Fruit and its devastating effects on individuals, serve as a powerful critique of the use of such weapons, even for deterrence purposes.

¹⁹² Deudney, Daniel. (1983) *Whole Earth Security: A Geopolitics of Peace*, Worldwatch Institute. pp. 80

¹⁹³ Lebeda, Frank J. (1997) "Deterrence of Biological and Chemical Warfare: A Review of Policy Options." *Military Medicine*, vol. 162, no. 3, pp. 156–61

¹⁹⁴ Bowen et al, 2020, pp. 807

¹⁹⁵ Zanders, Jean Pascal. (1995) "Towards Understanding Chemical Warfare Weapons Proliferation." *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 84–110.

¹⁹⁶ Bowen et al, 2020, pp. 804



Figure 6 Eiichiro Oda (1997-today) *One Piece* Vol 94 Chapter 943

Additionally, the series explores alternative approaches to conflict resolution and the pursuit of justice, such as diplomacy, alliances, and non-violent resistance. These themes offer a counterpoint to the reliance on weapons of mass destruction as a means of maintaining stability, suggesting that peaceful and ethical alternatives can be more effective and sustainable in the long run. The Straw Hat Pirates and their allies represent a force that challenges the status quo and inspires hope, defying the deterrent effect intended by Doflamingo and Kaido chemical weapons.¹⁹⁷ The alliance between the Straw Hat Pirates, the Tontatta Tribe, and other factions within Dressrosa demonstrates the power of cooperation, unity, and shared values in overcoming oppressive regimes and existential threats. This is similar to the concept of common security, which emphasizes the pursuit of mutual security through cooperation, rather than relying on deterrence and the threat of force.¹⁹⁸ And also with

¹⁹⁷ Oda, 1997, Vol. 81 Chapter 807

¹⁹⁸ Roberts, Brad. (1986) "Chemical Weapons: A Policy Overview." *Issues in Science and Technology*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 102–14.

the principles of normative restraint and the delegitimization of weapons of mass destruction, which have been central to various disarmament movements and non-proliferation efforts.¹⁹⁹ Deterrence can be undermined by the adversary's resolve, motivation, and willingness to accept risks in pursuit of their goals.²⁰⁰ The concepts of normative restraint and the delegitimization of weapons of mass destruction have been central to various disarmament movements and non-proliferation efforts.²⁰¹ Doflamingo's acquisition of such weapons through the black market and his willingness to employ them against civilians demonstrates the inherent dangers of relying on deterrence strategies based on weapons of mass destruction.²⁰² The series' portrayal of the aftermath of Doflamingo's defeat also offers insights into the importance of accountability and the need for robust international norms and institutions to prevent the proliferation and misuse of weapons like chemical agents. The efforts to provide medical aid and support to the victims of the chemical attack underscore the long-lasting consequences of such actions and the need for a comprehensive approach to addressing the root causes of conflict and instability.²⁰³

Doflamingo's use of chemical weapons is depicted as indiscriminate and devastating, causing widespread suffering and environmental destruction. This resonates with the real-world consequences of chemical warfare, which have been extensively documented in conflicts such as the Iran-Iraq War and the Syrian Civil War. Doflamingo's actions represent a flagrant violation of these principles, underscoring the grave consequences of the misuse of science and technology. One Piece's portrayal of Doflamingo's chemical weapons program also touches upon the broader issue of dual-use research and the potential for misuse of scientific knowledge. As Brian Rappert and Malcolm Dando highlight, "Dual-use research is research which could be used for permitted or prohibited uses. This term applies to much work in science and technology".²⁰⁴ Doflamingo's exploitation of chemical agents illustrates how seemingly benign scientific advancements can be weaponized, echoing real-world concerns about the dual-use nature of specific technologies.

In addition to its ethical critique, One Piece also raises practical concerns about the effectiveness of deterrence strategies based on chemical weapons. Doflamingo's eventual defeat at the hands of the Straw Hat Pirates suggests that the deterrent value of such weapons

¹⁹⁹ Hersman, Rebecca K. C., and William Pittinos. (2018) "Understanding Restraint." *Restoring Restraint: Enforcing Accountability for Users of Chemical Weapons*, pp. 4–18.

²⁰⁰ Bowen et al, 2020, pp. 805

²⁰¹ Hersman, Pittinos, 2018, pp. 4–10.

²⁰² Joseph, Robert, and John Reichart. (1999) "Deterrence and Defense in a Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Environment." *Center for Counterproliferation Research National Defense University*, pp. 1-45

²⁰³ Tucker, Jonathan. (2009) "The Future of Chemical Weapons." *The New Atlantis*, pp. 1–27.

²⁰⁴ Pearson and Mahaffy, 2006, pp. 2187

is limited when faced with a determined and principled opposition. The series challenges the assumption that the threat of overwhelming force is sufficient to maintain control and stability, as it can breed defiance and resistance instead of submission. Moreover, One Piece highlights the risks and potential consequences of chemical weapons proliferation and their misuse by rogue actors or unstable regimes. By exploring these complex issues, One Piece invites its audience to engage in critical thinking and ethical reflection on the use of chemical weapons and other unconventional weapons as deterrents.

3.1.3 Chemical weapons as unconditionally unacceptable means

Chemical weapons are among the most destructive creations in the history of warfare, capable of inflicting unimaginable suffering and leaving a trail of devastation in their wake. Their use is deemed a grave violation of international humanitarian law and the laws of armed conflict. Through its depiction of the fictional "Shinokuni" gas and its devastating impact on the island of Punk Hazard, the popular manga series One Piece effectively captures the humanitarian crisis caused by chemical weapons. The Shinokuni gas is portrayed as an indiscriminate killer, petrifying and ultimately causing the deaths of anyone exposed, whether combatant or civilian, unless they get promptly cured by a rare antidote.

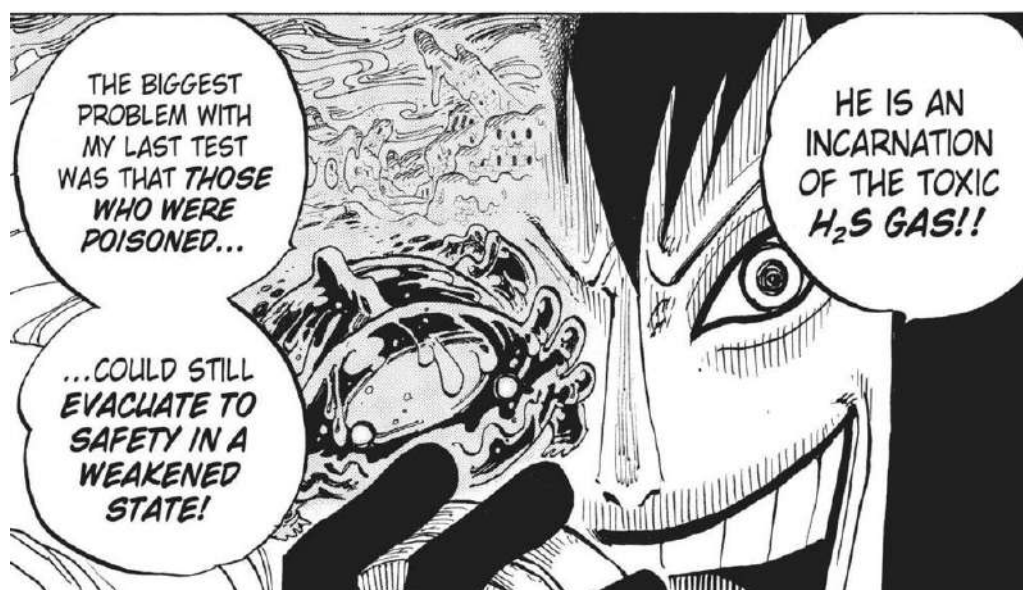


Figure 40 Oda, 1997 Vol 68 Chapter 675

The manga's illustrations and harrowing descriptions of victims' suffering, with bodies contorted in anguish and expressions frozen in terror, are a reminder of the real-world accounts of chemical weapon attacks. The scenes of entire towns and populations being wiped out by the Shinokuni gas, with bodies lying lifeless in the streets and the once-lush landscapes reduced to barren wastelands, resonate with the well-documented impacts of chemical

weapons throughout history. The portrayal of the Shinokuni gas also contributes to the discourse on the ethical implications of chemical weapons development and use. The indiscriminate nature of chemical weapons, their inability to distinguish between soldiers and civilians, is a fundamental violation of the principles of international humanitarian law and the laws of armed conflict.²⁰⁵ Studies have documented the devastating consequences of different chemical agents, such as blistering agents causing cell death through DNA and protein damage, nerve agents leading to neural overstimulation or paralysis, and choking agents causing severe respiratory distress.²⁰⁶ The use of chemical weapons is also harmful for the environment, in which decontamination efforts can take decades, and environmental degradation and health hazards persist for nearby populations.²⁰⁷ It with these consequences in mind, that in 1925 the Geneva Protocol and the 1993 Chemical Weapons Conventions (CWC) explicitly outlaw the development, production, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons, recognizing their inhumane and indiscriminate effects.²⁰⁸ These weapons violate the fundamental principles of distinction and proportionality, as they cannot discriminate between legitimate military targets and civilians, and their effects often extend far beyond military necessity, causing excessive and disproportionate harm.²⁰⁹ Experts have warned of the existential threat posed by weapon of mass destruction (WMD) like chemical weapons, emphasizing the potential for catastrophic consequences if they were to fall into the wrong hands.²¹⁰

The character of Caesar Clown, a brilliant yet amoral scientist who creates the Shinokuni gas, serves as a cautionary tale about the potential misuse of scientific knowledge for the development of weapons of mass destruction. This narrative resonates with the real-world ethical debates surrounding the involvement of scientists and medical professionals in chemical weapons research, which is widely considered a violation of the fundamental principles of human dignity and the right to life.²¹¹

²⁰⁵ Sagan, Scott. (2000) "The Commitment Trap." *International Security*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 85–115.

²⁰⁶ Ekzayez, Abdulkarim, et al. (2019) "Chemical Weapons and Public Health: Assessing Impact and Responses." *Journal of Public Health*, vol. 42, no. 3, pp. e334–42.

²⁰⁷ Haines, David, and S. C. Fox. (2014) "Acute and Long-Term Impact of Chemical Weapons: Lessons From the Iran-Iraq War." *Forensic Science Review*, vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 97–114.

²⁰⁸ *Ibidem*, pp. 104

²⁰⁹ Vogel, Frederick J. (1997) "The Chemical Weapons Convention: Strategic Implications for the United States." *Monographs*, pp. 1–35

²¹⁰ Almary, Michelle. (2018) "The Necessity For A Permanent Disincentive: Examining The Use Of Chemical Weapons With A Focus On Syria's Civil War." *Southwestern Law School*, vol. 24, pp. 301–35.

²¹¹ Patrick, Kirsten. (2013) "Lest We Forget: Why the Use of Chemical Weapons Must Not Go Unchallenged." *Editorial*, p. 1299.

The manga's depiction of the Shinokuni gas as a powerful and destructive WMD aligns with the broader literature on the proliferation of such weapons and the need for disarmament and non-proliferation efforts. One Piece effectively conveys this concern, portraying the Shinokuni gas as a force capable of causing widespread devastation if left unchecked, mirroring the efforts of organizations like the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) to ensure the complete elimination of chemical weapons and prevent their proliferation.²¹²

J.P. Perry Robinson's papers provide a comprehensive analysis of the challenges faced in preventing the proliferation and use of chemical weapons from a real-world perspective. Robinson highlights the potential for new utilities or applications of chemical weapons, particularly in the context of modern warfare and terrorism, where they may be perceived as having greater affinity or usefulness for sowing fear and violating human rights.²¹³ This resonates with Do flamingo's disregard for human life and his willingness to employ chemical weapons as a means to an end, exemplifying the moral bankruptcy of such actors. However, the use of chemical weapons as a deterrent poses several ethical, legal, and practical challenges. Ethically and legally, the use of chemical weapons is prohibited under the CWC and is considered a crime against humanity. No "purposes not prohibited" exemptions under Article II.9(d) of the CWC can justify research into novel incapacitating chemical agents that could be used as weapons, as these would constitute a dangerous erosion of the convention's objective. Practically, controlling the effects of chemical weapons is extremely difficult, as highlighted by the 2002 Moscow theater siege, where the inability to discriminate rendered the intended "incapacitating" chemicals lethal to many hostages, similar to what had happened in the Zou Island in the manga.

²¹² Zanders, Jean Pascal, and Elisabeth M. French. (1999) "Article XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention: Between Irrelevance and Indispensability." *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 56–85.

²¹³ Robinson, J. P. Perry. (2008) "Difficulties Facing the Chemical Weapons Convention." *International Affairs*, vol. 84, no. 2, pp. 223–39.



