



The Zine



Issue 12 May 2021

Jesus in Danmachi

The Gosho Waifu

History of Anime

Much More...

The Legend of
Simon the Digger



Contents

Great Pretender Review By Cameron, James Thackway, Nick, and Hannah	2
Set Series Ratings	3
The Great Lasagne	4
History of Anime By Hannah Scullion	5
GJ-bu Character Relations Chart By Cameron and James Thackway	12
Memories of a Springtime Sun By James Thackway	13
Gainax Member Timeline By James Thackway	16
The Legend of Simon the Digger - Part 1 By Nick Stathakis	17
Love Letters of Autism By Joseph Wallen	21
Hayate no Gotoku Character Relations Chart By Cameron and James Thackway	24
The Gosho Waifu By Nick Stathakis	25
Jesus in Danmachi & More By Cameron Johnson	27
The Legend of Simon the Digger - Part 2 By Nick Stathakis	29
Why Catgirls are the Best By James Frost	36
Why Autists Love Anime By Joe Peake	37
Cammy's Picks from 2020 By Cameron Johnson	41
MadThad0890: A Brief History of a Broken Man By Joseph Wallen	46
The Appeal of Divine Waifus By Cameron Johnson	49
AnimeSoc's New Mascot	51
This Year in the Society By James Frost	53
Pumpkin Carving	55

CONNED AND SWINDLED IN: GREAT PRETENDER



CAMERON

Great Pretender was an interesting anime that we watched in society this year. I had seen a few episodes before and I thought it was good because it was unique and it was wild in its settings and themes. I really enjoyed its colour palette too. However, as we got further in the anime than I had seen, I started to like Edamame less and less as he became more annoying and pretentious. The ending of Great Pretender though was quite hilarious, it was very ridiculous and implausible but the way they brought all the previous characters back was a fun time.



JAMES

This show wasn't really my cup of tea to begin with, and it really struggled to string together a cohesive narrative for the main characters. There are some excellent individual scenes but as the show went on the plot became increasingly laughable, until the finale which flipped my opinion on the writing somewhat. The story is a meta-narrative troll, which nobody else seems to understand. The premise centres around con-artistry, and the finale brings this to a meta-crescendo by flipping the story around: conning the viewer with the most stupid ending in recent history. The signs of parody were there all along and we just missed them.



NICK

Great Pretender was not a big 'gotcha' at the end, and if it was, it was a badly executed one. Despite the quality art and animation, the protagonist was insufferable, the heists were formulaic and predictable, the arcs ended unsatisfyingly, and the ending was only funny to laugh *at* not *with*. Go watch Lupin III instead.

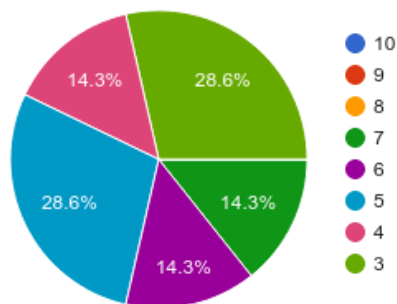


HANNAH

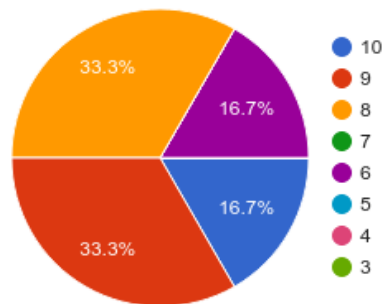
Great Pretender's first 3 arcs were fun enough, except for the main character, who was a lesson of endurance and patience in the face of unending idiocy. The fun and interesting side characters were constantly subjected to the whims of a moral grandstander with an IQ to match the edamame he was named after. However, the last arc brings everyone down to his level, creating a scenario so ridiculous that all you can do is dissolve into laughter, redeeming the watching experience. Absolutely hilarious.

GREAT PRETENDER

In the second semester **the society's** set series was Great Pretender, a Netflix original anime about scam artists. Let's see what people thought about it...



Great Pretender Ratings. Mean of 4.7



Lucky Star Ratings. Mean of 8.3

Those are some scathing numbers! The average score is only 4.7 making this the lowest rated show that has ever been a set series. At least we all got to eat some lasagne.

Much better received was our “unofficial set series”, Lucky Star, getting an average score of 8.3. It seems KyoAni really hit gold with this very chill slice-of-life.



The Great Lasagne





History of Anime

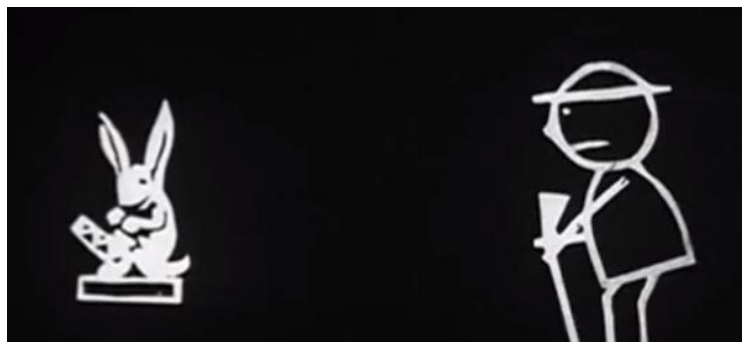
The Road to Astro Boy

Written by Hannah Scullion

Anime is a Japanese colloquialism. But what is it and where did it come from?

The history of anime crosses borders and seas, travelling across the world, but how did small drawings of dinosaurs and clowns lead to one of the largest and most successful entertainment industries in the world? That's what we're here to explore. Sadly, most examples of old animation in Japan have been lost to time, but through mentions and images we can put together the evolution of anime and how it became the medium we all know and love today.

The first full animation shown in Japanese cinemas is largely considered to be Emile Cohl's, *Les Exploits de Feu Follet* (Will-o'-the-wisp's Exploits) in 1912, although in Japan it was known as *Nipparu no henkei* (The Nipper's Transformations). Cohl was a well-known animator of the early 1900s, and this film is a continuation of his distinct 'chalkboard' style using the negatives of the photos of his drawings, so they appeared as white lines on a black background.



Les Exploits de Feu Follet- Emile Cohl (1911)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JwxEnVCex0M>

While this was the start of animation's presence in Japan, 1917 is when the first true Japanese animations started, with many being created within this year, all by the 3 fathers of anime: Shimokawa Oten, Kitayama Seitaro and Kouchi Jun'ichi. Both Shimokawa and Kitayama worked with regular film studios and were a mangaka and painter respectively, but Kouchi worked with his friend and fellow mangaka Kobayashi Kisaburo at what could be considered the first ever anime studio- Kobayashi Shoukai, although it only lasted until the end of 1917.

It is believed the first anime film to ever air in Japan was *Dekobō shingachō – Meian no shippai* or 'Dekobo's new picture book- Failure of a great plan' by Shimokawa, which was first released to cinemas in February 1917, but at least 16 other short films were also made this year and shown. Sadly, due to the 1923 Great Kanto Earthquake, nearly all of these works are lost, with only Jun'ichi's *Namakuragatana* or 'The Blunt Sword' from June 1917 remaining. A four-minute comedy short in which a foolish samurai with a blunt sword tries to figure why he can't defeat his enemies. The film uses cutout animation with some drawn animation, meaning that as opposed to the anime we know today which is drawn in layers of cel and placed on top of each other, this uses paper cut-outs over the drawn background and was a popular choice of animation at the time. Cut out animation was one of the most popular animation techniques at the time in Japan, as the other new invention, the 'light table' caused the animators that used it for significant periods to at least partially lose their vision.



The next era of animation is known as can be classed as the 'pre-war era' where animators struggled to keep up with large companies like Disney in the West whose films could be shown much cheaper in Japan, as their main profit source was the western world. This meant animators had to work cheaply, delaying the use of cels until the 1930s due to their cost, and the companies kept their crews small. Films were dependent on sponsorship, as well as

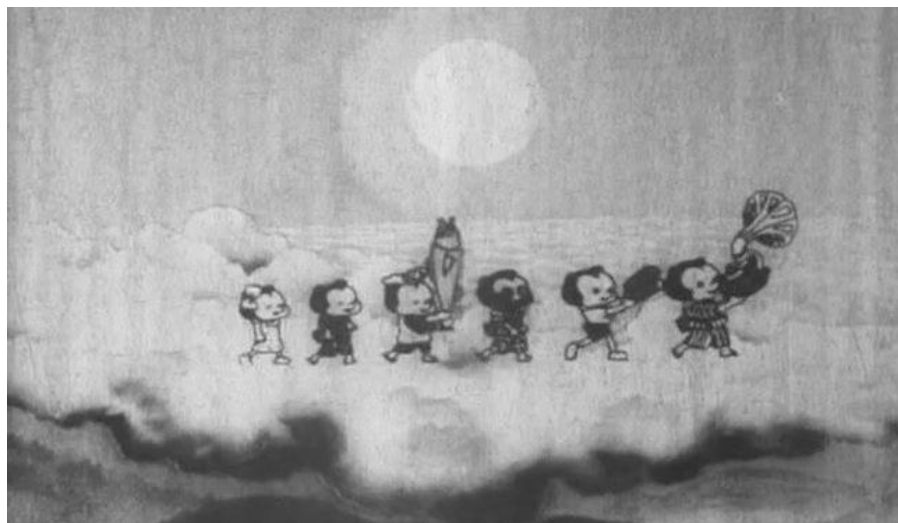
making educational films, as children were discouraged from watching films and so getting educational approval from the government was essential for the financial success of any anime of the time.

Namakura Gatana- Kouchi Jun'ichi (1917)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AnxMNq2QbvA>

These animated movies were silent but **would often feature 'benshi'** or a storyteller who would stand to the side of the screen and narrate the story as it played. The major animators of this time include Yasuji Murata and Noburo Ofuji, who were trained by Kitayama and worked at his studio. These animators still used cutout animation and limited animation to reduce the costs of films, although innovations by Ofuji meant they could now use a more transparent paper and cut outs against a screen.

Other animators of the era were Kenzo Masaoka and Mitsuyo Seo, who would eventually introduce cels to Japanese animation, as well as the use of multiplane cameras. This camera could move the different layers of cel with varying speeds and distances between them all, creating a sense of depth and allowing faster and more precise filming . Masaoka created the first anime with sound in, or **'talkie'** in 1933 with Seo listed as one of the 3 credited animators. The film was called *Chikara to Onna no Yo no Naka* or **'Within the World of Power and Women'** and features famous Japanese actors of the time as voice actors. Sadly, there are no copies of this film, and it remains lost to time. Masaoka also made the first entirely cel anime is the *The Dance of the Chagamas* was also in 1934.

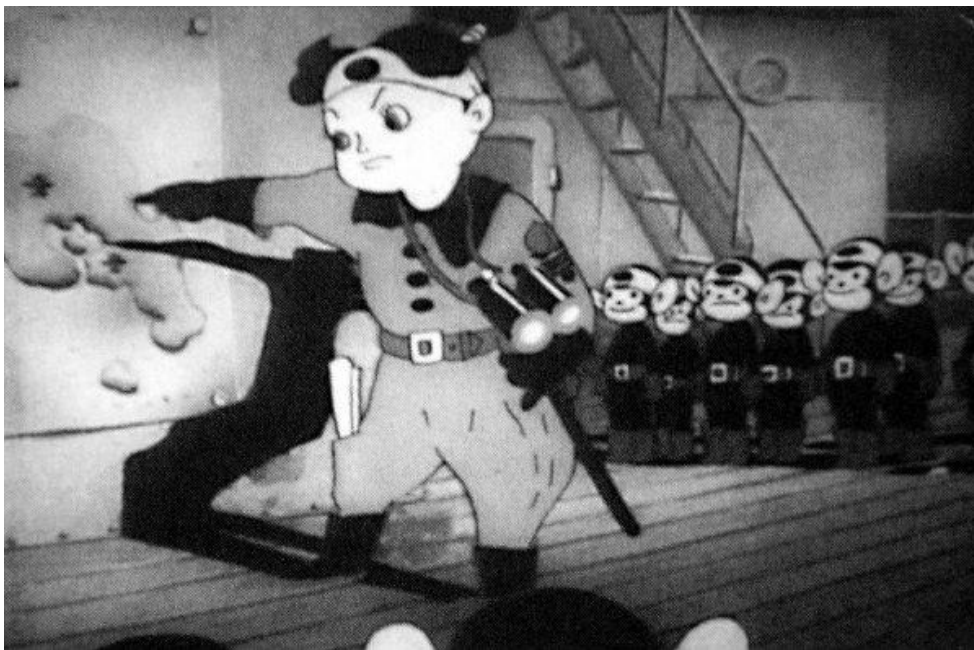


Chagama Ondo- Kenzo Masaoka (1934)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UYbpvtDvd34>

Murata is one of the key animators of this pre-war era with 23 films of the time. These feature Norakuro, who is a stray dog that becomes a soldier in a canine army. The character rose to fame when Japan was at war with China and the series shifts from comedy to propaganda over time as Norakuro goes from a bumbling private in 1933 to a heroic corporal in the final short. This shows the shift of the blooming anime industry in the 1930s and 40s, with more and more emphasis being placed on propaganda in anime and many of the technological advances being funded by the military. In the 1920s and early 30s many prominent animators were left leaning, and several were even in the left-wing film organisation Proletarian Film League of Japan.

