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**Existentialism and the Beauty of Sublime in Manga and Anime  
*Mob Psycho 100***

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is a result of hard work and dedicated to those who are dear to us, of family and friends, to our dear parents Aissani Yacine and khelil Thoraya to Salah Kheleifia may God have mercy on his beautiful soul also to Benghalem Fouzia

To our dear husbands Hocine and Imad

To Khawla's daughter Layen

To our best friend Raniya

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## Table of Contents

Dedication.....	I
Acknowledgements.....	II
Table of Contents.....	III
Abstract.....	V
Résumé.....	VI
مخلص.....	VII
General Introduction.....	1
<b>Chapter I: Existentialism and Sublime in the Manga: Theoretical Background</b>	
Introduction.....	5
I- Existentialism and Literature: a Brief Insight and the Main Characteristics.....	6
II- The Concept of Sublime and its Role in Literature.....	22
III- Manga and Anime Background: It's Relation With Literature and its Impacts On Culture.....	24
Conclusion.....	34
<b>Chapter II: Existentialism in Mob Psycho 100</b>	
Introduction.....	35
I- Manga and Anime Mob Psycho 100: a Brief overview.....	35
II- Mob Psycho 100: An Insight to the Plot and Characters.....	42

III- Elements of Existentialism in Mob Psycho 100.....	44
Conclusion.....	51
<b>Chapter III The sublime in Mob Psycho 100</b>	
I- Sublime as the main theme in Mob Psycho 100.....	52
II- Implication and Elements of the sublime in the Graphic novel.....	55
<b>General Conclusion</b> .....	56
<b>Bibliography</b> .....	58

**Abstract:**

Manga and anime are quite underrated, and not given enough attention in literary studies due to many factors; such as medium or the false belief that manga and anime are too plain to be taken seriously such as another form of literary works. However, the manga and its anime adaptation are worth studying because it contains all the fine artistic elements as in any other literary work of quality. Furthermore, manga and anime is a great field for philosophical theories which had always been related to literature. Both mangas or their anime adaptations can raise philosophical questions, and controversial issues that can be related to complex issues in which many masterpieces' work of literature had tackled as main themes such as Existentialism and the beauty of the sublime. Generally, the existential theory in literature is highlighted and marked by many themes. Furthermore, it presents the characters in another scope that makes it easy to analyze the crisis they are going through. In addition to the existential theory, the theory of the sublime makes the protagonist wonder about the outcomes of his action, or does his journey have a purpose or not? Therefore, this research aim is to manifold existentialism and the beauty of the sublime in the famous manga *Mob Psycho 100* and its anime adaptation. This will show how both manga and anime matured as an important literary genre through the years and were able to shed the light on deep philosophical ideas and analyzing ONE& Yusuke Murata's *Mob Psycho 100* to illustrate both existentialism and the sublime by breaking down the plot and characters.

**Keywords:** Existentialism ,manga, anime, sublime.

**Résumé:**

Les Mangas et les animes sont en quelques sortes sous estimés et n'obtiennent pas beaucoup d'attention lorsqu'il s'agit de littérature. Cela est dû plusieurs facteurs tels que l'idée reçue que les mangas sont trop banals pour être pris sérieusement en considération. Cependant, les mangas et leur adaptation : les animes- méritent d'être étudiés comme toute autre œuvre littéraire de qualité. Traitant les thèmes parfois complexes, ils abordent également des questions philosophiques tels que le concept d'existentialisme et la beauté du sublime. En Littérature, ce concept est mis en évidence par divers thèmes mettant en avant les personnages et les conflits qu'ils subissent. Dans la théorie du sublime, le protagoniste remet en questions ses actions, leur conséquence et ses objectifs. Le but de cette recherche est de reproduire l'existentialisme et la beauté du sublime tel qu'ils apparaissent dans le manga de ONE et Yusuke Murata *Mob Psycho 100* et son adaptation animée, afin de montrer comment les mangas et les animes se sont développés au fil des années autant que genre littéraire, illustrant a la fois l'existentialisme et les ublime, en analysant l'intrigue et les personnages de cette œuvre

**Mots clés :** Existentialism ,manga, anime, sublime.

## ملخص :

لا تحظى كل من المانغا و الأنيمي بالعرفان أو التقدير و الاهتمام الكافي في الدراسات الأدبيه و ذلك لعدة أسباب مثل شكلها الخارجي و المعتقد الخاطئ حولها على أنها بسيطه للغاية و لا ترقى لدرجه الجد التي تؤخذ بها الأعمال الأدبيه الأخرى و لكن المانغا و الأنيمي الخاص بها في الحقيقه يستحقان الحلول موضع دراسه و ذلك لاحتوائهما على كل الوسائل و الأدوات الفنيه و الأدبيه القيمه التي توجد في أي عمل أدبي آخر ذو جوده عاليه بالاضافه الى كون الاخيرين يمثلان مساحه ممتازة لعرض النظريات الفلسفيه التي لطالما كانت متعلقه بالأدب و الاعمال الأدبيه .بامكان كل من المانغا و الأنيمي طرح عده أسئلة ذات بعد فلسفي و كذا بامكانها مناقشه افكار مثيره للجدل كموضوع رئيسي تعالجه مثل الوجوديه و فلسفه السمو بشكل عام النظريه الوجوديه في الأدب تلاحظ بسهولة ذلك بفضل المواضيع المرتبطه بها بالاضافه الى كونها تقدم الشخصيات من منظور يساهم في تحليل الأزمات الوجوديه التي يقعون فيها.

بالاضافه للنظريه الوجوديه فلسفه السمو تجعل من البطل يتساءل حول نتائج أفعاله أو اذا كانت رحلته التي خاضها ذات معنى أو لا؟

و لهذا هذا هدف هذا البحث هو تغطيه الوجوديه و كذا فلسفه السمو في المانغا الشهيره موب سايكو 100 و الأنيمي الخاص بها كذلك.

هذا سيكون عبر عرض كيف أن كل من المانغا و الأنيمي نضجا كنوع أدبي مهم عبر السنوات و كانا قادرين على وضع افكار فلسفيه عميقه تحت دائره الضوء.

بالاضافه الى تحليل المانغا و الأنيمي الخاصين بكتبيها وان و يوسوكي موراتا عبر اسقراء القصة و الشخصيات

## الكلمات المفتاحيه

المانغا، الأنيمي، موب سايكو، الأدب، فلسفه السمو، الوجوديه.

## General Introduction:

Generally, when people hear the word manga or the word anime they tend to associate it with children and certainly not any serious form of literature. This might have been somehow true for a while especially at its first introduction to the media in Japan on a national level which air anime TV and radio stations that narrated the manga between 1940s-70s. Yet, the manga marked its beginnings as a mature content directed towards adults since the Edo era in Japan around the 1800's despite the fact it was not called Manga yet. Gradually, both mangas and their anime adaptations grew up in scale and had matured over the years that they attained literary relevance. This was a solid fact especially when the term manga became categorized as a graphic novel which appeared to classify comics and the genre that follows this style.

Among the graphic novels that go under the classification of manga, one can mention Eichiro Oda's *One Piece*, Masashi Kishimoto's *Naruto Shippuden*, and Eichiro Togashi's *Hunter X Hunter*. Many studies have been done on comics, mangas, and their anime adaptations as well as on graphic novels to set a proper understanding of this literary genre. Usually, the medium of manga is included in journals of popular culture such as the famous magazine Shonen Jump. Another common misconception about mangas that exists, lays in the fact that it is believed that the medium's production is about a childish hero with basic ideas and plain conception that only suits children's simple understanding.

However, significant genres, different complex ideas do exist in the manga and they flourished well in the last three decades. These genres are usually published as an independent category of comics that existed throughout the life span for the medium. These are the relevant misconceptions about manga and anime. It can be added that in the last few decades, the anime or the manga as a main category of the graphic novel

found success especially in expressing deep philosophical ideas such as existentialism or the philosophy of the sublime. Therefore, it is not a mistake to consider that manga or its anime adaptation has every possibility to be tightly related to existentialism and the beauty of the sublime, whereas the former can be analyzed under the scope of the latter's traits, notions, and attitudes.

Existentialism largely refers to a philosophical and a literary theory that has a massive impact on many levels be it cultural, and sociological. Existentialism is generally related to the fact that existence precedes essence which is an expression formed by the famous French philosopher Sartre. In other words, this theory denotes that people have to create their own lives based on their values without considering any divine presence; for they according to this theory do not exist. Moreover, existentialism is based that people are condemned to be free since they are born without destiny and it is all up to them to hold the responsibility of their lives.

However, this absolute responsibility may lead to despair and anguish sentiments and even questioning the purpose and the point of living itself. All these points firmly illustrate the classic existentialist crisis. This crisis is a human condition that is related beyond people's genuine desire to understand the meaning of their lives and the purpose out of it. In works of literature, existentialism was a major point of discussion whether explicitly or implicitly. The truth that it stated about people being free in an absorbed world was a significant mark that shaped many literary works especially graphic novels and their category more notably mangas and its anime adaptation since it is an extension of the manga.

In addition to existentialism, the sublime or the philosophy of sublime is as well considered to be a part of literary theories. In fact, the sublime in any given work of literature reflects profound thoughts and ideas. Generally, in works of literature beauty is a major theme. However, beautiful objects tend to be small, smooth, attractive, or

even delicate. Sublime on the other hand is vast, gloomy, dark, and threatening. In other words, the sublime stands tall with beauty, but it reflects its other side which means, it is the profound expression of the beauty itself.

While beautiful objects produce pleasurable feelings; sublime ones produce overwhelming feelings and also terrifying viscerally. At some level, this gives the notion of a paradox which not only enriches the literary work but also adds the quality of profundity within it. Whatever frightening experience that appears in a given work of literature, the sublime makes readers experience both feelings of joy and fright. This sheer power of this philosophical idea adds an appeal to any work. Many famous works of literature adopted the sublime such as mangas or most especially shonen mangas due to the many themes that the sublime expresses such as pain and basic reservation, the paradox in making daily options or even the emotional crisis that a given character may experience.

In *Mob Psycho 100* ideas of freedom in an absorbed world, religious unsure notions, emotional crisis, and themes like measuring what matters about the beauty and letting go concepts were all expressed. Therefore, it is true to say that this work of literature, whether in the form of manga or its anime adaptation adheres to both existentialism and the beauty of the sublime.

Thus, to give a better outlook on mangas and its euphemized term graphic novels as well as its anime adaptation and why considering manga literature is a fact that became unarguable. This study will focus on the relationship between manga and its anime adaptation existentialism and beauty of sublime as main literary theories. Moreover, this research will analyze One & Yusuke Murata's *Mob Psycho 100* and the use of existentialism themes. In addition to that, it will analyze the illustration of the sublime and its features within the plot.

We chose this topic because we firmly believe that both manga and anime do have a valuable place in academic studies and should never be ignored or underestimated. After reading many mangas and watching a lot of animes, we came to conclude that they are worth studying as they not only express a terrific art style but also possess a very rich literary content like any other well-designed work of literature.