Figure 41 Oda, 1997 Vol 81 Chapter 810

Novel bioregulators and neuroscience-derived chemicals provide increasing possibilities for agents targeting specific biochemical pathways, but with potentially severe unintended consequences given complex human biological systems.²¹⁴ This raises concerns about the blurred lines between legitimate and prohibited uses of chemical agents, potentially leading to a creeping legitimization of certain types of chemical weapons under the guise of "non-lethal" or "incapacitating" agents.²¹⁵ The challenges of proliferation and the diffusion of dual-use technologies that could be exploited for weaponization are also highlighted by Robinson, who points out that globalization and the spread of industrial and biotechnological capabilities have made it easier for states and non-state actors to acquire the means to develop chemical

²¹⁴ Malcolm, Dando. (2003) "The Danger to the Chemical Weapons Convention From Incapacitating Chemicals." *University of Bradford*, vol. 4, pp. 1–22

²¹⁵ Robinson, 2008, pp. 237

weapons, either overtly or as a "break-out capacity".²¹⁶ This aligns with DoFlamingo's portrayal as a former member of the Celestial Dragons and his connections to the underworld, suggesting access to illicit trade networks and unscrupulous suppliers, akin to the real-world convergence of rogue states and terrorist organizations in the pursuit of chemical weapons capabilities.²¹⁷ Moreover, Robinson discusses the tension between principle and political expediency in the implementation of the CWC. He cites examples where influential states have failed to fully comply with the treaty's provisions, such as not declaring certain facilities or stockpiles or asserting interpretations that contradict the treaty's principles.²¹⁸ This tension can undermine the integrity of the CWC regime and create challenges for its effective implementation and enforcement, resonating with Do flamingo's flagrant disregard for international laws and norms governing the use of chemical weapons.

The 1993 CWC aimed to establish a comprehensive ban on the development, production, stockpiling, and use of chemical weapons, as well as provisions for the verification and destruction of existing stockpiles. However, enforcing this convention and preventing the proliferation of chemical weapons has proven to be a complex and multifaceted challenge.²¹⁹ One of the primary challenges is the shift from state-sponsored proliferation to private actors driven by economic interests. In the past, governments were directly involved in the spread of chemical weaponry as part of their foreign and security policies. However, the experience of the Gulf War showed that private companies were supplying chemicals, equipment, and expertise to countries like Iraq, often circumventing export controls. This complicates the enforcement of non-proliferation measures, as economic motivations and the pursuit of profit can outweigh national security concerns. Another challenge identified by Zanders is the inherent limitations of export control regimes. While export controls are a means for governments to regain some control over the spread of chemical weapons, they ultimately address only the supply side of the issue and not the underlying demand.

Moreover, as developing countries acquire increasing technological capabilities through legitimate industrialization programs, the number of materials and technologies subject to export controls would need to expand, eventually becoming untenable. The CWC itself, while wanting to establish a global disarmament regime, faces challenges in addressing specific aspects of chemical weapons proliferation. Zanders highlights the issue of unscheduled chemicals, which may fall outside the verification regime but could potentially violate the

²¹⁶ Ibidem, 231-232

²¹⁷ Vogel, 1997, pp. 13

²¹⁸ Robinson, 2008, pp. 234

²¹⁹ Zanders, Jean Pascal. (1993) "Chemical-Weapons Deproliferation And The Chemical-Weapons Convention." *Revue Belge De Droit International*, pp. 264–79.

convention's intent and purpose. The interpretation of the treaty provisions and the extent to which national export controls can be applied to these unscheduled chemicals remains a contentious issue.²²⁰

However, the motivations behind the procurement and use of chemical weapons extend beyond the traditional confines of warfare. In some cases, their use has been a means of exerting power and control over civilian populations. The Iraqi regime's deployment of chemical agents against Iranian troops and Kurdish civilians during the Iran-Iraq war serves as a chilling reminder of how these weapons can be used as tools of oppression and genocide, with the focus of subjugating and terrorizing perceived enemies.²²¹ The use of chemical weapons by terrorist organizations, such as the Aum Shinrikyo cult's sarin gas attack on the Tokyo subway in 1995 highlights another sinister motivation: the desire to instill fear and amplify the psychological impact of an attack far beyond the immediate casualties. By wielding the threat of indiscriminate and horrific harm, terrorist groups seek to assert power and control through the spread of terror and chaos. Moreover, the mere possession of chemical weapons stockpiles has been a driving force behind their development, serving as a deterrent and a symbol of power on the global stage. During the Cold War era, the United States and Russia maintained substantial stockpiles of chemical agents, not necessarily with the intent to use them. However, instead as a means of projecting strength and influence in the geopolitical arena.²²² These examples of use of chemical weapons against civilians goes against the principles of distinctions of international humanitarian law, which requires parties to a conflict to distinguish between civilian populations and combatants and to direct their attacks only against military objectives.²²³ Chemical weapons, by their very nature, violate this principle as they are indiscriminate and cannot distinguish between civilians and combatants. Their use would inevitably cause widespread harm to civilian populations, as evidenced by the document's description of the lethal effects of nerve agents like Sarin and VX on human life. Furthermore, the principles of humanity and the prohibition of causing unnecessary suffering are fundamental to the laws of armed conflict. The detailed account of the devastating effects of chemical weapons, such as mustard gas causing chemical burns,

²²⁰ Ibidem, pp. 273-275

²²¹ Shea, Dana. (2013) "Chemical Weapons: A Summary Report of Characteristics and Effects ." *Congress Research Service*, pp. 1–15.

²²² Ibidem, pp. 1-3

²²³ Müller, Simone. (2016) "Cut holes and sink 'em": chemical weapons disposal and cold war history as a history of risk. no. 1, pp. 263–84.

pulmonary edema, and nerve agents destroying the nervous system, underscores the immense suffering these weapons can inflict.²²⁴

Chemical weapons, by their very nature, are designed to inflict massive suffering and indiscriminate harm. The accounts from World War I, such as the one provided by Company Sergeant Major Ernest Shepard, serve as a grim reminder of the excruciating agony and inhumane effects of these weapons.²²⁵ Shepard's description of men "caught by fumes and in dreadful agony, coughing and vomiting, rolling on [the] ground in agony" is a stark testament to the brutal reality of chemical warfare. Despite the moral outrage and condemnation that followed the use of chemical weapons in World War I, arguments were put forth to justify their employment. The pragmatic argument, as outlined by General Erich von Falkenhayn, suggested that chemical weapons were a necessary means to break the stalemate and achieve victory. This line of reasoning prioritized military expediency over moral considerations, rationalizing the use of chemical weapons as a means to an end. Furthermore, some attempted to frame chemical weapons as a "humane" alternative, claiming that they caused fewer fatalities than conventional weapons.²²⁶ This argument, however, fails to account for the long-term physical and psychological trauma inflicted on survivors, as well as the indiscriminate nature of these weapons, which often claimed civilian lives.

One of the distinctive aspects of *One Piece's* approach is its exploration of the potential for redemption and restorative justice in the aftermath of chemical weapon use. The series depicts the characters' efforts to find a cure for the petrification caused by the Shinokuni gas, highlighting the importance of accountability and the possibility of rehabilitation.

While holding perpetrators accountable for their actions is crucial, exploring paths toward rehabilitation and reintegration into society is equally essential. This can contribute to breaking cycles of violence and fostering reconciliation. One aspect that could inform discussions on accountability and rehabilitation is the recognition of the inherent humanity in all individuals, even those who have committed grave crimes.²²⁷ By acknowledging the potential for personal growth and transformation, avenues for restorative justice can be explored. This could involve processes that allow perpetrators to take responsibility for their actions, express remorse, and actively work towards making amends to the victims and the broader community. Restorative justice approaches, such as victim-offender dialogues or community-based programs, can provide opportunities for victims to share their experiences

²²⁴ *Ibidem*, pp. 267-268

²²⁵ Mattox, John Mark. (2020) "The Moral Status of Chemical Weapons: Arguments From World War I." *National Defense University Press*, pp. 185-98.

²²⁶ *Ibidem*, pp. 191-193

²²⁷ Rawlins, M. D. (1989) "Chemical Weapons Easy to Make, Hard to Destroy." *BMJ*, vol. 298, pp. 767-68.

and for offenders to understand the full impact of their actions.²²⁸ This can be a powerful catalyst for genuine remorse and a desire for redemption, like when Caesar Clown is forced to create an antidote for his killing gas. Additionally, educational and rehabilitative programs that address the root causes of violence and promote non-violent conflict resolution can play a vital role in preventing future atrocities.²²⁹



²²⁸ Menkel-Meadow, Carrie (2007) "Restorative Justice: What Is It and Does It Work?" *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 161–87

²²⁹ *Ibidem*, pp, 768



Figure 42 Oda, 1997 Vol 81 Chapter 811

Their use is a grave violation of international humanitarian law and the laws of armed conflict, universally condemned as an affront to human dignity and the principles of humanity. One Piece highlights the long-lasting environmental impact of chemical weapons, portraying the once-thriving island of Punk Hazard as a contaminated wasteland, with vast areas rendered uninhabitable due to the persistent effects of the Shinokuni gas.²³⁰ This aspect contributes to raising awareness about the enduring ecological consequences of chemical weapon use, which can render landscapes uninhabitable for extended periods.

One Piece's narrative thread presents a perspective that is often overlooked in traditional analyses of chemical weapon incidents, which tend to focus on the immediate aftermath and the attribution of responsibility. One Piece reminds readers of the inherent dignity and worth of those affected by these atrocities by depicting the strength of the human spirit and the bonds of friendship and camaraderie in the face of adversity. This humanizing approach adds

²³⁰ Oda, 1997, Vol. 68 Chapter 675

depth and emotional resonance to the portrayal of chemical weapon incidents, transcending the clinical or legal analyses often found in academic literature.²³¹

While *One Piece* condemns the use of chemical weapons and reinforces the international consensus on their unacceptability, it also acknowledges the challenges and complexities surrounding their elimination. The series highlights the difficulties in verifying compliance with international agreements and holding violators accountable, as seen in the struggle to hold Caesar Clown responsible for his actions. This aspect of the narrative mirrors the real-world challenges faced by organizations like the OPCW in attributing responsibility for chemical weapon attacks and enforcing the provisions of the CWC.²³² Furthermore, *One Piece* touches upon the issue of chemical weapons disposal and the long-term environmental impact of these weapons. The island of Punk Hazard remains a toxic wasteland, with the effects of the Shinokuni gas lingering for years, rendering it uninhabitable. This reflects the real-world challenges of safely disposing of chemical weapons stockpiles and the potential for long-lasting environmental damage, as highlighted by the numerous instances of sea-dumping and improper disposal throughout history.²³³

The effect of the Shinokuni gas is similar to the 1988 Halabja massacre, where Saddam Hussein's regime unleashed chemical agents on the Kurdish population, resulting in the immediate deaths of thousands and long-term health consequences for survivors.²³⁴

²³¹ Oda, 1997, Vol. 70 Chapter 698

²³² Nguyen, Tuan H. (2022) "Countering the Future Chemical Weapons Threat." *Science*, vol. 376, no. 6591, pp. 355–57.

²³³ Harigel, Gert. (2001) "Chemical and Biological Weapons: Use in Warfare, Impact on Society and Environment ." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Address*, pp. 1–25.

²³⁴ Vogel, 1997, pp. 1–15



Figure 43 Oda, 1997 Vol 68 Chapter 675

While One Piece touches upon themes such as injustice, corruption, and the use of chemical weapons through characters like Doflamingo, it is crucial to remember that it is a work of fiction and entertainment. Unlike academic literature and research on war crimes, human rights violations, and weapons proliferation, One Piece does not aim to provide an in-depth analysis of the complex political, economic, and social dynamics that underlie such atrocities. Academic studies delve into the intricate systemic factors that enable the rise of oppressive regimes, meticulously examining the legal frameworks, international conventions, and investigative processes surrounding war crimes and the use of weapons of mass destruction. These scholarly works scrutinize the root causes, historical contexts, and far-reaching consequences of such violations, often proposing solutions and reforms to address these grave issues.²³⁵ In contrast, One Piece, a fictional manga series, cannot engage in the same level of critical analysis and nuanced exploration as academic literature on these topics.²³⁶ While it acknowledges the illegality and immorality of actions like Do flamingo's, its primary purpose is storytelling and entertainment. As such, its portrayal of these themes is necessarily stylized,

²³⁵ Zanders, 1995, pp. 84-90

²³⁶ Roberts, 1986, pp. 105

fictionalized, and less analytical than academic research's rigorous academic approach. One Piece's exaggerated and fantastical depictions may highlight the absurdity and inhumanity of such actions. However, it does not delve into the complexities of international laws, conventions, and systematic issues that enable these abuses of power in the real world. Its strength lies in using storytelling to raise awareness and provoke thought, but it cannot substitute for the depth and rigor of academic studies on war crimes, human rights violations, and weapons proliferation

3.2 Dr. Vegapunk and technology

While One Piece is set during the fantasy age of piracy resembling the real-world 16th century, its narrative delves into science and technological progress. Technology takes center stage despite the adventures, with Dr. Vegapunk emerging as a pivotal character.