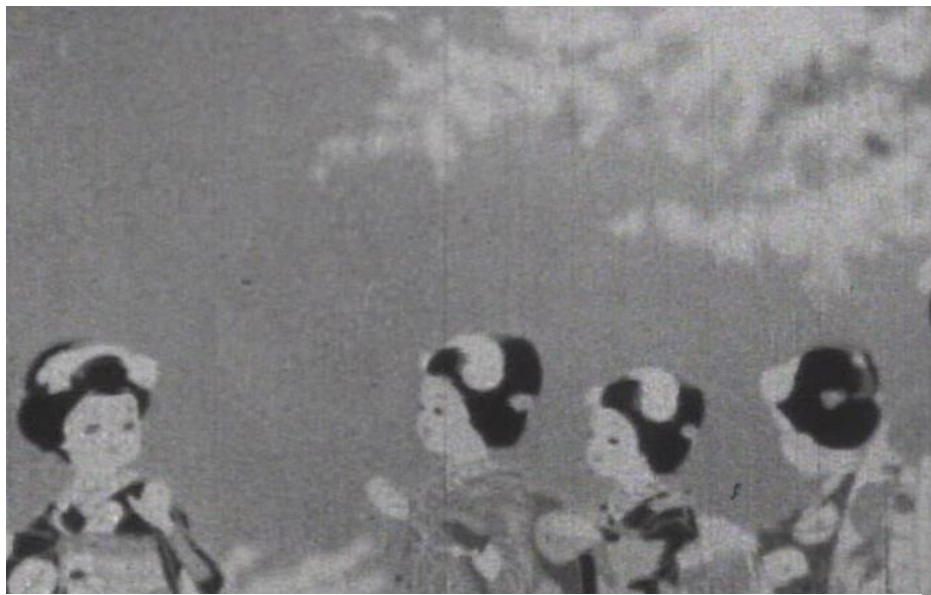
One of the members of this organisation was Mitsuyo Seo, who before his work on '**Within the World of Power and Women**', created the illegal film *Sankichi no Kūchū Ryokōi*, for which he was arrested and tortured. Ironically he is now most known, not only for introducing the multiplane camera in 1941 with *Ari-chan*, but for creating the most prolific propaganda anime of war time Japan. In 1942 he created *Momotaro no Umiwashi* (**Momotaro's Sea Eagles**) in which Momotaro and his animal sidekicks bomb Pearl Harbour. Its success led to the Japanese Naval Ministry ordering Seo to make the sequel *Momotaro: Umi no shinpei* ('**Momotaro's Divine Sea Warriors**'), the first anime feature film, running at a full 74 minutes, which Tezuka cites as one of his inspirations to take an interest in animation.



Momotaro no Umiwashi- Mitsuyo Seo- 1942

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GzjpsuRHiro>

After the second world war, Japanese animation became increasingly influenced by that of the West. This was partially due to the Allied Forces Occupation of Japan from 1945-52, which encouraged the creation of movies with no military inclination and burned over 200 prints of films **made during the war for 'anti-democratic content'**. This includes films such as *Sakura* by Masaoka which depicts a typical spring in Japan to symbolise the new dawn of the country. At this time animation was being kept alive largely by the sponsor Toho, however most of its projects had been largely military based and its new branches focussed on post-war animation were financially unsuccessful. This led to the market being open to a merger of Toyoko and Oizumi film production companies in 1951, resulting in the Tokyo Motion Picture Distribution Company, or Toei, which eventually open Toei Animation Studies being made in 1956.



Sakura - Masaoka Kenzo- 1946

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=s-aMBUqkWLU>

The first full-length colour anime was Taiji Yabushita's *Tale of the White Serpent* made by Toei Doga studio. Its success determined that one fairytale or adventure film would follow per year, and in 1960 the film was **'The Journey to the West'** which is the film that introduced a man who shaped the future of anime to the medium: Osamu Tezuka. Tezuka at the time was not only a celebrity from his 1947 manga 'New Treasure Island' but also working for his doctorate in medicine. In 1961 he parted ways with Toei Doga and founded his own studio **'Tezuka Osamu Productions'** which quickly became **'Mushi Productions'**. The first film they produced was **'Tales of a Street Corner'**, a 40 min full colour experiment, but which had little financial success.

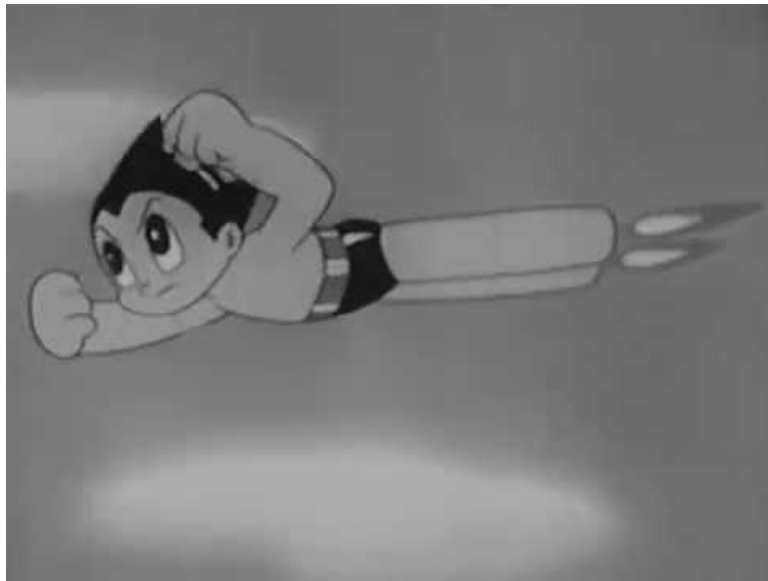


Tale of the White Serpent- Taiji Yabushita- 1958

This same year Otogi Pro studio released the first ever anime series '**Instant History**', but all its episodes were only one minute. At this time **anime was using 'full animation'** with 24 different frames per second, but Tezuka and other Mushi Pro employee Yusaku Sakamoto had the idea that they could use the limited animation of just 8 frames per second like the cartoons of Hanna-Barbera in the West. While this type of animation was viewed as shabby in Japan, Sakamoto proposed they make up for its lack of elegance with an engaging plot. They also chose to introduce many other cost saving measures that are now anime staple, such as storing character poses, and rotating episode directors.

This led them to adapting **Tezuka's most famous manga at the time: Astro Boy.**

Astro Boy first aired a pilot film, but the series itself aired in 1963 to great success. With it, the anime floodgates were opened and 3 more anime series would airing in 1963 alone. Its success would lead to the exponential growth in the anime industry and Toei studios would be responsible for training some of the most successful animators of the years to come. However, this was only possible from the struggles and innovations of the pioneers of animation that came before them. Taking a new format and bringing it forward with every decade to create new ideas, new methods, and eventually a new industry.



Astro Boy- Osamu Tezuka- 1963

Watch old Anime/Further Reading

Playlist with most of the films mentioned above-

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLzySc4g12q1RKcvOnkNzUAmK8TVSxV2x9>

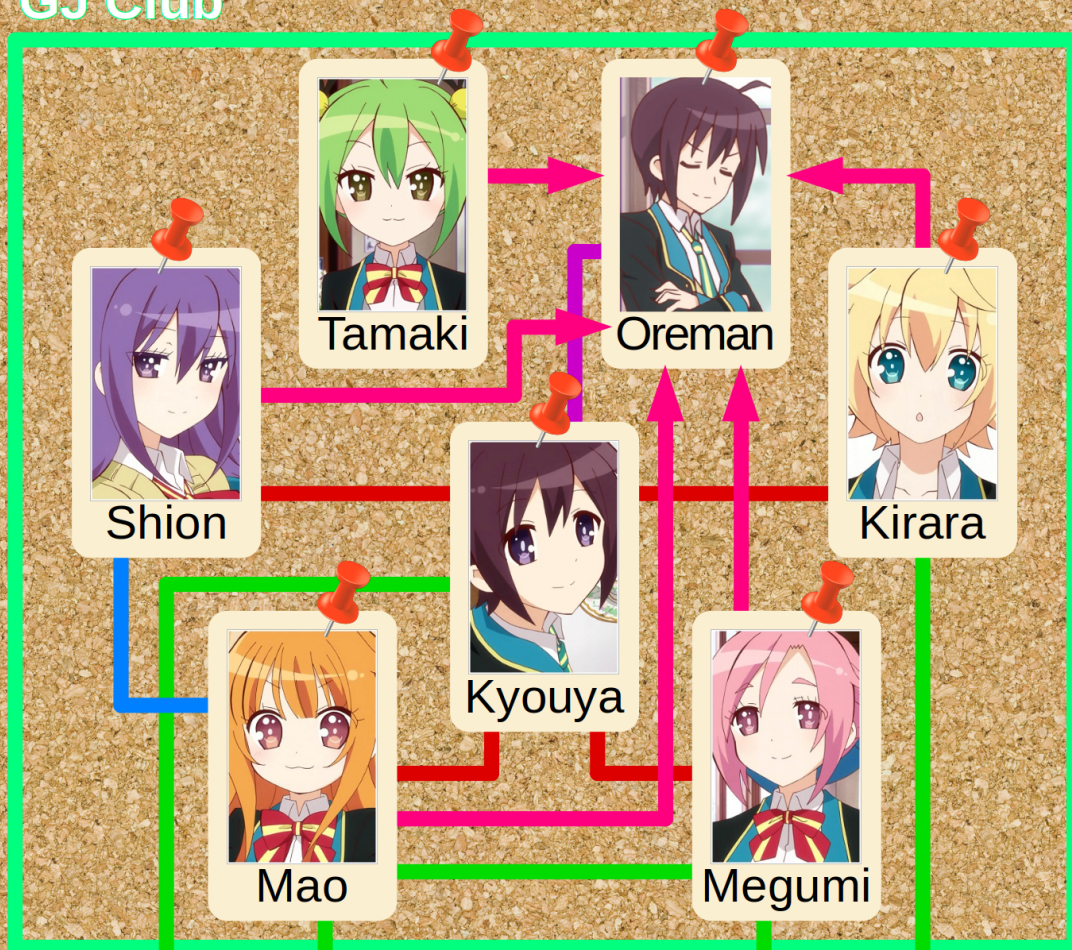
Japanese animated film archive - <https://animation.filmarchives.jp/index.html>

