

The Zine

Issue 13
May 2022

Featuring -

- AoT Concentric Womb Theory (Part 2)
- Evangelion and Human Instrumentality
- The Oddities of The Monogatari Series
- Freedom Explored Through Anime
- Murders in Detective Conan
- + Much more!

Contents

Set Series Ratings + Best Characters By Matt Fieldsend	3
Nines Nines By James Frost	5
Nabeshin: The Man Behind the Afro By James Thackway	14
Cammy's Picks 2021 By Cameron Johnson	16
The Glory of Trashy Old OVAs By Ben Eaves	20
You Will (Not) Understand: A Look at Evangelion and Human Instrumentality By Nick Stathakis	24
Freedom Explored Through Two Contrasting Personalities By Joseph Thomas (art by Chloe Henry)	30
Why Are There So Many Murders in Detective Conan? By Cameron Johnson	35
The Many Oddities of The Monogatari Series and Their Meaning By Matt Fieldsend	37
Why it's Right to Pirate By Nick Stathakis	40
The Library of Akihabara By James Thackway	43
The Conan Piss By Cameron Johnson	49
A Slice of Ramble By Joseph Wallen	51

Contents



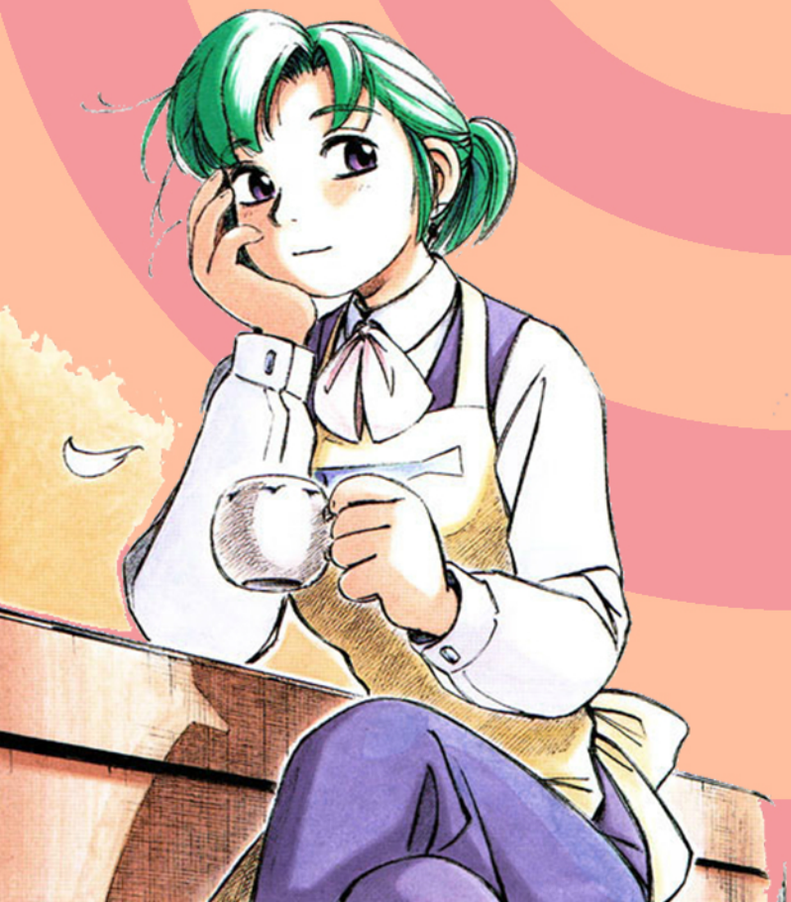
Osamu Dezaki: Making of Modern Anime 53
By Nick Stathakis