During his youth, Vegapunk displayed a generosity that endeared him to the residents of his island, where he used his inventions to assist them. Despite his numerous accomplishments, the island still eagerly anticipates his return, considering him a source of pride. Importantly, Vegapunk maintained a solid moral compass, refusing to involve children in the gigantification process and rejecting the creation of a harmful poison gas weapon. His focus shifted towards peaceful inventions, diverging from the dangerous pursuits of his colleagues.²³⁷ His idealistic and humanitarian side shines through as he envisions using his inventions to contribute positively to humanity and mitigate conflicts. Unfortunately, misperceptions, like those held by Jewelry Bonney, obscure this facet of Vegapunk's character. As a scientist, he harbors a profound interest in scientific theories, going to great lengths to explore and experiment. His curiosity extends to unusual concepts, such as the weight of the soul, which he investigates rigorously, enlisting the help of confidants like Bartholomew Kuma. Aware of the risks associated with his research, particularly concerning the Ohara Incident and the Void Century, Vegapunk acknowledges his precarious position as a threat to the government.²³⁸ His sense of honor is evident in his granting of Kuma's final wish, programming him to protect the Thousand Sunny until the return of the Straw Hat Pirates. Despite his serious demeanor, he recognizes the importance of his words and science, expressing annoyance at Luffy's indifference.²³⁹ When faced with imminent danger, Vegapunk prioritizes his survival and is not hesitant to seek help, even enlisting the assistance of Luffy when the World Government moves to assassinate him. His insatiable thirst for knowledge

²³⁷ Oda, 1997, One Piece Chapter 1102

²³⁸ Oda, 1997, One Piece Vol. 106 Chapter 1066

²³⁹ Oda, 1997, One Piece Vol. 61 Chapter 603

peaks when he creates six satellite versions of himself, each embodying distinct aspects of his personality. These satellites share Vega punk's consciousness through Punk Records, adding a unique dimension to the enigmatic scientist's character, as seen in Figure 44.



Figure 44 Oda, 1997 Vol 106 Chapter 1067

Each of Vegapunk's six satellites embodies a distinct personality trait, presumably reflective of Vegapunk's overall character. While he exhibits strong morals, a commitment to justice, and takes pride in his role as a scientist (represented by Shaka), he also harbors darker inclinations, such as a penchant for theft to fund his research (personified by Lilith), moments of greed (personified by York), violent outbursts (personified by Atlas), hyper-focused on his

research (personified by Edison) and able to dispense wise advice (personified by Pythagoras).²⁴⁰

Technological innovations, both fictional and real, reflect enduring human aspirations for progress. An analysis of Vegapunk's feats in the context of real-world technological advancements over the past century reveals striking parallels in the shared quest to push boundaries. As described, Vegapunk's residence, called Egghead Island, demonstrates his ability to manipulate weather patterns through the intricate regulation of moisture levels in the atmosphere. This mastery over island-wide climate control mirrors real-world efforts to influence the weather, from cloud seeding to cool cities to proposals for dispersing particles in the stratosphere to reflect sunlight. While not yet achieved to the scale depicted in *One Piece*, environmental engineering demonstrates that same impulse to wield control over nature through technology.²⁴¹

²⁴⁰ Oda, 1997, Vol. 105 Chapter 1062

²⁴¹ Londonip (2014) *20 Groundbreaking Inventions from last 100 years* URL: <https://www.londonip.co.uk/20-groundbreaking-inventions-from-the-last-100-years/>



Figure 45 Oda, 1997 Vol 105 Chapter 1064

Additionally, Vegapunk's exploitation of the mysterious "Lineage Factor" for biological experimentation and cloning projects echoes the real-world unveiling of DNA as the carrier of genetic blueprints.²⁴² Identifying DNA's double helix structure in 1953 enabled modern genetics and the ability to map, analyze, and manipulate genes. This paved the way for contentious practices like cloning, genetically modified organisms, and gene editing using CRISPR technology in the 21st century. Much like Vegapunk's cloning endeavors, these examples demonstrate the formidable but concerning power over life itself. Even the creation of Vega Punk's cyborg assistants capable of reprogramming lifeforms' instincts mirrors ongoing work on neural link technology to interface artificial intelligence with animals and humans. Elon Musk's Neuralink has tested its brain implants to make monkeys play video games with pure thought.²⁴³ The tantalizing promise of machine and biological intelligence

²⁴² Oda, 1997, Vol. 84 Chapter 840

²⁴³ SKYTG24. (2024) *Cento Giorni Con Il Chip Neuralink per Il Paziente Zero, Elon Musk: 'Un Successo*. URL: tg24.sky.it/tecnologia/2024/05/09/elon-musk-chip-neuralink-paziente-zero.

working in tandem continues to entice innovators to enhance natural capabilities through merges with technology.

One Piece's depiction of Vegapunk also raises intriguing questions about scientists' and technologists' responsibilities and moral obligations. While Vega Punk's creations have undoubtedly advanced scientific knowledge and technological capabilities, their potential for misuse and the ethical implications of their research still need to be explored within the narrative. This resonates with the ongoing debates surrounding the social responsibility of scientists and the need for ethical frameworks to ensure that scientific progress aligns with societal values and minimizes potential harm. In contrast to the traditional portrayal of scientists as dispassionate and purely rational beings, Vegapunk's characterization hints at the complex interplay of emotions, personal motivations, and psychological factors that may influence scientific endeavors.

3.2.1 Technological progress and societal change

Through the lens of Vegapunk and the developments surrounding the formidable Ancient Weapons, the series offers a nuanced perspective on embracing technological advancements and their transformative potential. Vegapunk is central in One Piece's portrayal of technological progress, embodying the relentless pursuit of knowledge and scientific breakthroughs. His creations exemplify the series' openness to embracing technological change and its disruptive impact on established norms and paradigms.²⁴⁴ This depiction resonates with the idea of "creative destruction" proposed by Joseph Schumpeter, the influential economist who theorized that innovation acts as a driving force, incessantly reshaping economic and social structures.²⁴⁵ However, Oda's portrayal of Vegapunk also offers a new perspective on the role of the scientist/technologist. While the character's creations have been used for nefarious purposes, their motivations and intentions remain ambiguous, leaving room for interpretation. This ambiguity challenges the traditional dichotomy of the scientist as either a virtuous seeker of truth or a morally compromised collaborator with power structures.²⁴⁶ Instead, Vegapunk's character invites us to consider the complexities and contradictions inherent in the scientific endeavor, where knowledge and technological advancements can simultaneously serve as forces for progress and sources of potential harm.

²⁴⁴ Oda, 1997, Vol. 52 Chapter 510

²⁴⁵ Hospers, Gert-Jan. (2005) "Joseph Schumpeter and His Legacy in Innovation Studies." *Knowledge, Technology & Policy*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 20–37.

²⁴⁶ Santosuosso, Amedeo, et al. (2015) *The Challenge Of Innovation In Law*. 1st ed., Pavia UP, pp. 19-33

Furthermore, Vegapunk's pursuit of knowledge and their relentless quest for innovation resonate with the idea of the scientist as a perpetual questioner and a challenger of established norms. This aspect of their character aligns with Michel Foucault's notion of "subjugated knowledge," a form of knowledge marginalized or disqualified by dominant discourses. Vegapunk's enigmatic nature and the potential for their discoveries to disrupt existing power structures hint at the possibility of scientific knowledge serving as a counterforce to established narratives and hierarchies. This resonates with Foucault's analysis of the complex interplay between knowledge and power, where he argues that power and knowledge are inextricably linked. Knowledge can perpetuate and reinforce existing power structures.²⁴⁷ The Ancient Weapons – Pluton, Uranus, and Poseidon – further embody the duality of technological progress in *One Piece*. These legendary weapons, imbued with immense destructive capabilities, symbolize the double-edged nature of innovation, echoing the philosophical perspectives of thinkers like Jacques Ellul.²⁴⁸ Ellul's works cautioned against the potential dangers of unchecked technological development, emphasizing the need for ethical considerations and responsible governance to mitigate the risk of technology becoming a dominating force that subjugates human autonomy and societal values.²⁴⁹

Moreover, *One Piece*'s portrayal of the Ancient Weapons evokes the "technological sublime," coined by David E. Nye, in which he means "the overpowering and often a delicious sense of awe and disorientation that we experience in the presence of some gigantic structure or mighty machine."²⁵⁰ The sheer power and awe-inspiring magnitude of these weapons encapsulate the complex and often overwhelming relationship between humanity and the technological marvels it creates, eliciting a blend of wonder and apprehension.²⁵¹ This connection between scientific innovation and unintended consequences resonates with real-world examples like nuclear fission, discovered as a novel energy source but soon weaponized through the Manhattan Project. Even the Internet, created for military networking, enabled immense civilian progress and provided a medium for cyberattacks. Much like the Pacifistas, these cases illustrate how society's application of knowledge potentiates unanticipated effects beyond initial intent.²⁵² This narrative thread mirrors real-

²⁴⁷ Thomson, Iain. (2000) "From the Question Concerning Technology to the Quest for a Democratic Technology: Heidegger, Marcuse, Feenberg." *Inquiry*, vol. 43, no. 2, pp. 203–15.

²⁴⁸ Oda, 1997, Vol. 61 Chapter 612

²⁴⁹ Hanks, J. Craig, and Emily Kay Hanks. (2015) "From Technological Autonomy to Technological Bluff: Jacques Ellul and Our Technological Condition." *Human Affairs*, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 460–70.

²⁵⁰ Nye, David E. (1996) *American Technological Sublime*, MIT Press, pp. 1-17

²⁵¹ Kavanagh, Camino. (2019) "New Tech, New Threats, and New Governance Challenges: An Opportunity to Craft Smarter Responses?" *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, pp. 1–58.

²⁵² Vaver, A. (2018) *Use of Science and Technology in Wars* URL: <https://web.colby.edu/st112a-fall18/2018/10/24/use-of-science-and-technology-in-wars/>

world debates surrounding the ethical implications of technological advancements and the need for regulatory frameworks to govern their development and deployment. However, One Piece also counter this cautious stance by showcasing the potential benefits and empowering aspects of technological progress. The Straw Hat Pirates frequently encounter and utilize advanced technologies, such as Franky's cyborg enhancements and the innovative weaponry of the Galley-La Company.



Figure 46 Oda, 1997 Vol 61 Chapter 599

The challenge of the notion of scientific knowledge as an inherently oppressive force instead suggests its potential for liberation and empowerment. This aspect of One Piece resonates with the perspectives of scholars like Andrew Feenberg, who have argued for the possibility of "democratizing technology" and harnessing scientific innovations for emancipatory and socially transformative ends.²⁵³ Furthermore, Oda's narrative offers a unique perspective on the relationship between scientific knowledge and individual agency. While critical theorists like Heidegger and Marcuse have emphasized the potential for technology to subsume human beings and diminish their autonomy, One Piece presents a more complex dynamic. Characters like Franky, who has seamlessly integrated Vega punk's technological innovations into his

²⁵³ Feenberg, Andrew. (1996) "Marcuse or Habermas: Two Critiques of Technology1." *Inquiry*, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 45-70.

body and identity, challenge the notion of a strict dichotomy between human and machine.²⁵⁴ This portrayal suggests that scientific advancements can be embraced and incorporated into individual narratives, blurring the boundaries between technology and the human experience. This resonates with the perspectives of scholars like Don Ihde, who have advocated for a phenomenological approach to understanding the human-technology relation, emphasizing the embodied and experiential dimensions of our encounters with technological artifacts.²⁵⁵ Ihde's critique of the essentialist and deterministic conceptions of technology finds echoes in One Piece's portrayal of characters like Franky, who actively shape and appropriate Vega punk's innovations in ways that challenge traditional notions of human subjectivity and agency. These examples illustrate the positive impacts of technological innovations on personal empowerment, self-expression, and problem-solving capabilities, offering a more optimistic perspective on the role of technology in enriching human experiences. Furthermore, the series explores the themes of knowledge-sharing and collaboration as driving forces behind technological progress. Vega Punk's willingness to disseminate his research and findings highlights the importance of an open exchange of ideas and cross-disciplinary cooperation in advancing scientific and technological frontiers.²⁵⁶ This aspect resonates with the concept of "open innovation," which emphasizes the value of leveraging external sources of knowledge and fostering collaborative networks across organizational boundaries to catalyze innovation.²⁵⁷

One of the most notable impacts of scientific and technological progress is on economic growth and development. Schumpeter introduced the concept of innovation as a source of economic change, highlighting its role in driving economic dynamism.²⁵⁸ Building on this foundation, Maclaurin developed a sequential model of technological innovation, encompassing stages from fundamental research to commercialization. This linear innovation model underscores technological advancements' critical role in fostering economic progress and spawning new industries. The relationship between technological innovation and economic growth has been the subject of extensive research. As Broughel and Thierer emphasize, innovation is a fundamental driver of economic growth and human progress.²⁵⁹ They argue that embracing and nurturing a culture of innovation is crucial for sustained

²⁵⁴ Santosuosso, 2015, pp. 26

²⁵⁵ Albrechtslund, pp. 68

²⁵⁶ Oda, 1997, Vol. 106 Chapter 1067

²⁵⁷ Chesbrough, Henry, et al. (2008) *Open Innovation*. OUP Oxford, pp. 1-80

²⁵⁸ Godin, Benoît. (2008) "In The Shadow of Schumpeter: W. Rupert Maclaurin and the Study of Technological Innovation." *Minerva*, vol. 46, no. 3, pp. 343–60.