This study relies on many articles and books such as Gilles Portia's *The Anime Companion: What's Japanese about Japanese Animation*, Antonia Levi's *Samurai from Outer Space: Understanding Japanese Animation*, and Susan Napier's *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation*, Scott McCloud's *Making Comics: Storytelling Secrets of Comics, Manga, and Graphic*, Jeff Malpas's *Place and Experience* which tackled existentialism in literature, Maurice Merleau-Ponté's *Metaphysics and the Novel*, and Edmund Burke's *On Sublime and Beautiful Reflections* in addition to some articles that are related to the topic.

This work is divided into two chapters. The first chapter will focus on setting a definition and an overview of existentialism and the sublime and their role in literature. In addition to that, it will define manga and anime and emphasize a brief explanation about them as part of graphic novels, it will also give an overview of the history of manga and anime, their relationship with comics, and how the medium changed through the years in addition to their relationship with literature and their impact on it. The second chapter will analyze manga mob psycho 100 and the features of existentialism and sublime within it.

## **Chapter I:**

### **Existentialism and Sublime in the Manga: Theoretical Background**

#### **Introduction:**

Existentialism is one of the most worldwide controversial and well known philosophical movements. Although existentialism has tight roots with philosophy, it's is not a branch of it. Existentialism; however, was created and presented to the world through the works of Soren Kierkegaard, a Danish philosopher of the second half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Furthermore, it was due to the French Philosopher, Jean Paul Sartre's efforts; existentialism had gotten significant. It is also extremely important to note that existentialism had kick-started due to Kierkegaard's brilliant ideas which had helped it to shine so incandescently.

Kierkegaard wrote twenty-two books in his lifetime. However, three of them were the most significant ones such as "*Either/Or*" and "*Fear and trembling*". Kierkegaard had a belief that his books were meant to get humanity to a point of self-awareness free of doubt and anxieties about reality. He was quite determined to show us the reasons why humanity must understand the world they live in. He hated modern moral fabrications and worldview of values. He thought that every down to love and friendship was utterly insignificant in the grand scale of things and that everything is pointless and meaningless.

This point motivated later other pioneers of literature to adopt his principles and apply them in their literary texts. However, based on its definitions; existentialism appears to cross over with other philosophical ideas that care less about the impersonification of matters and the admission of the necessity that after all nothing is truly important. The very philosophical idea that shares this common principle with

existentialism is no more than the sublime. Thus, this chapter will try to navigate through those two main philosophical ideas and their impact on literature. In addition to tackling these philosophical ideas, this research's main subject is based on Manga which was also introduced in the form of anime. This chapter will also be concerned with disposing, illustrating, and highlighting the purpose beyond selecting anime and manga as the main theme. It will attempt to tackle important points that navigate from anime and manga origins into their role in expressing significant matrimony of culture. Finally, It will focus on the relationship between literature and anime and manga.

## **I. Existentialism and literature: a Brief Insight and the main characteristics**

The pillars, principals, and the core establishment of existentialism were presented to the world thanks to the efforts of Kierkegaard. As a matter of fact, Kierkegaard has a strong belief that life was completely purposeless. His assumptions were based on the significant fact that he hated the rich aristocratic and bourgeoisie communities; even though, he was born in a very wealthy family (Doerr 12). In addition to that, he hated the impact that the church made on the minds of people (Doerr 14).

In his book, *Either/ Or*, Kierkegaard brilliantly described how unhappy can we live under the pressure of society or religion, because they simply impose people to do things in the name of curtesy and virtue and they never care what humanity really want. He gave an example with some failed marriages when some couples are forced to marry each other simply because their religion or their community forced them to do that, hence their marriage will fall apart and they will never be happy (Doer 24). In his book, *Either/ Or* he says "Marry, you will regret. Don't marry, you will also regret it. Marry or don't marry you will regret it either way....This is the essence of life philosophy"

(Kierkegaard 44).

Kierkegaard is described as the founder of existentialism; it was because of his works and efforts that other pioneers in literature had adopted this philosophical idea and revolutionized it such as Sartre and Camus. In fact, Kierkegaard was able to produce a most brilliant book that fascinated later thinkers the most which was entitled: *The Concept of Anxiety*, published in 1844. In this book, Kierkegaard emphasized a new word that had a major impact on literary works.

The word Angst (in German) or angst as it's known in English was used by Kierkegaard to describe how it is like when people are exposed to a condition where they find themselves in a position of awareness. People in such cases come to understand that they can come to face many options in their lifetime, yet the truth lays in the fact that they truly understand that they possess very few options and not as much as they imagined( Ericsson 19). Kierkegaard explained this with the simple example of a teenage girl who at a point in her life believes that she has many options of handsome men to select. However, when she becomes an adult, she understands that she did not have many choices as she imagined and settles with one guy who does not have to be as good as she imagines(Wahl 33).

Moreover, Kierkegaard inserted that people mostly are not aware when they make choices explains how people in this condition find themselves have a little understanding when it and care the less about the purpose beyond it. For instance, people lack ambition or a clear plan whenever they select an option (Ericsson 22). The house maiden spends her days doing the same things over and over again such as cleaning or cooking by mere choice; however, she has no clue about the purpose of her choices. Kierkegaard argued that "Life can only be understood backward, but must be lived forwards" (Kierkegaard 38).

Thus, it is true to say that Kierkegaard thought of angst will make people see how unhappiness is their fate and even the choices they make in life will never make living purposeful. He explained his book *The Concept of Anxiety*, as he wrote “anyone who has given the matter any serious thought will know that I'm right when I say” (Kierkegaard 66). Furthermore, Kierkegaard pointed out loud that he truly disliked humanity’s fake feelings of joy-sufficiency as he mentioned that “it's not possible for anyone to be absolutely, and in every conceivable way, completely content” (Kierkegaard 72).

Existentialism was not in good accord with traditional ideas. The ideas that were usually based on faith and religion, the assumption that life has got meaning, and the assumption that humans were pre-destined to their fates before they even made the choices were all ideas that existentialism had resented (Tracy 51). In fact, pioneers of existentialism had always manifested the idea that notes that life is meaningless. Kierkegaard mention in *The Concept of Anxiety* that “How empty and meaningless life is; we bury a person, throw three shovels of earth over him” (Kierkegaard 23).

Kierkegaard’s purpose out of this statement that appears to be very depressing was to make a reminder that no matter how life appeared to be joyful and meaningful; all this fake sense of meaning we created will disappear once we die and return to the nothingness that we have always been (Olson 25). Thus, it is true to say that existentialists despised traditional thinking on life that is adhered to religion or certain norms. They believed that these ideas were not made by choice, but were imposed by humans and their understanding. However, they admired the simple truths that relate a given human with God as his creator (Olson27).

As an example, they hated some traditional ideas that come from religion or society such as the common idea of marriage is a necessity for the happiness of people,

they thought that people can achieve happiness in their life even if they have never married. Yet, they believed that religion may be very helpful in simplifying life, for the simple fact that not all people are fit to think on a complex manner (Wahl 38).

Undoubtedly, existentialism captures attention towards religion and the relationship of humanity with its supreme beliefs. However, they also saw that it was necessary to recommend a dramatic and famous leap of faith. They thought of this leap as a way for humans to break free from the many complex rules that religion inserts (Brooks 19). Even though, they denied that the religious texts and rules are divine; however, some of them believed in the totality of God. However, they argued that the religious rules make it very difficult to believe in his totality; therefore, they saw that for a given person to keep his faith. He must stop arguing everything about his religion, nor questioning it, and just accept it as it is without thinking (Brooks 28). So, for them to believe and keep the faith one must surely use his mindless and his emotions more (Crowell 41).

Another significant point that can be discussed considering existentialism lays in the fact that existentialism shares many similarities with Marxist communism this characteristic exist also in literary texts, this point of similarity is concerned with the fact that existentialists' solutions are like their peer Marxists' solutions when it comes to their perspective on how to be human. Their perspective is mainly based on enduring the challenges that face what they called the ills of humanity (Hsieh 34). They were more interested in enduring the agony than putting diagnoses for it. Existentialists had also a common belief with their fellow Marxists, which was based on the importance of the cognitive understanding for humans' collective needs (Hsieh 39). They believed that this collective understanding will spare humanity from falling into the superstitious common thinking that usually accompanies religious beliefs (Crowell 44).

While tracing the roots of existentialism especially in the field of literature, it appears that existential authors were extremely interested in ideas such as freedom, anxiety, despair, and what it means to live as a genuine human being. All these ideas were the main themes for their novels and literary texts which deserved to be in the center of attention, for it had explored new angles in literature (Haidt 41). In fact, the major ideas that those existentialist authors brought to literature lay in the points that human beings are a synthesis of opposites.

That means that existentialists looked to humans as significant pairs of opposites. They also had commonly used this perspective in their literary works and called it “The infinite and finite writing”. Existentialist authors and novelists believed that characters possess a synthesis in which the finite factor is the limiting factor and the infinite factor the expanding one (Haidt 51). They thought that the infinite factor in a given character especially the main character in a given literary work corresponds to many conditions such as the possibility and the capacity to envisage and display new thoughts and ideas (Bakewell 17).

In fact, both of the infinite and finite factors were set to correspond with a certain condition in literature. While the infinite factor corresponds to the condition of bringing into existence some new ideas, lifestyles, or even new structure to introduce characters in a given novel, the infinite factor also corresponds with the condition of change that characters may experience on the level of their mental presence in the story or even their spiritual essence and connection with social norms and beliefs (Bakewell 25). The truth about these characters lies in the point that they usually make their decisions and choices from innumerable potentialities.

The finite factor; however, corresponds to actuality or the essentiality of the characters in a given literary work or a novel to make a certain concrete choice, so the

readers can understand that the reality of the characters in that given literary work is definite despite the inner struggles that any character may have (Pink 42). Generally, in literal works that express existentialism; readers express their difficulty to completely absorb characters and the plot of the literary work that correspond to finite or infinite factors. Furthermore, there is a compulsion in absorbing the work (Pink 47). For this reason, characters appear to gain freedom in abandoning the responsibility of being self-aware or adhered to the social norms. As an example in the existential graphic novel *V for Vendetta*, readers find some difficulties in understanding the plot, the characters, and the setting until they reach the end of the novel at the same time, this helps author Alan Moore in liberating his characters from social norms or divine beliefs as we notice the protagonist never bothers to reveal his mask that he wears or mentions religion (Bakewell 20).

Undoubtedly, within any literary work in order for a given character to lose itself based on the finite factors, this character must experience a life in which it finds itself imprisoned in what one perceives as an inescapable environment where no alternatives exist (Collins 68). There are many famous novels can illustrate this expression ,and their setting is usually linked to jails and mental facilities such as the famous existential novel of Dennis Lehane: *Shutter Island*, whereas the main character lost himself in a finite factor, since, he was imprisoned in a mental facility (Lehane 122). Generally, if a character in any literary work experienced losing itself in a finite factor, it turned out to become frequently depressed, slavish, and dependent on others (Collins 71). Thus, based on these points we may say that what defines existentialism in literature is the fact that finding safety and security depends on assimilating the character into social, institutional, or familial networks.