AoT Concentric Womb Theory: Part 2 55
By Joe Peake

Samurai Champloo Art 71
By Finlay Hill

Manga Book Club - Year Review 72
By Joe Green

Anime Society - The Year in Review 73
By James Frost & Matt Fieldsend





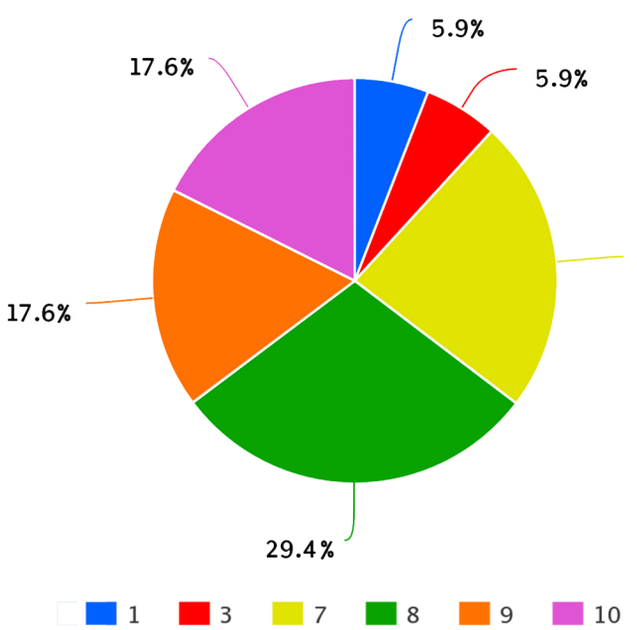


Set Series 2021/2022 Ratings and Favourite Characters

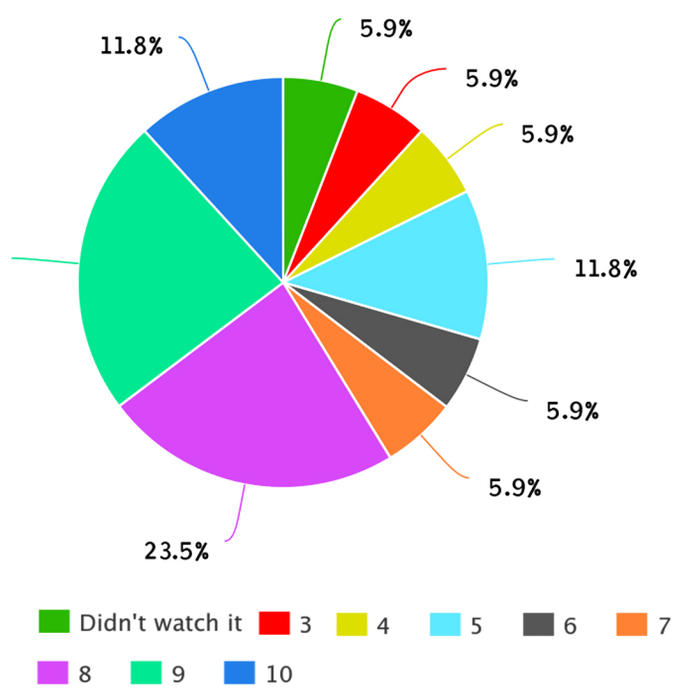
By Matt Fieldsend

As regular attendees of the society will know, Monday evenings are our core anime viewing time, where we watch a few episodes of shows people voted in, and 2-3 episodes of a set series voted in at the start of the semester. This year, our two set series were Samurai Champloo for the Autumn semester and The Monogatari Series (bakemonogatari and nisemonogatari to be precise) for the Spring semester. I put together a short poll for people to fill out with their overall rating and favourite character from the respective shows, here are the results!

Samurai Champloo Overall Ratings

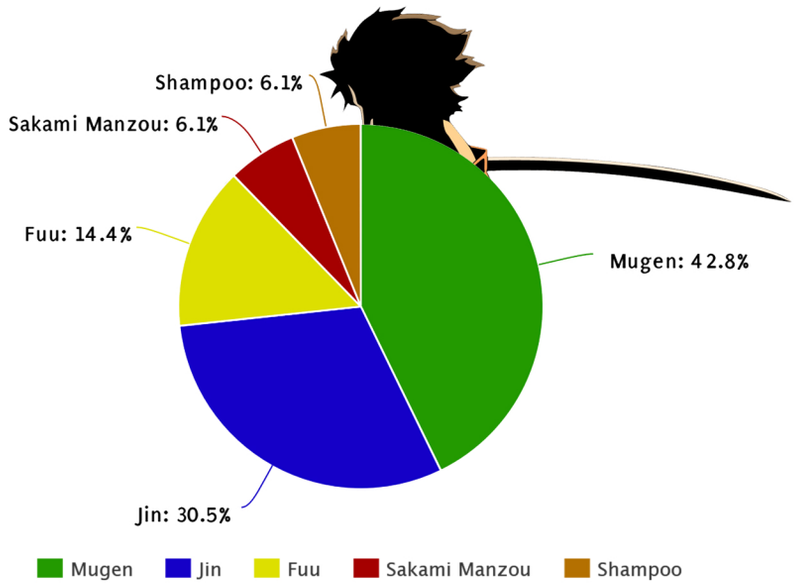


The Monogatari Series Overall Ratings



Samurai Champloo, a very solid shounen, appears to have had mass appeal with most people rating it highly, turning out a mean score of **7.59**. The Monogatari Series on the other-hand, appears to have been much more polarising, with ratings hitting every number except 1 and 2, however still overall a popular series with a solid mean rating of **7.38**. I think the two set series we had this year provided some great variety between them, and I am of course personally very happy that the Mongatari series, as one of my favourites, got in. Here's hoping we have as good of a selection next year! As for the favourite characters:

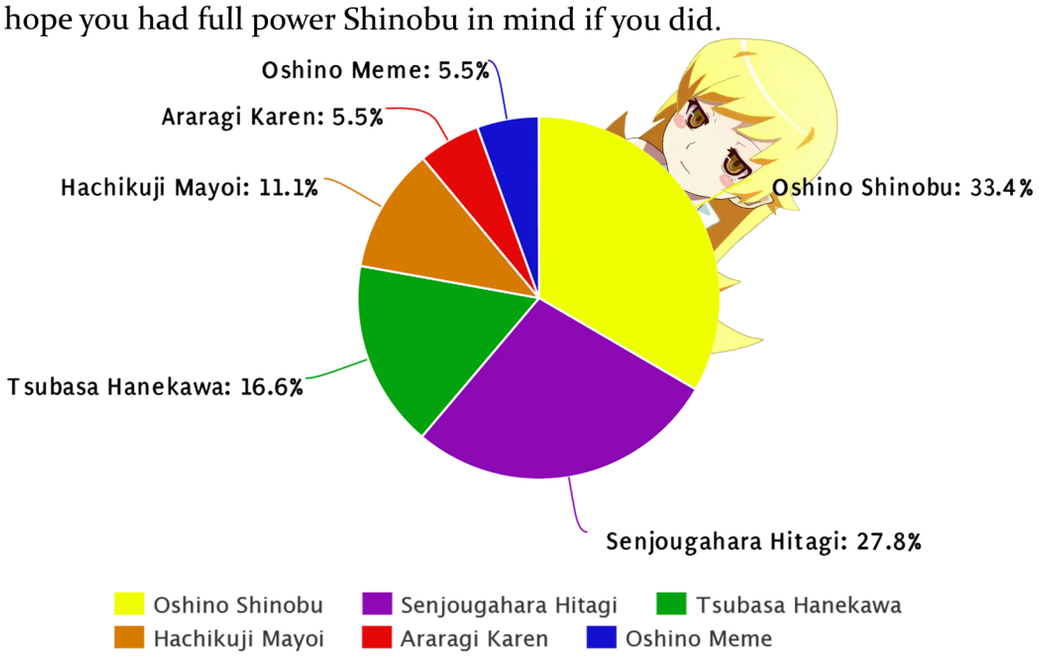
Samurai Champloo Favourite Character Results



Mugen won the Samurai Champloo character popularity vote by a reasonable margin, and I have to say that out of the three protagonists, I agree. Mugen definitely felt like the stronger protagonist and was the major driving force behind much of the events that unfolded in the story. While the ending was overall quite weak, and what let the show down from an 8 to a 7 for me personally, Mugen's ending was a more satisfying and coherent conclusion than Jin's, which is probably part of what allowed him to edge out the vote. Personally, however, my vote went to the detective Sakami Manzou as every scene he was in had me in stitches. Also shout-out to whoever voted for Shampoo, I guess...?

The Monogatari Series Favourite Character Results

Now this was a far more contested vote, with everyone's favourite blonde vampire loli, **Oshino Shionbu,** formerly known as **Kiss-Shot Acerola-Orion Heart-Under-Blade**, winning by just one vote! Once again, I must say I have to agree. While Shinobu gets much more screentime beyond Bake, Nise and Kizu that we watched this semester, even within those three series it's easy to see why she's so popular. Her relationship with Koyomi is a very genuine and believable relationship given the circumstances and events that take places and she offers genuinely good advice to him through-out the series and keeps him anchored, while also occasionally doing a mild amount of trolling. And to top it all off she can be very cute, especially when donuts are involved. However, as a Monogatari fan, I love the entire cast of this show and I wouldn't have been upset had someone else won. Senjougahara's verbal assaults are endlessly entertaining to watch and her and Koyomi have a genuinely heartwarming relationship despite the fact that she is a hyper tsundere-bordering-yandere. The third runner-up, Hanekawa, is endearing yet also pitiful for the strong persona she puts up in the face of all the things that have gone terribly wrong in her life. I'd be here all day if I talked about every character, but they're all great and I highly advise you all go and watch the rest of the series. It's easy to see why they're each popular in some way, or you just all voted on which one you thought was more attractive, which is fair enough I just hope you had full power Shinobu in mind if you did.





Nine Nines

By James Frost

When I rate a show on MyAnimeList, the score I give it reflects both how much I enjoyed the show, as well as how much I recommend it to others. A seven is a good show if you are into the genre, an eight is a good show all around, but nine is a rating I only give to a show I absolutely recommend that everyone tries. To help you all in watching some good anime, this article contains nine of the shows I have rated nine, and tries to explain my rational.

The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya



Suzumiya Haruhi no Yuuutsu is a real classic, hailing from back in 2006. It follows the cynical Kyon and the supernatural obsessed Suzumiya Haruhi, and the antics of their SOS Brigade, a club founded by Haruhi. As show progresses several people join the SOS Brigade, and Kyon finds out that they are the very supernatural beings that Haruhi is searching for.