²⁵⁹ Broughel, James, and Adam D. Thierer (2019) "Technological Innovation and Economic Growth: A Brief Report on the Evidence." *Social Science Research Network*, pp.1-30

economic development. However, this process is challenging. Policymakers and society must strike a delicate balance between fostering technological advancements and addressing their potential disruptive effects while ensuring that the benefits of innovation are equitably distributed. The work of Diaconu further elaborates on this concept by exploring the various dimensions of technological innovation. She traces the evolution of innovation theories, from Schumpeter's initial ideas to more recent models that consider the complex interplay of factors influencing innovation. Diaconu emphasizes that innovation is not just about creating new products or processes; it also involves improvements in existing systems, organizational changes, and the development of new markets.²⁶⁰ This multifaceted understanding of innovation highlights its pervasive impact on economic systems. Mohamed et al. contribute to this discourse by examining the causality between technological innovation and economic growth, particularly in the context of developing economies. Their research underscores the bidirectional relationship between these two factors, suggesting that while technological innovation drives economic growth, economic development also creates conditions conducive to further innovation.²⁶¹ This reciprocal relationship points to the need for comprehensive policies that not only promote technological advancement but also address broader socio-economic factors that can either facilitate or hinder innovation.

The open-source phenomenon offers a compelling example of how technological innovation can challenge traditional economic models. As Lerner and Tirole note, the open source process of production seems at odds with conventional economic expectations, where private firms typically manage and compensate their workers while controlling the output and intellectual property.²⁶² The rise of open source software, with contributors freely sharing their work under specific licensing conditions, presents a new paradigm for innovation and collaboration. This shift has led to discussions around intellectual property rights, software patents, and their potential impact on innovation and economic growth. The legal system and licensing models play a crucial role in shaping the open source movement and its implications.²⁶³ Understanding the incentives and motivations of individual contributors, such as career concerns, peer recognition, and intrinsic enjoyment, provides insights into this new model of production and innovation. The open-source model challenges traditional notions of

²⁶⁰ Diaconu, Mihaela (2011) "Technological Innovation: Concept, Process, Typology and Implications in the Economy." *Theoretical and Applied Economics*, Vol. 18, No. 10, pp. 127-144

²⁶¹ Mohamed, Maha Mohamed Alsebai, et al. (2022) "Causality between Technological Innovation and Economic Growth: Evidence from the Economies of Developing Countries." *Sustainability*, vol. 14, no. 6, p. 1-39

²⁶² Lerner, Josh and Jean Tirole (2005) "The Economics of Technology Sharing: Open Source and Beyond." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 99-120

²⁶³ Lerner and Tirole, 2005, pp. 106-113

value creation and appropriation. While conventional economic theory suggests that individuals and firms engage in productive activities primarily for monetary rewards, the open source movement demonstrates that other factors, such as reputation, learning opportunities, and the satisfaction of solving complex problems, can also drive significant contributions to technological development.

Moreover, the collaborative nature of open-source projects has fostered a global community of developers, transcending geographical and organizational boundaries. This decentralized approach to innovation has led to the rapid development and improvement of software, often outpacing proprietary alternatives. The success of projects like Linux, Apache, and countless others attests to the power of this distributed innovation model. The implications of the open source phenomenon extend beyond the software industry. Its principles of openness, collaboration, and shared resources have inspired similar movements in other fields, such as open access in academic publishing, open data initiatives, and even open-source hardware projects. These developments suggest a broader shift towards more open and participatory innovation models across various sectors.

Scientific and technological advancements have also significantly influenced employment patterns and the labor market. Introducing new technologies can lead to job displacements and necessitate retraining or skill acquisition.²⁶⁴ Maclaurin recognized this impact and advocated for studying conditions that promote steady technological progress while minimizing disruptive effects on employment. The decision of individuals to contribute without pay to freely available software, as in the case of open-source projects, may seem puzzling to economists.²⁶⁵ However, factors such as career concerns, peer recognition, and intrinsic enjoyment drive participation in these initiatives. This phenomenon challenges traditional notions of employment and compensation, highlighting the need for a broader understanding of work in the context of technological innovation. Diaconu further elaborates on the impact of technological innovation on employment, noting that new technologies can lead to significant shifts in labor demand.²⁶⁶ While some jobs may be displaced, new opportunities often emerge in sectors driven by technological advancements. The key challenge lies in facilitating the transition of the workforce through education and training programs that align with the evolving demands of the labor market.

The rapid advancement of science and technology has raised significant ethical and philosophical concerns. The pace of innovation has often outstripped our ability to

²⁶⁴ Godin, 2008, pp. 7

²⁶⁵ Lerner and Tirole, 2005, pp. 101

²⁶⁶ Diaconu, 2011, 138-139

comprehend and address the ethical implications of emerging technologies. Privacy, data security, and the potential misuse of technology for malicious purposes have become increasingly relevant.²⁶⁷ The rise of big data and artificial intelligence (AI) has brought these concerns to the forefront. While these technologies offer immense potential for improving decision-making, personalizing services, and solving complex problems, they also pose risks related to surveillance, algorithmic bias, and the erosion of privacy. The use of AI in sensitive areas such as criminal justice, healthcare, and employment has sparked debates about fairness, accountability, and transparency.²⁶⁸ Biotechnological advancements, such as genetic engineering and synthetic biology, have opened up new frontiers in medicine and agriculture. However, they have also raised profound questions about the limits of human intervention in natural processes. Ethical dilemmas surrounding designer babies, gene patents, and the equitable distribution of biotechnological benefits are becoming increasingly complex. The development of autonomous systems, including self-driving cars and military drones, has brought the trolley problem from philosophical thought experiments into real-world scenarios.²⁶⁹ Environmental ethics is another critical area where technological progress intersects with moral considerations. While technology has contributed to environmental degradation through industrialization and resource exploitation, it also offers potential solutions for sustainability. Renewable energy technologies, carbon capture systems, and smart grid infrastructure are examples of how innovation can address climate change.²⁷⁰ However, the development and deployment of these technologies must be guided by principles of environmental justice and intergenerational equity.

The rise of cryptocurrencies like Bitcoin, facilitated by blockchain technology, has ignited intense discussions about their value, exchange rate determinants, and potential to disrupt traditional financial systems.²⁷¹ These discussions extend beyond economic considerations to encompass questions about the nature of money, the role of central authorities, and the societal implications of decentralized financial systems. The environmental impact of cryptocurrency mining, the use of cryptocurrencies in illicit activities, and their potential to exacerbate inequality are all ethical concerns that must be addressed. Furthermore, as our reliance on technology grows, so does the importance of cybersecurity ethics. The actions of

²⁶⁷ Godin, 2008, pp. 14

²⁶⁸ Feffer, Michael, et al. (2023) "The AI Incident Database as an Educational Tool to Raise Awareness of AI Harms: A Classroom Exploration of Efficacy, Limitations, and Future Improvements", *EEAMO*, pp. 1-11

²⁶⁹ Turriziani, Jenifer V. (2014), "Designer Babies: The Need for Regulation on the Quest For Perfection". *Law School Student Scholarship*, pp. 1-33

²⁷⁰ Fernandez-Cornejo, J. (1988) "Environmental and Economic Consequences of Technology Adoption: IPM in Viticulture." *Agricultural Economics*, vol. 18, no. 2, , pp. 145–55.

²⁷¹ Xin Li, Chong Alex Wang (2017) "The technology and economic determinants of cryptocurrency exchange rates: The case of Bitcoin." *Decision Support Systems*, vol. 95, pp. 49–60.

hackers, whether they are cybercriminals, state-sponsored actors, or self-proclaimed vigilantes, raise questions about the boundaries of digital sovereignty and the norms of behavior in cyberspace. The development of offensive cyber capabilities by nations has led to discussions about the ethics of cyberwarfare and the need for international treaties to govern this new domain.

The role of technology companies in shaping public discourse and influencing political processes has also come under scrutiny. The immense power wielded by a handful of tech giants raises concerns about corporate responsibility, free speech limits, and platform governance's impact on democracy. As technologies become more pervasive and integrated into our daily lives, the boundaries between humans and machines are increasingly blurred. This convergence prompts philosophical inquiries into the nature of consciousness, identity, and what it means to be human in the age of advanced technology. The prospect of human enhancement technologies and the transhumanist vision of overcoming biological limitations through technology further complicate these existential questions. Addressing these ethical challenges requires a multidisciplinary approach. It calls for collaboration among technologists, ethicists, policymakers, and the public to develop frameworks and guidelines that ensure technology serves humanity's best interests. Responsible innovation, which considers ethical implications throughout development, is crucial. Moreover, ethics education for scientists, engineers, and technology professionals is essential. By embedding ethical reasoning into the core of technological development, we can foster a culture of responsibility and foresight.

One Piece's representation of technological progress aligns with sociological perspectives that view technology and society as co-evolving entities. Scholars such as Wiebe E. Bijker and Trevor J. Pinch have argued that scientific and technical factors do not solely shape technological developments but are also influenced by social, cultural, and political contexts.²⁷² The series reflects this notion through the World Government's attempts to control and manipulate advanced technologies for political and military purposes, as well as the various factions' competing interests and ideologies surrounding the Ancient Weapons. One Piece's representation of technological progress extends beyond physical inventions and weaponry, delving into the transformative potential of knowledge and information dissemination – a theme deeply relevant in the modern information age. The pursuit of the Poneglyphs and the revelations they hold about the world's true history symbolizes the disruptive power of knowledge and its ability to challenge existing narratives, power structures, and societal paradigms. This aspect resonates with the perspectives of scholars like

²⁷² Feenberg, 1996, pp. 45–50

Manuel Castells, who have highlighted the paradigm shift brought about by the information age, where knowledge and information processing become driving forces of societal transformation.²⁷³ Moreover, the series explores the intricate interplay between technological progress and the preservation of cultural heritage and collective memory and ethics dilemma. One example is the "Pacifista": they represent Vegapunk's expertise in cybernetic enhancement, which has been taken to an extreme through the weaponization of clones, but the sole control of them is in the hand of the World Government, who uses at their discretion. By technologically and biologically manipulating Bartholomew Kuma's genetic code, Vegapunk fabricates obedient, ruthless cyborgs programmed to execute pirate targets. The Pacifists symbolize the ironic transformation of Kuma's pacifist ideals into instruments of violence, underscoring philosophical debates on whether weapons technology is fundamentally neutral or inherently deleterious.



Figure 14 Eiichiro Oda (1997-today) *One Piece* Vol 61 Chapter 601

While it may not provide definitive answers, the series invites readers to embrace the complexities and nuances of this intricate relationship, encouraging them to critically examine the implications of technological progress and consider the delicate balance between harnessing its transformative potential and preserving the fundamental values and ethical considerations that define our shared humanity. The series acknowledges the inherent tensions and paradoxes accompanying advancements in science and technology, reflecting the ongoing debates within academic circles. On the one hand, the character of Vegapunk represents the relentless pursuit of knowledge and the boundless potential of human ingenuity. His creations, such as the highly advanced cyborgs and artificial intelligence, embody the transformative power of technology to reshape our understanding of what is possible and push the boundaries of the human experience. This portrayal aligns with the perspectives of thinkers who celebrate technological progress as a driving force behind human flourishing and expanding our

²⁷³ Pérez, Carlota. (2001) "Technological Change and Opportunities for Development as a Moving Target." *CEPAL Review*, vol. 2001, no. 75, pp. 109–30.

collective capabilities.²⁷⁴ However, One Piece also acknowledges the potential risks and ethical dilemmas accompanying such advancements. With their immense destructive power, the Ancient Weapons serve as a cautionary tale about the dangers of unchecked technological progress and the potential for even the most groundbreaking innovations to be weaponized or misused.



Figure 47 Oda, 1997 Chapter 1116

One Piece's portrayal of technological progress also touches upon the complex interplay between innovation and societal power dynamics. The World Government's efforts to control and monopolize the knowledge and technologies represented by the Ancient Weapons and Vegapunk's inventions reflect the real-world tensions surrounding the governance and regulation of emerging technologies. The diverse reactions and interpretations of Vegapunk's creations among the various factions in the One Piece world reflect the social construction of scientific knowledge, as proposed by scholars like Bruno Latour and Steve Woolgar.²⁷⁵ The perception and understanding of Vegapunk's achievements are shaped by the sociocultural contexts and power dynamics within the One Piece universe, echoing the notion that scientific

²⁷⁴ Go'zal Ikhtiyorovna, Karimova. (2023) "Embracing Technological Changes for a Better Future." *AMERICAN Journal of Language, Literacy and Learning in STEM Education*, pp. 339-344

²⁷⁵ Feenberg, 1996, pp. 59

knowledge is not neutral but somewhat contingent upon the social and political contexts in which it is produced and disseminated.

3.2.2 *Governing technological developments*

At the core of Vegapunk's characterization lies a critique of the perceived neutrality of science and technology. The shroud of mystery surrounding Vegapunk's identity and motives challenges the traditional notion of the scientist as an impartial observer and a neutral purveyor of knowledge. Vegapunk's affiliation with the World Government, an entity known for its authoritarian tendencies and questionable moral compass, raises questions about the potential instrumentalization of scientific research for political and ideological purposes. This echoes the concerns raised by critical theorists such as Herbert Marcuse, who warned of the "technological rationality" that could serve as a tool for domination and social control.²⁷⁶ Marcuse's critique of the "one-dimensional society," where instrumental reason subsumes all aspects of human existence, resonates with the portrayal of the World Government's exploitation of Vegapunk's innovations for their oppressive ends. *One Piece's* narrative also grapples with the ethical implications of scientific progress, particularly concerning the development of weapons and other potentially destructive technologies. Vegapunk's involvement in creating advanced weaponry highlights the inherent tension between scientific advancement and preserving human life and dignity. This resonates with Martin Heidegger's critique of modern technology as a mode of "enframing" that reduces the world to a "standing reserve", potentially leading to the objectification and exploitation of both nature and human beings.²⁷⁷ Heidegger's warnings about the dangers of the technological understanding of being, where everything is reduced to mere resources for human consumption and manipulation, find echoes in the portrayal of the World Government's co-optation of Vegapunk's creations for their nefarious ends. From the development of advanced cyborgs like Kuma and Kizaru to the creation of artificial Devil Fruits and the revolutionary lineage factor experiments, Vegapunk's inventions have reshaped the very fabric of society.²⁷⁸ Like one of his last creations, the "Seraphim": clones, genetically modified, of the most influential individuals of the manga, created with the goal of obedience towards their masters.