However, it is clear that this character would find it an extremely venturous

thing to be himself (Collins 74). Even though, it looks very easy from far for this character to assimilate the other static characters and become just like them. The famous novel *1984* is a great example for this point when we see the protagonist finds out that it is quite venturous to just be himself without lying or faking, despite the fact that it is far easier and safer for him to be like the others, to become an imitation, a number, a cipher in the crowd in the setting of George Orwell's peculiar existential novel (Bossidy&Charam 24). In fact, in an existential literary work, the character struggles if it was forced to follow a strict living pattern or did not realize that inner hollowness was there all along and that was what precisely happened with the protagonist of the famous novel *1984* (Bakewell 24).

However, when it comes to the infinite character in a given existential literary work, it is vital for the character to live taking into consideration that life is nothing but a series of endless experiments (Battlefield 35). In fact, in order for the character to live series of endless experiences, the author grants it different paths, so it can decide which to choose. In addition to that, the author tends to grant a given character the ability to switch between different personalities that make it very easy for him to adapt in case he decided to choose any certain path that more or less will be the turning down of a given novel. Yet, this character that lost itself in the infinite factor never actually endures a choice or a commitment it ever makes (Battlefield 37). A good example lies in the character of Scott Pilgrim, who is the protagonist of arguably one of the most famous existential novels *Slaughter house five*, by Kurt Vonnegut.

The author grants Scott the possibility to select from many choices (Vonnegut 89). Furthermore, readers notice that Scott has the possibility to switch off between different personalities when we see him hanging on between a very depressed guy and a most joyful man with a very positive perspective about life (Vonnegut 94). In addition

to that, we notice how Scott loses himself in the infinite factor and never actually endures with the choices he made such as his marriage to ugly Valencia whom he chose to marry but never endured his choice of living with her in the long run because she had an ugly personality according to him (Bakewell 26).

In other words, the character which is lost in the infinite factor is more or less obsessed with the one who can potentially become. Yet, in reality, he or she never becomes anything and realizes in the course of that literary work that his or her quest was purposeless from the beginning which leads him or her to despair over him or herself (Bakewell 28). A great example that illustrates a character that is lost in the infinite factor is set in the famous novel *Shutter Island's* main character.

The main character was desperately dedicated to becoming a successful detective that would solve the crime and captures the real criminal who exists in *Shutter Island* which happened to be a mental facility. However, with the course of events, this main character finds out that in reality, he will never become anything (Newport 54). In addition to realizing that he was a patient all along in that facility, the main character also realizes that his quest was purposeless. In fact, by the end of the book, he surrenders himself voluntarily to execution, for he realizes his existential crisis and the hollowness that life carried all along (Robbins 57).

The wave of embracing existentialism as a literary theory and adapting it in literary works had grown immensely. It wasn't just the works of Soren Kierkegaard that paved the way for modern existentialists to display their ideas in the world of literature. The German philosopher Frederich Nietzsche had also a great impact on reinforcing the statue of existentialism which inspired many pioneers in literature later on such as Albert Camus. Throughout his works and writings, Nietzsche appeared to have high beliefs hanged on the impact of existentialism, especially on a vivid field such as

literature. He saw that existentialism may help a great deal in teaching us how to become who we are. In plain words, existentialism can aid a person to find the answer for how to discover and be loyal to his highest potential. In a similar manner, literature represents a fertile field for these types of questions that Frederich Nietzsche posed while tackling the importance of existentialism (Kaufmann 12-14).

He constructed four helpful main ideas that can be easily linked to existentialism and its role in literature. Own up to envy, don't be a Christian (or do not be religious), never drink alcohol, god is dead (Vaughn 24-33). As controversial, bizarre, or even uncommon as these four major four lines appear, the German philosopher made arguments that can be used as a basis in this research to demonstrate Nietzsche's major contribution in developing existentialism, especially in the world of literature. His first main idea was owning up to envy tackled many important issues that literature represents the field that can handle it the best (Vaughn 49). As a matter of fact, literary works represent a divine mirror that describes human emotions. Authors may always provoke different feelings within their character and sometimes find the freedom to discuss some taboo emotions such as envy (Kaufmann 19).

To begin with, Nietzsche stated how humans are taught or even forced according to social ethics to feel ashamed of their envious feelings; since they indicate evil and the dark side of humanity. Therefore, envious feelings tend to be hidden from one's self and other (Kaufmann 21). Moreover, Nietzsche asserted that there are people who will claim that they don't envy anyone with all sincerity and this point is marked in literary works (MacIntyre 37) and there are many examples from world class literature that can describe this matter such as Holden Caulfield's envious feelings towards the simplicity of Stradlater's life in the very famous novel *Catcher in the Rye* by J.D Salinger or even in graphics, since the subject matter of this research is based on a manga. Such the envy

that the character of Adrian Viedt in the famous graphic novel *Watchmen* by Allan Moore carried to the world which later motivated him to kill millions of people despite claiming that he sincerely never envies anyone (Moore 94).

Another fine example that considers manga and explains the complexity of envious feelings that detects existentialism such as Nietzsche described relies on the famous manga *Beastars*, whereas, we see the main character's Rival Louie having serious envious feelings towards the hero Legacy; even though, Louie kept claiming that he does not envy anyone. Nietzsche explained that the absence of the idea of envy is logically impossible and that appears mainly in the works of literature (MacIntyre 45). Moreover, he insisted that if the work of literature's setting is based in the modern world, the characters will always face an existential problem that is at some point related to the point of owning up to their envious feelings towards other characters (Spaemann 87).

Nietzsche saw that many modern authors in the different literary genres adopted the idea of making their characters encouraged to feel that they were equal to everyone else. He believed that literary works are becoming more and more based on the idea that everyone compared themselves to everyone else. Hence, they were exposed to a volatile mixture of ambition and inadequacy complex emotions which means that the main character would always have a rival whom he will always compare himself to him and that would only bring an explosion in the emotion of that main character as Nietzsche described (Spaemann 94) .

However, it is not a mistake to consider that there is nothing wrong with envy, especially in works of literature. In addition to exposing the characters in depth and illustrating their complex emotions which in many times can be marked by an existential crisis, the German philosopher also maintained that what matters the most is

how these characters handle these emotions. As he highly believed that, greatness can be achieved through being able to learn from envious crises (Cooper 54). A good example that may help in clarifying this point is set in the famous novel *Post Office* by Charles Bukowski which is often described as one of the best existential novels in modern literature, whereas the main character Hank was able to learn from his envious feelings towards his wife's friends who claimed to be good authors and became a successful author and had surpassed them (Cooper 58).

Nietzsche confirmed that as confusing as it appears, envy remains important especially in works of literature. Furthermore, the feeling of envy is a signal from a given character's deeper self about what it wants (Cooper 61). In a specific manner, the existential crisis can be depicted in works of literature based on this point. As an example in mangas, everything that makes some characters envious is a fragment of their potential, yet due to their perils, they disown these feelings such as the previous example of Louie in manga *Beastars*. Based on Nietzsche's works, we may conclude that the envy that any character in any given work of literature who doesn't own to its envious feelings ends up struggling in what he called 'sulfurous odours or simply "Bitterness" (Rachels 71). However, a character that appears to be able to own up to this feeling becomes conscious of its true potential. All in all, whether characters decided to own or disown these feelings the possibility to mark existentialism crisis would be always present in this literary work (Wahl 67).

The second main idea that Nietzsche discussed was no different than Soren Kierkegaard. For, they both loathed, opposed, and disliked Christian religious traditions or any other religious tradition that carried close concepts to the Christian traditions (Harris 66). Linking this point to literature, Nietzsche thought of dedicated religious characters as weak ones who did not know their emotions (Harris 69). This point can

easily describe existential problems within any work of literature that has a plot or characters of this kind. Nietzsche thought that religious virtue is made of religious people's cowardice (Nietzsche 33). He saw that these people had wished to enjoy the real ingredients of fulfillment intellectual mastery, a position in the world, creativity, and sex, but had been too inept to get them.

In literature, this can be noticed in many famous novels such as *Madame Bovary*, whereas characters fashioned a hypocritical creed denouncing a delicacy in their manners based on religious manners that their societies forced them to unconsciously adopt it (Flaubert 88). However, as the novel reveals, they wanted more things that were religiously unethical but were too weak to obtain them. Another example lays in one of the most extraordinary novels of all time, *The Song of Ice and Fire: a game of thrones*, By George R.R Martin.

This novel that carries many existential crises is a fine illustration of how religious beliefs can make a character too Coward to claim their rights and desires. In the Book, we notice how Ned Edard Stark's attachment to religious and social norms bent him down from claiming the Iron Throne and later on led him to lose his head because he was too religious and afraid to rebel against King Robert Baratheon who was by all standards too bad to be a monarch( Martin 224).

Nietzsche's other important idea was drifting away from Alcohol and spiritual drinks. In fact, we may consider it symbolic because this idea tackles the human constraints that humans exercise on their selves once they enter in the zone of abduction. In literature, abduction can take many forms such as alcohol, gambling, love, food, or any other factor that makes the character distracted and causes a clear loss of freedom that the character used to have before having this problem of abduction (Cooper 78). So, it is not a mistake to consider Nietzsche's third idea as an obvious

mark of existentialism in literary works(Nussbaum 111). A good example lays in the famous book *The Hobbit*, By J .R. R .Tolkein, when we see the character of Thranduil, the king of elves suffering from his abduction of love. Thranduil's obsessive love with his late wife that takes the form of abduction distracts him from ruling his kingdom and fulfilling his duties as King of the elves, as well as that fact that he makes him loses his freedom in making decisions or loving someone else because his abductions control his life and decisions(Tolkein 114-129).

“God is dead” was Nietzsche's other main idea which takes the form of a dramatic assertion about the demise of God. Yet, it is necessary to clarify that it is not, as it's often taken to be, some kind of a celebratory statement .As the main interest is the field of literature, the end of belief is not something to celebrate according to Nietzsche (Rachles 79). The German philosopher knew that it would be tricky to give up on religion; as a consequence, this reveals the existential problem and the inner struggles in a given literary work (Nietzsche 42).

A fine example that depicts this point based on Nietzsche lays in one of the most famous existential novels of all times: *The Stranger* by Albert Camus. In *The Stranger*, Albert Camus's main character appears to illustrate many characteristics of existentialism, most notably the loss of beliefs which was not replaced by any other supplier such as philosophy or culture since Nietzsche insisted that the loss of religious beliefs must be replaced by another supplier of ethics such as philosophy. As a consequence, the main character slowly lost his sense of sanity (Camus 91-102). As a conclusion, Nietzsche's main four ideas were very essential in reinforcing the impact of existentialism in literature. Since, depending on them, one can analyze different characters in different literary genres, as he can also easily mark characteristics of existentialism (Berne 39).