The show really has the slice-of-life aspect nailed down, with all of the usual trappings of the genre. Where it really shines to me is in the additional element of the supernatural characters, which allows absurd situations to occur, and keeps the show fresh. The comedy is exquisite throughout with Kyon providing the perfect *tsukkomi* to Haruhi's *boke*, and the occasional more serious bit grounds the show, preventing it from becoming a fever dream. That Haruhi doesn't discover any of the actually occurring supernatural events throughout the show puts Kyon in the interesting position of responding to her absurd but unknowingly correct fantasization.

Overall *Suzumiya Haruhi no Yuuutsu* is one of the pinnacles of the slice-of-life genre, and you should watch it. Just don't ask about the order of the episodes.



Date A Live



We've seen the first episode of Date A Live in the society this year, but in case you missed it the premise is thus: Around the world disasters called spacequakes are occurring, and it turns out that they are caused by beings called spirits, unwillingly coming to Earth from another world. The government plans to deal with this by killing the spirits, but is finding it difficult due to the spirits having superpowers. There is one other way to deal with spirits though: By dating them, and making them fall in love! It is this noble endeavour upon which our protagonist Shido embarks upon, and is the core motivation for this amazing action-harem-romcom.

This is the kind of show that lives and dies by it character designs, and it does not disappoint. Each girl is unique, and while they do play into tropes, they aren't entirely predictable. They are also all very much likeable, and all experience good character development over the course of the series. Shido has some personality, which can be rare in a harem protagonist, and is all round likeable. The series also generally avoids ecchi, instead focusing more on romance, which soothes my pure heart. They also sort out the characters' feelings regarding polygamy quite quickly, which allows the series to continue without it being a recurring issue.



In the various dates throughout the show almost every date scenario is explored

The date scenarios are where the real meat of this show is, and like Haruhi they can get a little bit absurd at times, with a force of specialists working behind the scenes to try and make the dates go smoothly, though they rarely do. The visual novel choice parody sections are also good fun, and poke fun at a lot of common dating sim tropes. The first season mainly focuses on the romcom aspects, but the later ones increase the amount of action as well.

Overall Date A Live is a really fun romcom, and there is plenty of it, with a fourth season currently airing (as of spring 2022).

No Game, No Life

No Game, No Life is probably the most famous show on my list, ranking in as the 15th most popular show on MyAnimeList. It follows two gamer siblings, Sora and Shiro, who are transported to another world after winning a game of online chess. This world is one in which all conflict is decided through games, with all violence disallowed through divine decree. But in this world humanity is not doing too great, as they are up against fifteen other supernatural races, from the powerful (not to mention fluffy) Warbeasts to the Gods themselves, in a bid for world domination.



The series follows Sora and Shiro as they rise up in this world, using their L33T gamer skills to keep on winning. Almost every game in this series is full of intrigue, and is more than meets the eye, and the crazy strategies that are employed by all sides makes every one full of suspense, even if the outcome is already known.

Where this show really shines is in its characters. In particular Sora and Shiro are pretty poor specimens of humanity, both shut-in NEETs who do nothing but play games. They are by most definitions of the word, pretty lame. But it is through this weakness that they can beat the strongest this world has to offer.

If you want a fantasy series that features the very weakest rising up to beat the strongest, look no further than No Game, No Life. Just don't expect a second season anytime soon...



If you needed another reason to watch it, Izuna is very cute

Blade Dance of the Elementalers



Seireitsukai no Blade Dance is one of my absolute favourite anime. It is also trash of the highest order. As an Action-Battle-Ecchi-Harem-Romcom it has all of the tropes, and doesn't even try to subvert them. Protagonist Kamito is the only male elementalist in the world, and he enrols in the elite girls-only Areishia Spirit Academy to be able to compete in the "Blade Dance", a ritualistic fighting tournament where the winner will be granted any wish. Here, he meets feisty tsundere Clare, contracts with loli spirit Est, gets on the bad side of busty knight Ellis, become the target of affection of sexy princess Fiannia, and is declared the servant of ojou-sama Rinslet.

The character designs in this series are great, and the world actually has quite a lot going on. It is also pure fantasy, so no isekai here (though I guess when they go to the spirit realm that technically counts?) Kamito is a great protagonist, being a lot calmer than a lot of shounen protagonists, and actually being quite experience and competent, knowing a lot more than he lets on.

This series does somewhat suffer from being a single cour adaption of a longer light novel series, as the series gets exponentially better almost immediately after the end of the anime. The anime adapts the first three volumes, which mostly serve as an introduction to the characters, before they go and interact with the rest of the world. If there was one series that I could give a second season, it would be this one.

If you are looking for some very fun trash to watch, I highly recommend *Seireitsukai no Blade Dance*, and if you enjoy it, please go and read the light novels.



Some of the characters are quite precocious, despite their sheltered nature

Gonna be the Twin-Tail!!

Ore, Twintail ni Narimasu is an anime in that favourite genre of mine: gender bender. It is a genre for which I have watched over half of the entries on MAL, and the rest are on my Plan to Watch list.