Frames of Anime: Culture and Image-Building by Tze-Yue G. Hu

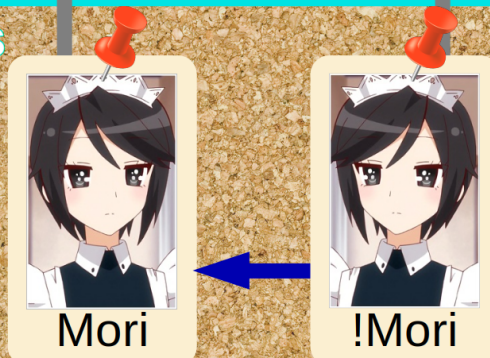
GJ-bu Character Relations Chart

By Cameron & James

GJ Club

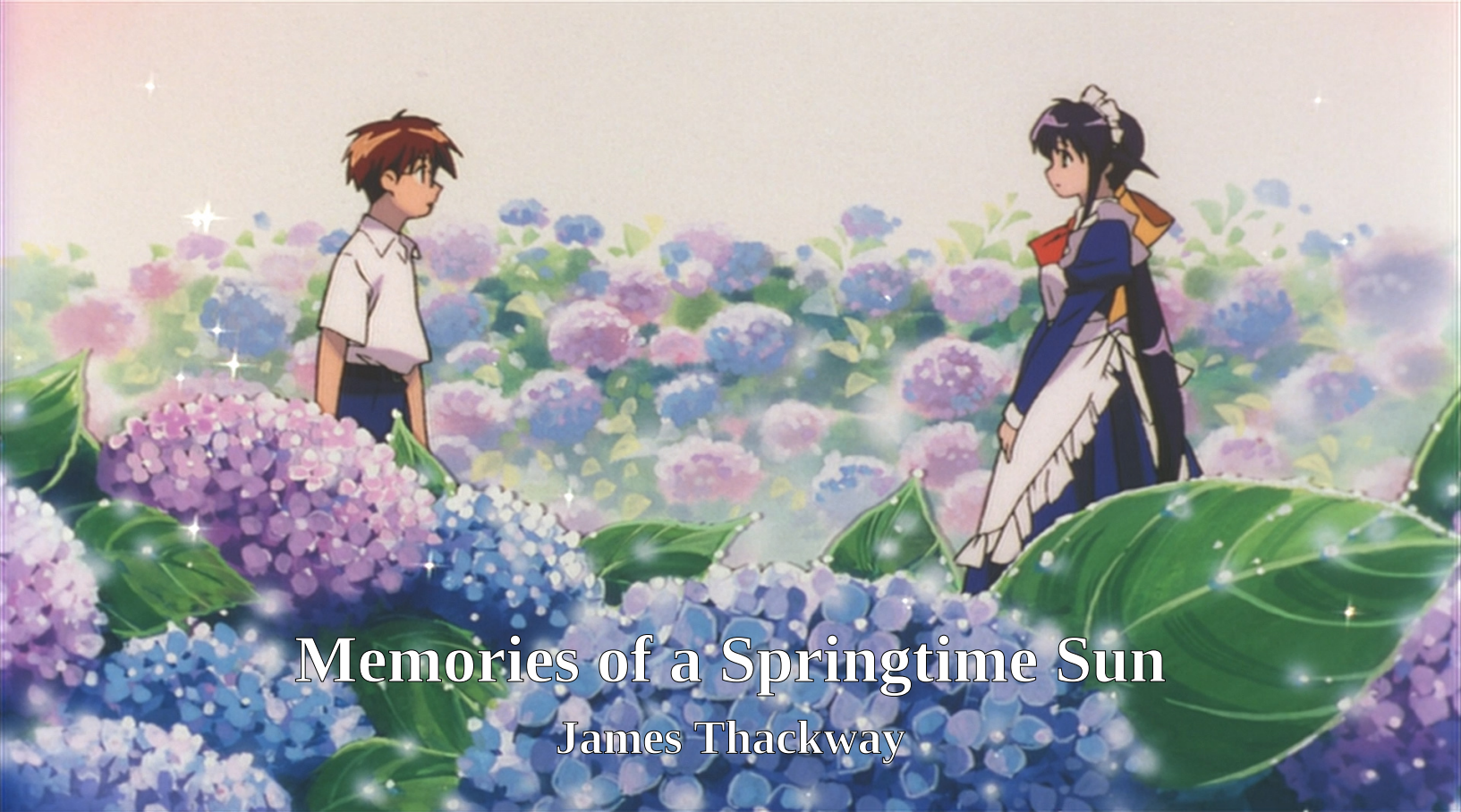


GJ Juniors



Affection
Sibling
Childhood Friend
Uncontrollable Lust
Maid
Alter-Ego
Mother

GJ-bu fansite:
www.iklone.org/GJ



Memories of a Springtime Sun

James Thackway

Once upon a time there were a pair of kingfishers that were cursed to live out on the open sea, their names were Ceyx and Halcyon. When it came time to lay her eggs, Halcyon had no option but to nest on the shoreline, close to the danger of the crashing waves and tide. The sea noticed the birds' plight, and calmed the oceans for fourteen days straight, giving Halcyon the chance to brood her eggs and for her young to fledge. This is from where we get the phrase "halcyon days", meaning something similar to "the good ol' days" in common usage.

For most of us, our halcyon days are from our youth, the times we are nostalgic for. Most of us are nostalgic for many things: a familiar sight, sound or smell that triggers the recollection of a bleary scene of youth, or a totally indescribable but powerful emotion. That which we are nostalgic for are often those things that we wish to return to; and in this way our experience of time is mirrored through the present moment. Our hopes for the future are constructed from the nostalgia of our past.

In Mahoromatic we see the "good ol' days" of Suguru, the story's hero. Chapters of his life with his maid Mahoro form a vignette of his youth: both the good, the bad and the seemingly mundane moments. The show itself is often presented within a literal vignette, the colours fading at the borders as if the memory is incomplete. But the end of each rose-tinted episode is punctuated with a reminder that the end is inescapable: the slowly decreasing count of the days remaining for Mahoro, since as a deprecated android her lifespan is limited. With it you are pulled out from the moment and reminded that "this too shall pass". Somehow I always forget it's coming, even though I have watched the show

many times over, and the affect is still strong: not because it is surprising but because it was always there, looming in the background. We can all be glad we aren't shown a daily countdown for our own lives, but memories of the past are different; once the conclusion is known it's impossible to ignore the eventual ending, and it is this that gives nostalgia a painful edge.

In the end we see Mahoro and Suguru's golden age come to an end, with their destiny being writ in stone before they had even met, controlled by malevolent forces outside of their control. Being the story's heroes, their fates are also tied to the fate of the world itself, and soon the imminent destruction of the Earth becomes clear to everyone on the planet. But humanity is not thrown into panic. Neither Mahoro nor Suguru nor anyone on Earth despairs at the coming armageddon; they neither welcome nor curse it, but simply carry on. *"At this moment all the people of Earth, facing their day of judgement, did not fall into panic. As never before people calmly passed their time in thought. Is it a miracle? Resignation? No. This is the beautiful side of man."* The moment the series had been literally counting down to arrives with an unexpected tranquility: for something that is destined isn't terrible or scary in the end, it just is. Mahoro and Suguru and the viewer have all understood for a long time that this is where it ends, and so when Mahoro sacrifices herself for the sake of the world it's not a shock, but rather a fulfillment of fate.

But Mahoromatic's story doesn't end there. We get to see humanity twenty years after the Mahoro's ultimate sacrifice to save the world. Man has reached Mars: a new colonial age has begun with millions emigrating to the space colony of "Na-Geanna". The name is taken from a Gaelic term meaning "wild goose": a moniker given to the young men that left the old world for America in the 18th century. We see Suguru as one of these new wild geese, living out a vengeful life as a bounty hunter forever seeking revenge against the androids that he associates with taking his Mahoro away from him. He has never let go of the past and still grips tightly to his nostalgic youth. This is the negative form of nostalgia, bitter, one that drives you to despair rather than to hope. Suguru's friends have all moved on and grown up, leaving just him behind. It is at that point, his lowest, when God finally answers his prayers. Matthew, the essence of God in Mahoromatic, shines part of herself down onto Earth to save Suguru. Matthew describes the gift simply as *"memories of a springtime sun"*: it is his emotion of nostalgia. This manifests as a direct answer to Suguru's prayers and Mahoro is reborn into the world.

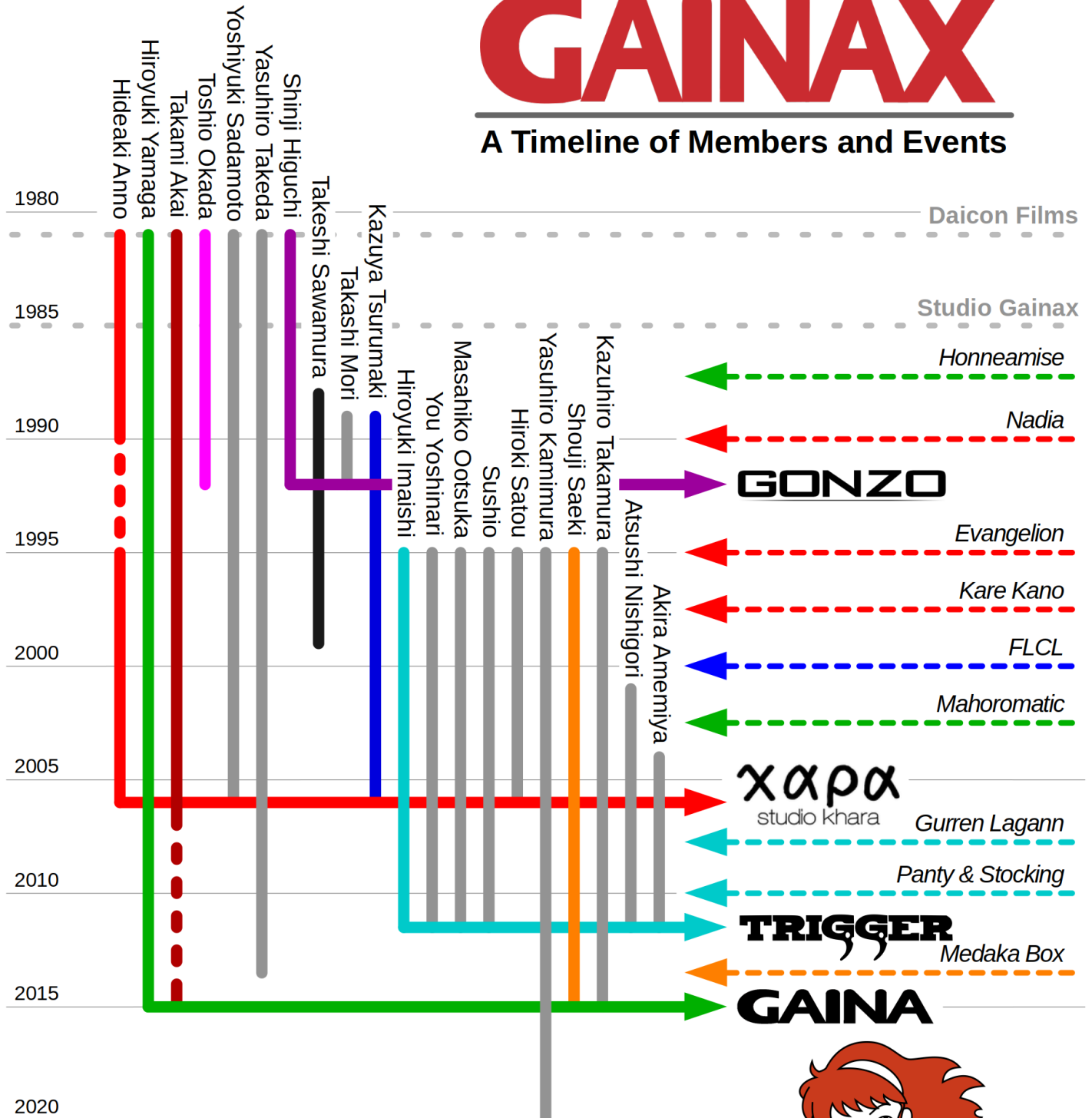
To me Mahoro represents the piece of perfection that is here on Earth. That feeling you sense at the moments in your life that will go down as your best. She's something otherworldly but yet the most natural of things at the same time. She's something that we

all will find at some point in our lives and when we do we must clutch onto it as hard as possible. She is "*the maid who runs on tears*" because she is the melancholy that pervades all thoughts of eternity in a fallen world. A supernatural being that by virtue of being perfect must become a servant to the imperfect, such are maids. Basically she's my waifu I guess.

It is often debated how literally the ending of Mahoromatic is meant to be taken, but I wholeheartedly believe that it was meant to portray a real miracle, rather than just a hallucination. Through this it sums up the world which Mahoromatic portrays. It's a world where you are rewarded for good deeds in material ways by a higher power through the goodness of its grace. A world where the divine is reality and where we are all destined for salvation. A world where the gods will grace all men with their own halcyon days if only they ask. It is our real world, and we just need to build the robot maids.

GAINAX

A Timeline of Members and Events



Studio Directors

- Hideaki Anno:** Gunbuster, Nadia, Evangelion, Kare Kano
Founded *Studio Khara* in 2006
- Hiroiyuki Yamaga:** Honneamise, Mahoromatic, Abenobashi
- Takami Akai:** Princess Maker, Petite Princess Yucie
- Toshio Okada:** Daicon, General Products, Otaku no Video
Fired in 1992 and became the Otaking
- Shinji Higuchi:** Founded *Studio Gonzo* in 1992
- Takeshi Sawamura:** Arrested and imprisoned in 1999 for tax fraud
- Kazuya Tsurumaki:** FLCL, Diebuster
- Hiroiyuki Imaishi:** Cutey Honey, Gurren Lagann, Panty & Stocking
Founded *Studio Trigger* in 2011
- Shouji Saeki:** He is My Master, Medaka Box, Pleiades



Diagram by James Thackway



The Legend of Simon the Digger

Part 1 – Written by Nick Stathakis

Gurren Lagann – a beloved classic. A show which drags you by the hand showing you a true hero's journey from baby to old man. Amongst what at first is a cool, engaging, beautiful show is a much deeper plot – a plot about Simon's birth into adulthood – a plot that each one of us follow across our lifetime. Gurren Lagann's status as a classic is because it's a show that rings true on so many levels. Should the show have just been a wacky action show or just been a psychological deep-dive into adolescence, it wouldn't have been the masterpiece anime fans recognise it to be. Today, however, we will be discussing that 'deeper' layer of the show, looking at how the show tells the ancient story of one's lifetime – of your lifetime, past, present, and future. Let's begin with Simon the Digger, stuck with Kamina in the cave.

The Birth of Simon the Digger

Simon the Digger is known as one of the best drillers in the cave-town. Simon is a child; young and blind, following Kamina, his older brother, to a tee. However there isn't much to do underground. It's dark, cramped and empty – there's just nothing. Simon hasn't come to consciousness yet as his own man – he hasn't yet obtained those powers of reflection that you develop in puberty. And so in this cramped, dark, seemingly 'unconscious' world, he lives.