Nietzsche's works did not only help existentialism to flourish in literature but also inspired other pioneers such as Jean Paul Sartre. Sartre's purpose appeared to be about understanding human existence rather than the world as such (Kahneman 26). Moreover, he showed the main interest in the possibility of adopting and adapting the methods of phenomenology and was set out to create and revolutionize an ontological account of what it is to be human (Wahl 71).

In modern works of literature, Sartre's efforts helped a great deal in finding the repetitive answer of what it means to be human or have humanistic features since graphics including manga's may depend on unrealistic characters such as aliens; however, they possess human characteristics and emotions (Kahneman 29). A good example that illustrates this is the famous manga *Parasite* which is mainly about given aliens evading people's bodies; however, little by little the demise of the idea that they are a superior race when they experience human emotions and imperfections (Wahl 74).

The main features of Sartre's ontology are based on radical freedom as well as the groundlessness which characterizes the human condition (Hogshead 57). However, these two features stand in opposite with the world's problematic being which is the view of others as Sartre had put it in his book *Hell is other people*. Furthermore, Sartre managed to construct an understanding of the instability of facts that freedom as a human condition in an ever changing world is set by delivering a substantial literary output which is simply the existential theory (Hogshead 63). One can summarize Sartre's existentialist understanding of what it is to be human, as in his view it appears that action, human decisions, and deeds are marked by an underlying motivation (Cialdini 44).

This motivation is set to be found in the nature of consciousness. Sartre believed that this nature is a desire for being or becoming a certain one or thing. He also

thought that it is up to each person to exercise his freedom in a manner that allows him or her not to lose sight of his or her existence as a facticity, in addition to his or her freedom of will (Sartre 45,51,77). In doing so, based on Sartre's assertions characters in any given work of literature will come to understand more about the original choice which their life demonstrates, therefore, there will not be any confusion when it comes to wondering about the values that are thereby projected in a particular work of literature as Sartre claimed that "Such an understanding is only obtained through living this particular life and avoiding the pitfalls of strategies of self-deceit such as bad faith" (Sartre 84).

Furthermore, he claimed that "This authentic option for human life represents the realization of a universal in the singularity of a human life" (Sartre 84). A good example to illustrate Sartre's views lies in the character of Saitama who is the protagonist of the famous manga *One Punch Man* By ONE & Murata. Through the course of events, we see how Saitama avoids self-deceit by bending himself from bad faith that many people of his city were trapped in. Furthermore, it appears that he came to understand the original choice that his life had demonstrated to him which is to be a hero (Gladwell 22). Saitama knows himself and potentials and made his choice upon it he quit in being an employee in a company because he realized the singularity of human life, therefore, we never see him confused as the hero as much when he was an employee (Gladwell 24).

Sartre was not the only scholar who had a great impact in founding existential literary theory, as there were other scholars and authors, too. One of the most important figures was the French author Albert Camus who helped with his extraordinary novels such as *The Stranger*, in setting main characteristics for existentialism in literature. In fact, there are many characteristics that stand out in works of literature and mark the

existential theory (Coleman 44-48). However, the main interest would be on those who were set and exposed by Albert Camus in his works. The reason for this choice is that many scholars consider his novel *The Stranger* as the first pure modern existential novel. In his works, Camus emphasized the importance of the individual in the individuality of his works individuality stood out, instead of focusing on collectivity; Camus focuses on characters and their spirits without the need to link it with the society or the entourage in which they live in, importance of choice (In Albert Camus's novels the characters seem to have all the right to make their choices and free decisions (Coleman 61).

It appears that in his novels character's ability to make their own options in life was the main feature), anxiety regarding life (in many novels of Camus's anxiety about life, the way or the pattern that the character should follow to live was the main issue that was tackled), death (death was the main theme that defined existentialism, especially in Camus's novels. Characters often dealt with this subject as they experienced losing someone (Camus 28). However, they showed a sense of not caring much as they never believed in the afterlife), contingencies and extreme situations (Camus's plot and characters are often set to deal with extreme situations such falling into deep problems such as crimes and murders or facing huge psychological and mental problem), meaning and absurdity (characters in works of literature that are marked as existential works are so often less serious, more absurd in their vision towards life, not because of their silliness or simple minds; but because of their intelligence and complex minds who never seem to take things much more seriously than they deserve) (Ariely 11).

Moreover, authenticity (the plots or characters are always authentic as there is always room for original ideas, problems, and complex emotions that don't necessarily

imitate the so often repetitive collective problems and ideas), social criticism (characters are so often fed up with their societies, they are disgusted from their fake ethics, virtues, and old fashioned way of thinking. hence, they always tend to criticize their societies) (Heath 24). The importance of personal relations is also a point (personal relations takes a wide space of importance in most of Camus's works that it became the main characteristic that defines existentialism in literary works, Atheism and Religion (Camus's view towards religion was never different than Kierkegaard or Nietzsche's in fact he based that religion was not important and that marked existentialism in his works) (Cooper 21-29).

## **II. The Concept of Sublime and its role in Literature:**

Tracing back the origins of the sublime, one must first stand to the sublime refers to its general definition. Generally, the sublime refers to an experience of vastness (of space, age, time) beyond comprehension. Moreover, this vastness is also beyond human calculation. In fact, the sublime as a concept can be simply described as a sense of awe we might feel before an ocean, or even a glacier, the earth from a plane ,or a starry sky. In the presence of this overwhelming concept, humans tend to feel desperately small (James 74). Usually, this sense of our smallness and narrowness is experienced as a humiliation (when it happens, for example, at the hands of a professional enemy, a person who awfully dislikes our mere existence ,or even a bully).

However, surprisingly the impression of smallness that accompanies the presence of the sublime has a yet bizarre, but overwhelming profoundly and uplifting redemptive effect. In fact, people are divinely granted an impression of their nullity which happens to be full (James 81). Furthermore, they seem to be granted insignificance in the grander pattern which helps a great dealing relieving them from strictness and over seriousness about life and help them to find a relaxing mode and

even a sense of absurdity. People often welcome the idea of taking daily situations in their life time in a simpler way once the idea that they are universe grew in their minds (Doran 12-16).

Crucially, the sublime isn't just an idea or a concept or even a life style. It's a piece of applied philosophy (which can be easily be applied in literature)experienced through the use of senses and emotions. Accepting the fact that our littleness in this vast universe won't impact upon us just as an abstract proposition is the main characteristic of the sublime (Frankl 69). There is always an urge for humans to test their limits and connect to the universe they are living in, and the sense of the tremendousness of this universe. This fact was not far from literature, as there are many world class literature works that exposed the concept of sublime (Kitson 43). A fine example lays in the famous book *Eat Pray Love* by Elizabeth Gilbert when the concept of sublime takes a huge part in the book and the main character embraces it as she feels the greatness of the world compared to its little, small universe when she believed at the beginning of the book that she was at a point the center of the universe (Bloom 25).

In fact, in any work of literature, the importance of a sensory impression reveals a general truth about how the minds of characters function. Characters' pure ideas are feeble tools for affecting their human side conduct. In works of literature, we notice that some characters can be easily distracted or may even shrug off words (Frankl 87). For this reason, art and philosophy are often ideal resources of these characters' overwhelming senses and deep connection with their world. At their best, these characters integrate thought and feeling and the reader gets this notion quite easily. The fine idea is that what they seem to be seeking to teach us readers is delivered in the way we need, and wrapped up in powerful sensory emotions (Burke 57).A fine example that can illustrate this matter lays in one of the best mangas of all times *One Piece* by

Eichiro Oda when we notice that several characters such as Shanks or Corazon De Flamingo father had expressed the sense of sublime through their actions (McKeown 33). Philosophy and art were their main resources, which they depend on to express their thought and emotions.

Shanks for instance is a character that seems to take everything simply, despite his strength, intelligence, and complex mind. In the manga, Shanks saves Luffy, the protagonist from a sea monster and tragically loses his arm. Instead of panicking, and taking the situation seriously, Shanks thinks of his arm as not that important compared to Luffy's life (McKeown 39). "It is just an arm" said shanks to the frightened kid Luffy, who appeared to be shocked out by shanks' reaction but felt safe as he hugged him at the same time. Shanks proved that he adopted the sense of sublime via embracing his littleness (despite being one of the strongest characters in *One Piece*) compared to the universe's greatness (Oda 48).

This chapter's aim was about navigating existentialism and the philosophy of the sublime in the field of literature. This chapter tackled existentialism and tried to provide a brief insight into it . Moreover, it tackled Nietzsche and Sartre's main impacts. Then, it discussed existentialism's main characteristics in literature. Finally, it tackled the concept of the sublime and its role in literature.

### **III. Manga and anime Background: It's relation with literature and its impacts on culture**

The modern view towards the Japanese culture regards anime and manga as the most significant features that stood out in a hyper globalized world. Anime and Manga are major economic export that boosted the Japanese economy which integrated this industry into the global economy. The last decades witnessed a widespread for anime studios that dominated this industry internationally and even managed to open up many

centers outside Japan. Such as Mappa Studio which had launched a sector in the USA to reinsure its dominance in the anime industry (Schodt 9). During these last decades, the rates of manga readers and anime fans were extremely high.

To begin with, to better understand the importance of manga and anime a simple definition must be given to illustrate their status, whether for anime as a major genre of animation industry or manga which is the Japanese given name to the graphics and comic books (Duhigg 31). It is more than necessary to start with understanding the specific form of sequential art that is concerned with storytelling which manga easily provides giving the fact that it is a type of literature. Moreover, it is a tool that allows readers to focus on capturing a moment or invoking an emotional response that is present in stand-alone pieces of art. However, in a wide understanding of the word graphic, it is essential to disentangle the slight difference between the term comics and manga which surpasses that manga is exclusively a Japanese production. To begin with, there is no distinct medium known as comics (Herlander 20).

Comics are a medium used to express ideas through juxtaposing images that are often combined with texts or other visuals in a given sequence. As it is mentioned, comics frequently take the form of sequences of panels of images. The text devices that are often used take the form of speech balloons, captions, and animatopea that takes the form of dialogue (Duncan et al. 3). According to the theorist Scott McCloud whose works are overwhelmed with graphics, manga, and comics mostly, there are many points to be taken into consideration when it comes to defining comics. He pointed out the fact that the term has been used to cover comic strips, comic books, stained glass, Grecian urns, cave paintings, tapestries, windows, and more (McCloud 22).

Notably, manga shares those qualities with comics. The simple definition of manga is the Japanese term that describes a comic format. Just like comics, manga contains age

categorization (Duncan et al.6). You can find adult manga or manga directed to kids under thirteen years old. Unlike comics, manga is written from right to left. It follows the Japanese writing system which is also from right to left (Duncan et al.8.) What makes manga quite popular lays in the fact that just like comics it offers readers the choice of mature content where a reader can be encountered with deep philosophical ideas, controversial arguments, and even philanthropy; however, philanthropy is illustrated as Hentai which is the Japanese word that describes sexual literary engagement within the story (Clear 41).

