International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

Japanese Sociocultural Dynamics in One Piece Wano Kuni Arc: A Visual and Narrative Analysis

Imam Santoso

Master of Design Program Institut Desain and Bisnis Bali

Corresponding author : Mamsky888@gmail.com

Abstract

The Wano Kuni Arc in One Piece represents a significant cultural phenomenon where Japanese feudal history is reconstructed within the framework of global popular culture. This study aims to analyze the visual and narrative representation of Japanese sociocultural dynamics in the Wano Arc and examine how the three-act structure effectively conveys these cultural messages. Employing a qualitative descriptive approach with inductive content analysis (Mayring model), this research scrutinizes episodes 890–1085. The analysis is theoretically grounded in Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory, Robertson's Glocalization, Hjarvard's Mediatization, and Hall's Representation Theory. The findings reveal that Wano Kuni functions as a "glocal" ecosystem where traditional aesthetics (Ukiyo-e, Kabuki) are hybridized with global shonen tropes (pirate rebellion). The narrative progression—from romanticizing culture in the Setup to exposing social repression in the Confrontation, and culminating in ideological liberation via the "Rubber Hose" animation style in the Resolution demonstrates anime's capacity as a medium of counter-hegemony. This study concludes that the Wano Arc serves as a critical discourse on authoritarianism and cultural identity, negotiating local values for global consumption.

Keywords: Anime, Glocalization, One Piece, Sociocultural Representation, Visual Narrative.

INTRODUCTION

Film and animation have evolved beyond mere entertainment into potent visual communication media capable of disseminating cultural values and educational content. As stated by Cangara (2011), mass media plays a pivotal role in shaping social reality and cultural transmission. In the landscape of cultural globalization, Japanese anime has emerged as a significant "soft power," carrying distinct Japanese cultural values to

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

international audiences. Scholars like MacWilliams (2008) argue that anime is a key component of contemporary Japanese visual culture, while Hu (2010) emphasizes its role in representing socio-political dynamics and preserving traditional art heritage.

One of the most profound representations of this cultural dynamic is observed in the *Wano Kuni Arc* of the serial *One Piece*. Unlike previous arcs, Wano Kuni explicitly presents a setting deeply rooted in the Edo period of Japan, featuring political isolation policies (*Sakoku*), feudal hierarchy, and distinct *Ukiyo-e* visual aesthetics. However, the Wano Arc is not a static historical replication. It represents a "glocal" phenomenon a term coined by Roland Robertson (1995) to describe the simultaneity of universalizing and particularizing tendencies. The anime illustrates a dialectical tension between tradition (Samurai codes, Bushido) and modernity (industrialization, piracy), embedded with social critiques on class inequality and ecological degradation.

Despite the global popularity of *One Piece*, existing academic literature has predominantly focused on linguistic aspects, character heroism, or general narrative structures. There is a noticeable gap in research that specifically dissects how visual aesthetics and narrative structures in anime function as critical sociocultural discourse, particularly through the lens of *Visual Communication Design*. Previous studies have yet to comprehensively analyze how the specific visual shift in animation styles such as the transition from traditional anime styles to western cartoon aesthetics in the climax of Wano serves as an ideological tool.

This study aims to bridge this gap by analyzing the visual and narrative representation of Japanese sociocultural dynamics in the *Wano Arc*. The urgency of this research lies in understanding anime not merely as a spectacle, but as a complex "cultural text" that shapes global perceptions of Japanese identity. By integrating Vygotsky's sociocultural theory with visual-narrative analysis, this research offers a novel perspective on how anime mediates local values for a global market, specifically through the strategic use of the Three-Act Structure.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach using content analysis. The interpretative paradigm is adopted to decode the symbolic and ideological meanings embedded within the visual text.

Data Source The primary data source is the *One Piece* anime series, specifically the *Wano Kuni Arc* (Episodes 890–1085). Samples were selected using a purposive sampling technique, focusing on key scenes that represent critical plot points within the Three-Act Structure: the visualization of the Flower Capital (Setup), the poverty of Ebisu Town (Confrontation), and the Raid on Onigashima (Resolution).

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

Data Analysis The analysis follows Philipp Mayring's *Inductive Category Development* model. The process involves three steps: (1) Coding visual elements (architecture, costume, expression) and narrative beats; (2) Categorizing these codes into thematic groups (e.g., "Cultural Romanticism," "Social Repression," "Visual Hybridity"); and (3) Synthesizing findings through theoretical lenses. The narrative structure is dissected using Syd Field's Three-Act paradigm to map the escalation of cultural conflict. Validity is ensured through triangulation with literature reviews and observation of visual consistency across episodes.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings based on the three-act structure and discusses them through four theoretical perspectives: Sociocultural Dynamics, Glocalization, Mediatization, and Politics of Representation.