But in this dark world, Simon has a light: Kamina. Kamina is Simon's *aniki* – his older brother – but can also be seen as a kind of guiding manly spirit who propels and directs Simon on his journey into adulthood. But before an escape plan in Episode 1 can succeed, Simon must first find Lagann. Lagann is a tiny little mech, which only really has space for one person (Simon), which only Simon can power with his core

drill. Lagann is but a body, however – without the power of Simon’s core drill, it is an empty shell. By providing his ghost, his *geist*, his spirit, his core drill to that shell, he can begin his journey out of the dark, unconscious, Platonic cave, to the bright surface above.

Escaping the cave, Simon and Kamina are greeted with reams of Gunmen – demons who’ve taken over the surface of the Earth. In leaving the motherly safety, security and nurture of the cave, Simon has come to awareness as an individual only to find the outside world is full of monsters. Without the womb-like protection of the caverns he grew up in, he relies instead on his friends: on his *aniki*, Kamina; his eventual crush Yoko; and the rest of the Gurren-dan for support.

The Extinguished Light

The Gurren-dan continue their quest, defeating ever greater foes, taking us up to episode eight. Episode eight: anyone who’s watched the show remembers the episode vividly. He’s dead? He can’t be – surely not. The loss of the key screw holding together the team, holding together their successes, holding together Simon on his journey from the caverns, has been wrenched out, and the scaffolding comes tumbling down. The Simon who believes in the Kamina who believes in him is lost without Kamina’s guiding light to shine his path.

Many growing up feel the moment when Kamina dies in them. For many, including myself, that came at age fourteen – the moodiest year for many teens – when the Aegis shield of parental protection guarding you begins to disappear and become invisible to the maturing mind. Suddenly the surety of childhood, that prized sweet childhood innocence, evaporates, leaving a gritty reality to contend with. Kamina solved every problem Simon had – he was his model of masculinity, his image of who he must be, his senpai, his brother, his fatherly figure. Now where is Simon to tread? The destination is gone; the map is ruined. Without Kamina, his light (in Japanese, *kaminari* means ‘lightning’), the young Simon must now dig his own path.

Simon’s mope

Simon becomes understandably mopey. He lashes out at the group members, flinging frustration over his *aniki’s* death. But the wound runs deeper than that – it was Simon’s fault that Kamina died. If it weren’t for Simon getting distracted over his memories of Kamina and Yoko’s midnight rendezvous, Kamina would’ve never been caught off guard and killed by Lordgenome’s forces.



"All that's left is ash." - Ashita no Joe

But Simon's jealous. Simon's jealous that Kamina, that perfect vision of masculinity, that vision of his ideal future self, gets the girl he loves: Yoko. But Simon will never get Yoko, for as long as he stands in Kamina's shadow, he can never shine as brightly, forever relegated to Kamina's cute younger brother. The seeds of jealousy deep deep down inside Simon is at root a hatred; Simon suffers so brutally after Kamina's death because a small dark part of his soul is glad that Kamina died – Simon can now 'get the girl' without competition. Naturally, Simon could never admit these feelings to himself, but the maelstrom rips him apart from the inside all the same.

The appearance of Nia

The forest which burns down leaves space and a bed of nutrients for the next generation. Despite the tragedy of Kamina's death, and Simon's inner turmoil, Simon finally has the space and the nutrients to grow as an individual. No longer can he be the Simon who "believes in the you who believes in me"; Simon must become the Simon who believes in himself. Simon must no longer see himself as Kamina's younger brother, as a little Kamina – he should instead see himself as Simon. In ceasing to see himself as a younger Kamina, Simon ceases to pursue Yoko – the same soul whom Kamina pursued. Instead, Simon is met by a fair maiden who descends from the heavens: Nia.

Simon's barren soulless landscape is greeted by a princess – a princess who's willing to vouch for him. Finding his own soul, finding his own confidence, Simon's encouraged out of his catatonic hibernation bit by bit by his newfound waifu. The new Simon, emerging from the rubble of Kamina's death, grows to become a great Kamina-styled leader of the Gurren-dan only because Nia has his back.



New hope from a casket

Lordgenome

Lordgenome is the lord of the genome – a force suppressing spiral energy, suppressing evolution, oppressing mankind. He is the force sending chimeric freaks to attack the Gurren-dan upon his command. He is the full force of the law – the force stopping man in his tracks from achieving their full potential.

From below, one feels the instinctive drive, the drive from our genome, to develop into an ever greater and ever more mature person. Whilst from above, there's

authority – an oppressive power telling you how to act and what the right thing to do is, disregarding what your instincts and intuitions may say. This tension sits at the centre of the human experience. Growing up, once the illusion of your parents' omnipotence ends, once your Kamina dies, we are stuck with rules and laws, without the sureness that they are morally and truthfully sound. At this age the laws have to be tested and rebelled against until the “policeman inside our heads” is slain. Lordgenome is no different. He's the oppressive paternalistic authority who governs the world of beastmen who, for the most part, are obedient clay men without the spiral energy, the spirit, to rebel.

But we must remember that Lordgenome's a failed hero. He tread the same tracks as Simon, leading the rebellion against the powers at be, only to fail. Instead of letting his spiral energy drive him to pierce the heavens, he used it to screw over mankind, subjecting them to a long life of oppression. This is the tyranny of the moral code which must be obeyed without explanation, even though much of the etiquette and rules which govern us aren't sensible. This is the tyranny of the 'cabal', the elites, the authority figures who believe they rule by virtue of experience and age. This is the tyranny of those who failed to pierce the heavens.

The Final Fight?

For Simon, defeating Lordgenome is not just to take back control of the Gurren-dan's autonomy to live without constant threat of beastmen; it is also to take back Nia from her father. Simon's soul is not wholly free yet – she is still in part in the clutches of her father, of authority. For Simon to become an adult, he must set his soul free from the clutches of authority, since only once Nia is truly Simon's own, can Simon achieve the autonomy of adulthood.



Kokoro no Gattai

On a map, there'd be an arrow, saying “You are here”. At our age, we've mostly slain our Lordgenome's; we're not rebelling against our parents nor society, breaking the rules to 'be cool' - we've matured beyond that point. Slowly but surely, we're becoming part of the establishment, not rebelling against rules with passion, but rather obeying them with indifference. Instead of the figure of the powerful towering Lordgenome who uses force to make you conform, we now have a weak yet wise head of Lordgenome who instead advises us. We have become adults and made peace with the establishment.



Love Letters of Autism

Written by Joseph Wallen



Anime is an inherently autistic medium, and thus its fans, and its creators are populated with the newtypes of society. Kenichi Sonoda is a great exemplar of this, creating things such as gunsmith cats and riding bean, two series which I think neatly fall into a category, or maybe even a genre in itself, that I'm going to call the "Love Letter of Autism".

To briefly introduce **gunsmith cats**, a 90's 3-episode OVA based on Sonoda's manga series. The story revolves around two girls: "**Rally**" Vincent, a gun obsessed bounty hunter and explosives obsessed "**Minnie**" May Hopkins, who own a Gunsmith in the centre of Chicago. One day Bill, an ATF agent visits their store asking for collaboration on a case, lest they be arrested for unregistered possession of machine guns. Reluctant, Rally and May work alongside Bill in the case, a USSR spy gets involved trying to get rid of Rally and May; hijinks ensue.

You could pick apart the plot, call it surface level and silly, but if you do that, you're dumb, and completely missing the point of anime like this. The purpose of the plot in these love letters of autism isn't to delve deep into the character psychology, or the human condition, but rather to serve as a platter to serve the autism filled gushing of the Authors interests on, and to have fun with the world setting- a setting reflective of the Authors specific flavour of autism. This isn't to say however, that the plot is necessarily meaningless, or devoid of anything beyond surface level, but instead that plot isn't the driving force.

Sonoda is a self-proclaimed gun otaku, and as such, it is no surprise that the plot of gunsmith cats is essentially one big flex of his knowledge of guns and gun culture. The realistically designed firearms (in an audio and visual sense); even leaving in subtleties like the cz-75 in the opening have a "75 stamp" (an incredibly rare date for manufacture), the distrust of alphabet agencies (specifically the ATF), an anti-gun politician, the ATF even blow up a building (albeit accidentally), which we of course know is true



Monā From Nico Nico Douga, Episode 1 of Komugi-chan

to life. These things, whilst meaningless to the average viewer, for the cognate autist to the author, add a feasting ground of information and subtly to delve into, and play to the tribalistic nature of hobby communities, sparking the “hey, I get that reference” or “I know what that is” response, allowing you to identify with the show on a deeper level. This is not dissimilar to how some anime riddle themselves with references to otaku culture and other anime, sparking that same response; see Nurse Witch Komugi-chan Magikarte (Komugi-Chan) for example, a parody spin-off of soul taker, filled with references to otaku & internet culture; acting in a way as small love letters nested within shows.

This lack of a reliance on **plot lends this “Genre” exceedingly well to be paired with slice of life**, where again, the **plot isn’t the main driving force**; because what do autists love more than their deep obsessions? Cute anime girls participating in those obsessions. By adding the *cute girls doing cute things*, slice of life filter on top of the obsessive gushing, a hyper concentrated autism outlet is formed. And thus, very dedicated, hyper concentrated autism fanbases form, see the fanbases of things such as Girls und panzer. This phenomenon even showing up in the modern Gacha game trend, in games such as KanColle, Girls front line, or whatever kind of obsession they want to target, where companies have monetarily weaponized this autism **in order to sell PNG’s**.

It is within these niche fanbases where obsessive gushing over the property itself can be seen and is almost like reciprocal love letters back to the property itself, taking the form of things like Itasha 痛車 (Cringe/painful car). It is a symbiotic circle of autism, centred on the core concept of cute anime girls + Hobby with dedicated subscribers.



[MAD] Lucky Star x Suzumiya Haruhi Opening
360p to preserve authenticity

Perhaps the pinnacle of this is Lucky star; Lucky star is itself a love letter to otaku culture of the time, many of the “plot”/comedy elements are predicated on the internet and otaku culture of the mid 00’s, ending each episode with the voice actors conversing and singing songs from anime, and in the later episodes, having Minoru Shiraishi (the voice actor for Sakomoto in Nichijou among other things) dance around on the beach, singing, and just generally confessing his love for anime and otaku culture. It was this very culture that then reciprocated the love in the form of things like

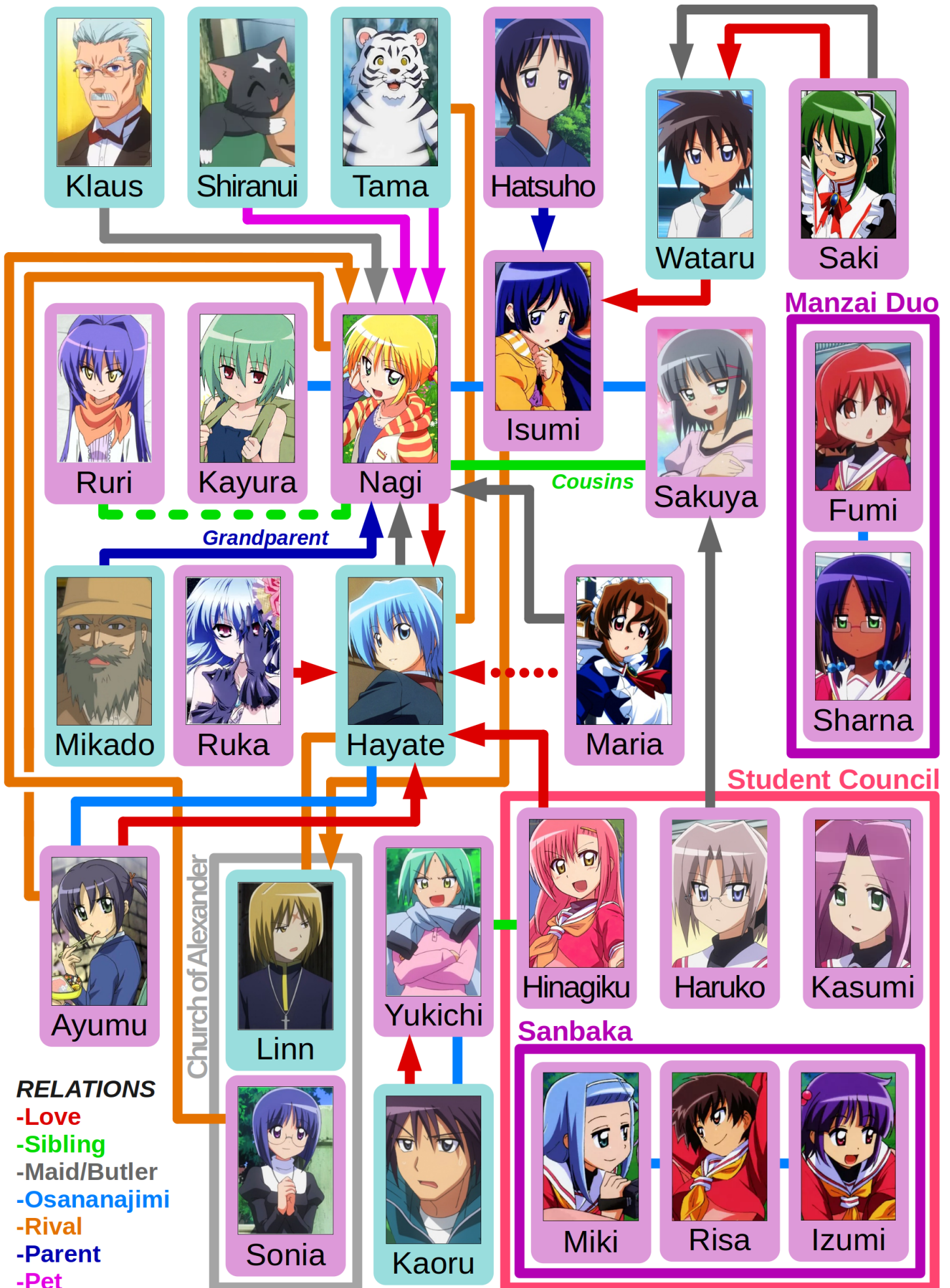
MAD’s etc. posted to Nico Nico Douga and youtube, forming a pool of autistic gushing about

the culture they are all a part of. It is for this reason I think Lucky star is one of the most *otaku* anime; it, and the reciprocal autistic gushing of **MAD's and fan content** surrounding it, made it into what it was, the pool of autism worked to create something greater than the sum of its parts. Lucky star was nothing without the reciprocal sperging, and the otaku community that inspired its development.