Astonishingly, in comics and manga there are many disparate forms that have been treated as a single medium for several reasons. As both, manga and comics tell a kind of story and follow a given stream of events; there is however a focus on carefully chosen moments which is called a panel. It is that discernible space that contains a moment or a scene of the story that is captured within. Additional formal similarities between comics and manga may include the use of elements of composition such as perceived distance, arrangements, angle of view, and other effects (Clear 49). However, as comics are well known for their vivid colors manga takes only the form of black and white.

Moreover, manga emphasis Eastern Asian customs and habits in drawing characters and their attitudes; while comics take a western form (Kelts 7-13).

Tracing the root of graphics and particularly comics and manga, one should start by clarifying some important characteristics of this genre. However, there are two main levels that stood out from the rest and captured the attention and they are the artistic features and the commercial phenomenon. Moreover, to understand more manga and its impact as an influential literary genre under the category of graphics it is important to link it with comics and concentrate on their history (Chute 4). For, despite having some

slight differences between manga and comics, the similarities they share such as in the way the story and events are introduced or how characters are portrayed.

One can follow their historical development in order to shed the light on the role of graphics and its status in the world of literature. Concerning comics, it is possible to divide history into different eras. Notably, each era has its own characteristic that makes it unique and quite enriching to the heritage of graphics. Furthermore, each era overlaps with another era which causes a collision ,and its results are based on the fact that some of the previous characteristics start to fade slowly when entering a new one (Chute 7).

Since this art form, graphics which includes comics and manga, depends mainly on commercial success which by its turn captures attention towards the artistic value of the work; it was essential to create a significant fan base community in which it has certain division. As an example, comics are signified with three main ages which are the golden age during the 1940s, the silver age during the 1960s, and the bronze age during the 1980s. Even though, the case for manga is a bit implicit when it comes to age division; however, we can notice that just like comics, manga has its own ages that pass from golden to silver to bronze (Keller 27-33).

At the phase of its beginning, manga as comics relayed mainly on key characters events such as first appearances and deaths for the main character which often takes the form of a western superhero for comics or legendary samurai for manga. There is an opt to focus on major content changes in manga and comic content in order to have a wider view of this literary genre. For, it is a fact that their similarities surpassed their differences (Duncan et al. 22).

As manga was previously defined, we can however illustrate a simple basic definition for it which is, manga literally humorous comics, a Japanese comic strips

(Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary), originally meaning irreverent or irresponsible pictures of a sardonic nature used in 18th century Japan to describe risqué prints and hanging scrolls and further applied to Western style comics with frame sequencing and speech balloons (Hardy 51). The term now specifically relates to the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> century art form and industry of Japanese comics. It is sometimes confusingly applied in the West as anime (The Art Gallery of New South Wales 8).

As a matter of fact, graphics, even though in this case the main focus is on manga and comics given the fact that they are a part of graphics, might be defined as a hybrid word-and-image form in which two narrative tracks, one verbal and one visual, register temporality spatially (Hardy 64). Manga, in its English version, moves forward through the space of the page concerning time and events. One major example that illustrates this matter is the successive manga of *One Punch Man* by Yusuke Murata & ONE who created the manga that this research is concerned with *Mob Psycho 100*. Moreover, manga seems to have through its progressive counterpoint of presence and absence, packed panels also called frames alternating with gutters this point is also a similarity with Comics (Chute 2).

When it comes to manga there is a vital consideration for its both literary and artistic value. While manga holds a significant amount of drawings, mainly black and white with techniques that develop each year which have a major artistic value through aesthetics, there was an arguable question on whether it has some of the literary qualities that make it qualified to be categorized as literature or not? even though, the answer is an obvious yes, manga was always a subject matter for those who denied its role in literature. However, years of progress in art, style of writing, deep philosophical ideas, in addition to the great scripts delivered on each page, made manga quite competent to be signified as a fantastic type of literature (Napier 33).

In fact, many scholars depended on manga to explain philosophical ideas and their role in literature such as Jordan Peterson's famous discussion for the arc of pain in manga *Naruto* by Massashi Kishimoto. In fact, it was the same answer, a plain yes for yet another significant question which was on whether any manga has the kinds of values that are essential in great literature, for example, being well-written and having the depth of characterization (Babauta 17).

Given the high status of literature and the wide space it takes in culture, in addition to, its inspirational nature much of the contemporary discourse about manga supported its influential role as a genre of literature (Babauta 23). It is not a surprise then that many theorists have claimed that manga, as well as comics, count as literature. The great comics' artist Will Eisner believed that "in every sense, this misnamed form of reading is entitled to be regarded as literature because the images are employed as language" (Eisner 5).

Theorists such as Poltras and Keith Oliver believed that manga is also important and should not be regarded as less than literature. In his article entitled as *The Importance of Manga and Anime*, Oliver displayed how manga is but a great enhancement to the world of literature giving great examples such as the example of manga *One Piece* by Eichiro Oda which did not succeed only commercially; in fact, it out beat other literary genres. It sold over than 500 million copies around the world and was translated into 41 languages, but also artistically and literary in discussing great philosophical ideas and using many literary items that made it one of the most literary works of all times (Condry 77).

In fact, when talking about manga, we should also tackle anime. Japanese animation or as it is known worldwide with *anime* (Japanese: アニメ) is a Japanese

film/television that often has a science fiction subject (Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary). It is a famous type of TV show/animation that is made in specialized studios in Japan, most importantly Ghibly studios, Mappa, Wit, and Mad House. There whereas artists, scenarists, mangakas, computer-animators, and CGI specialists work constantly to create products that are highly consumed all over the globe and highly valued whether in the ratings of viewers or by the critics inside and outside Japan. Anime often expresses entities of the Japanese pop-culture (Craig 4).

Author Herlander Elias claimed that anime is special by its contents and the way it's presented, visual arts, features, the flow of events, he also believed that it is not representative of all animation films produced in Japan. In his book *The Anime Galaxy: Japanese Animation As New Media*, Elias argued that "...its popular language and the format it imprints on fictions relying on motion, participation and subjectivity" (Herlander 65).

Furthermore, many other scholars talked about anime and attempted to present a sufficient definition. In his "*Contemporary Anime in Japanese Pop Culture*", Gilles Poltras introduced anime as

(1) anime is simply the word used by the Japanese for all animation, without regard to its nation of origin; and (2) outside of Japan, the common use of the word anime is to refer specifically to Japanese animation" and then insists on using the second definition in his essay. (Poltras 48)

In addition to giving a definition, Poltras attempted explicitly to trace the origins of anime. He argued that anime has no special origin yet it can be traced back to the "Meiji era" which spanned the late nineteenth and early twentieth century's when

“there was a rich flow of technical and artistic knowledge between the Japanese, European, and American cultures.” (PoItras 49). In fact, Polras’s statement is nothing but major evidence that supports the claims that link anime to literature.

Giving the fact that, Meji era or even Edo era, two famous eras of ancient Japan the first lasted between 1870 to 1931 and the second was between 1680 to 1720 are a significant part of the eastern Asian history and history had been always a raw material that fed literary medium. One can easily make the link since these eras are but a good historical material that helps in creating anime, too. To say it plainly, anime unarguably has a solid relationship with literature (PoItras 61).

Even though the anime depends mainly as a primary source on manga which explains the significant relationship between the two; it can however depend on other sources besides mangas such as data books, light novels, and other sources (Steinberg 244). In fact, anime and manga depend on many sources just like literature which takes inspiration from many fields; anime does the same fields that contain history, music, medical studies, sciences, video games Japanese literally works, European or American novels (Keller 68).

Anime can also be original, which means that it may lack original manga to rely upon as it is the case with anime *Easter Egg* (2020) or we may call it original when the anime stops quoting from the manga and relies only on characters, while creating a different flow of events from the original source as it is the case with the famous anime *The Promise Never Land* (2020). Therefore, it is only right to consider that stories of both anime and manga can be based on legend, ancient plays novels, history, and recited tales (PoItras 61). Scholar Mark W. McWilliams proposed an argument based on the many similarities between manga and anime.

He believed that this relationship is of a mixed or hybrid nature. In his book, particularly in the introduction of *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime*, McWilliams attempted to explain his point based on the ideas of another scholar, David Carrier who wrote *The Aesthetics of Comics*. He says that “they both (Manga and anime) blend the visual and the verbal into a unified whole, manga via a synthesis of text and images and anime through dialogue in cinematic live action” (McWilliams 3).

An analytical view towards McWilliams’s argument suggests that both manga and anime are indeed culturally hybrid. Since they were an evident consequence that appeared from the modern Japanese-Western contact (McWilliams 5). Their contact seems to be linked with Japan’s venerable tradition of caricature and sequential as well as, depicting the Japanese origins and the influence from the western styles, themes ,and visual culture.

Moreover, McWilliams considered that both manga and anime were forms of contemporary art that ultimately dissolve the impermeable line between high and low art ,and as a part of a mixed media, by this, we refer to a phenomenon of contemporary markets in which a single corporate conglomerate dominates by producing and distributing a wide variety of media products to its consumers, where entertainment intermingles with Japan’s increasingly globalized culture industry (McWilliams 6).

On the level of cultural influence, manga and anime currently are massively important around the global culture industry. In fact, due to their success ,many other Japanese exports such as films, series, TV dramas, and even books are now being widely consumed and followed around the world. Due to cultural globalization, the western interest in manga and anime had grown gigantically (Craig 14). As an

example, a statistic showed that manga *One Piece* was the best selling piece of literature in 2020 in France, whereas the famous anime *Daemon Slayer* had the highest rates of views in South America in 2019( Craig 19).

McWilliams was able to propose an extremely interesting point concerning cultural globalization, he believed that “For a long time, “globalization” was synonymous with “Americanization”. However, and during the last decade, Japanese animation is becoming a trend as a dominant cultural and economic force and a part of the global flow of Japanese popular culture (McWilliams 14). In fact, anime and manga helped the Japanese that generally take the form of the preserving one, to spread widely just like Hollywood movies helped and promoted the American culture (McKeown 47).

Through the years, manga and anime were extremely successful in capturing the attention of fans in Japan and even elsewhere, mostly in every single country there are anime fans. This success and this huge fan base did not appear by coincidence. Anime and manga’s terrific development through the years according to the technological advancement and the demands of each epoch helped a great deal in making a solid fan base.

People of all ages expressed their love for anime and manga (McKeown 49). As a matter of fact, the infatuation with manga and anime attraction was never a consequence of eastern mystical sense of harmony with nature, but rather a solid result of manga and anime’s great ability in delivering expressions and senses in a way many other literary genres did not. The French scholar Jean Marie Bouissou has argued that “...aesthetic of excess, conflict, imbalance, and overt sensuality” (Bouissou 25).

**Conclusion:**

This chapter tackled existentialism and tried to provide a brief insight into it. Moreover, it tackled Nietzsche and Sartre's main impacts. Then, it discussed existentialism's main characteristics in literature. Furthermore, it tackled the concept of the sublime and its role in literature. Additionally, it appears that considering that both manga and anime as a genre in literature is no longer a point that caused controversy.