Putting my particular fetishes aside for a moment, the protagonist of Ore, Twintail ni Narimasu, Souji, is a fervent aficionado of twintails. When he is approached by a strange woman called Twoearle, he learns that aliens have come to Earth to claim all the world's twintails as their own. Together with his twintailed childhood friend Aika, he must use a device he is given to transform into the twintailed warrior Tail Red and fight for Earth's twintails!

The series is a parody of much of otaku culture, from the transforming hero squad to each of the aliens having a specific fetish, from dolls to bloomers. The scenes in the alien spaceship are some of the best in the show, with them arguing about why their particular fetish is the best. The characters are all very distinctive, and each cover a variety of tropes, which the show plays off well.

Overall *Ore, Twintail ni Narimasu* is a really funny series that should be essential watching for every seasoned anime fan.



Magic Kaito 1412

A spin-off series from Detective Conan, *Magic Kaito 1412* is a phantom thief anime, following the enigmatic Kaito Kid as he pulls of impossible heists with excellent showmanship. Much like *No Game No Life*, this anime features some very clever set pieces in its heists, with all of the classic impossible heists explored, as well as some very unique ones. What sets this anime apart from others in its category, is that Kaito Kid is a stage magician. As such, many techniques from the performing arts are used, and everything that initially seems impossible being believably explained.

When he's not pulling of the perfect crime, Kaito Kid's identity is that of Kuroba Kaito, a high school magician who has to balance setting up heists and doing high school things with childhood friend Aoko. During these sections the comedy is great, and the romance between Kaito and Aoko is also really sweet.

Magic Kaito also makes the perfect introduction to the *Detective Conan* universe, especially if you are intimidated at the sheer length of the main series. All in all, *Magic Kaito 1412* is a fantastic entry into the prestigious list of phantom thief series.



Utawarerumono: The False Faces



Utawarerumono: Itsuwari no Kamen is a fantasy drama made by my favourite studio, White Fox. Awakening with out any memories on a mountain a man wanders until he finds a girl, with animal ears and tail, called Kuon. Given the name Haku, he is taken in and follows her on her journey. They eventually link up with various other characters and find that war is brewing with the surrounding countries.

The cast of characters is superb, with both breadth and depth. Each character is developed well, with fun scenes that give a look into the characters' everyday interspersed throughout the plot points. Another thing this series does really well is indirect world building, with subtle (or not so subtle near the end) references throughout to things that are perhaps out of place.

Another thing I like about it is the elements of Ainu culture that are included, with the whole setting having a very different feel than other fantasy or historical shows.

This is especially notable in Kuon's homeland. Speaking of Kuon, she is one of my absolute favourite characters across all media, being kind and caring, whilst also not taking nonsense from anyone. Her cute and expressive animal ears also don't hurt.

Utawarerumono: Itsuwari no Kamen is a fantastic fantasy, and excellent drama with great characters. I would also recommend watching the 2006 Utawarerumono, which, while by no means required, is heavily referenced in Itsuwari no Kamen. If I had to say something I didn't like about it, it would be that it ends on quite a cliffhanger, however this is set to change. Next season (summer 2022) Utawarerumono: Futari no Hakuoro will be airing, which should complete the story. It only took seven years.



Inbetween the action and plot driven scenes there is still time for characters to be developed

My Next Life as a Villainess: All Routes Lead to Doom!



Otome Game no Hametsu Flag shika Nai Akuyaku Reijou ni Tensei shiteshimatta, or *Hamefura* is a fairly recent anime in the otome game villainess genre. This is a genre that is prevalent in shoujo manga, and is based upon a common trope amongst dating games targetted at women. In these games the protagonist tries to gain the love of various capture targets (typically hot guys), but is often opposed by a villainess who will use her authority to bully the protagonist and oppose them. This villainess often comes to a sticky end when they are defeated by the protagonist, and their abuses are exposed.

In *Hamefura* the villainess Catarina Claes regains memories of her previous life, where she lived in Japan and played a game that is now the world within which she now lives. Realizing that all of the endings of the game are bad endings for the villainess, she sets to work preparing for the worst, and attempts to avoid every death flag that comes her way.

Catarina is a great protagonist for the series. She is full of cheerful energy that makes watching her and the rest of the cast an absolute pleasure. She isn't the sharpest tool in the shed, being known in the community as *Bakarina*, but this works in her favour as she is one of the most sincere and lovable characters I have seen in a long time.

The death flags add some ongoing plot to what would otherwise be a fantasy slice-of-life, which keeps things fresh and forces the characters to be developed. The comedy is hilarious, though it is often based on Catarina's misunderstandings.

Hamefura is an excellent first foray into the world of villainesses, and an amazing fantasy comedy in its own right.

Mushoku Tensei: Jobless Reincarnation



For the final anime on this list, I have chosen *Mushoku Tensei: Isekai Ittara Honki Dasu*. This is the most recent show on the list, and also the one with the highest average MAL score. It is considered to be one of the fathers of the isekai genre in its modern form, with the light novel having been immensely popular.