Despite everything I've said, it must be stated that autism is a fraud. And even more, it's a harmful and dangerous fraud (Iklone, *Autism isn't real???* (2017)); I am instead using the word a blank space, lacking a better word, referring to a state of absolute infatuation with a subject or thing; something which is common in those that describe themselves as autistic, and is the essence of *otaku*, whatever form that may take.

Hayate the Combat Butler Character Relations Chart

By Cameron and James



The Goshu Waifu

Written by Nick Stathakis

Aoyama Goshu, best known as the writer for one of my favourite series, Detective Conan, is a man with a very particular waifu. Once you examine the waifus of his works, certain traits wrestle your attention which are both unique and fascinating since, after all, a lot can be told about a man after seeing his waifu. First, let's see a selection of his waifus:

Mouri Ran



Detective Conan

Toyama Kazuha



Detective Conan

Nakamori Aoko



Magic Kaito

Mine Sayaka



Yaiba

These four cover all of Goshu's major works: the first two belong to Detective Conan (1995); the second to Magic Kaito (1987), Goshu's first work; the last to Yaiba, another of Goshu's major works, which has a 52 episode anime adaptation which I haven't seen. Despite never having seen Yaiba, the plot synopsis sounds quite funny, especially when you find out they all take place in the same universe.

So what are their similarities? Let's start with how they look. Hair in the front is generally messy, two characters – Aoko and Ran – opting for free-flowing hair, the other two, Sayaka and Kazuha, opting for high ponytails. From Sayaka's design, you can kind of see how it diffracts into Ran and Kazuha, with the ponytail being donated to Kazuha and the horn being donated to Ran. The horn. Ran's horn is truly a marvel of art. No other anime girl to my knowledge has such a magnificent horn.

Manga beginning



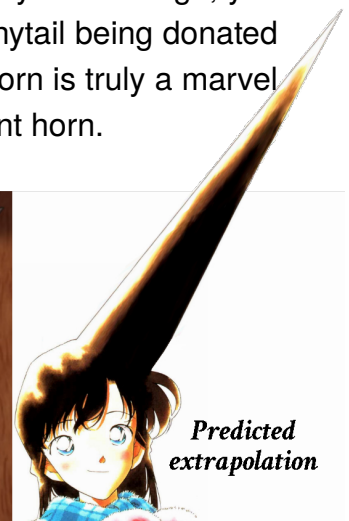
Anime beginning



Anime present



Predicted extrapolation



Above we see the manga's stub, evolving into a blunt, missile-shaped horn, evolving into the longer, sharp, piercing horn we see today, with the inevitable result on the far right.

Beyond physical comparisons, comparisons of character are where we see the similarities most clearly. All four of these characters have pretty much the same personality. For one, they're all mild *tsunderes*, getting angry over menial things. It is worth noting, however, that they're all more *dere* than *tsun*, owing to the fact that they're all childhood friends with the protagonist. The pairings in every show have the same pattern of romance: *tsundere osana najimi* gradually opens up, even though they both clearly love each other already and all of their friends make fun of them since they're 'basically a couple'. The similarities grow when considering the two Detective Conan characters. Both Ran and Kazuha are: martial artists, Ran being the top highschool girl in karate, Kazuha being one of the best aikido practitioners; afraid of horror plots, like ghost stories and such; afraid of bugs and insects; strong spirited, willing to say what they think. Including Aoko as well, all three have policemen for fathers (albeit with very different fathers).

Granted, within Detective Conan many of the similarities were intentional, but looking more broadly, this is just what Aoyama-sensei likes. He loves *tsundere* childhood friends and I respect that. Beyond waifus, the protagonists are similar also: EdoGawa Conan looks near identical to Yaiba; Kudo Shinichi looks the same as Kuroba Kaito with a similar personality to boot, albeit with a different moral compass. All four are smug yet just, romantically shy yet heroically brave – to Goshō, he is *the* coolest guy. Fun side fact: for a few years Goshō was married to the voice actor who voiced both Yaiba and Conan. The man clearly loves the characters he creates; his characters come from the heart, which is why he can't help but tell similar stories with similar characters with similar looks. If you watch an episode of Detective Conan, or Magic Kaito, or even Yaiba and liked it, you will enjoy all the rest of it. His works are bathed in a sense of cool for the protagonists and cute for the waifus and I hope you give it a full watch to the end.

Congratulation Detective Conan for reaching 1000 episodes!

A character with white hair and red eyes, wearing a white and black armor with red lightning bolt accents, standing on a stone floor. The character is looking directly at the viewer with a neutral expression.

Jesus in DanMachi & More

Written by Cameron Johnson

Jesus in anime is a more recent concept but there has always been 'Jesus figures' in anime such as Kirito in SAO because he rises from the dead and saves the day, but I am here to argue that Bell Cranel, from 'Is it Wrong to try to Pick up Girls in a Dungeon?' or DanMachi for short, is metaphorically Jesus in his world and not a fake prophet like Kirito. Jesus in Christianity was a person whose mother was virgin Mary, and he was the son of God. He was pure of heart and suffered for **everyone's** sins before returning from the dead and then people had faith in him. Whether Jesus was real is a topic for another day, but we are still telling stories of him thousands of years later.

Firstly, in DanMachi the roles of gods in familias are definitely that of a parent as they are the head of the familia therefore Hestia is Bell's 'mother'. In Ancient Greek religion, Hestia was the virgin goddess of the hearth. You could even say she was like the Virgin Mary. At the end of the first season, it is revealed that Bell is the grandson of Zeus; the king of the gods. Even though he is not his blood relative, Bell still saw him as his grandfather, and he was taken care of by him. People would therefore believe that Bell was related to God similar to Jesus. Bell Cranel's character in the show was like 'pure white' whose soul was untainted even when he faced difficult situations where he had to confront the sins of humanity such greed in Lili using him to steal his knife and leave him for dead in the dungeon or when he was shown the envy of other adventurers when they kidnapped his goddess and beat him up because they were jealous of his progress. Even in these situations Bell did not become corrupted and give in to anger or hate; he only forgave the fellow adventurers and Lili which is something Jesus would do.

(*spoiler warning*) In season three, Bell comes face to face with the Xenos whose creatures are born from the dungeon who have gained sentience from many reincarnations and deaths by the hands of adventurers. While most adventurers would never allow such creatures to

exist and would exterminate them due to their hatred of monsters, Bell does not and he offers a hand of friendship with the Xenos and because of this, he gets trapped between a rock and a hard place when he must choose whether to side with the Xenos or the humans. This causes Bell to suffer for everyone's sins as he can't choose one race over the other and only wants to help the two races coexist. He becomes socially crucified as he becomes an outcast of society and becomes the scum of the city like Jesus was in his time. Even though he doesn't die in the same way as Jesus, he reaches rock bottom, but Bell rises to the challenge and takes on the weight of everyone's sins and instead of breaking down, he accepts it all and decides to save both races and will not choose one over the other. In the process, he becomes a hero of the city and his name becomes famous amongst the residents of Orario showing how he has gained their faith in him similar to how Jesus' death and revival inspired faith in people spawning Christianity.

In the anime, Bell grew up hearing stories of heroes and their heroic deeds and this left him wanting to be like those heroes and leave his mark on history. Shortly after becoming an adventurer, he meets Hermes who is a god that has taken an interest in the 'Little Rookie' and wants to witness Bell's actions himself. When he does see Bell's heroic deeds, Hermes refers to Bell as the 'The Last Hero' implying that he has started a story similar to those that Bell grew up reading. The second name of DanMachi was 'Familia Myth' but it was changed to the long one we all love because it wasn't eye-catching enough. This means that the story following Bell Cranel's adventure is like one big myth just like the alternative title and myths are stories that have we have passed down for Millennia which can move the heart even if they aren't accurate and the story of Jesus is close to a myth - just a well-documented one.

Also, as a minor piece of evidence, Bell does in fact run on water for a split second in episode 12 to escape from the girls having a bath. Even though Bell might not be exactly like Jesus, there is enough points to say that he is metaphorically similar enough to Jesus that he isn't a fake one.

My attempt at drawing Bell Cranel





The Legend of Simon the Digger

Part 2 – Written by Nick Stathakis

Seeming Tranquillity

Simon helps rebuild the new city, Simon and Nia marry, have kids, and live out their days as respected heroes, the end... is how most stories would end. But Gurren Lagann is special – it's a different beast to other anime out there. The first half of the story, the story up to this point, is the traditional hero myth which, upon its completion, is the protagonist *done*. Finished. Story's over. The next step, is to 'settle down' since you're a finished product. Neuroplasticity dwindles; you're twenty-five, and you'll never change.



Respectfully observed morality.

But you're not done. Why else would our spiral energy keep charging us up? Gurren Lagann realises the myth ain't over – there's still a story to be told. Many say the first part after the time skip is slow, boring, and doesn't have quite the same 'cool' as the action-packed first half had. I used to be in that camp before we watched the show with the society. Upon rewatching, this part of the show touched me the most – it was the point in my life I was at - and hit me in ways I wasn't expecting.

Kamina City

Once Simon and the Gurren-dan defeat Lordgenome, the rebel insurgents start building an authoritarian state in the name of their martyr, Kamina. Simon sitting at

the helm of the new government, but with true power lying in Rossiu, the grey blur. Warning strikes, however: the moon has been declared by the anti spiral to fall on the Earth in three weeks. The anti-spiral, the new big evil, take control of Nia, Simon's betrothed, turning her into a virtual image, or simply a 2D waifu. No longer is Nia flesh and blood – instead she's become the interlocutor for the anti-spiral. But what does it mean to become virtual, to become an image? It means that Simon can no longer see his Nia, his soul-mate, his soul-image, his soul, in concrete reality; in a sense, Simon has become detached from his own soul. 'Loss of Soul' is a common motif throughout hunter-gatherer tribes and antiquity, which can be generally equated to the idea of depression, ennui, or a loss of vitality and passion for life. In short: Simon's lost his edge; his soul, Nia, has left him; and his spiral energy has reached a new nadir.

“Times Have Changed”

Upon Simon's daring yet successful rescue of the city, crowds who quite recently lived in hovels came to boo him. They said that “times have changed” and that such reckless actions can't be justified in the dignified new government. Rossiu, nervous, picks Simon as a scapegoat, imprisoning him.

Rossiu is a very interesting character. At first glance, Rossiu is clearly a bad guy, imprisoning the protagonist after saving the city. There's something distinctly fake and creepy about him – his relationship with Kinon, for example, who he later straps with explosives without second thought, is a clear example why. Yet, upon second glance, Rossiu's the proud statesman who's telling his citizens to 'Stay Home; Save Lives' - he ensured that as many people who could be saved would be saved, in a kind of utilitarian calculus. But upon third glance, Rossiu really isn't a good guy at all. In fact he's utterly contemptible. Despite being pivotal in overthrowing Lordgenome, he's become Lordgenome Mk II; instead of fighting back even *when there is no hope of victory, because it is better to perish than to live as slaves*, he instead tries to bury mankind, bury humanities potential, and bury man's spiral energy back into the little caves from which they've come. Rossiu's plan is to flee back to the warm comfort of mother's lap. Rossiu believes that in an infantile troglodytic state, mankind will return to the Noble Savages he once knew back in Adai village, where “half his soul still lives.” Once the simulations are calculated, prophecising the Ark's collapse, Rossiu even ponders whether man should've ever gone to the surface, whether mankind should've ever grown up. Wishing to trade growth, progress, and hardship for safety, helplessness, and hopelessness, Rossiu wants man to devolve, returning to the caves, just like the good old days under Lordgenome's fatherly tyranny.