As it was discussed, manga and anime made their special mark on the world of literature based on many significant characteristics that made them stand out as a principal category of graphics. Furthermore, the significant role of anime and manga in promoting the Japanese culture and becoming a worldwide literary genre whereas different cultures were met was expressed in this chapter.

## **Chapter II:**

### **Existentialism in Anime *Mob Psycho 100***

#### **Introduction:**

This chapter will tackle elements of existentialism and sublime in manga and anime *Mob Psycho 100*. First, it will give a brief overview of the plot in both manga and anime additionally, it will attempt to break down the characters to get them closer to the analysis. Second, it will illustrate elements of existentialism in manga and anime and provide examples. Moreover, it will illustrate the elements of sublime in the manga and anime based on an analytical approach.

#### **I. Manga and Anime *Mob Psycho 100*: a brief overview**

Before tackling existentialism and the sublime in *Mob Psycho 100*, we need first to express its form and content on the level of manga and the way it was presented in the anime. Some successful animes and mangas received wide praise in the last decade and the manga and anime *mob psycho 100* was no exception. As a matter of fact, *Mob psycho 100* works stand out from other works because he makes readers or anime viewers pose many important questions that are related to deep philosophical ideas. *Mob Psycho 100* centers on Mob who is an awkward middle school boy with natural-born psychic powers that makes him struggle with the quest of to control this power and when to use it.

Despite all these unique powers, mob's keeps it a secret from his school mates, he's not athletic, popular, and he doesn't believe in himself which makes him struggle with self-esteem issues. Mob's real name is Kageyama (影山茂夫, *Kageyama Shigeo in Japanese*), nicknamed "Mob" (モブ, *Mobu in Japanese*) appears to suffer at the beginning of the story, both mentally and psychological due to the fact that he struggles

to hide his super powers from other people but his family; and also due to peer pressure that a normal teenager receives while in school (ONE& Murata 1-19).

The manga and the anime successfully delivers a good message that Mob is actually struggling on a social form through the use of another character. Mob's brother goes to the same school as Mob; however, unlike Mob, he is quite normal and was born without any super powers. Mob's brother is a lot more popular than him because he's a perfect student, athletic, and isn't quite introverted or weird like mob. While following the story, especially in the first chapters; we get the notion that for Mob life is anything but desirable and yet he never complains or expresses any feelings of regrets or longing for any social success or even gaining popularity amongst his class mates like any ordinary teenager would have wished for. Within him our psychic abilities are so powerful that his brother worries that Mob will lose control one day and kill his entire family unconsciously (Clear 49).

However, the Mangakas brilliantly manages to convince readers that mob may turn into anything but a murderer or a violent criminal through the misuse of his powers. In the manga, we notice many unprecedented emotions which can be magnified into something lethal. However, despite experiencing these emotions, Mob proved his superpowers do not make him that unique character, but rather his personality, soft side, and ability to see good in others. In the manga the Mangakas make the readers understand this point very well through the use of other characters and provide it with powers just like Mob's. However, unlike him, these characters express vanity and misuse of their powers.

In fact, emotions in manga and anime *Mob Psycho 100* appear to be quite erratic giving the situation that Mob is in a crucial phase in his life which is the early years of adolescence and experiencing life in middle school. Although the manga

foreshadows many important feelings and emotions yet, the most expressive emotion that is highlighted quite often through the development of events is anger. For an ordinary middle school pupil in Mob's age, the righteous expression of anger might end in a way that may make him innate disagreements with his teachers, classmates, or even parents, or even in extreme cases they would relieve their anger and stress through behaving in an aggressive way such as starting a fight with their classmates or even bully on them.

However, things are quite different for our main character. For a boy who's quite uncategorized as an ordinary middle school pupil like mob; dealing with anger or jealousy or any inner demon that may possess him over even for just a second can mean the end of someone's life. Being born with super psychic powers that may be fantastic in a given teen's view is not easy to handle especially when it comes to the truth losing your focus, or not experiencing severe anger issues would expose Mob and his relatives, family or friends, to danger and they may face the menace of death and destruction.

Through the manga as well as the anime, Mob seems to understand very well that letting his psyche power dominates his daily life is not a favorable idea as many would believe. Giving the shy nature of Mob and the awkward situation he often finds himself through, as well as the social dilemma he faces in his school especially on the level of making a conversation with his classmates or teachers without feeling very anxious, his power may help him a great deal in making his life quite easier. However, Mob grasped that as long as his power represents a grace it may also be a curse.

In the course of the development of events, we come to understand Mob's view towards his gift, when the Mangakas illustrate how the psyche power is a curse if it was misused. In the course of the story, some characters appeared to possess a similar gift like Mob's although; Mob is considered to be the strongest amongst them. However,

psychics in *Mob Psycho 100* have become obsessed with their abilities. The rush of energy, the thrill of using power beyond normal people's capacities, and the possibility to gain wealth, fame as well as being able to satisfy their ego were all unhindered tempting motives for these characters but not to Mob.

He seems to be the only one who's immune to these selfish desires. For him, with the help of his mentor, Regan knew that as much as his abilities are quite significant and may change many things on the personal level and could help him fulfill what makes him different; it can be used for a greater cause. For someone who's easily manipulated, Mob seems to be strangely immune to being evoked into actions of violence. Given his peaceful nature, in addition to his mentor's help, Mob thinks of violence as a last option; however, despite the fact that Mob resents violence very much.

However, Mob had found himself quite often in situations, when he was forced to use violence. Mob's mentor helped him to understand that as much as his ability can be destructive and causes horror to ordinary people; it may be only used in noble causes. Mob grasped that with great power come to great responsibility. Mob believed in the exclusivity of using his power which means engaging in violence and fights. This exclusivity was set in controlling his power since its launch is quite connected to the explosion of deep emotions such as deep anger or deep fear, and using it to help others whether from ghosts or other villain characters who try to harm innocent people. Yet, the massive problem that faced Mob lays in the fact of dealing with his power; since it is in many forms related to the status of his inner state and the mass of emotions he experiences.

As a matter of fact, nobody can make Mob fight until his feelings boil over to 100%. As a result, his power is unleashed without the slightest resemblance of control.

Mob's suppressed feelings will explode outwards if not addressed towards a given villain. If someone relates to mob then they may confirm that human beings at some point of their life time may have moments where they hit 100 % which means, they experience an explosion within their inner state and finally unleash a massive reaction. Critical reading of the manga may put us in front of some various good questions that should be posted in such situations that people may find themselves within such as how they really felt? Or did something incredible happen if they ever wondered why they acted the way they did? Or even if they ever felt like they can never quite speak their minds or can't relate to any of that?

The answer to these questions lays in a simple answer which understands which philosophy the manga is based upon.

In such manga or the anime adaptation, the Mangakas depended on both existentialism and the philosophy of the sublime. In fact, manga and anime *Mob Psycho 100* stands out from other works in the same literary genre, in other words, mangas in the same category Shonen, Comedy, drama, adventure, or super in many terms, most notably mirroring human emotions. Mob is but a great assimilation for any given person who has trouble in terms of connecting with his emotions. It is not a mistake to consider the mob psycho universe as an interesting place, due to the unique diversity it possesses.

The setting is far away from being traditional; even though, the main character is just a middle school boy who is trying to deal with his complex emotions while entering a new phase in his life that was adolescence. There are spooky ghosts and evil spirits doing bad things such as possessing innocent people and forcing them to harm others. These demons exist on the other side of reality the side that most ordinary people cannot notice.

However, they seem to be visible enough psychics who can detect them. These entities are but an interesting parallel to the emotions in our heads since they're quite unpredictable. Furthermore, these entities represent a menace since they can be unleashed if they're not kept under control. In the word, that the Mangakas make the characters' inner demons manifest on the outside. In many perspectives, *Mob Psycho 100*'s popularity precedes itself in terms of literary quality. It is considered to be one of the best well written merits in the last decade. Furthermore, Yusuke Morata's art work and art style, especially in this manga are considered to be one of the finest. However, to relate the work's success only to its fine quality which means, well written and well drawn will not do *Mob psycho 100* justice.

The most significant reason for the wide success that *Mob Psycho 100* received is hanged to the fact that the manga readers or the anime viewers can relate to characters, as One, the author of the manga managed to mirror complex human emotions most brilliantly. To say the least about this matter, both the manga and the anime adaptation foreshadowed humanity's fragility in a setting that is considered to be quite surreal whereas psychic abilities and paranormal activities are the main themes. Furthermore, the surrealistic art style which Yusuke Murata created to match one's extraordinary writing style was a major point that drew attention to *Mob Psycho 100*.

*Mob Psycho 100* (Japanese: モブサイコ100, pronounced in Japanese Mobu Saiko Hyaku) is a Japanese manga series written and illustrated by One (the writer) and Yusuke Murata (the artist).

It was serialized on Shogakukan's Ura Sunday website, a famous Japanese site whereas famous Shonen Mangas are published from April 2012 to December 2017. It has been also available online on Shogakukan's mobile app manga One since December 2014. Shogakukan compiled its chapters into sixteen tankōbon volumes. A Tankōbon

単行本, in Japanese ,means an independent/standalone book. It refers to the Japanese term for a book that is not part of a series, in the case manga *Mob Psycho 100* it is considered to be a tankōbon, for unlike other mangas it was not an extension of other famous book series or graphic series and it was an authentic creation originated by the mangakas One and Murata, the famous manga *My Hero Academy* is a good example to illustrate the opposite idea since it's a part of long series of superhero graphic series.

However, tankōbon in modern Japan became a term that is at often rate used in reference to independent volumes of a single manga series; that means it's related to most series that made its first appearance as individual chapters in a weekly or monthly manga magazine with other works before being collected into tankōbon containing several chapters each. Hence, it is not a mistake to consider manga *Mob psycho 100* a tankōbon concerning the form it appeared with.

Furthermore, the manga was released in a special format which is the kanzenban format (完全版 in Japanese). This format refers to a perfect complete edition. In fact, it is considered to be another term that is often used to denote a type of special release in the domain of manga, not all the works follow the same format. A kanzenban release is generally A5 size, 148 mm × 210 mm, 5.8 in × 8.3 in, and will typically reproduce individual chapter covers, color pages, and side-stories from its original magazine run features that are often omitted or converted to grayscale in standard tankōbon releases which happened to manga *Mob Psycho 100*, when One added side stories in 2018 and changed some colors in many chapters.

While the aizōban appellation which is the other famous format that other famous Shonen mangas adapt emphasizes the value of the volumes; the term kanzenban emphasizes their completeness though it is likewise generally reserved for popular

manga and *Mob Psycho 100* was not an exception of this popularity since it was one of the most complete Shonen mangas of all times.