Act / Narrative Structure	**Key Visual Elements**	**Theoretical Perspective**	**Sociocultural Interpretation**
Act I: Setup *(Introduction of Wano's Identity)*	• **Ukiyo-e Art Style:** The "Great Wave" imagery referencing Hokusai. • **Kabuki Elements:** *Joshikimaku* (stage curtains) and *Shamisen* music.	**Glocalization** *(Roland Robertson)*	Visuals function to romanticize feudal Japan for global consumption. It establishes a "hybrid identity" where local aesthetics are packaged within a global anime format.
Act II: Confrontation *(Revelation of Conflict)*	• **Visual Juxtaposition:** The golden/vibrant Flower Capital vs. the gray/desolate Ebisu Town.	**Sociocultural Dynamics** *(Lev Vygotsky)*	The repressive environment acts as a negative "cultural tool" shaping citizen psychology. The forced laughter

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

Act / Narrative Structure	Key Visual Elements	Theoretical Perspective	Sociocultural Interpretation
	• **SMILE Fruit Victims:** Emaciated citizens laughing uncontrollably.		represents the distortion of *Gaman* (endurance) culture into "Biopolitical" control.
Act III: Resolution *(Climax & Liberation)*	• **Gear 5 Transformation:** Radical shift to **Rubber Hose Animation** (Western cartoon style). • **Symbolic Destruction:** Luffy using Kaido as a jump rope; destruction of the Onigashima skull.	**Mediatization & Representation** *(Hjarvard & Hall)*	A visual act of **Counter-Hegemony**. The absurdity of Western cartoon aesthetics is used to deconstruct the seriousness of authoritarianism, symbolizing absolute freedom over rigid tradition.

1. Act I (Setup): Visualizing Cultural Romanticism and Regional Identity

In the Setup phase, the anime establishes Wano's identity through an exaggerated aesthetic of "Classic Japan." Visual analysis reveals a heavy reliance on *Ukiyo-e* (pictures of the floating world) art style. The opening scene, depicting the Straw Hat ship entering Wano's turbulent waters, visually quotes Hokusai's masterpiece, *The Great Wave off Kanagawa*. This intertextuality serves to anchor the viewer's perception of Wano as a land frozen in time, distinct from the rest of the *One Piece* world.

Furthermore, the narrative structure itself is framed as a traditional performance. The use of *Joshikimaku* (traditional stage curtains) and *Shamisen* music to open and

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

close acts mimics the *Jo-Ha-Kyu* structure of Kabuki theater. From the perspective of **Glocalization (Robertson)**, this is a strategic localization of global content.



Figure 1. Intertextuality between One Piece's animation (left) and Hokusai's Ukiyo-e art (right), demonstrating the glocalization of Japanese aesthetics.

Oda, the creator, appropriates highly particular local aesthetics (Feudal Japan) and packages them within the universal language of *shonen* anime. This creates a hybrid identity; for instance, the protagonist Luffy adopts a *Yukata* and carries a *Katana*, blending the global pirate archetype with the local samurai image. This visual hybridity makes the "exotic" culture of feudal Japan accessible and consuming for a global audience.

In the Wano Kuni Arc, which is deeply saturated with cultural isolation and Edo-period feudal aesthetics, Eiichiro Oda introduces a startling anachronistic element through the character of Sanji. The utilization of the Germa 66 *Raid Suit*, which transforms Sanji into the masked hero "O-Soba Mask," introduces a futuristic science-fiction aesthetic into a strictly traditional landscape. Visually, the design of this high-tech suit sharply contrasts with the *Yukata* garments and samurai armor that dominate Wano, creating a visual disruption that intentionally collides two distinct eras within a single narrative frame.



Figure 2. The visual anachronism of Sanji's O-Soba Mask, demonstrating the integration of futuristic science-fiction aesthetics into a feudal landscape.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Socioculturally, the manifestation of O-Soba Mask is a direct reference to the culture of *Tokusatsu* and *Super Sentai* (such as Kamen Rider), which are among Japan's most iconic modern pop culture exports. Sanji's transformation is complete with a *henshin* (transformation) sequence, armored costume, and stealth technology. The presence of these elements is not merely an action trope; it is a profound form of visual hybridity where Oda merges the Japan of the past (Samurai/Ninja) with the Japan of the future (Cyborg/Sentai) on the exact same stage.