²⁷⁶ Feenberg, 1996, pp. 45–60

²⁷⁷ Thomson, 2000, pp. 211-213.

²⁷⁸ Oda, 1997, Vol. 70 Chapter 698



Figure 48 Oda, 1997 Vol 106 Chapter 1069

Heidegger's central critique is that technology is not merely a neutral instrument or tool but rather a way of revealing or relating to the world. He argues that modern technology has its roots in the drive for calculation, control, and mastery over beings, which stems from a metaphysical stance that sees human beings as the source of all meaning and value.²⁷⁹ In this view, technology is not a mere means to an end, but instead enacts a particular mode of being that reduces all beings to a "standing reserve" to be ordered, calculated, and exploited. For Heidegger, this technological mode of revealing stems from the Greek concept of *physis*, which means the self-blossoming or self-emergent arising of beings. Modern technology paradoxically aims to master and dominate the very principle of emergence and self-disclosure that defines nature. It treats all beings as resources to be efficiently ordered and exploited, foreclosing other more primordial ways of encountering beings and the world. In this way, the essence of modern technology is reducing all things to a kind of stock to be stored and made permanently available for use.²⁸⁰

However, while these innovations were intended for benevolent purposes, the series also underscores their potential for misuse and exploitation, echoing the concerns raised by philosophers regarding the inherent politics and values embodied within technological artifacts. Langdon Winner, a pioneering thinker in the philosophy of technology, articulated a seminal perspective on the relationship between technological artifacts and social structures. Winner argues that technologies are not mere neutral tools but rather embody and perpetuate specific forms of power, authority, and social relationships.²⁸¹

²⁷⁹ Smith, Gregory Bruce. (1991) "Heidegger, Technology and Postmodernity." *The Social Science Journal*, vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 369–89

²⁸⁰ *Ibidem*, pp. 382

²⁸¹ Winner, Langdon (1980) "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" *Daedalus*, vol. 109, no. 1, pp. 121–36.

One example is the Canadian experience with AI development, which illustrates the importance of ethical and human-centric approaches rooted in national culture and values.²⁸² The country's institutional framework, characterized by stringent privacy laws and regulations, coupled with an active citizenry and civil society, has fostered a trajectory focused on excellence in technological development and the ethical application of AI. Public participation and multi-stakeholder engagement have played a crucial role in maintaining a balance of power and preventing private actors from excessively influencing AI development. In contrast, China's AI trajectory has been driven primarily by market forces and commercial applications, with domestic tech giants and the government playing dominant roles.²⁸³ While this approach has facilitated rapid commercialization and adoption of AI technologies, it has also raised concerns about privacy, data governance, and the concentration of power in the hands of a few influential actors. The divergent trajectories of AI development in Canada and China underscore the importance of national-level dynamics, including formal and informal institutions, technologies, and actor strategies, in determining the paths of technological progress.²⁸⁴ As emerging technologies continue to reshape societies, it is crucial to ensure that their development and diffusion are guided by democratic principles and societal values, rather than solely by commercial interests or the agendas of powerful entities.

Technological innovations have the power to redefine our understanding of what is "natural," "human," or "normal." As we venture into realms like geoengineering, de-extinction, and human enhancement, we are confronted with the profound ethical dilemma of artificializing the world.²⁸⁵ These innovations challenge our traditional dichotomies between humans and machines, matter and mind, science and technology, and natural and artificial. The ethical implications of this boundary-shifting are multifaceted. On the one hand, innovations that alter the natural world or the human condition raise concerns about disrupting the intrinsic value of nature or compromising the sanctity of human life. On the other hand, these innovations may offer solutions to pressing global challenges, such as climate change or disease.²⁸⁶ Moreover, the notion of "total responsibility" is rising from the profound uncertainty and global impact of specific technological innovations. In the case of geoengineering, for instance, scientists and technologists would assume responsibility for

²⁸² Gherhes, Cristian, et al. (2023) "Technological Trajectories as an Outcome of the Structure-agency Interplay at the National Level: Insights From Emerging Varieties of AI." *World Development*, vol. 168, p. 1-15.

²⁸³ Ibidem, pp. 8-11

²⁸⁴ Ibidem, pp. 4

²⁸⁵ Bourban, Michel, and Johan Rochel. (2020) "Synergies in Innovation: Lessons Learnt From Innovation Ethics for Responsible Innovation." *Philosophy & Technology*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 373-94.

²⁸⁶ Ibidem, pp. 384

managing the entire Earth's climate system, with the potential to affect current and future generations, as well as non-human life. This concept of total responsibility encompasses aggregative, inclusive, and responsibility in the face of deep uncertainty.

The event of Punk Hazard, especially the part in which Vegapunk's experiments went awry, serves as a cautionary tale, highlighting the potential risks and unintended consequences of scientific experimentation when conducted without proper ethical oversight or consideration for societal implications. It echoes the concerns raised by thinkers like Ulrich Beck, who warned of the potential for scientific and technological advancements to generate new risks and uncertainties, requiring a reflexive approach to modernity.²⁸⁷ Beck's concept of the "risk society," where the very pursuit of scientific and technological progress paradoxically creates new sources of danger and instability, finds resonance in the portrayal of Punk Hazard's devastating aftermath. Moreover, Vega punk's elusive nature and the ambiguity surrounding their allegiances challenge the traditional notion of the scientist/technologist as a neutral and objective observer of the natural world. Instead, Vegapunk's actions and creations are intrinsically intertwined with the World Government's complex power dynamics and political machinations, blurring the line between scientific pursuit and political agenda. This reflects the critical perspective put forth by scholars like Donna Haraway, who argued that scientific knowledge is always situated and enmeshed within broader sociopolitical networks and power structures.²⁸⁸ Haraway's notion of "situated knowledge" challenges the idea of a universal, objective scientific truth, and instead emphasizes the contextual and situated nature of all knowledge production, echoing the ambiguous and politically-entangled position of Vegapunk within the narrative.

Furthermore, the existence of the ancient weapons in the One Piece universe – the Pluton, a formidable warship capable of obliterating entire islands; Uranus, a mysterious weapon of mass destruction; and Poseidon, the mythical being capable of commanding the mighty Sea Kings – serves as a reminder of the catastrophic potential of technological prowess when left unchecked or exploited for destructive purposes. These relics from a bygone era symbolize the devastation that can be wrought by the misuse of advanced technologies, aligning with Winner's contention that certain technologies inherently demand centralized control and authoritarian tendencies, potentially undermining democratic ideals and individual

²⁸⁷ Dawson, Kara, and Walter Heinecke. (2004) "Conditions, Processes and Consequences of Technology Use: A Case Study." *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 61–81.

²⁸⁸ Schraube, Ernst. (2021) "Langdon Winner's Theory of Technological Politics: Rethinking Science and Technology for Future Society." *Engaging Science, Technology, and Society*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 113–17.

freedoms.²⁸⁹ Andrew Feenberg, another influential philosopher of technology, has made significant contributions to the critical discourse on the sociopolitical dimensions of technological development. Feenberg advocates for a critical theory of technology that recognizes the inherent social and political forces shaping technological trajectories.²⁹⁰ He argues that technologies are not value-neutral but embody specific values and interests, which can either reinforce existing power structures or empower marginalized groups. In the context of *One Piece*, the portrayal of Vega punk's creations and the ancient weapons highlights the potential for technological advancements to be co-opted and exploited by powerful entities or malevolent actors, perpetuating existing power dynamics and inequalities. The series underscores the risks associated with the concentration of technological might in the hands of a select few, devoid of democratic oversight and accountability. Feenberg's call for the "democratization of technology" emphasizes the importance of public engagement and the active participation of diverse stakeholders in shaping technological trajectories to align with societal values and the greater good. *One Piece*'s narrative echoes this sentiment as the existence of the ancient weapons and the secrecy surrounding Vegapunk's research serve as cautionary tales about the potential consequences of unchecked technological progress driven by narrow interests or authoritarian regimes.²⁹¹

The series presents a portrayal of the interplay between technology and society, aligning with the critiques leveled by philosophers like Winner and Feenberg, who warn against the technocratic tendencies in modern societies and the devaluation of human values and democratic processes in pursuing technological rationality. *One Piece* underscores the risks of allowing technological advancements to be shaped solely by profit motives, capitalist imperatives, or the agendas of powerful elites, echoing the philosophical arguments for democratizing technological decision-making processes. However, *One Piece* also presents a nuanced perspective, acknowledging the potential benefits of scientific advancements while simultaneously cautioning against their abuse or misuse. The series portrays characters like Kuma, a compassionate man who turned himself into a weapon to protect his daughter.

²⁸⁹ Winner, Langdon. (2021) "The Democratic Shaping of Technology: Its Rise, Fall and Possible Rebirth." *Engaging Science, Technology, and Society*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 95–103.

²⁹⁰ Feenberg, Andrew. (1992) "Subversive Rationalization: Technology, Power, and Democracy1." *Inquiry*, vol. 35, no. 3–4, pp. 301–22.

²⁹¹ Veak, Tyler. (2000) "Whose Technology? Whose Modernity? Questioning Feenberg's Questioning Technology." *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 226–37



Figure 49 Oda, 1997 Chapter 1102

These narratives align with Feenberg's vision of a "subversive rationalization" process, where technology is reshaped and reoriented to serve the interests of marginalized groups and foster greater social equality.²⁹² One Piece diverges from a purely techno-critical stance by presenting alternative perspectives and narratives that challenge the assumption of technological determinism. The series suggests that technological trajectories are not predetermined but somewhat shaped by human agency, societal values, and the collective efforts of individuals and communities. This is similar to the philosophical arguments put forth by thinkers like Winner, who advocates for the cultivation of a "philosophy of technological culture" that promotes critical engagement and active participation in shaping technological developments.²⁹³ Oda's narrative challenges the notion of technological determinism by suggesting that the trajectories of scientific progress are malleable and can be reshaped through collective efforts, aligning with the philosophical calls for the

²⁹² Feenberg, 1992, pp. 310

²⁹³ Schraube, 2021, pp. 113–116.

democratization of technological decision-making processes. By presenting these perspectives, *One Piece* invites readers to grapple with the complexities surrounding the governance of technological trajectories. While highlighting the potential risks and dangers associated with the abuse of technology, the series also acknowledges the positive transformative potential of scientific advancements when guided by ethical principles and democratic oversight.

While Vegapunk's creations were initially developed under the auspices of the World Government, the narrative depicts various factions and individuals appropriating, adapting, and reinterpreting these innovations for their purposes. This resonates with the concept of "nomology" and "ontology" discussed by legal scholar Kieran Tranter, where he argues that technology and law are not fixed entities but somewhat fluid and constantly evolving through interactions and reinterpretations.²⁹⁴ *One Piece*'s depiction of the diverse applications and interpretations of Vegapunk's inventions challenges the notion of scientific knowledge as a monolithic force controlled by a single authority, instead suggesting a more dynamic and decentralized landscape where knowledge is actively negotiated and transformed by various actors. Moreover, Franky's character exemplifies the potential for technological innovations to be reclaimed and repurposed for emancipatory ends. Franky's integration of Vegapunk's cybernetic enhancements into his own body and identity represents a subversion of the dominant narratives surrounding technology and power, resonating with the perspectives of critical theorists like Andrew Feenberg, who have advocated for the democratization of technology and the harnessing of scientific innovations for socially transformative purposes. In addition to these philosophical and ethical dimensions, Oda's portrayal of Vegapunk offers a unique perspective on the nature of scientific knowledge itself. Vegapunk's achievements throughout the narrative are shrouded in mystery, and their capabilities remain elusive, challenging the notion of scientific knowledge as a fixed, objective truth. This resonates with the postmodern critique of scientific discourse, as articulated by scholars like Jean-François Lyotard, who challenged the notion of a single, overarching meta-narrative of scientific progress.²⁹⁵ Vegapunk's enigmatic nature and the ambiguity surrounding their creations and motivations invite readers to question the supposed objectivity and certainty of scientific knowledge, opening up spaces for alternative interpretations and narratives. Vegapunk's actions and motivations remain primarily opaque throughout the narrative, with their creations seemingly operating outside the realm of democratic oversight or public scrutiny. This dynamic resonates with the critiques of the technocratic tendency in modern societies, as

²⁹⁴ Santosuosso, 2015, pp. 30-31

²⁹⁵ Feenberg, 1992, pp. 308

articulated by scholars like Jürgen Habermas and Andrew Feenberg. Habermas warned against the encroachment of technocratic rationality into the public sphere, where an unaccountable scientific-technical elite makes decisions with far-reaching societal implications. Similarly, Feenberg criticized the tendency to view technology as a neutral, value-free entity, arguing that technological choices are inherently political and should be subject to democratic deliberation.²⁹⁶

One Piece raises questions about the responsibility of scientists and the potential for their creations to be misused or co-opted for nefarious purposes. This issue is explored in the works of thinkers like Bruno Latour, who emphasizes the need for scientists to be aware of the social and political contexts in which their research and inventions are embedded.²⁹⁷ The series underscores the importance of considering the broader implications and potential misuses of technological innovations, echoing Latour's call for increased accountability and transparency in the scientific community.