## **II. *Mob Psycho 100: An Insight to The Plot and Characters***

As mentioned before, *Mob Psycho 100* is considered to be one of the best mangas in the last decade. What contributed to this success is the well-crafted plot and well designed characters. The plot of *Mob psycho 100* as much as it looks plain and basic and quite the Shonen category type of plot who is a teenage boy with supernatural power versa evil, it is quite complex. This complexity was fed by the well written side stories of the different main characters. The summary of the story would go as follow, Mob who was born with extraordinary psychic power that makes him able to do many things starting from bending a spoon just by looking at it to capture lost spirits especially the evil ones ,and talking to them as well as fighting them, to even flying if he reached to the level one hundred percent. However, this power is connected to his inner feelings and deep sorrow or anger may cause Mob to lose his control of his power hence, destroying anything in his way (ONE 14).

Mob kept his super power a secret from his class mates or friends in the beginning he had not, because he was unpopular, awkward, introverted, and shy for many reasons. The main reason is that Mob wanted to be popular and loved but not because of his superpower. One day Mob meets a con man yet, a very funny and kind heart 31 year-old man whose name is Riegan, he is arguably the protagonist of the story since he appears as much as Mob narrates the event all the time, and the story is told from his perspective ,not Mob's. However, the Mangaka One confirmed that Reigan is a main character, while Mob is the protagonist. Reigan is very infatuated with the world of psychics. He is ultimate purpose is to help others, despite having no real skills in

communicating with spirits let alone kicking them away even though, Reigan deceived some clients before meeting Mob to gain money.

Being easily manipulated, Mob falls under the spell of Reigan who is a master persuader. Mob starts working with Reigan as psychics and calls him master, in Japanese master is a word that refers to high respect and it means that someone will become a disciple for someone else with wisdom and experience (ONE 23). Despite, lacking skills and abilities, Reigan is a very smart guy and extremely nice. He understood Mob's struggle with his powers and convinced him with using them only to help other people such as his clients who appear to be really suffering. Thanks to Reigan, Mob succeeded in gaining new friends in his school when he decided to accept the athlete club invitation and starting interacting with them, and even he gained a friend that is a boy his age having the same quality of superpower but he misused it.

Thus, Mob after indulging in a fight with him and defeating him managed to persuade him that their power should be used for good purposes only (Smart 18). The climax of the story is when a very strong opponent creates a psychic organization and tries to destroy the world; however, he keeps this as an ulterior motive from his followers since he wanted to kill them in the end, because he is a selfish villain, the other major point is that Mob's younger brother becomes a part of this organization. It looks ironic because Mob had always expressed how much he wanted to be like his ordinary brother, while his brother developed feelings of jealousy and envy from Mob's psychic powers until he reached a point to join this organization.

After a quite fascinating fight and Mob reaching level 100; Mob defeats the big head of the organization. However, Mob became unaware and was about to destroy everything around him until Reigan comes along and his super powers spark surprisingly after three decades, unlike Mob's power; Reigan's power is about being

able to navigate through the world of spirits (Smart 27). Reigan was able to obtain Mob's spirit and actually met his parents who both died in a tragic accident that explains why Reigan was so obsessed with the world of psychics and helping others because the child inside was never healed from the trauma of losing his parents and never actually making a funeral for them because their bodies were not found (ONE 39).

Mob and Reigan's spirits returned to the real world ,and Mob actually wakes up, but this time he earns the confidence and something is changed in his quite trembling unsure personality. We watch a time skip in the anime and we see how Mob managed to gain friends and takes the girl he likes to the prom, not because of his super power but because of his amazing personality. As for Reigan, we see him travel from one place to another to help people in need with his brand new power, and that marked the end of the story (Smart 33).

### **III. Elements of Existentialism in *Mob Psycho 100***

The first element that features existentialism in *Mob Psycho 100* lays in the fact that the characters always find themselves asking questions that reflect an existential crisis. Mob the main character kicked off his first appearance in the first scene with a heavy question, Why me? Why us humans for that matter? This question, as rhetoric as it sounds aims to reflect existentialism in this literary work. As a matter of fact, there is no meaning or purpose behind Mob having all that psychic power. It was his fate that dragged him into that situation. Mob's curiosity shows that characters in *Mob Psycho 100* tend to find the greater meaning in anything they go through. Reigan as an example, often asks himself if what he was doing is of any worth? While Mob's brother would ask him why? Why he was not born powerful like Mob?

While Mob's rival then later on, a friend had been always wondering how things would it be if he was born ordinary without any special powers? Would his classmates still pay him the same attention? Or would he be still popular among girls if he was an ordinary student? Those questions are all purposeless and yet, we notice that characters are striving to find life's meaning. However, one must know according to the existential theory that things happen in life without carrying any meaning. In addition to these questions that illustrate existentialism in *Mob Psycho 100*, both the manga and the anime navigated through themes that are considered to be mainly related to existentialism (Cooper 11-14).

Through the flow of events and the way that the characters were introduced by the Mangakasor even the way they behave in the story concerning their attitudes, the situations they find themselves in, their inner and exterior struggles, the way they look to life within the story, and the options they prefer to choose based on their philosophical assumptions, existentialism can be depicted and noticed quite easily. In fact, there are many themes in *Mob Psycho 100* that illustrate existentialism; however, the Mangakas did not make them entirely consistent with one other. And that was another genius way to illustrate existentialism more that is to say that life is quite inconsistent, meaningless, and purposeless at least within the setting of the Mangakas; hence, the themes also stand for this inconsistency.

To begin with, one of the most important themes is quite obvious within this work. It is nonetheless, the theme of the importance of the individual. Notably, the leading question in this case is, what does it mean to be existing as a human? in *Mob Psycho 100*, many characters asked this question for instance, in chapter three in the manga Mob asked Reigan directly "Master, what does it really mean to exist as an ordinary human in this world? (ONE& Murata 31). Of course, Reigan had no answer

for such a hard existential question, but this question was of a big value in the series for he revealed an important existential element. Furthermore, by posing this question, Mob accidentally revealed that there is always a daunting issue of what constitutes a meaningful way of life in a world in which all the talk of purposes has become quite obscure (Bakewell 9,11,17).

Another major element of existentialism in this literary work is the importance of choice.

In *Mob Psycho 100*, we notice that this element is colorfully expressed. The famous scholar Karl Rahner insisted that in literary works that express existentialism, characters are described as one giant decision. The reason for this statement is the fact that characters generally are constituted by their decisions which was the case in *Mob Psycho 100*. Moreover, in any literary work including works of manga and in a most specific way, the manga of *Mob Psycho 100*, characters cannot appeal to the system of traditions and social habits of that given community as deceptively furnishing instruction for the options they take in their life. As an example, Mob and Reigan chose to use their gifts for the common good that was their personal choice. They never felt that they were obliged giving the fact that they were born and raised in a very conservative and polite community such as the Japanese one. All their decisions were based on their personal desires and morals which was directly linked to the fact that they had a free choice (Kaufmann 22;29).

In addition to these elements, there were many themes that marked existentialism such as anxiety regarding life, death, extreme situations, and contingencies. The famous scholar Tillich expressed this point when he tackled the theme of existentialism in literature in his formulation in a most elegant way. He mentioned that in a given work of literature, anxiety, view towards life and death, and the extreme situations that appear

on the surface are speaking loud due to the threat of non- being. By this, he meant that there are various ways for a given character to lose its essence, true being, and the elements that construct it physically, mentally, and spiritually (Kaufmann 29). In *Mob Psycho 100*, this point represents a major theme, for each time Mob experience a deep sadness or deep anger caused by his intuitive anxiety; the level of becoming a full super psychic rise to the point of one hundred.

Each time Mob gets near the level one hundred, he loses a part of his conscious, spirit, and physical appearance from a human boy into what's almost looks like one of the ghosts in the Japanese folklore. Hence, Mob's anxiety prefigures his ultimate loss of being which by all terms expresses an existential problem. Furthermore, Heidegger thought that experiencing life and death as a human means that the characters find themselves thrown into a world that provides no obvious logic, nor an obvious moral within its structure. Those things are completely related to the characters' view towards life and death and the extreme situations that they may face which in many cases carry no sense of logic within it(Heidegger 36).

Therefore, it is only right to consider this point as a reference of existentialism in literary works. In *Mob Psycho 100*, the point that Heidegger tackled was present. In *Mob Psycho 100*, characters have different views towards life and death. Hanazawa, Mob's rival think that life is but a worm up to his upcoming great journey as psychic in the afterlife, while characters like Riegan, Suzuki, and the talking ghost Dimple have a similar view towards life and death and they all agreed they were purposeless ( concepts of life and death) (Heidegger 36).

These examples illustrate clearly elements of existentialism within the plot. Elements of existentialism are still to be counted in *Mob Psycho 100*; however, the most notable ones appear to be of great importance. Those elements which include themes

like meaning and obscurity, authenticity, and the statue of religion. For the theme of meaning and absurdity, we notice that in *Mob Psycho 100* characters are constantly striving for fulfillment. Sartre mentioned that the unfulfillable desire of a given character expresses meaning and absurdity within a context (Frankl 28).

Characters in *Mob Psycho 100* appear to be forced to ask questions by the very nature of their lives as an example Mob always asks questions that are related to his powers and by the yearning for orientation and purpose in their lives for instance, Mob always asks Reigan about the purpose of life and does it really have any special orientations? However, there were no deceiving answers for Mob or other characters' deep questions that were related to looking for purpose. Thus, meaning seems to be constructed through courageous choices like the fact that Riegan decides to help Mob and fight evil psychics even though, he was so frightened most of the time in the face of absorbed situations (Sartre 27). In addition to this theme, the theme of authenticity is a massive mark of existentialism in *Mob Psycho 100*. Jean-Paul Sartre believed that, opposition to bad faith is a good example of authenticity.

In *Mob Psycho 100*, almost all the main characters deep down opposed self deception and bad faith. For instance, Mob came to understand that facing up the situations that he went through being shy and lonely, being a victim of bullying, not being able to control his powers very well is quite authentic rather than making everything worse with self deception like Hanazawa did. Since he had a similar power like Mob, Hanazawa almost went through the same situations that Mob went through. However, unlike Mob he was not true to himself. Instead of facing his problems, he ignored them and convinced himself that all that happened because he was cursed with his psychic powers.

The statue of religion and atheism is another major theme in *Mob Psycho 100* that illustrates existentialism. Even though, it is a controversial theme in literature and amongst existentialist themselves yet, it remains one of the pillar themes of existentialism in literature. In *Mob Psycho 100*, we notice that characters were forced to make a decision that creates meaning in a spiritual manner. Existentialists believe that the world is too small for more than one free reality. This means that, in their opinion, that either God or humans are free. However, it is not right to say that they are both free. This leads to intolerable issues of the audacity, since denying the freedom of both God and humans at once would create a chaotic existence.

The famous preacher Calvin and the famous thinker Spinoza believed those human beings are determined, in order to do justice for the freedom of God. In literature, this idea is vaguely navigated by many authors. In *Mob Psycho 100*, One& Murata illustrated how religion and atheism represent a controversial issue, hence an element of existentialism. Some characters such as Hanizawa illustrated that there is no reality of God's existence (De Beauvoire 64).