Through the lens of Roland Robertson's theory of Glocalization, the appearance of O-Soba Mask represents a practice of cross-cultural commodification and localization. Oda negotiates cultural identity by injecting science-fiction elements into a fictitious historical narrative. For a global audience that might be less familiar with the intricacies of Japanese feudal history, they are provided with a universal pop culture "anchor" (*Tokusatsu*), demonstrating *One Piece*'s flexibility in synthesizing diverse cultural entities into a novel visual experience.

Ideologically, the physical clash between O-Soba Mask (cutting-edge technology) and Page One (prehistoric dinosaur power) represents the broader collision between modernity and traditional order. However, Sanji's decision to modify the name of his fascist-origin suit to "O-Soba Mask" (referencing a traditional, humble wandering noodle cart) acts as a form of representational resistance. It projects the discourse that global modernity and advanced technology must ultimately submit to and assimilate with local wisdom and humanistic values.

2. Act II (Confrontation): Visualizing Inequality and Social Repression

As the narrative shifts to the Confrontation phase, the visual tone changes drastically. The anime employs sharp visual juxtaposition to highlight social inequality. The vibrant, gold-laden visuals of Shogun Orochi’s Flower Capital are contrasted with the monochromatic, desolate visuals of the peripheral Ebisu Town and the industrial wasteland of Udon.

Analyzing this through **Vygotsky’s Sociocultural Theory**, the environment in Wano is not just a backdrop but an active agent shaping character psychology. The most harrowing visual evidence is the plight of Ebisu citizens who, due to starvation, consume defective SMILE fruits. This results in a biological manipulation where they are forced to laugh perpetually, even when grieving. This visual representation critiques the distortion of the Japanese cultural concept of *"Gaman"* (endurance/patience).

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR



Figure 3. Visual juxtaposition between the lavish Flower Capital (left) and the destitute Ebisu Town (right), representing social stratification and biopolitical control.

Here, the social environment functions as a negative "cultural tool," internalizing trauma and stripping citizens of their emotional autonomy. This "biopolitical" control visualizes how authoritarian regimes manipulate not just the labor but the very biological expressions of their subjects.

One of the most dramatic moments in Wano's narrative structure is the execution of Kozuki Oden in the Flower Capital. Oden is sentenced to death by being boiled alive in a cauldron of searing oil (the *Legendary Hour*), while simultaneously carrying his nine loyal retainers on a wooden plank for a full hour. This scene serves not only as the tragic climax of the Wano flashback but also as the moral foundation and catalyst for the future Samurai alliance's rebellion in Act III.



Figure 4. Visual intertextuality between Kozuki Oden's boiling execution and the historical folklore of Ishikawa Goemon.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

Through the analysis of representation, Oden's execution serves as a powerful visual intertextuality drawn from real-world Japanese history and folklore, specifically the execution of Ishikawa Goemon. Goemon was a 16th-century folk hero and noble bandit who was boiled alive (*Goemon-buro*) by the warlord Toyotomi Hideyoshi. Oda intelligently revitalizes the collective memory of the Japanese people regarding this folkloric hero and transplants it into the fictional character of Oden, giving the narrative an incredibly profound mythological weight.

From the perspective of Stuart Hall's Politics of Representation, the use of this historical reference functions to legitimize the narrative of resistance. Authoritarian regimes like Kaido and Orochi attempt to erase Oden's name from historical records. However, the heroic nature of his execution paradoxically carves an indelible collective memory in the minds of the commoners. The legend of "Boiled Oden" becomes a counter-narrative secretly passed down through generations, proving that the hegemony of the ruling class can be dismantled by the power of the people's historical memory.

Furthermore, this execution represents the symbolic transformation of *Bushido* (the way of the warrior). Oden's sacrifice to endure the excruciating torture alone for the safety of his followers is the ultimate visualization of *Giri* (moral duty). At this juncture, Oda transforms the cruelty of a feudal death penalty into an aesthetic performance of sacrifice, where death is not represented as a defeat, but as an eternal ideological victory that sows the seeds of Wano's eventual uprising.

3. Act III (Resolution): Resistance via Mediatization and Hybridity

The Resolution phase on Onigashima presents the ideological climax. Visually, Kaido's headquarters—a giant skull fused with a *Torii* gate symbolizes the corruption of sacred tradition by violent militarism. The *Torii*, usually marking sacred ground, is here consumed by symbols of death.