Mushoku Tensei follows a former failure of a person, a mid-thirties shut-in NEET. After reincarnating as a baby he decides that in this life, as Rudeus Greyrat, he is going to seriously try. In a lot of ways this is a coming of age story, as despite his pre-reincarnation years he never really developed passed childhood.
This anime is beautifully animated, with some of the nicest background art I have seen outside of Studio Ghibli. The music is also incredible, and really sets the atmosphere of the more impactful scenes. From what I understand, Studio Bind, which is making it, what founded exclusively for this series, and they will be adapting all 24 volumes of the light novel over the next few years.

The writing of the characters in this series is amazing. They feel so very human, and they are all shown being flawed in some way, sometimes in many. The show really highlights the importance of family, and how even if you don't succeed it is still important to try. If there is one thing holding this show back, it is probably the degree to which Rudeus is a pervert. While this does fit his character, the degree of it does get excessive sometimes.



Sometimes Redeus's perversion can get excessive

I've read through the entire set of light novels several years ago, and it only gets better from here on. If you want to see what is probably the best isekai series, be sure to give Mushoku Tensei a try!

NABESHIN

THE MAN BEHIND THE AFRO

By James “iklone” Thackway

Anime has its fair share of eccentric creators. More than its fair share. From the grumpy and filophobic attitudes of Hayao Miyazaki to the bombastic arrogance of Yoshiyuki Tomino, it’s hard to stand out in a world of such striking personalities. But one man made it his mission to be more aggressively over-the-top than any of the competition, and that man’s name is Shinichi Watanabe.

If you’ve never heard of this man I don’t really blame you. His time in the limelight was in the era of the early ‘oos, with his fame coming mostly from his appearances in the Excel Saga and Hayate no Gotoku anime. And yes, “appearances”. For while your average director is satisfied with just putting their ideas to animation, Mr Watanabe’s does not hesitate to insert his own likeness into every possible story as a character in his own right. As the man himself said: “*I really like animation. And I really like myself. So combining the two you get animations of myself, which is something I really really like.*”



From the various interviews with him it is clear to see that his mission in life is to stand out from the crowd. He donned his iconic red suit and yellow tie explicitly for that purpose, with his natural afro adding to the eccentric look. But Shinichi had been dealt a bad hand in life in regards to his name: being but two letters off from the (more) famous director Shinichiro Watanabe of Cowboy Bebop fame. And so he adopted the nickname “Nabeshin”, a combination of elements from his first and last name. His attire has often been compared to that of Lupin, a comparison which Nabeshin adamantly denies, saying: “*We just happened to have very similar taste in clothing!*”; the fact that Lupin III was his directorial debut being a mere coincidence. But he doesn’t claim everything comes from his own mind. When asked in an interview where his nickname originated he said “*It came to me from God. God himself came down and told me ‘YOU ARE NABESHIN’*”. A humble man indeed.

Nabeshin’s most recognisable work is the 1999 anime Excel Saga, one of the most eccentric and surreal comedies ever put to TV animation. In the first episode Nabeshin fights the original mangaka for control of the narrative, in which the poor mangaka is portrayed s a feeble nerd who stands no chance against the strength of our brave director. And so, over the course of the show Nabeshin slowly takes over the protagonist role from the original characters, fusing conventional manzai comedy with surrealist and meta story-telling: literally demolishing the fourth wall with a submachine-gun.

But it wasn't enough. The next year he would step it up a notch in the tour-de-force that is Puni Puni Poemi. A thought-provoking deconstruction of the magical girl genre, featuring Nabeshin as the neglectful father of a nuclear-powered magical girl who is out to destroy the world. Nabeshin is crucified and dies, only to be resurrected and save the day in his role as "director-father". This work is truly his gesamtkunstwerk, although its not an anime for the weak of heart.

After this Nabeshin would appear in most of the works in which he was involved, often taking over the episodes he directed. His appearance became a running gag within the projects he worked on such as Eyeshield 21, Komugi-chan Magikarte, and my favourite anime: Mahoromatic. His most notable work in this era was with the long-running shounen romcom Hayate no Gotoku, to which his erratic style served well.

Apart from his profuse self-insertion, his directing repertoire includes facets such as his use of off-model character animation and "noodle limbs", non-linear and dream-like narratives that flit in and out of various levels of reality, leaving the viewer bewildered as to where the story truly begins and ends; a style similar to the skit-segueing of Monty Python. This leads to anime where the focus is placed entirely on the characters, the story confusing itself into non-existance. And while such a frenetic nature can be taxing, in small doses he creates anime nobody else can: or at least nobody else would dare to.



Cammy's Picks 2021

By Cameron Johnson

Welcome back! We had more free time in 2021 so I decided to watch more anime and thought it'd be a nice tradition to give some good recommendations. I shall give twelve recommendations (one per month).