In chapter thirteen he told Mob: I don't think there is a Kami Sama, Kami Sama is the Japanese reference for the word God. If he really existed then, why some people and ghosts harm other people and get away with it? This line expressed Hanizawa idea that atheism is the answer while religion was never an option for him. While in Mob's case, he believed that Kami Sama or simply God does exist and the fact that he was provided with his unique powers to protect innocent people is but a strong proof of his existence (Crowell 79).

To conclude, *Mob Psycho 100* is a work of literature that appears to include many elements of existentialism within it. Both, the plot and the character and sometimes the art style of Yusuke Murata had expressed existentialism. Even though, there were many

themes that reflected existentialism; however, the most- notable ones were the importance of the individual, the importance of choice, anxiety regarding life, death, contingencies, and extreme situations, meaning and absurdity, the statute of religion ,and atheism (Camus 4).

In addition to that, the manga was very successful in displaying the sense of Marxism that the latter shares with existentialism.

The manga clearly displays how the characters possess a cognitive understanding of their community's collective needs. Such as the fact that Mob takes on his shoulders the responsibility of representing the goodness of his community against the ultimate villain of the manga. (Hsieh 39). Mob believed that his collective understanding will spare his family, friends, and members of the community will spare them from falling into the superstitious common thinking that usually accompanies the religious beliefs, for his power is beyond imagination and not all characters can understand its nature very well (Crowell 44).

As a matter of fact, this similarity with the Marxist sense made the sense of existentialism in the manga quite related to themes of frustration, agony, and despair. We notice that Mob suffers from sorrows no matter how cheerful he attempted to be. In fact, what brings him all this sorrow is mainly related to the fact that he believed that it was his responsibility to understand and sympathize with the collective needs of his community. Because he possesses a unique power, and they do not (Haidt 41). Furthermore, the major ideas that those existentialist authors brought to literature lay in the point that human beings are a synthesis of opposites. That means that existentialists looked to human as significant pairs of opposites.

They also had commonly used this perspective in their literary works and called it "The infinite and finite writing". Existentialist authors and novelists believed that

characters possess a synthesis in which the finite factor is the limiting factor and the infinite factor the expanding one (Haidt 51) .They thought that the infinite factor in a given character especially the main character in a given literary work corresponds to many conditions such as the possibility and the capacity to envisage and display new thoughts and idea (Bakewell 17).

## **Conclusion**

This chapter tackled existentialism and tried to provide a brief insight on it. Moreover it tackled and discussed its main characteristics in literature. As it was discussed, manga and anime made their special mark on the world of literature based on many significant characteristics in the literature that made them stand out as a principal category of graphics. Furthermore the significant role of anime and manga in promoting the Japanese culture and becoming a worldwide literary genre whereas different cultures were met was expressed in this chapter.

## Chapter III: The Sublime in Mob Psycho 100

### Sublime in Manga

#### I. Sublime as the main Theme in Mob psycho

In addition to the fact that *Mob Psycho 100* carries some of the deepest and most complex ideas that a fine work of literature is ought to the truth about it is related to the fact that, it is one of the most hilarious and thought-provoking works. *Mob Psycho 100* explores what it means to live a fulfilling life by exploring the unique challenges faced by an overpowered protagonist (ONE 12).

Unlike other overpowered protagonists in Shonen Mangas, Shigeo Kageyama, or as he is known simply as Mob finds a way to make peace with his abilities and get satisfaction out of life in spite of them. The question that should be posted in this situation is how does he do it? More technically, what kind of philosophical idea that makes Mob able to find satisfaction despite all the factors being overpowered, shy, introverted, and facing many social challenges that makes it nearly impossible for him to find fulfillment.

Being a middle school student who was born with psychic powers that give him a near-godlike ability to manipulate the world around him is more or less quite stressful. The young psychic Mob spends his afternoons working for Reigan Arataka, a con man masquerading as a powerful psychic. From the beginning of their time together, Reigan tells Mob that he must never use his powers against another human being. He told Mob once “However, if you misuse a power that's all too great, you'll only destroy yourself” (ONE& Murata 21). And then he added “That's why I'm teaching you how to control your powers, so they don't go berserk”(ONE& Murata 21). Those lines express fairly well that *Mob Psycho 100* is actually adopting the philosophy of Sublime.

A good proof that *Mob Psycho 100* contains many elements that refer to the philosophy of the sublime lays in the fact that Mob spends his days trying to live the life of a normal teenager, repressing the rage that fuels his powers which in spite of his best efforts, occasionally gets away from him. As a matter of fact, the literary sublime was always related to the expression of the Great Spirit and the power to provoke ecstasy in one's readers. *Mob Psycho 100* is the best example that provides readers or even anime viewers with that experience (Doran 48). One was highly praised for using a simple, yet elegant language, despite the fact that the story is in a quite modern setting and about teenagers who mostly appear to be b'w'keen on informalities, rather than a high prestigious language.

Furthermore, *Mob Psycho 100* significantly contained one of the most crucial elements of the sublime which is the sense of wonder the sense of wonder refers to the fact that a literary work contains what is known as an emotional and intellectual state which is frequently invoked in discussions of science fiction and philosophy. Many characters illustrated the sense of wonder in *Mob Psycho 100*, especially Reigan. Reigan often connected his words, ideas, and sometimes his dark humor to the principals and ideas of Asian philosophy. In the third volume of the manga which was adopted in episode seven in the anime, Reigan had a quite enduring philosophical discussion with another esper, an esper is a word that refers to a person with power like Mob's. The point of discussion was mainly about the major six philosophical ideas that the Buddha came up with which are life is suffering, benevolence, mercy and compassion, not making an effort, bamboo as wisdom, sublime (Doran 85).

Reigan beautifully discussed the term Kintsugi, which is the term that we are, ought to say it refers to sublime. Reigan asserted to the esper that psychics like him and Mob are like accidentally smashed pots by this he meant that they were accidentally

born with enormous power and so the pieces of these pots should not be ignored or thrown away by this, he meant that people like Mob are quite fragile despite having super power and should not be looked upon as monsters, nor should they be ignored.

Those pieces of this smashed pot should be carefully picked up, reassembled, and then glued together. This expression refers to the fact that Reigan was offering his friendship and help to this esper who misused his power just like he did with Mob (Sandner 82). However, it was the way Reigan had offered his help in a most brilliant way that invoked a philosophical discussion that made deference. This deference usually sets the line between works of literature. Generally, literary works of quality implement such impressions. Moreover, it is not a mistake to say that such a discussion between characters and such ideas that appear in the story are related to the sublime (Burke 73). Thus, this expression is standing as a great example that resembles the elements of the sublime in *Mob Psycho 100*.

In fact, like any other good literary works about overpowered characters, it appears that the espers' abilities in *Mob Psycho 100* are like a double-edged sword. If it was left unchecked, they make it easy for to believe that they are inherently better than other humans. Therefore, they deserve more than special treatment. However, this way of thinking leaves them feeling deeply unsatisfied no matter how much power or status they attain. Analytically, it appears that what these over powered psychics need is a reality check or simply a reminder that they are subject to the same set of rules as the rest of the human race. In other words, they need to limit their vanity and egoism. This can be achieved by an overwhelming experience with the sublime. The famous author Burke described the experience as a terrifying, yet ultimately pleasant feeling resulting from the healthy exercise of mind, body, and spirit (Burke 26-33).

## II. Implication and Elements of the Sublime in the Graphic Novel

### Mob Psycho

Usually, applying the sublime in a work of literature is related to Burke's expression that a mind that never experiences its own insignificance is, therefore, a weak mind. In *Mob Psycho 100*, readers come to understand that in the same way that a body gets weak without exercise that weakness is what allows melancholy, dejection, despair, and many other negative feelings. Burke claims that "The best remedy for all these evils is to exercise or labor, and labor is a surmounting"(Burke 28). This idea is navigated in *Mob Psycho 100* when we see that, unlike the deluded espers, Mob wants to do the difficult labor of integrating himself into the world and society, rather than trying to transcend it. Hence, he finally begins overcoming his fear and anxiety and finds some friends to help him do just that (Burke 31-37).

The mangakas One and Murata in their master piece *Mob Psycho 100* ask us to really think about what constitutes a good life which is the core essence of the philosophy of the sublime. Mob's struggles with his powers reveal that a fulfilling existence might not be as simple as getting whatever you want whenever you want it. In this work of literature, happiness is the result of deliberate struggle and growth. This point was a main theme in the manga and many characters expressed it mainly Reigan. Reigan was the main representation for the character that promoted to sublime.

It took him the adult whom Mob respects and looks up to; to remind him that he is just a kid and that he doesn't always have to bear the world on his shoulders. In the last volume, which was adopted in the last episode of the anime Reigan told Mob who was about to snap and destroy everything "Don't do it, Mob! In the end you're the one who's going to be suffering" (ONE& Murata 171). He also was the one who insisted that "When things go south, it's okay to runaway" (ONE & Murata 47). The idea that he

doesn't have to be at the center of the fight after all shocks Mob in to an experience of the sublime Burke would say he'd been properly astonished. It is true then to say that , *Mob Psycho 100* contained many elements that referred to the beauty of the sublime which was a significant addition to this manga that knew a great success.

## **General Conclusion:**

The Japanese Mangakas One and his artist partner Yusuke Murata brilliantly presented a master piece manga that was turned into a quite successful anime using approaches and elements that refers to deep philosophical movements in a way that had not been tackled before in the genre of manga. Their work gives a radical different view to the Shonen protagonist than the traditional view that puts the main character in a plain atmosphere that does not discuss deep philosophical ideas. Moreover, this manga uttered the view towards Shonen mangas through expressing both existentialism and the philosophy of the sublime.

Through their reevaluation of the genre, One and Murata were able to set many complex questions that are usually found in literary texts that navigate existentialism as the main theme and tackle the beauty of the sublime as a correspondent idea. Through philosophical examination, *Mob Psycho 100* managed to go beyond its artistic black and white pages and turned from an illustration of a story about a teenager with psychic super power into an authentic literary work that brilliantly expressed existentialism and the sublime. This genius expression is easily noticed by analyzing the characters that were held up as heroic either with psychic powers or even without it or in other case malicious even if they did not possess any super power.

In all cases, all these characters were confused and unsure; they all searched for meaning in one way or another. Based on this, we can truly notice a reflection of existential elements and other elements that are related to the philosophy of the sublime in the manga. Hence, this had shown the complexity of the work and its fabulous writing by One accompanied by one of the best artistic panels in the history by Murata.

All those efforts had a great impact on the content and made this work a true master piece.

From the analysis of *Mob Psycho 100* as a follow up of a relevant history of mangas and graphic novels in general, we can notice that this genre contains a lot of literary qualities that make it more than acceptable to call it a fine work of literature, despite its manga form and black and white drawings on pages. These qualities exist in other works as well in the medium of mangas where we can actually use the term graphic novel instead. However, just like any other genre in literature, not all works belong to the same category which is mangas that are similar in terms of complexity and success to manga *Mob Psycho 100* which proved to be indeed worthy of being called fine work of literature.

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