Resistance is visualized through a radical shift in animation style during Luffy's transformation into *Sun God Nika* (Gear 5). The animation abandons the rigid, detailed style of modern anime for **Rubber Hose Animation**, reminiscent of 1930s Western cartoons like *Tom and Jerry*. Luffy's eyes pop out, limbs rotate without joints, and enemies are turned into skipping ropes.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR



Figure 5. Luffy's Gear 5 transformation utilizing "Rubber Hose" animation style, serving as a visual metaphor for counter-hegemony against rigid feudal structures.

Through **Hjarvard's Mediatization theory**, this shift demonstrates "Media Logic" where aesthetic form dictates content. The absurdity of the cartoon style is used to deconstruct the seriousness of the villain's tyranny. Furthermore, viewed through **Stuart Hall's Politics of Representation**, this visual transformation is a profound act of *counter-hegemony*. If Kaido represents a rigid, oppressive, and serious feudal order, Luffy represents absolute freedom a freedom so potent it defies the laws of physics and anime conventions. By hybridizing the local myth (Sun God Nika) with a global visual language (Western Cartoons), the anime posits that true liberation transcends cultural borders and traditional constraints.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

In the Wano Kuni Arc, which is deeply saturated with cultural isolation and Edo-period feudal aesthetics, Eiichiro Oda introduces a startling anachronistic element through the character of Sanji. The utilization of the Germa 66 *Raid Suit*, which transforms Sanji into the masked hero "O-Soba Mask," introduces a futuristic science-fiction aesthetic into a strictly traditional landscape. Visually, the design of this high-tech suit sharply contrasts with the *Yukata* garments and samurai armor that dominate Wano, creating a visual disruption that intentionally collides two distinct eras within a single narrative frame.

The character of Kanjuro the "Evening Shower" is constructed as the most complex mole in this arc. Known for years as a fiercely loyal servant to Kozuki Oden, Kanjuro is revealed to be a sleeper agent planted by the rival Kurozumi clan. The complexity of his character lies in the fact that he does not betray for wealth, power, or political status, but rather for the "perfection of a role." He entirely empties his human identity to serve merely as an acting vessel for the script dictated by Orochi.



Figure 6. The visual integration of Kabuki theater aesthetics in Kanjuro's character design and performative betrayal.

This representation of betrayal is deeply intertwined with the structure and aesthetics of *Kabuki* theater. Kanjuro's visual appearance duplicates these exact elements; he wears the signature *Kumadori* makeup of Kabuki actors and sports thick hair resembling a theatrical wig (*Katsura*). When revealing his true identity, he strikes a *Mie* pose (a theatrical, static posture used to display the peak of emotion). Kanjuro treats the genuine suffering of Wano as a mere stage play, positioning himself as a fatalistic actor obligated to perform the "traitor" script until his literal death.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

From the perspective of Sociocultural theory, Kanjuro's distorted psychological condition is the direct product of systemic historical trauma. The historical mass persecution and slaughter of the Kurozumi clan by Wano society erased Kanjuro's empathy and core identity, forcing him to seek validation for his existence only through dying on a fictional stage. This represents how a feudal social system, built upon collective discrimination, will inevitably birth sociopathic monsters from its own womb.

Kanjuro also serves as the personification of manipulation and mediatization itself. Instead of a sword, his primary weapon is a "Brush" that manipulates visual reality, aligning perfectly with how the rulers deceive the populace through curated propaganda. Kanjuro's eventual death on the stage of Onigashima, concluding with his dialogue that he can finally "exit the stage," acts as a sharp critique of the dangers of identity performativity where an individual loses their ontological reality because they have lived entirely within the text of someone else's power.

During the climactic battle at Onigashima, the character Queen (one of Kaido's lead commanders) releases an extreme biological weapon known as the "Ice Oni" virus. This experimental contagion spreads rapidly through physical contact, turning its victims into mindless, brutal ice monsters before ultimately freezing them to death. The visualization of mass chaos in the castle hall, where allies and enemies blindly attack one another, stands as one of the most horrifying visual manifestations of the despair of war.