Recent discourse within the International Science Council (ISC) has spotlighted enduring systemic barriers impeding scientific progress, including crisis, funding inequities, and disciplinary siloes. However, scientists have demonstrated remarkable solidarity and resourcefulness in devising adaptive strategies to fulfill science's highest purpose - advancing collective well-being through knowledge generation. A continued effort to improve underlying conditions promises to empower science to address shared problems.²⁹⁸ A predominant threat remains the spectral persistence of conflict, authoritarianism, and environmental catastrophe. Around the world, researchers face dangers gathering data, losing invaluable records to violence, or having work constrained by repressive regimes. Young scholars may be deprived of training when institutions are disrupted. The causes of such precarity exceed scientific control, but solidarity within the profession assists vulnerable peers through small grants or programs for displaced academics. Resilience relies on systematically preserving and sharing knowledge about effective crisis response strategies.

Additionally, funding disparities between the global North and South impinge on research equity and agenda setting. Data collection remains centrally organized, underrepresenting observations from lower-income regions. Lack of funding diminishes opportunities for local scholars to publish or pursue careers, propagating cycles of invisibility and exclusion. The roots of these divides run deep, but democratizing research participation through affordable technology and Indigenous knowledge systems promises progress. Scientific specialization

²⁹⁶ Feenberg, 1996, pp. 45-55

²⁹⁷ Ibidem, 45–60.

²⁹⁸ Sparks, R. (2023) *From Authoritarian Threats to Funding Disparities: Key Challenges in Global Science*
URL: <https://council.science/current/blog/key-challenges-in-global-science/>

also carries limitations, needing help to address multidimensional challenges like climate change or pandemics. Instead, boundary-spanning interdisciplinary collaboration can illuminate problems more holistically and synthesize insights across sectors. Coordinating such interconnectivity remains complex but holds transformative potential. The ISC discourse underscores that science relies profoundly on surrounding political and social ecosystems by spotlighting obstacles. External factors cannot be fully controlled, but adaptive strategies can empower science to fulfill ethical obligations, guided by conscious stewardship principles. Continued efforts to improve conditions through peer solidarity, democratized participation, interdisciplinary synthesis, and knowledge preservation offer a vital path for research addressing shared problems rather than particular interests.

CONCLUSION

In this research, we have used "One Piece" as an engaging lens to investigate the complex relationships between political discourse, human rights, and the diverse effects of popular culture, in order to answer the question: is it possible to utilize "One Piece" as a case study to examine the world?

We have first conducted a comparative study of politics and literature to answer the topic. Specifically, we have examined how literature has historically influenced public opinion, addressed social injustices, and developed manga from ancient tales to a worldwide phenomenon. We discussed how literature might represent the problems of the marginalized, inspire societal reforms, broaden the political conversation, and inspire individual and group action against injustice. It presents notable literary works that, by humanizing the oppressed via gripping storylines, ignited revolutionary revolutions, increased anger against injustice, and gave civil rights campaigns impetus. It also confronts the threat of censorship, as it directly hinders the influence of fiction on society. It explores the dangers of propagandist literature, the use of fiction by totalitarian governments, and a range of censorship techniques and sources, including political, religious, and sociocultural ones.

Then, there was a discussion about the extensive historical background of Japanese comics, sometimes known as manga. This analysis examines the origins of manga, tracing its development from its early manifestations, such as emakimono and kusazoshi. It examines the significant surge in manga's popularity during World War II, attributing it to renowned manga artists and the widespread appeal of genres such as shonen (targeted at boys), shojo (targeted at girls), seinen (targeted at adult men), and josei (targeted at adult women). Subsequently, we had thoroughly analyzed the widely acclaimed manga series "One Piece." The text provides comprehensive insights into the narrative, protagonists, and global popularity of "One Piece." The primary emphasis of the research is on the World Government portrayed in the manga and anime series "One Piece." The World Government is a significant consortium consisting of 170 nations. The primary concept under examination is the "Absolute Justice" notion the World Government upholds. This principle permits eradicating threats at any expense, even if it involves sacrificing innocent lives or employing unethical methods. Im-Sama, a figure shrouded in mystery, occupies the highest position within the World Government's highly structured power hierarchy. The activities of the World Government, particularly its abuses of power, may be analyzed using a range of political and philosophical views. This aligns with Hannah Arendt's concept of the "banality of evil," which provides a thought-provoking

viewpoint on the individuals and officials inside the government. Many of these individuals are shown as ordinary individuals who commit atrocities due to their unquestioning obedience and absence of critical thinking. The hierarchical structure of the World Government and the concept of absolute obedience evoke parallels with Stanley Milgram's renowned experiments on submission to authority. Monkey D. Dragon is the leader of the Revolutionary Army in the One Piece series. The primary objective of this army is to overthrow the World Government. Exploring concepts that promote revolutionary action is highly recommended, in line with the organization's objective of toppling the World Government. In contrast, enlightenment thinkers such as John Locke and Jean-Jacques Rousseau argued that governments obtained their legitimate authority from the consent of the governed. The account highlights the potential disadvantages of revolutionary movements, such as the Iranian, Chinese, and Cuban revolutions, and stimulates critical thinking. The narrative explores the concepts of cultural relativism, human rights, and the struggle against societal decay. Profound understanding is achieved by comparing the imaginary world with actual historical events, intellectual concepts, and ongoing debates on human rights. The World Government in One Piece serves as a foreboding symbol of totalitarian regimes, embodying the potential downfall of society. In the portrayed world, rebel movements persist despite the reign of the World Government. The study examines perspectives on federalism, the social contract ideas of Locke and Rousseau, and Montesquieu's concept of separation of powers. One Piece consistently upholds the rights of individuals, promoting freedom, fairness, and reverence for all sentient beings. However, instead of presenting an idealized and simplified portrayal of human rights, the narrative explores the essential clashes between universalism and cultural relativism. The series utilizes its diverse range of cultures to exemplify the challenges faced when implementing universal human rights concepts in various cultural settings.

The analysis of chemical weapons, weaponry, and technology concluded the debate. The examination primarily focuses on two key components: chemical weapons use and technological progress management. The initial segment examines the previous collaboration between the Warlord and the Emperor, Donquixote Doflamingo and Kaido, concerning the dissemination of counterfeit Devil Fruits (SMILEs). It highlights the resilience of Doflamingo and Kaido in the face of the suffering caused by SMILEs. The enigmatic scientist Dr. Vegapunk in the One Piece series is the focus of the second part, where his inventions, including artificial intelligence and cybernetic enhancements, are used as symbolic representations of real scientific advancements. This analysis examines the frequent use of

these technologies by powerful entities such as the World Government for political and military gain.

To explore concepts such as technological determinism, the political nature of technological artifacts, and the importance of democratic control in scientific progress, this work extensively incorporates philosophical viewpoints on technology. It delves into the ideas of influential thinkers like Martin Heidegger, Andrew Feenberg, and Langdon Winner. We also explored the ethical responsibilities of scientists, particularly their involvement in investigating the potential misuse of their inventions, as shown by the enigmatic character of Vegapunk. This narrative has enhanced our understanding of complex socio-political dynamics, improving our comprehension of world politics.

"One Piece" explores complex socioeconomic issues, yet fundamentally, it remains an adventure story. Monkey D. Luffy navigates a realm teeming with pirates, marines, and revolutionaries, with the narrative mostly centered around his adventures and individual development. The manga's political stance is ultimately limited by its focus on character and plot development. Typically, the plot's requirements and the goal of keeping the reader engaged through comedy, action, and emotional impact are more important than directly critiquing society. Furthermore, "One Piece" exemplifies *shōnen* manga, a genre aimed explicitly at adolescent males as its primary audience. It must effectively achieve a delicate equilibrium between intricate components and easy comprehension. Considering these themes in the text may possess a different thoroughness and analytical precision typically observed in specialized academic or political debates. However, it does incorporate concepts such as injustice, the ramifications of unrestrained authority, and the moral intricacies associated with revolution.

This decrease in complexity might restrict the subtlety of the communicated social signals. An important issue arises when one excessively interprets the findings of this type of research. Researchers may ascribe narrative components with interpretations that go beyond or even contradict the author's intentions since they possess their own ideological frameworks and analytical tools.

When examining a graphically and narratively intricate medium like manga, the distinction between perceptual analysis and theoretical frameworks can become indistinct. The cultural influence on the evolution of manga also contributes to this problem. Eiichiro Oda's Japanese heritage is the primary determinant of his global success. The author's perspective on foreign concerns in "One Piece" is influenced by his worldview, which is fashioned by post-war Japan's distinctive political, social, and historical dynamics. As a result, readers from different

cultural backgrounds may misinterpret or ignore specific topic components, while they may influence those with similar cultural roots. This was elucidated in the "Wano" narrative, where some elements rooted in traditional Japanese culture may have posed challenges for readers from different nations to grasp fully. While this allows for a more in-depth analysis, the focus on "One Piece" alone regrettably restricts the generalizability of our findings to the manga subgenre. Oda's unconventional storytelling style and length and the series' other distinctive elements set it apart from the competition. These qualities, although increasing its global appeal, also limit its capacity to be recognized as a complete portrayal of manga.

Notwithstanding these limitations, our data demonstrates the manga's significant and underappreciated impact on global public opinion. By avoiding oversimplification and skillfully distilling complex sociopolitical themes into visually captivating storylines, series like "One Piece" provide younger readers with an accessible platform to engage critically with real-world issues.

Readers may explore delicate topics like racism, economic exploitation, and the abuse of power thanks to the manga's thorough creation of a fictitious environment. The efforts made by the characters to transcend these pressures often reflect situations that exist in the real world today. Millions of people's thoughts are shaped by the ideas, values, and points of view that are deeply embedded in the manga, which has the power to alter how they perceive the world profoundly.

Rather than devaluing this study, the limitations identified here illuminate exciting directions for further investigation. A more comprehensive understanding of the varied effects of this medium on public opinion would be provided by a thorough comparative analysis of many manga series across various genres (such as seinen and josei) and target demographics. By broadening the focus in this manner, it would be easier to distinguish between the effects unique to specific genres and the essential characteristics of manga as a communication medium. As the next crucial step, interdisciplinary collaboration is becoming increasingly significant. Through collaboration among media scholars, psychologists, sociologists, and political scientists, researchers can better understand how fictional narratives impact real-world views and actions. It would be highly beneficial to carry out longitudinal studies that track readers' shifting opinions, engagement in local issues, and political engagement over extended periods.

Thoroughly investigating the instructional capabilities of manga requires the performance of well-planned pilot projects. Popular manga series may be used to assess how well this medium fosters critical thinking skills by including them in educational courses as topics for

literary analysis and conversation starters about current affairs. These events may also aid in bridging the gap between students' recreational interests and formal academic instruction, increasing youth engagement in sociopolitical issues.

Research possibilities abound in the subject of global fandom studies. By examining how readers from various cultural backgrounds understand, analyze, and adapt manga's themes to their local circumstances, researchers might get insight into the processes of transcultural meaning-making. Internet discussion boards, social media sites, and fan conventions are excellent resources for learning how manga contributes to developing global imagined communities united by shared themes and narratives.

Assessing manga's influence on opinion leaders and politicians is an intriguing and challenging technique, particularly in Japan, where the medium is highly respected. To fully understand the influence of popular culture on foreign affairs and governance, an in-depth examination of how manga has shaped legislative agendas, public policy, and diplomatic relations is essential.

The phenomenon known as "scanlation," or the internet sharing of fan-translated comics, is worth researching since it plays a significant part in the global manga movement. How do these grassroots efforts, which sometimes occur in legally grey areas, affect how manga is distributed and the ideas it conveys? To what extent can translation variations and the inclusion of cultural context affect readers' comprehension of sociopolitical themes? Analyzing this crucial yet unproven distribution mechanism might provide insightful information on how ideas spread naturally at the grassroots level across linguistic and cultural divides.

The ethical implications of manga's widespread influence are essential for future consideration. After their works are read by people worldwide and impact young people's brains, what duty do authors, publishers, and readers have? How can the manga industry successfully navigate the fine line between maintaining creative freedom and upholding social responsibility? To help anybody traversing these complex moral terrains, an all-encompassing ethical framework for evaluating the societal effect of manga may be developed. Comparative media studies offer a different angle for research. We may highlight manga's unique qualities and place it within the larger framework of global narrative by contrasting its influence with other storytelling mediums like Western comics, literature, film, and interactive media like video games. This method highlights how diverse media outlets are connected in influencing public opinion, leading to a thorough understanding of how multiple narrative experiences affect people's viewpoints as a whole.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Having arrived at the day of my graduation, I would like to thank all the people who helped me during my university journey.

I thank, and above all dedicate not only this thesis but these last two years, to my grandfather. I had hoped he would see me with the laurel wreath on my head, but fate decided differently. He has been and will remain forever the support of my life and my rock to lean on, without him, I would not have been able to get here.