Rossiu's Folly

Rossiu's folly is the will to survive. At every mention of death, Rossiu bravely ran away, saving as many as he possibly could without standing up to the enemy before him. Risk, for Rossiu, is not an option. Forethought is man's ultimate gift, the gift of Prometheus, but it can tie us up in knots; for every simulation, plan and counter-plan Rossiu had, his simulations didn't pose any solutions. Which ingredient was missing from his calculations and plans? Why, that would be spiral energy, of course, or more specifically, *hope*. Rossiu didn't believe in a new future, he didn't hope for a new future, and consequently could never bring about a new future. All Rossiu could ever muster was a retreat into the past; he couldn't drill into the future nor up into the heavens, merely drilling back down into the Earth, drilling into archaeology, into the past, into rosy memories of primitive man.

Yoko & Viral

Whilst Rossiu's doomed plan continues, Simon wastes away in jail with his new room-mate, Viral. Viral, who I've failed to mention up until this point, was Kamina's long standing arch-nemesis – a beastman who never failed to give Kamina a good fight. After exchanging blows with several cross-counters in the showers, Simon and Viral come to a kind of understanding, gaining a mutual respect for one another. Meanwhile, on a faraway island, Yoko is working as a school teacher, teaching young kids, nurturing the first generation born on the surface. Upon hearing the news of the anti-spiral's invasion, she scooters across the sea to save Simon and the Earth. Yoko releases Simon from prison, releases Simon from the cage he trapped himself in, unlocking his spiral energy to grow once more.

Ultimately, Simon was saved and allied by Kamina's soul / lover Yoko and Kamina's arch rival Viral; Kamina's spirit, that divine masculine force which has guided Simon since his days in the caves, called from beyond the grave and told Simon to "wake up". It said: enough with pleasantries, like hoping Rossiu's plan will work – it won't, and you know that. To save humanity *you* must go out there with *your* spiral energy, holding your core drill high as a beacon of hope.

As I've said earlier, the third act was my favourite upon rewatching, even though it's usually considered the worst of the four. What hit me hardest was Simon's revivification, his revitalisation, his rebirth back into a hero by Yoko's doing. Settling down wasn't a mistake, but in settling down, Simon lost sight of the future. To Simon, Rossiu's vision of the future seemed good enough, even though it was a future

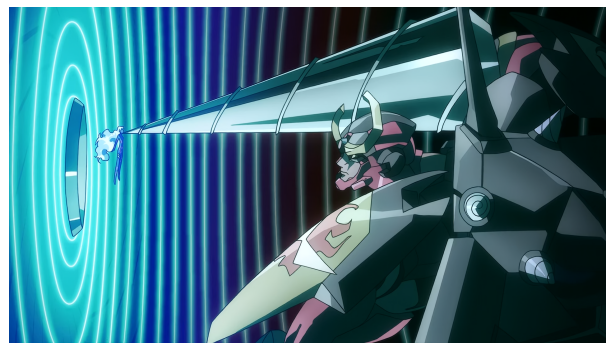
based upon fleeing, not facing one's foes. On Simon's quest to get Nia back, on his Orphic journey to get back his soul, the descent into the underworld has now begun.

Hope vs. Survival

Rossiu's Ark flies in space under attack, nearly sinking due to a loss of spiral energy. Why is the ark losing spiral energy? Because there's no *hope* on board. Rossiu's message of survival is a grim one; it's a message of 'we're nearly dead but the grit of our teeth hasn't worn down yet' - certainly not a message for raising morale and spirits. Only once Simon and the Gurren-dan come to rescue the Ark-Gurren and pronounce the gospel of hope, does the spiral energy of the ship surge, keeping it afloat and its shields alive.

The Princess is in Another Castle

Simon enters the moon, planning to *gattai* with the Cathedral Terra, but Nia stands in the way of Simon's drill. To combine with the moon, Simon would have to kill Nia. Nia, under control of the anti-spiral, claims she's risking her life to produce absolute despair. To this, Simon says no; in absolute despair, Simon argues, is absolute hope. Through hope and trust, Simon drills forth, and at the final moment Nia dodges.



Nia, once hope, has become despair. But in Nia, in despair, Simon still sees her hope.

Rossiu could only see despair – his vision was tainted black. Rossiu could only seek survival since in every simulation, forethought, and plan, he saw the death of mankind. Instead Simon sees brightness in all things; he sees hope of victory, not the despair of defeat. To Simon, simulations mean nothing, for he has hope and will drill through the heavens, rewriting the laws of nature if need be. He may have not rescued Nia yet, but sure as hell he will. Simon knows he will because he has hope.

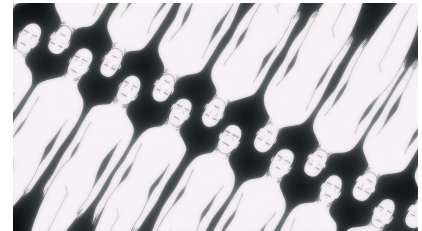
Rossiu's Final Attempt to Return

After realising his mistake, Rossiu returns to his village. He walks down into the dark abyss, returning to his childhood, to his origins, to a pre-conscious state. There he plans to shoot himself. Suicide: the final retreat into nothingness. If the retreat into the cave is a retreat into childhood and to your mother's lap, suicide is a retreat to a

time before you were born, to a time when there wasn't even nothingness. Thankfully Simon and Kinon bring him to his senses, and Rossiu appears a humbled man, now with more love and hope in his heart.

The Final Showdown

On our journey through Simon's life, enter the final battle against the anti-spiral. The anti-spiral are the root of the evil Simon is facing; they seek to crush mankind's spiral energy since they are afraid of 'Spiral Nemesis'. Spiral Nemesis is the end of the world – the end point of any spiral race who seeks unfettered growth, growing larger and more powerful, inventing ever-more technologies until the universe bursts at the breaches. As a response to this threat, the anti-spiral, who were once also a spiral race, chose the path of Rossiu: to return back to the ground, back into clay, into feeble infantile messes. They chose Human Instrumentality over spiral energy.



Homunculus-like anti-spiral citizens

In an attempt to exact absolute despair, to crush the Gurren-dan's hope and spiral energy, the anti-spiral takes to using stone hands, feet, and faces to crush Gunmen and Grapearls. Several crew members who've been a part of our adventure perish: most memorably the twins Jorgun and Balinbow whose laughs echo as their ship is vaporised. The one which touched me most, however, was Makken, the short mechanic, who sacrifices himself to save the ship without hesitation nor fanfare.

The Sea of Despair

The hands and feet attacking the crew serve a second purpose: to push. Whilst Simon is charging up his spiral energy to *gattai* with the Chouginga Dai-Gurren, the ship is pushed down into the Sea of Despair. This despairing depressive environ sucks up spiral energy through the Death Spiral Machine: the heart of the Sea. The team desperately try to avoid fate, trying to bob upwards for air, but no matter how hard they resist the pull, they sink. Simon, however, suggests they sail straight down into the machine, into the core. Crazy. But isn't this what we've seen the Gurren-dan do all along? Bobbing for air and resisting the pull is what Rossiu did, trying to save as many as he could and survive. This will to survive, this will to merely live, is not spiral energy; no, spiral energy is a will directed towards fate, towards the fatal, towards death. Movement towards death is natural, since for every day we



The Gurren-Dan descending into the belly of the Sea of Despair

grow, we're one day closer to death; movement towards surviving is hanging on for dear life to the present, or in many cases the past, not letting time pass nor fate be woven. Hence, Simon looks the Death Spiral Machine in the eye and sails into the singularity of chaos.

In destroying the machine, Kittan makes the ultimate sacrifice. Yet in his final exchanges, and again in his last moments, he finally realises he can't be a Kamina. With no amount of bravado can he match up to Kamina, the perfect man, who he idolised and felt lesser than. But ultimately Kittan proves *his* courage, *his* soul, and only when flying towards his death, he finally accesses his *own* spiral power to perform a Giga Drill Break.

Halcyon Dreaming

The anti-spiral's next trick is to possess each member of the crew into a stupor, sending them into dreams of happier times. Not only are these fantasies fake, but they're also not of good times: Simon and Kamina thief, and beg beastmen for forgiveness; Yoko is a famous bounty hunter idol, but she isn't content with fame and glory. In both worlds, Kamina, that ever-present guiding light, leads Simon and Yoko out of fantasy and back to reality. Kamina's spirit is the best antidote to the soppy peaceable times they nearly fell for. The anti-spiral have tried crushing their hearts with the despair of pain, but now they're using the despair of peace. Eternal halcyon worlds where you never cease to be happy are a kind of despair where you can never grow, change nor develop. Again, we see a peaceful world of surviving instead of growing, where you hold on to a tree whilst the stream pulls you along, instead of flowing downstream towards the end as fate intended. Onwards, the Gurren-dan march to the final battle.



Simon refuses to beg and lower his head in his dream

Destiny

The final battle with the anti-spiral is too good to describe in words. After galactic frisbees and Big Bang Bombs, Lordgenome undergoes quantum something-or-other, turning into a drill, passing on his spiral energy to Simon for the final assault. As each iteration of Gurren Lagann is crucified, the next pops out like Russian dolls, until Simon, piloting Lagann, drills straight into the anti-spiral mech. Lordgenome truly passes the torch on to the next generation, becoming the fuel to light their ambitions.

Nia, however, begins to pixelate and disappear. Returning to Earth, Simon and Nia marry, kiss, confirm their love, and then Nia disappears. Gone.

But this *is* the end of the story, right? Doesn't Simon get the girl and live happily ever after? It's a bitter-sweet ending for our hero who up until this point has not only been trying to save the world, but also trying to recover his waifu. But marriage is eternal – even beyond the grave, Nia and Simon will be married to each other. They've



Coniunctio Oppositorum – The Union of Opposites

entered a rite, a ritual, a mystery, an alchemical union, which has been passed down since time immemorial wherein two become one – that of marriage. Even though Nia has passed away into pixels, she now shares Simon's heart from where she'll never leave. Simon has been truly reunited with his soul; his quest is finally over. Simon has become a true hero.

A Short Summary

We've covered a lot of ground in this article, so let's finish off by organising our thoughts. Gurren Lagann has a clear message: rebel against and don't become a Lordgenome; rebel against and don't become a Rossi; and reject the principle of the anti-spiral which permeates through the culture and the world with all your strength. Resist anti-spiralic tendencies by not trying to hold on to the present, and not retreating into fantasies of the past to find solace, for the only way for either yourself, or for society, to grow and remain healthy is to look to the future. The future is terrifying, however, for in the future lurks the death of yourself, society, and the universe: Spiral Nemesis – the fate of those who grow. But don't shy away. Don't be discouraged. Walk onwards, staring death in the face, for that is the courage to be.



A face more terrifying than death's



Why Catgirls are the Best

Written by James Frost



Catgirls are cute. This is an undeniable truth, but where do catgirls come from, and what makes them so cute?

Humans and cats have been living together for more than ten thousand years, and for most of that catgirls have existed too. The Ancient Egyptians worshiped a cat headed goddess called Bastet all they way back in 2890 BCE, and in the interim years there have been many other gods and goddesses featuring cat like motifs. Catgirls have existed in Japan since the 1200s in the form of youkai called *nekomata*, though these were ferocious beasts who would devour humans. More friendly catgirls emerged in Japan in the 1700s with stories of shapeshifting *bakeneko* prostitutes popular during the Edo period. This is also when the term *nekomusume* first came into use.



The first modern example of a beautiful catgirl is in Kenji Miyazawa's 1924 book "4th of Narcissus Month" and was further popularised in 1936 by a form of street theatre called *Kamishibai*. The first anime with catgirls was *The King's Tail* (*Osama no Shippo*) in 1949. While it has been lost to time, it is among the earliest feature-length anime films, showing that catgirls and anime have been linked for a long time. By the 1990s, catgirls had become synonymous with anime, especially with the advent of *moe*.

But why are catgirls so cute anyway? For one, they are the product of combining two things that are generally thought of as cute: girls and cats. This makes sense, but I think there is another even greater reason: expressiveness. A catgirl is very expressive. In addition to the normal human ways of expression, they have movable ears, and a tail. Both can be used to portray emotion, from droopy ears and tail for sadness, to fur standing on end when scared. They can also use common cat actions that would normally be inappropriate for a human, such as rubbing against someone to show affection.



So go forth and spread the wonders of catgirls!

Why Autists Love Anime

In this article, part-time weaboo and full-time autist Joe Peake discusses why people like himself are drawn to Japanese cartoons.