Figure 7. The visualization of the Ice Oni epidemic as a mediatized reflection of global pandemic anxieties and biopolitical exploitation.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

International Journal of Economics, Business and Innovation Research
https://e-journal.citakonsultindo.or.id/index.php/IJEBIR
E-ISSN : 2964-0865
IJEBIR

The chronological release of this biological weapon narrative chapter intersected directly with the peak tension of the real-world COVID-19 global pandemic. Through Stig Hjarvard's theory of Cultural Mediatization, the representation of the *Ice Oni* epidemic can be read as the anime's mediatization of humanity's collective anxiety regarding microscopic plagues. The anime reconstructs the abstract fear of an invisible real-world virus into visceral, visual monsters in a fictional world, allowing *shonen* entertainment to function as a coping mechanism for contemporary global trauma.

From the perspective of the Politics of Representation, Queen's decision to use his own lower-class troops (*Pleasures* and *Waiters*) as guinea pigs for the virus is a dark representation of capitalist "Biopolitics." Kaido's authoritarian regime views human bodies especially the working class not as valuable lives, but merely as biological instruments that can be sacrificed for the sake of genocidal efficiency. The spread of this virus visualizes how the proletarian social strata are consistently the most vulnerable victims in structural crises engineered by the elite.

The antithesis to this biopolitical horror is represented by Chopper, the protagonist crew's doctor. Chopper heroically reproduces the vaccine (antibodies) amidst the battlefield chaos and distributes it equally to both allies and enemy soldiers. This action carries a profound ideological discourse of *counter-hegemony*: that scientific and medical advancement must be founded on egalitarian humanism, not military hegemony. This successful mass healing triggers the enemy troops to defect from Queen, proving that medical solidarity and empathy are vastly superior in toppling an empire than weapons of mass destruction.



Figure 8. The hybrid representation of the Sun God Nika, merging Greek mythological archetypes with the aesthetic absurdity of Western cartoon animation.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

In terms of cultural analysis, the naming and role of the Sun God Nika indicate a high degree of syncretism with "Nike" from ancient Greek mythology—the winged Goddess of Victory who liberates humans from oppression. Oda brilliantly executes a hybridity of meaning; he borrows the archetype of the liberating hero from classical Western literature and weaves it directly into the heart of the Eastern (Wano) samurai liberation narrative. This elevates Nika from a mere fictional entity to a universal symbol of a new dawn for any colonized civilization.

From the lens of media aesthetic logic, the Gear 5 form rejects the conventions of modern animation that rely on serious, sharp, and intense power auras (*Sakuga*). Instead, the anime mutates, employing *Rubber Hose Animation* a classic 1930s Western comedy cartoon style *Looney Tunes*. Luffy's body contorts without the limits of anatomical joints, his eyes bulge out of their sockets (*eye-popping*), and he manipulates Kaido's giant dragon form as a literal jump rope. This is a form of aesthetic mediatization where absurdity and laughter are used to deconstruct the intensity of a "life-or-death battle."

According to Stuart Hall's theory of ideological representation, Gear 5 is an absolute manifesto of *counter-hegemony*. Kaido represents fascism, determinism, and an incredibly rigid social hierarchy. Conversely, Luffy's cartoon style represents an absolute freedom that refuses to submit to any rules whatsoever—including the laws of physics and the storytelling logic of the anime genre itself. This absurd transformation cements the synthesis that dogmatic tyranny cannot be destroyed by a greater authoritarian force; it can only be dismantled by wild imagination, joy, and the absolute freedom of expression.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to analyze the visual and narrative representation of Japanese sociocultural dynamics in the *One Piece Wano Kuni Arc* and examine how its structure conveys ideological critiques. The results indicate that the *Wano Kuni Arc* operates as a sophisticated space of visual glocalization, where traditional Japanese aesthetics such as *Ukiyo-e* art, *Kabuki* theater, and Shinto iconography are hybridized with modern pop culture archetypes. This syncretism is brilliantly visualized through Sanji's "O-Soba Mask" (merging feudal aesthetics with *Tokusatsu* sci-fi) and Yamato's mythical "Ooguchi no Makami" form (blending sacred Shinto guardianship with pop-culture zoan transformation). Furthermore, the narrative dismantles discourses of repression and capitalist biopolitics. Hegemonic power is represented through the emotional distortion of citizens via SMILE fruits, the manipulation of historical memory through educational propaganda, and the exploitation of the working class via Queen's "Ice Oni" biological weapon a visualization that simultaneously mediatizes real-world pandemic anxieties.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

As an antithesis to this authoritarian repression, Wano constructs a discourse of *counter-hegemony* grounded in liberation and the restoration of collective memory. Resistance begins with the visual intertextuality of Kozuki Oden's execution, which revitalizes the folklore of Ishikawa Goemon to transform feudal death into an eternal ideological victory. This struggle culminates in two symbolic awakenings: the prophecy of "The Dawn" (*Reimei*), which reframes the opening of borders as a prerequisite for sociopolitical health, and Luffy's transformation into Sun God Nika. By syncretizing Greek mythology (Nike) and mutating the visual style into absurd *Rubber Hose Animation*, the anime deconstructs the seriousness of Kaido's fascist regime. The victory of Gear 5 affirms that rigid structural tyranny can only be dismantled by the absolute freedom of imagination.