I thank my parents and my grandmother, for having supported and endured me in these last, very long years. Their closeness and affection have been the driving force that allowed me to live this wonderful university experience. There was not a day when I was not proud to be their daughter and granddaughter. They are the second people to whom I dedicate my journey and my life, hoping to continue to make them proud of me.

I thank Professor Antonio Zotti, for being my thesis advisor, advising and correcting me in the drafting of the thesis.

I thank Giulia Federici, Morena Fabozzi and Denise Montanari, the best kind of friends one could wish for. Pillars of my last years, they consoled me, advised me and supported me in every possible way. I will also like to thank the new friends that I have made on the way, with them, laughing is always assured.

The only thing I can say is thank you.

REFERENCES

ARTICLES

- Almary, Michelle. (2018) “The Necessity For A Permanent Disincentive: Examining The Use Of Chemical Weapons With A Focus On Syria’s Civil War.” *Southwestern Law School*, vol. 24, pp. 301–35.
- Alston, Philip (2006) “Reconceiving the UN Human Rights Regime: Challenges Confronting the New UN Human Rights Council.” *SSRN Electronic Journal*, pp. 1-39
- Baehr, Peter (2007) “The ‘Masses’ in Hannah Arendt’s Theory of Totalitarianism.” *The Good Society*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. 12–18.
- Biddle, Stephen, and Ivan Oelrich (2016) “Future Warfare in the Western Pacific: Chinese Antiaccess/Area Denial, U.S. AirSea Battle, and Command of the Commons in East Asia.” *International Security*, vol. 41, no. 1, pp. 7–48.
- Binder, Guyora (1999) “Cultural Relativism and Cultural Imperialism in Human Rights Law.” *Buffalo Human Rights Law Review*, vol. 5, no. 5, pp. 211–21
- Blumenson, Eric D (2014) “Four Challenges Confronting the Concept of Universal Human Rights.” *SSRN Electronic Journal*, pp. 1-27
- Born, Christopher (2010). “ In the Footsteps of the Master: Confucian Values in Anime and Manga”, *ASIANetwork Exchange A Journal for Asian Studies in the Liberal Arts*, pp. 39-53
- Bourban, Michel, and Johan Rochel. (2020) “Synergies in Innovation: Lessons Learnt From Innovation Ethics for Responsible Innovation.” *Philosophy & Technology*, vol. 34, no. 2, pp. 373–94.
- Bowen, Wyn, et al. (2020) “The Obama Administration and Syrian Chemical Weapons: Deterrence, Compellence, and the Limits of the ‘Resolve Plus Bombs’ Formula.” *Security Studies*, vol. 29, no. 5, pp. 797–831.
- Broughel, James, and Adam D. Thierer (2019) “Technological Innovation and Economic Growth: A Brief Report on the Evidence.” *Social Science Research Network*, pp.1-30
- Cheng Chua Karl Uy (2015). “Boy meets world: the worldview of Shōnen kurabu in the 1930s”, *Japan Forum* pp. 1-27
- Cranston, Maurice (1983) “Are There Any Human Rights?” *Daedalus*, vol. 112, no. 4, pp. 1–17.
- Davis, Joseph E. (2008) “Culture and Relativism.” *Society*, vol. 45, no. 3, Apr. 2008, pp. 270–76.

- Dawson, Kara, and Walter Heinecke. (2004) “Conditions, Processes and Consequences of Technology Use: A Case Study.” *Technology, Pedagogy and Education*, vol. 13, no. 1, pp. 61–81.
- Diaconu, Mihaela (2011) “Technological Innovation: Concept, Process, Typology and Implications in the Economy.” *Theoretical and Applied Economics*, Vol. 18, No. 10, pp. 127-144
- Doernberg, Donald L. (1985) “‘We The People’: John Locke, Collective Constitutional Rights, and Standing to Challenge Government Action.” *California Law Review*, vol. 73, no. 1, p. 52.
- Donnelly, Jack. (1984) “Cultural Relativism and Universal Human Rights.” *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 6, no. 4, p. 400.
- Ekzayez, Abdulkarim, et al. (2019) “Chemical Weapons and Public Health: Assessing Impact and Responses.” *Journal of Public Health*, vol. 42, no. 3, pp. e334–42.
- Er Lam, Pang. (2007) “Japan's Quest for "Soft Power": Attraction and Limitation” *East Asia*, Vol. 24, pp. 349-363
- Evans, Brad. (2009) “Revolution without Violence.” *Peace Review*, 21 (1): 85–94
- Fashina, Oladipo (1989) “Frantz Fanon and the Ethical Justification of Anti-Colonial Violence.” *Social Theory and Practice*, vol. 15, no. 2, pp. 179–212.
- Feenberg, Andrew. (1992) “Subversive Rationalization: Technology, Power, and Democracy1.” *Inquiry*, vol. 35, no. 3–4, pp. 301–22.
- Feenberg, Andrew. (1996) “Marcuse or Habermas: Two Critiques of Technology1.” *Inquiry*, vol. 39, no. 1, pp. 45–70.
- Feffer, Michael, et al. (2023) “The AI Incident Database as an Educational Tool to Raise Awareness of AI Harms: A Classroom Exploration of Efficacy, Limitations, and Future Improvements”, EEAMO, pp. 1-11
- Fernandez-Cornejo, J. (1988) “Environmental and Economic Consequences of Technology Adoption: IPM in Viticulture.” *Agricultural Economics*, vol. 18, no. 2, , pp. 145–55.
- Gertz, Nurith. (1986) “Social Myths in Literary and Political Texts.” *Poetics Today*, vol. 7, no. 4, pp. 621–39
- Gherhes, Cristian, et al. (2023) “Technological Trajectories as an Outcome of the Structure-agency Interplay at the National Level: Insights From Emerging Varieties of AI.” *World Development*, vol. 168, p. 1-15. ,
- Gibson, Stephen (2018). “Obedience Without Orders: Expanding Social Psychology’s Conception of ‘Obedience.’” *British Journal of Social Psychology*, vol. 58, no. 1, pp. 1–39.

- Go'zal Ikhtiyorovna, Karimova. (2023) "Embracing Technological Changes for a Better Future." *AMERICAN Journal of Language, Literacy and Learning in STEM Education*, pp. 339-344
- Godin, Benoît. (2008) "In The Shadow of Schumpeter: W. Rupert Maclaurin and the Study of Technological Innovation." *Minerva*, vol. 46, no. 3, pp. 343–60.
- Goldstone, Jack A (1980) "Theories of Revolution: The Third Generation." *World Politics*, vol. 32, no. 3, pp. 425–53.
- Good, Colleen (2010) "Human Rights and Relativism." *Macalester Journal of Philosophy*., vol. 19, no. 1, pp. 27–52.
- Grant, Ruth W., and Robert O. Keohane (2005) "Accountability and Abuses of Power in World Politics." *American Political Science Review*, vol. 99, no. 1, pp. 29–43.
- Greenwood, Christopher (1992) "New World Order or Old? The Invasion of Kuwait and the Rule of Law." *the Modern Law Review*, vol. 55, no. 2, pp. 153–78
- Hahn, Hans Peter (2023) "On The Changeful History of Franz Boas's Concept of Cultural Relativism." *EAZ – Ethnographisch-Archaeologische Zeitschrift*, vol. 57, no. 1, pp. 1-12
- Haines, David, and S. C. Fox. (2014) "Acute and Long-Term Impact of Chemical Weapons: Lessons From the Iran-Iraq War." *Forensic Science Review*, vol. 26, no. 2, pp. 97–114.
- Hanks, J. Craig, and Emily Kay Hanks. (2015) "From Technological Autonomy to Technological Bluff: Jacques Ellul and Our Technological Condition." *Human Affairs*, vol. 25, no. 4, pp. 460–70.
- Harigel, Gert. (2001) "Chemical and Biological Weapons: Use in Warfare, Impact on Society and Environment ." *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace Address*, pp. 1–25.
- Heberer, Thomas (2009) "The 'Great Proletarian Cultural Revolution': China's Modern Trauma." *Journal of Modern Chinese History*, vol. 3, no. 2, pp. 165–81.
- Hengen Fox, Nicholar (2012). "A Habermasian Literary Criticism", *New Literary History*, No. 2, Vol. 43, pp. 235-254
- Hersman, Rebecca K. C., and William Pittinos. (2018) "Understanding Restraint." *Restoring Restraint: Enforcing Accountability for Users of Chemical Weapons*, pp. 4–18.
- Hirohito, Miyamoto, and Jennifer Prough (2002) "The Formation of an Impure Genre—On the Origins of 'Manga.'" *Review of Japanese Culture and Society*, vol. 14, pp. 39–48
- Hoare, Marko Attila (2014)"Towards an Explanation for the Bosnian Genocide of 1992–1995." *Studies in Ethnicity and Nationalism*, vol. 14, no. 3, pp. 516–32
- Hospers, Gert-Jan. (2005) "Joseph Schumpeter and His Legacy in Innovation Studies." *Knowledge, Technology & Policy*, vol. 18, no. 3, pp. 20–37.

- Ilchmann, Kai, and James Revill. (2013) "Chemical and Biological Weapons in the 'New Wars.'" *Science and Engineering Ethics*, vol. 20, no. 3, pp. 753–67.
- Irr, Caren (2011) "Postmodernism in Reverse: American National Allegories and the 21st-Century Political Novel." *Twentieth Century Literature*, vol. 57, no. 3/4, pp. 516–38.
- Joseph, Robert, and John Reichart. (1999) "Deterrence and Defense in a Nuclear, Biological, and Chemical Environmen." *Center for Counterproliferation Research National Defense University*, pp. 1-45
- Kalyvas, Stathis N., and Nicholas Sambanis (2005) "Bosnia's Civil War: Origins and Violence Dynamics." *Understanding Civil War: Evidence and Analysis*, pp. 191–230.
- Kavanagh, Camino. (2019) "New Tech, New Threats, and New Governance Challenges: An Opportunity to Craft Smarter Responses?" *Carnegie Endowment for International Peace*, pp. 1–58.
- Keerthika, S. (2018). "Literature and Society: How Literature reflects society". *International Journal of Science, Engineering and Management (IJSEM)*, Issue 4, Vol. 3, pp. 471-372
- Lebeda, Frank J. (1997) "Deterrence of Biological and Chemical Warfare: A Review of Policy Options." *Military Medicine*, vol. 162, no. 3, pp. 156–61.
- Lerner, Josh and Jean Tirole (2005) "The Economics of Technology Sharing: Open Source and Beyond." *The Journal of Economic Perspectives*, vol. 19, no. 2, pp. 99–120
- Makusha, Michaela (2021) "Frantz Fanon: The Revolutionary Who Wrote a Revolution." *Durham University History in Politics Journal*, pp. 64–67.
- Malcolm, Dando. (2003) "The Danger to the Chemical Weapons Convention From Incapacitating Chemicals." *University of Bradford*, vol. 4, pp. 1–22
- Maley, William (2002) "Twelve Theses on the Impact of Humanitarian Intervention." *Security Dialogue*, vol. 33, no. 3, pp. 265–78.
- Mathew, Raisun. (2019) "Authoritarian Censorship: A Psycho-Historical Study Based On Brecht's 'The Burning Of The Books.'" *Literary Endeavour*, 2019, pp. 534–37.
- Mathews, S. J. (2016) " Study of Manga, Animation and Anime as an Art Form" *International Journal on Recent and Innovation Trends in Computing and Communication*, No. 6, Vol. 4, PP. 494-497
- Mattox, John Mark. (2020)"The Moral Status of Chemical Weapons: Arguments From World War I." *National Defense University Press*, pp. 185–98.
- Mckevitt, Andrew C. (2010) "'You Are Not Alone!': Anime and the Globalizing of America." *Diplomatic History*, vol. 34, no. 5, 2010, pp. 893–921

- Mende, Janne (2019) “Are Human Rights western—And Why Does It Matter? A Perspective From International Political Theory.” *Journal of International Political Theory*, vol. 17, no. 1, pp. 38–57
- Menkel-Meadow, Carrie (2007) “Restorative Justice: What Is It and Does It Work?” *Annual Review of Law and Social Science*, vol. 3, no. 1, pp. 161–87
- Messenger, David A (2021) “Local Government, Passive Defense and Aerial Bombardment in Barcelona During the Spanish Civil War, 1936–9.” *Journal of Contemporary History*, vol. 56, no. 4, pp. 1084–101
- Milgram, Stanley (1965) “Some Conditions of Obedience and Disobedience to Authority.” *Human Relations*, vol. 18, no. 1, pp. 57–76.
- Moghadam, Val (1989) “One revolution or two? The Iranian Revolution and the Islamic Republic .” *Socialist Register*, pp. 74–101.
- Mohamed, Maha Mohamed Alsebai, et al. (2022) “Causality between Technological Innovation and Economic Growth: Evidence from the Economies of Developing Countries.” *Sustainability*, vol. 14, no. 6, p. 1-39
- Morkevicius, Valerie (2013) “Why We Need a Just Rebellion Theory.” *Ethics & International Affairs*, vol. 27, no. 4, pp. 401–11.
- Müller, Simone. (2016) “*Cut holes and sink 'em*”: *chemical weapons disposal and cold war history as a history of risk*. no. 1, pp. 263–84.
- Nguyen, Tuan H. (2022) “Countering the Future Chemical Weapons Threat.” *Science*, vol. 376, no. 6591, pp. 355–57.
- Oda, Eiichiro (1997-today) “One Piece”, *Weekly Shounen Jump*, Chapter 1-ongoing
- Passini, Stefano, and Davide Morselli (2009) “Authority Relationships Between Obedience and Disobedience.” *New Ideas in Psychology*, vol. 27, no. 1, pp. 96–106.
- Patrick, Kirsten. (2013)“Lest We Forget: Why the Use of Chemical Weapons Must Not Go Unchallenged.” *Editorial*, p. 1299.
- Patton, Paul (1989)“Taylor and Foucault on Power and Freedom.” *Political Studies*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 276.
- Pearson, Graham S., and Peter Mahaffy. (2006) “Education, Outreach, and Codes of Conduct to Further the Norms and Obligations of the Chemical Weapons Convention (IUPAC Technical Report).” *Pure and Applied Chemistry*, vol. 78, no. 11, pp. 2169–92.
- Pérez, Carlota. (2001) “Technological Change and Opportunities for Development as a Moving Target.” *CEPAL Review*, no. 75, pp. 109–30.