January - Monster



Monster is a Madhouse anime from 2004. It is based on the acclaimed manga by the same name and it was incredible. The show mostly takes place in cold war era Germany or slightly thereafter. It follows a doctor, Kenzou Tenma, after he saves a boy's life from a near-fatal head wound which changed his life in more ways than one. Monster is good thriller with a good ensemble of characters as Dr Tenma must go on a road trip around Germany as a wanted criminal.

February - Millennium Actress



Satoshi Kon's most underrated film, Millenium Actress, came out in 2002. It tells the life of a beloved actress through the visual style of her films. This is a beautiful film wherein lies a story about an unrequited love and how it drives Chiyoko Fujiwara to pursue a life in the film industry; seeing events unhold across the decades. You can tell that Satoshi Kon was inspired by older movies when making this film as the evolution of cinema is represented by the millennium actress's life. This is a must watch if you like Satoshi Kon and enjoy cinema.

March - Steamboy



This is a film set during a steampunk Victorian England and follows a boy called Ray as he receives a macguffin that produces infinite steam. This a fun film about good vs evil as the steam ball constantly changes hands throughout the film. I won't spoil anything but the third act has a unique set piece as we get to see the most extreme thing the steam ball can do. I think this film is fully worth the watch if you're into steampunk or like 'boy must kill his father' films.

April - Ah! My Goddess



Keiichi Morisato is a broke university student who can't go to a party so he phones up his friend to tell him he can't go. However, the phone goes through to the goddess helpline instead where he summons Belldandy. Belldandy will grant Morisato any wish he desires but he jokingly wishes for Belldandy to stay with him forever. This wish is granted and it leads to the two of them living together and for a romance to blossom. This is a slice of life romance comedy between a human and a goddess while they must go through the standard university hi-jinks such as entering a dirt rally race or actually going to classes. It's a fun show as we see the characters grow fond of one another although it never crosses the line. I believe this is a good anime for fans who like romance or like to imagine what it'd be like to date an all powerful goddess.

May - Detective Conan Movie 03: The Last Wizard of the Century



For starters I will have to make a digression; you will have needed to see some Detective Conan before watching this. That said, it is one of the best Conan films to this day. The film came out in 1999 and was the last Conan film made on celluloid and you can definitely tell. The story follows a Fabergé egg from the Russian tsar dynasty as Kaito Kid tries to steal it. This is where the advantages of celluloid come into play as Kaito Kid is incredibly prominent in the film through the use of shining light through his cel. The same can be said for the resolution to the mystery but that's spoiler territory. This egg proves too much for Kid as it becomes wrapped up in a mystery of the truth behind the egg and murders. This film is certainly ambitious as we get to see more familiar faces like Hattori Heiji and Kid but also because of the settings they go to within the movie. If you are a Conan fan, this film will not disappoint.

June - Lupin III



Lupin III is a classic anime from 1971 about a group of 4 thieves as they ambitiously steal loot in the some of the most ridiculous ways you can imagine all while being chased by an expert from Interpol. For such an old anime it has had wide effects on anime we are watching today. Famous creators such as Hayao Miyazaki (of Ghibli fame) worked on Lupin III and even created a fantastic movie based on the characters. Lupin III, Jigen Daisuke, Goemon Ishikawa XIII, Mine Fujiko and Zenigata are some of the most iconic anime characters you will see and their dynamic keeps producing anime over 50 years after it first aired. Watching this, you may see certain anime references similar to ones nowadays. That is because Lupin III birthed a lot of anime references so watching this feels like you're watching a bit of anime history.

July - DNA²



DNA² is a forgotten anime by Madhouse from 1994. It is a romance comedy with time travel science fiction in it. In order to prevent overpopulation in the future, Karin time travels to the past to put a stop to it at its roots. She aims to achieve this by shooting a DNA-altering bullet at Junta Momonari who would later be known as the 'mega playboy' to prevent him becoming one. However, she messes up and shoots him with a bullet that turns him into the mega playboy! The bullet isn't instant though and Junta switches between his docile and his playboy sides constantly. Karin must then try to restore the situation before Junta becomes the mega playboy permanently. This is a very silly anime but it's an anime you can get a good laugh out of; just don't think about how stupid everyone is.

August - Ao Haru Ride



This is a high school romance anime between a girl and her long lost crush from middle school. It follows Futaba Yoshioka as she tries to become class favourite while trying not to stand out. When Kou Mabuchi comes back into her life, she becomes infatuated with him and wants to find out everything that's happened since they last saw each other. Kou however is very reserved and blunt. This doesn't stop Futaba as she thaws Mabuchi's heart and they become incredibly close. It's the story of two isolated hearts finding romance again through each as they make friends along the way. This is actually a good high school romance and would recommend to any romance fans.