It is a commonly held belief among those who are familiar with anime, and with anime fandom, that this hobby attracts a higher-than-average number of autists compared with the general population. While it is true that today a growing proportion of non-autistic people, also known as **'neurotypicals'** or **'normies'**, also watch anime, there is no denying that within circles of people who regularly meet up to discuss anime, go to conventions, engage with fandoms etc, autism seems to be more prevalent than usual. I will now outline 5 reasons which, in my view, explain this phenomenon.

Firstly, anime offers a window into an emotional world that is often inaccessible to people on the spectrum. Autistic people feel all the same emotions that normies do, but the difficulties they face in communicating their emotions to and reading the emotions of others acts as a barrier to forming strong emotional bonds with their peers, and to discussing their emotions. **Characters' emotions in anime are usually made very explicit and easily identifiable**, changes in facial expression and body language being extremely clear to the viewer. Obvious visual cues and signposts are used to drive the point home, and we are often given access to **characters' internal monologues**.



Some typically unambiguous anime faces

The second reason for anime's popularity among the autistic is its weirdness. Autistic kids have a tendency toward contrarianism and will rarely take up hobbies and interests based on what their peers like. Anime is sufficiently different from the media that most westerners are used to that it puts off many normies who are confused by its idiosyncrasies, while attracting those idiosyncratic people who are as confused regarding the rules and conventions of their own society. To such people, navigating the bizarre world of anime is by comparison a walk in the park compared to navigating the social world of the normies.



From top left, clockwise: A nefarious skinless chicken from *Humanity has Declined*; No idea; No idea; A piece of a giant naked lady from *End of Evangelion*; Haruko about to give some poor lad a wallop in *FLCL*





Urasawa's *Monster*, the first anime this author watched from start to finish; the classic 90s mindbender *Neon Genesis Evangelion*; the final chapters of the increasingly complicated *Attack on Titan*.

The third reason, which can also be regarded as an extension of the second reason, is that there is so much more variety in anime compared to western films and television. This gives autistic viewers more opportunity to find the specific weird and wonderful show that suits their special interests or eccentric tastes. Whether it be about foiling the dastardly scheme of some skinless chickens, or **battling robots that burst out of your head**, or **turning the entire world's population into psychic marmalade and inserting them into a giant flying womb**, many anime stories seem almost designed to scare away viewers who do not possess sufficient curiosity or spergish tendencies.

The fourth reason why anime attracts autists is its complexity. The stories, characters, and themes found in anime are, admittedly with many exceptions on both sides, on average more complex and nuanced than those found in western shows. No western director would think to create a big bombastic action movie or series and have it gradually turn into a Freudian psychodrama, or have the main character become an insane fascist toward the end and start indiscriminately murdering people. The complexity of long-running anime series' plots also provides the detail-minded autistic with plenty to obsess over, theorise about, and discuss with other nerds. **As with anime's weirdness and sheer variety**, the same factors that have the potential to drive away normie viewers are themselves draws for those with a touch of the 'tism.

Finally, and related to reason number one, anime places far more importance on friendship rather than romance compared to Western media. For young autistic people growing up, finding romance or friendship are both particularly steep hills to climb. Yet with romance often being even further out of reach and most of your peers not being interested in it until their

teens, it is the struggle to make friends that causes the most grief for those who are perceived as strange or freakish or unnerving by their classmates. In anime, there are far more examples of characters being willing to fight and die for their friends than for lovers, and there are many series focusing on groups of friends at school or at work just hanging out together. This demonstrates the high value placed on friendship by anime-creators – likely in large part because school is the last place where Japanese people can actually make and maintain friendships before being thrust into the daily meat-grinder, interspersed with evenings of forced alcohol consumption with your boss, that makes up much of Japanese working life. The experience of growing up Japanese I believe produces an effect in people not unlike autism, and this allows them to create media that speaks to the spergishly-inclined in ways that other media do not. Many anime creators themselves, including giants of the industry Hideaki Anno and Hayao Miyazaki, display multiple traits associated with autism. Anime is therefore an autistic medium, created by autistic people, who themselves are also the product of a uniquely autistic society.



TRUE FRIENDS

HELP YOU GET RID OF THE BODY.

Wise words to live by.

In summary, Japan is autistic, friendship is magic, and anime is a great fit for spergs.

Cammy's Picks from 2020

Written by Cameron Johnson

In 2020, with all the free time we had, I watched a lot of anime, so I am going to give 12 recommendations (1 per month) for anime that I had watched during the year.

January - Dimension W

Dimension W is set in the future after Humanity has discovered the 4th spatial dimension; dubbed W. This dimension provides infinite energy to society and powers everything from cities to cars. The story follows Kyouma Mabuchi who still uses petrol to fuel his car despite how expensive it is in this society because he dislikes the way society uses the W dimension. He is also a detective/hitman which leads him to take on a job that causes him to end up with Mira, an android who uses dimension W to power herself, but she's actually the key to a mystery involving a certain man's death.



When I watched this, I found it very enjoyable because the characters are likable especially Mira, but the main guy actually feels like a real character and you feel for him once you find out his backstory. The way they use dimension W to trap people in other dimensions or to be used as weapons is interesting. The opening though has to be the best and most memorable part of the show.

February - Mahoromatic: Automatic Maiden



Mahoromatic follows the story of Suguru Misato who was a boy orphaned by an alien war, which killed his father, as he copes with life until an android girl called Mahoro becomes his maid and changes his life completely. This show might be considered 'early noughties trash' because it's a harem and ecchi but I feel like that is wrong and that there is more to it than that. Firstly, the characters are fun and Mahoro is a cute maid who is actually quite reliable. This was also a Gainax anime, and it really shows at the end of S1 and 2 when Mechas get involved and it feels very much like a Gainax ending in S2. The show does have a plot, but it is mostly slice of life so there's a little something for everyone.

March - Maid Sama!



This cute romantic comedy anime is about Misaki Ayuzawa who is the student council president at her school while also working as a maid part-time at a maid cafe. One day, the main love interest Takumi Usui discovers this secret, and the story is about how these two characters carry the whole show with their cute relationship. It's very fun and the main character's chemistry together is great. Also, how can you say no to maids?

April - Redline

Redline is a Madhouse movie about basically a wacky race through space. It's only a movie so it's a lot more digestible than a whole series but it still has a lot of jokes to go around. Since Madhouse made the movie, it looks very good, and you can tell a lot of detail has gone into the animation department. Race movies are a lot of fun to begin with because the main character, JP, is an underdog who got screwed over in his last race and wants to redeem himself. This film is probably better enjoyed in a group, so it'd be perfect for a movie night.



May - Girls und Panzer



Girls und Panzer is better than people give it credit for. If you can accept the unrealistic nature of it with tankery clubs and the schools being on giant ships (for some reason) and just see it as a sports anime, it's quite fun. The story follows Miho Nishizumi who is, at first, blackmailed into joining the tankery club but then joins it willingly as she had experience in tankery before but didn't want to continue it because of her family. The show takes a while to set up everything but by episode 4, we're in the first match in tanks and it's unique to see a tank battle in anime. The show also has slice of life elements in it which will appeal to those types of fans as well but all the movies are plot-heavy but that doesn't detract from how good they are, and this is a very entertaining anime.

June - Irresponsible Captain Tylor

Tylor is the main character of the story set in the future where a sci-fi war between humans and an alien empire is going on. He is just a normal man before he joins the army being put on board the Soyokaze, a run-down decrepit space cruiser. This is a fun anime about a lucky dumbass as Tylor gets himself in dangerous situations but always manages to find a way out. It makes you wonder if he's actually stupid or secretly smart. A good funny sci-fi anime to watch with friends.



July - I want to eat your Pancreas



This is also a movie I watched this year, this time by Studio VOLN as they bring us a cute romantic story with emotions that pull at the heartstrings. Sakura and Haruki are the 2 leads of the film as they help each other out after getting stuck being librarians together. Haruki is a turtle who won't come out of his shell because he doesn't have any friends and Sakura is dying from 'pancreas disease' and they help each other make memories that they won't forget but as time goes on, Haruki's feelings begin to change. I think this is a very emotional movie that can make people cry.

August - Shinsekai Yori

Firstly, it might look shit and its A-1 pictures, but this is a good anime if you're into dystopian futures or interested in mystery horror. I also think that the art style adds to the show's eeriness, so it works in the anime's favour. This show is about humans with psychic powers, and it follows a group of school children who get wrapped up in a mystery when they do something that they've been told is forbidden by the adults. This show leaves you with questions that you want answering and the story gets even more mysterious when the 'queerats' get introduced as lower beings who are subservient to humans. While this can be scary to walk into, it is well worth the payoff when you finally figure out what has happened in this world.



September - Spice & Wolf



You could watch this show just for Holo and you would still enjoy it but there is more to the show as you are invested in the main character's journey and the mysterious nature of the world. Lawrence is just a merchant who makes a living buying and selling products until he meets Holo who is a wolf deity living in the wheat. When Lawrence meets Holo, he is only confused and reluctant to help her but as he warms up to her, he relies on her to solve problems. Holo is a great character who is hard to hate because she's well written and has good character design. The setting is pagan Europe and it's an interesting world that has giant wolves roaming about. An entertaining and fun watch.

October - Tamako Market + Love Story

Firstly, I only watched this anime so I could watch the movie because the movie is a sequel which is more romantic than the television anime. However, the anime is just as good, and watching it just made 'Love Story' better. Tamako Market is a Kyoani anime about Tamako whose family owns a mochi shop. It's a cute slice of life show about Tamako making mochi and going to her baton club, a talking bird named 'Dera chan' who came from a Polynesian island to escape his duties, and Mochizou who has known Tamako since he was little and wants to confess to her. I would say it is worth watching Market before Love Story and it's a Kyoani show so it looks pretty.



November - Hayate no Gotoku!



Hayate no Gotoku follows the story of Hayate Ayasaki as he is left with a huge debt by his awful parents. He tries to pay off this debt by exploiting a rich girl called Nagi, but he can't because he's too nice. Nagi then gets kidnapped after which Hayate jumps to the rescue with his superhuman strength and rescues Nagi. He is then hired as her butler. There's one problem, Nagi is a problem child who refuses to go to school so Hayate must use his new position to get on Nagi's good side and help her. This is a very funny show that has a lot of references in it such as Nagi's mansion having busts of Detective Conan characters or doing a whole episode based on Gurren Lagann. It also has good supporting characters too like Maria who is Nagi's genius maid and Hinagiku who is the student council president but also develops feelings for Hayate. Season 1 is the only one worth watching though.

December - Inuyasha

Inuyasha was a long-running shounen that came out between 2000 - 2009. It's about Kagome who is a shrine maiden girl until she is pulled down the shrine's well by a demon and ends up 500 years ago in the Sengoku Jidai. Once there, she is attacked by a demon because she has the 'Sacred Jewel' in her. After the Jewel is shattered, she recruits Inuyasha to help her find all the pieces. Most of the story is about Inuyasha, Kagome, and the friends they make along the way as they travel across Japan to look for the jewel shards. Even though there is an overarching plot of gathering the jewel pieces before bad guys find them, the show feels very slice of life as we just get to enjoy the character's journey and the occasional fight against demons.

This is also a good shounen because it has good filler such as the school festival arc where Inuyasha and Kagome go back to Japan to perform in the school play. Kagome and Inuyasha's relationship is also an attractive point of the anime as they begin developing feelings for one another. This is only a sliver of the anime that I watched in 2020 but I watched too much to put everything in here, so I gave some of my best recommendations that I watched through the year.



MadThad0890: A Brief History of a Broken Man

Written by Joseph Wallen

Madthad is character that goes back to the early days of western weeb culture, being an avid 4Chan user and general anime, and otaku culture fan; he has been a strong presence ever since- **even if at some points, he wasn't exactly present.**

Thad started posting on his YouTube channel in early 2008, videos included him singing various anime songs, seemingly recorded on a Nintendo DSI camera; the videos themselves **aren't too strange**, rather just a relic of the time. However, when looking closer, some weird stuff starts to jump out.

It starts in September of 2008, **with the video "Lucky star in real life parody.** Overall, **it's a pretty funny video, some autistic Weeb dancing around to the Lucky star OP, and I mean, who out of us hasn't done this behind closed doors.** Looking at the description, we start to see signs of **Thad's troubles.** *"Yea I finally got around to finishing this!! my dad locked me in my room and I was like "lets finish lucky star!!!".*



Alongside this, he has several videos showing talking about suicide, and his family troubles.

Perhaps most the most well-known of his YouTube videos is the birthday video; his voice trembling, he sings happy birthday to himself, sitting with a picture of Kotonoha, his waifu (disgusting, I know), a cake and some candles, **remarking "no one remembered my birthday but Kotonoha, at least she remembers... forever alone"**, perhaps a joke video, but given the context of many earlier videos, it seems there is some truth to it, ultimately giving us insight into the life and troubles of Thad.