- Pogge, Thomas (2000) "The International Significance of Human Rights." *The Journal of Ethics*, vol. 4, no. 1/2, pp. 45–69.
- Pye, Lucian W (1986) "Reassessing the Cultural Revolution." *The China Quarterly*, no. 108, pp. 597–612.
- Rakos, Richard F (1993) "Propaganda as Stimulus Control: The Case of the Iraqi Invasion of Kuwait." *Behavior and Social Issues*, vol. 3, no. 1–2, pp. 35–62.
- Rancière, Jacques (2004) "The Politics of Literature." *SubStance*, vol. 33, no. 1, 2004, pp. 10–24
- Ravenna, Marcella (2011) "Quando Individui Ordinari Compiono Atti 'Mostruosi'. Relazioni Tra Banalità Del Male, Obbedienza All'autorità, Realizzazione Della Shoah." *Rivista Internazionale Di Filosofia E Psicologia*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 96–113.
- Rawlins, M. D. (1989) "Chemical Weapons Easy to Make, Hard to Destroy." *BMJ*, vol. 298, pp. 767–68.
- Roberts, Brad. (1986) "Chemical Weapons: A Policy Overview." *Issues in Science and Technology*, vol. 2, no. 3, pp. 102–14.
- Robinson, J. P. Perry. (2008) "Difficulties Facing the Chemical Weapons Convention." *International Affairs*, vol. 84, no. 2, pp. 223–39.
- Sagan, Scott. (2000) "The Commitment Trap." *International Security*, vol. 24, no. 4, pp. 85–115.
- Sar, Vichana. (2023) «A Comprehensive Review on Literature: Hard Power, Soft Power, and Smart Power» *KDI School of Public Policy and Management*, pp. 1-49
- Schmitt, C. B., Skinner, Quentin, Kessler, Eckhard, Krays, Jill (1991) *The Cambridge History of Renaissance Philosophy*, Cambridge University Press, pp. 45-46
- Schraube, Ernst. (2021) "Langdon Winner's Theory of Technological Politics: Rethinking Science and Technology for Future Society." *Engaging Science, Technology, and Society*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 113–17.
- Sell, Cathy (2011) "Manga Translation and Interculture." *Mechademia*, vol. 6, pp. 93–108.
- Shea, Dana. (2013) "Chemical Weapons: A Summary Report of Characteristics and Effects ." *Congress Research Service*, pp. 1–15.
- Shestack, Jerome J (1998) "The Philosophic Foundations of Human Rights." *Human Rights Quarterly*, vol. 20, no. 2, pp. 201–34.
- Shing Bun Chan, Benedict (2011) "An East And West Debate On Human Rights." *Faculty of the Graduate School of the University of Maryland*, pp. 1–213.

- Smith, Gregory Bruce. (1991) "Heidegger, Technology and Postmodernity." *The Social Science Journal*, vol. 28, no. 3, pp. 369–89.
- Taras, Raymond (2013) "Why We Need the Novel: Understanding World Politics Through Literature." *The Fletcher Forum of World Affairs*, vol. 37, no. 2, pp. 185–95.
- Thomson, Iain. (2000) "From the Question Concerning Technology to the Quest for a Democratic Technology: Heidegger, Marcuse, Feenberg." *Inquiry*, vol. 43, no. 2, pp. 203–15.
- Ting, Grace En-Yi (2018) "The Desire and Disgust of Sweets: Consuming Femininities through *Shōjo* Manga." *U.S.-Japan Women's Journal*, no. 54, pp. 52–74.
- Tomonaga, Masao (2019) "The Atomic Bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki: A Summary of the Human Consequences, 1945-2018, and Lessons for Homo Sapiens to End the Nuclear Weapon Age." *Journal for Peace and Nuclear Disarmament*, vol. 2, no. 2, pp. 491–517
- Tucker, Jonathan. (2009) "The Future of Chemical Weapons." *The New Atlantis*, pp. 1–27.
- Turriziani, Jenifer V. (2014), "Designer Babies: The Need for Regulation on the Quest For Perfection". *Law School Student Scholarship*, pp. 1-33
- United Nations. "Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 29
- Vakili-Zad, Cyrus (1990) "Organization, Leadership and Revolution: Religiously-Oriented Opposition in the Iranian Revolution of 1978-1979 ." *Conflict Quarterly* , pp. 1–21.
- Van Dijk, Teun A. (2006) "Discourse and Manipulation." *Discourse & Society*, vol. 17, no. 3, pp. 359–83
- Veak, Tyler. (2000) "Whose Technology? Whose Modernity? Questioning Feenberg's Questioning Technology." *Science, Technology, & Human Values*, vol. 25, no. 2, pp. 226–37.
- Vogel, Frederick J. (1997) "The Chemical Weapons Convention: Strategic Implications for the United States." *Monographs*, pp. 1–35.
- Weber, Thomas (2003) "Nonviolence Is Who? Gene Sharp and Gandhi." *Peace and Change/Peace & Change*, vol. 28, no. 2, pp. 250–70.
- Weinert, Matthew (2012) "Hannah Arendt in a Global Age: Political Evil and International Theory ." *Human Rights & Human Welfare*, vol. 12, no. 1, pp. 1–14
- Winner, Langdon (1980) "Do Artifacts Have Politics?" *Daedalus*, vol. 109, no. 1, pp. 121–36.
- Winner, Langdon. (2021) "The Democratic Shaping of Technology: Its Rise, Fall and Possible Rebirth." *Engaging Science, Technology, and Society*, vol. 7, no. 1, pp. 95–103.
- Woolsey, T. S. (1986)"The Consequences of Cuban Belligerency." *The Yale Law Journal*, vol. 5, no. 4, pp. 182–86.

- Xin Li, Chong Alex Wang (2017) "The technology and economic determinants of cryptocurrency exchange rates: The case of Bitcoin." *Decision Support Systems*, vol. 95, pp. 49–60.
- Yagami, Kazuo (2009) "Bombing Hiroshima and Nagasaki: Gar Alperovitz and His Critics." *Southeast Review of Asian Studies*, vol. 31, pp. 301–07.
- Yildirimtürk Bayraktar, Fetine (2021) "Ethnic Conflict Movements: The Case Study Of Bosnia And Herzegovina." *Anadolu Ve Balkan Araştırmaları Dergisi*, vol. 4, no. 7, pp. 113–32.
- Zagorin, Perez (1973) "Theories of Revolution in Contemporary Historiography." *Political Science Quarterly*, vol. 88, no. 1, pp. 23–52.
- Zanders, Jean Pascal, and Elisabeth M. French. (1999) "Article XI of the Chemical Weapons Convention: Between Irrelevance and Indispensability." *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 20, no. 1, pp. 56–85.
- Zanders, Jean Pascal. (1993) "Chemical-Weapons Deproliferation And The Chemical-Weapons Convention." *Revue Belge De Droit International*, pp. 264–79.
- Zanders, Jean Pascal. (1995) "Towards Understanding Chemical Warfare Weapons Proliferation." *Contemporary Security Policy*, vol. 16, no. 1, pp. 84–110.

LITERARY RESOURCES

- Arendt, Hannah (1963) *La banalità del male: Eichmann a Gerusalemme*, The New Yorker, 1963, pp. 1-30
- Arendt, Hannah (1973) *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. Harcourts Brace, pp. 290-302
- Brunon-Ernst, Anne (2016) *Beyond Foucault*. Routledge, pp. 1-13
- Chesbrough, Henry, et al. (2008) *Open Innovation*. OUP Oxford, pp. 1-80
- Deudney, Daniel. (1983) *Whole Earth Security: A Geopolitics of Peace*, Worldwatch Institute. pp. 80
- Gustavsson, Sverker, et al. (2009) *The Illusion of Accountability in the European Union*, Routledge, Chapter 2
- Holder, Cindy, and David Reidy (2013) *Human Rights*. Cambridge UP, Chapter 3, pp. 59-75
- Nye, David E. (1996) *American Technological Sublime*, MIT Press, pp. 1-17
- Nye, Joseph (1991) *Bound To Lead: The Changing Nature Of American Power*, Basic Books, Chapter 1
- Santosuosso, Amedeo, et al. (2015) *The Challenge Of Innovation In Law*. 1st ed., Pavia UP, pp. 19-33

Speller, John R. W (2011) "Literature and Cultural Politics." *Bourdieu and Literature*, 1st ed., pp. 131–52.

Uzgalis , William (2001) "John Locke." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Psychology*, 2001, pp. 1–33.

ONLINE SOURCES

Anime News Network (2018) "*Top-Selling Manga in Japan by Series: 2018*" URL: <https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/news/2018-11-29/top-selling-manga-in-japan-by-series-2018/140163>

Belsunces, Andreu. (2018). *The Politics of Technology-Fiction*, URL: <https://lab.cccb.org/en/the-policies-of-technological-fiction/>

Bhadra, Subhashish. (2023) *How colonial laws of censorship are still used by governments for moral policing*. URL: <https://scroll.in/reel/1048235/how-colonial-laws-of-censorship-are-still-used-by-governments-for-moral-policing>

Cocchini, Giovanni (2019) *One Piece ha appena sorpassato Il Signore degli Anelli come incasso complessivo*, URL: <https://anime.everyeye.it/notizie/one-piece-appena-sorpassato-il-signore-anelli-incasso-complessivo-370545.html>

Daleziou, Madalena. (2023) *What Is Seinen Anime? Difference Between Shounen & Seinen Explained* URL: <https://epicstream.com/article/what-is-the-difference-between-shounen-and-seinen-anime-and-how-can-you-tell-between-them-full-details-and-explanation>

Day, Jonathan (2021) *What Is Self-Censorship? How Does It Kill Media Freedom?*, URL: <https://www.liberties.eu/en/stories/self-censorship/43569>

Diaz, Ana (2023) *Everything you need to know about One Piece before watching the Netflix show* URL: <https://www.polygon.com/entertainment/23845804/one-piece-explained-anime-manga-netflix-live-action>

Donohoo, Timothy. (2021) *Josei Is Anime & Manga's Most Underrated Demographic* URL: <https://www.cbr.com/josei-anime-manga-underrated/>

Getz, Arlene. (2022) *Number of jailed journalists spikes to new global record*, URL: <https://cpj.org/reports/2022/12/number-of-jailed-journalists-spikes-to-new-global-record/>

Hallmark, Kyle (2016) *One Piece manga enters "Vs Four Emperors Arc"*, URL: [animenewsnetwork.com](https://www.animenewsnetwork.com)

Immortallium (2020) *What is Kodomo Manga and Why You Should Know About It* URL: <https://immortalliumblog.com/what-is-kodomo-manga-and-why-you-should-know-about-it/>

Lindo, Héctor (2021) “*The Perils of Unchecked Power.*” URL: elfaro.net/en/202103/columns/25336/the-perils-of-unchecked-power.

Londonip (2014) *20 Groundbreaking Inventions from last 100 years* URL: <https://www.londonip.co.uk/20-groundbreaking-inventions-from-the-last-100-years/>

Rahbar, Victoria. (2022) *Familiarizing Oneself with Manga Censorship* URL: <https://www.oif.ala.org/familiarizing-oneself-with-manga-censorship/>

SKYTG24. (2024) *Cento Giorni Con Il Chip Neuralink per Il Paziente Zero, Elon Musk: ‘Un Successo.’* URL: tg24.sky.it/tecnologia/2024/05/09/elon-musk-chip-neuralink-paziente-zero.

Sparks, R. (2023) *From Authoritarian Threats to Funding Disparities: Key Challenges in Global Science* URL: <https://council.science/current/blog/key-challenges-in-global-science/>

Tarun (2023) *5 Hollywood Celebrities Including Dua Lipa and Travis Scott Who Are Huge Fans of One Piece* URL: <https://fandomwire.com/5-hollywood-celebrities-including-dua-lipa-and-travis-scott-who-are-huge-fans-of-one-piece/>

United Nations. (2000) "*Universal Declaration of Human Rights.*" URL: www.un.org/en/about-us/universal-declaration-of-human-rights.

Vaver, A. (2018) *Use of Science and Technology in Wars* URL: <https://web.colby.edu/st112a-fall18/2018/10/24/use-of-science-and-technology-in-wars/>

Wallace, Taynne. (2023) *10 Unusual Manga Genres That Are Not That Common In Anime* URL: <https://gamerant.com/unusual-manga-genres-not-common-anime/#anthropomorphic-romance>