The scientific implication of this research asserts that within Visual Communication Design (VCD) and cultural studies, *shonen* anime must be recognized as critical artifacts laden with cultural diplomacy, biopolitical critique, and politics of representation. However, this study has limitations as it relies solely on textual visual and narrative analysis, without measuring the psychological impact on the audience. Therefore, concrete suggestions for future research include conducting cross-cultural audience reception studies. Further empirical study is needed to dissect how global viewers interpret the extreme visual hybridity of the Gear 5 *Rubber Hose* style, and how audiences navigate the representations of isolationism versus globalism in a post-pandemic context.

REFERENCES

Barker, C. (2004). *The SAGE Dictionary of Cultural Studies*. SAGE Publications.

Cangara, H. (2011). *Pengantar Ilmu Komunikasi*. PT RajaGrafindo Persada.

Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2009). *Handbook of Qualitative Research*. Sage Publications.

Halas, J., & Manvell, R. (1976). The Technique of Film Animation. Focal Press.

Hall, S. (Ed.). (1997). Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices. Sage Publications.

Hjarvard, S. (2013). The Mediatization of Culture and Society. Routledge.

Hu, T. G. (2010). Frames of Anime: Culture and Image-Building. Hong Kong University Press.

MacWilliams, M. W. (Ed.). (2008). Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime. M.E. Sharpe.

Oda, E. (1997–present). One Piece [Manga]. Shueisha.

Robertson, R. (1995). Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity. In Global Modernities (pp. 25-44). Sage Publications.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes. Harvard University Press.
Wells, P. (1998). Understanding Animation. Routledge.
Animehunch. (2022). Luffy's Gear 5 Battle with Kaido was Inspired by Tom & Jerry, Oda Says. Retrieved from https://animehunch.com/luffys-gear-5-battle-with-kaido-was-inspired-by-tom-jerry-oda-says/
Barker, C. (2004). The SAGE Dictionary of Cultural Studies. SAGE Publications.
Cangara, H. (2011). Pengantar Ilmu Komunikasi. PT RajaGrafindo Persada.
Denzin, N. K., & Lincoln, Y. S. (2009). Handbook of Qualitative Research. Sage Publications.
Field, S. (2005). Screenplay: The Foundations of Screenwriting. Delta.
Game Rant. (2022). One Piece: The Mythological Roots of Sun God Nika. Retrieved from https://gamerant.com/one-piece-the-mythological-roots-of-sun-god-nika/
Halas, J., & Manvell, R. (1976). The Technique of Film Animation. Focal Press.
Hall, S. (Ed.). (1997). Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices. Sage Publications.
Hjarvard, S. (2013). The Mediatization of Culture and Society. Routledge.
Hu, T. G. (2010). Frames of Anime: Culture and Image-Building. Hong Kong University Press.
HYPEKAGE. (2021, April 20). Mythological Connections about Wano Final Battle in One Piece [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tKqn2QuvQQI
MacWilliams, M. W. (Ed.). (2008). Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime. M.E. Sharpe.
Mayring, P. (2014). Qualitative Content Analysis: Theoretical Foundation, Basic Procedures and Software Solution. SSOAR.
Napier, S. J. (2005). Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation. Palgrave Macmillan.
Oda, E. (1997–present). One Piece [Manga]. Shueisha.
Ohara. (2023, July 15). Sun God Nika & His Powers In One Piece Explained [Video]. YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=V-VkojiG6T8
Robertson, R. (1995). Glocalization: Time-Space and Homogeneity-Heterogeneity. In M. Featherstone, S. Lash, & R. Robertson (Eds.), Global Modernities (pp. 25-44). Sage Publications.
Storey, J. (2008). Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction (5th ed.). Pearson Longman.
Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes. Harvard University Press.
Wells, P. (1998). Understanding Animation. Routledge.

Copyright at authors some right reserved this work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.