Madthad is most infamously know for two things. The first being his love for school days, and Kotonoha- going so far as to record and upload himself having intercourse with her body pillow, *JULAYY* style, to the School days OP (the video is still available, **for whatever that's worth**).

The second being his interest in cheese pizza. A video, posted in March of 2010, discussing a new bill in Japan that would ban the distribution of lolis, sharing his disagreement and stating “I’m not a big fan of real CP, I’m not that interested in real people, but drawn CP, that I’m A-ok with”- something which wasn’t 100%



A screenshot from his PUBLIC Facebook in 2011

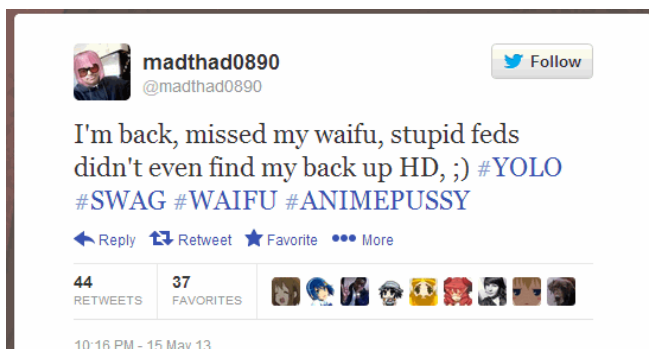
truthful. He then went on to further discuss several of his fetishes, thus marking his descent into modern Satan worship.

- a. \things\don't click
- b. \things\don't click\teens
- c. \things\don't click\cp
- d. \things\don't click\cp\cp

Sourced from the FBI Criminal complaint documents- available online.

Following this video, he took to Facebook and Myspace, using public accounts shared with his family and friends, to self-incriminate share his interests, discussing with those people how to look for CP, how to encrypt it, and what he *does* when viewing it- this can all be found in screenshots online, and within the FBI case documents; because, of course, after doing all this, an anonymous tip was submitted, and he

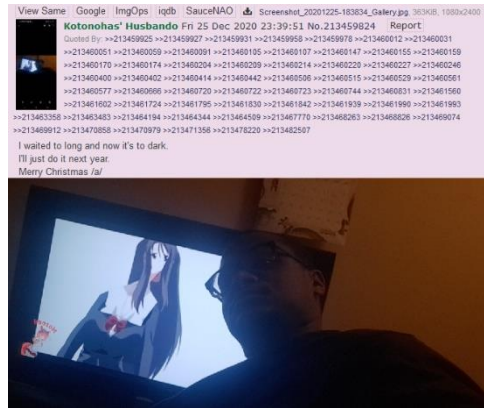
was raided by the FBI, where they found hundreds of *images*, disguised in a super-secret folder structure.



Thad then posted bail, with the terms of his bail being 1. Wear an ankle monitor, 2. Disallowed from using the internet until bail is up. Three days later, he takes to twitter. Needless to say, he went straight back to prison, subsequently taking a plea bargain

requiring him to spend at least 5 years in prison, delete his online accounts (luckily his YouTube remains, along with archives and screenshots of his Facebook and Myspace), and register as a sex offender.

So where is he today? Well, he got out of Jail in 2018, he is thirty something with a pretty damming record. In 2020 he started to become active online again, posting regularly on /a/ and /pol/, with the username “Kotonohas' Husbando”.



And on YouTube, using the name “Will Dill”, where he talks about his support for trump, dislike for SJWs, and complaining about modern women.

And thus concludes this brief introduction.

Overall, it's a pretty wacky tale of a troubled, yet horribly immoral man, with a lot more out there, if you are so inclined to look for it.



- 
Mai Waifu we look soooooo kawaii together!!!
 August 9, 2010 at 11:43am
- 
Thad McMichael I knowwwwwww. I was so tired that day. Thanks for cuddling up with me.
 August 9, 2010 at 11:44am
- 
Mai Waifu BAKA IT'S NOT LIKE I WANTED TO CUDDLE WITH YOU or anything!
 August 9, 2010 at 11:45am
- 
Thad McMichael STOP BEING Tsundere
 August 9, 2010 at 11:48am

In a relationship with
 **Mai Waifu**

The Appeal of Divine Waifus

Written by Cameron Johnson

When I say divine, I refer to goddesses which have appeared in anime for a while. They can either be of heavenly origin, alien origin, or artificial origin, but what makes a goddess is whether people believe they are one. I am writing this to make you fellow believers of the divine waifus.

Firstly, goddesses usually have some divine/otherworldly power which makes them not only fearsome but also someone to be respected. However, in order for a goddess to be a waifu, she must use this power for good and never for evil. This means that a divine waifu is always someone you can believe will do the right thing when the time comes to use their power. This power can take on many forms such as Belldandy's contract to Hestia's 'falna' or Aqua's 'god blow' but they use this power to support their friends/followers. If a goddess used her power for evil, she would lose her status as a goddess and would no longer be a divine waifu. If you choose a divine waifu, you are getting someone who is good-hearted and wouldn't betray you.



Goddesses in history have always been perceived as beautiful women and that is shown in anime by their character design. Whenever there is a goddess in a story, they always stand out either with their abnormal clothes or their beautiful appearance. You don't see ugly goddesses in anime. They always have perfect figures, and they are usually the centre of attention to the point that males put them on pedestals. When you pick a divine waifu then, you know you are getting a gorgeous character.



The quote 'with great power comes great responsibility' should apply to goddesses however a lot of the time, goddesses are irresponsible. Most goddesses in anime usually have character flaws such as being useless, debt-ridden, or being naive about Earth's customs. This means that the divine beings aren't perfect which I think humanizes them because humans are imperfect beings as well. This makes not only for great storytelling as an imperfect being makes it easier to relate to and it makes the character more likable. It makes for great humour when a goddess breaks your expectations by being flawed. The oxymoron of divine waifus being perfect and imperfect allows not only for funny comedy. It also makes their cuteness shine brighter as it is hard not to find it cute and funny when an all-powerful goddess is tamed by a powerless human.



While some of these arguments could also apply to other non-human waifus such as ghosts or aliens, I think divine waifus are appealing because humanity has had perceptions of what a goddess is for thousands of years since the times of the first civilizations and anime translates those perceptions into powerful, flawed but above all else cute waifus. I hope you too are now a believer of the divine waifus.

Runners Up

Here are the other great designs that were sent in.

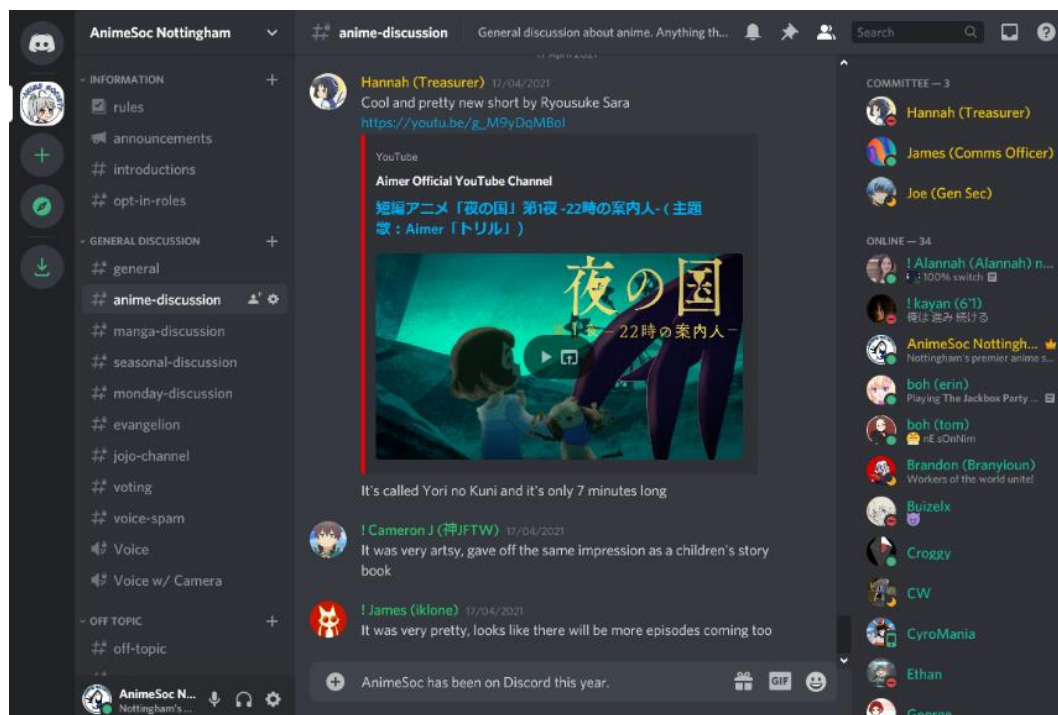




The 2020/21 academic year has certainly been, to use a word so often thrown about these days, unprecedented. The COVID-19 pandemic has meant that this year saw no visits to A41 in the Clive Granger Building, and instead consisted of events run on Discord, and anime watched over Kosmi. Technical difficulties plagued our early session, but we persevered, and managed to have a full and compelling year of the society.

With 218 people on the server, it has been busy, but I look forward to being able to meet all the new members that have joined over the past year face-to-face during next year's anime sessions.

Events that have run this year include Movie screenings, Kahoot quizzes, table quizzes, pumpkin carving, game nights, and our manga book club, all of which have been great fun!



Making this all happen was this year's committee, so let us take a moment to remember the strange folk who have lead us into the depths of anime this year:



Nick

President

Hi I'm Nick, the president, and I'll be hosting many of the events. I'm a fan of Maid Dragon, Akira, Galaxy Express 999, End of Eva, C.G. Jung and Aristotle.



Joe

General Secretary

Hey all, I'm Joe your general secretary for this year. I mostly do stuff in the background to keep things going smoothly. My anime tastes are more on the weird end such as Shimoneta, Himegoto, Made in Abyss and Ben-To.



Hannah

Treasurer

Hi, I'm Hannah! I handle the money and run the biweekly manga book club. My favourite animes are Fullmetal Alchemist and Yu Yu Hakusho and my favourite mangas are Fruits Basket and Yokohama Kaidashi Kikou.



James

Communications Officer

Sends newsletters and manages social media and this website. His favourites are Average Abilities, Date A Live, Blade Dance of the Elementalers, and Fate/Kaleid Liner.



Dom

Social Secretary

Hi, my name is Dominique and I help to organise events! My favourite anime include Boku No Hero Academia and Soul Eater, in general I'm a huge shounen fan.



Smugboi

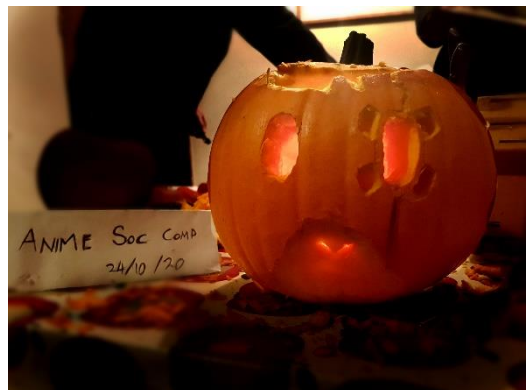
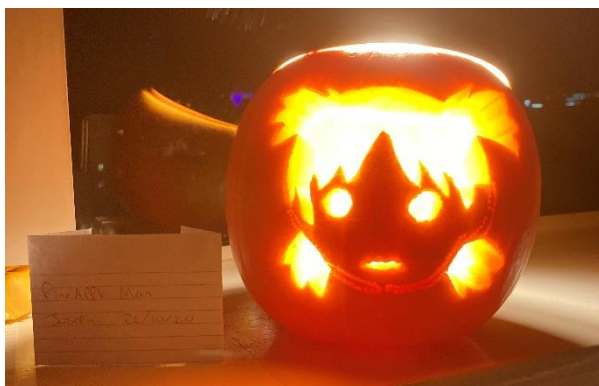
Mascot

Smugboi is a large, round plush seal. He is both very soft and very smug looking. He is helped in his duties by his manager, Miles, who has been a member of the society for several years and provides sage advice on occasion.

At time of writing, the AGM has not yet occurred, however I wish the incoming committee the very best of luck, and hope that AnimeSoc may prosper for years to come!

Pumpkin Carving

Here are the pumpkins that people sent in during Halloween 2020:



That is it for Issue 12 of the Zine. I hope you had as much fun reading it as I did making it.

Thank you to everyone who sent in articles, I think that this may be the greatest Zine yet. This year, for the first time, we have managed to get the Zine physically printed, which I think is a great achievement.

And of course, thank you to you, the reader. Whether you are reading it upon release, or in ten years time in a fit of nostalgia, I hope you have found it entertaining. I leave you with this 4-koma drawn by Wan. Thanks for sticking with us,
- James Frost (Zine Editor)



The Zine is the magazine produced by the University of Nottingham's Anime Society.

Contained within are articles going into everything from the history of anime, to the appeal of divine waifus.

The Zine Will Return...