September - Tatami Galaxy



Tatami Galaxy is a cult classic by Madhouse from 2010. It's about a university student if he isolated himself for most of the 3 years and didn't do anything fun. Then one day at a ramen stand, Watashi (literally meaning 'I') meets another college student who calls himself the god of matrimony. This sends Watashi back two years to redo his university life. We watch as he joins a different club each episode to try and achieve success or romance only for it to end in failure at the end of the episode and for him to start again next episode. This is a bizarre anime but it has funny plots and it has a lot to say about what not to do at university. If anything, watch this so you can find out how not to go about your university life.

October - Beck



Here's another Madhouse anime; this time from 2004 about a boy who learns to find himself through music. The story follows Yukio Tanaka as he meets a foreign born boy called Ray who would change his life. This inspires Yukio to learn to play the guitar and join a band. The journey isn't easy for Yukio as he faces many hardships along the way from bullying to discovering his feelings for Ray's younger sister. The cast of characters is diverse in Beck as we see all the members of Yukio's band suffer from their hardships too. Beck also has some of the funniest 'Engrish' in anime as they tackle the language barrier quite well instead of coping out and making everyone just speak Japanese. The line 'no one calls me baka' was very funny. Watch Beck if only for the music as it's some of the best in anime and the OP becomes quite poetic once you've seen the whole thing.

November - Nadia: The Secret of Blue Water

Gainax in 1990 released Nadia. It was directed by Hideaki Anno who's famous for creating Evangelion. It's loosely based on the Jules Verne novel '20,000 Leagues Under the Sea' so it follows a French boy called Jean who's an aspiring scientist when he meets an African girl, Nadia, at the world's fair in Paris. Once acquainted and after they escape the Grandis crew, they embark on a journey that'll take them from the islands of Cape Verde to thousands of meters below Antarctica in the Nautilus; a highly advanced submarine captained by Nemo. On their journey, the Nautilus faces off against 'Neo-Atlantians' who wish to restore Atlantis to power but in order to do so they need Nadia for the Blue Water, a mysterious stone with power. This is a fun anime that could be watched by all ages as there's a little something for everyone. The bonds of families and friends are put to the test in what could only be described as the most exhilarating journey.



December - Moriarty the Patriot



This can only be described as Sherlock Holmes fan fiction as the story follows James Moriarty as he tries to bring down the class system of Victorian Britain by manipulation. Along the way, Sherlock Holmes chases after Moriarty to prevent his crime spree as the 'Lord of Crime'. You can tell the author was a big Sherlock Holmes fan as it is very inspired by the original novels from the battle of wits and intellect to the bizarre murders that must be solved. The aesthetic of the show feels very reminiscent of Victorian England as the settings are quite dirty and we see the horrible darker sides of the era such as the discrimination of peasants from the elite. It was engaging watching Moriarty manipulate people, even Sherlock himself, through his persona as the lord of crime to satisfy his ends. This is worth watching if you like Sherlock Holmes or just want a dirtier darker murder mystery show; just don't mind the bishounen designs of all the characters.

Thank you for reading my recommendations, if there's one thing you should take away from this; it's that Madhouse made lots of good shows. I hope you enjoy some of these shows and movies I've shared with you and I hope to see you again next year maybe?

The Glory of Trashy Old OVAs

By Ben Eaves

As a concept, the idea of releasing media straight and exclusively to physical media is on the way out, and the anime world is no exception. The OVA (Original Video Animation) is a format which does endure to this day but is largely relegated to spinoffs of existing media or hentai or simply shorts bundled with other things. However, it wasn't always this way. The combined forces of an economic bubble which saw investors throwing money at literally anything and an explosion of otaku interest saw a short time period emerge as a veritable golden age of OVAs. With an initial boom in the middle of the 1980s and a slow decline beginning sometime in the mid-90s this period saw all manner of OVAs being produced, including such classics as Hideaki Anno's directorial debut Gunbuster, Macross Plus, Big Wars and of course the definitive Sci-Fi epic Legend of the Galactic Heroes. The lack of TV broadcast restrictions and commitments combined with the high profit potential meant that many talented people were given generous opportunities to flex their creative muscles in an environment that encouraged pushing boundaries and appealing to enthusiast otaku audiences who were far more willing to spend money on more unusual and out-there projects. This whole royal court of high-quality work still has many loyalists today, and pages and pages could be written about the benefits to the medium of anime and influence as a whole that the institution of OVAs in this period had. But that is not what I intend to write about. The same forces which unleased this barrage of creativity and quality also resulted in something which I personally find equally as fascinating: piles and piles of utter trash. Some may look down from their high horses upon our current age of repetitive isekai harem shows, stupidly named trash light novel adaptations (which may also be repetitive isekai harems) and boring shounens and consider us to be living in a time of trashy anime, but in my opinion the trash that our parents' generation endured is far greater.

The fact that OVAs were by and large free from most censorship and had a very low barrier of entry to produce meant there was a huge opportunity to pump out total guff, whether it be to cash in on otakus who are desperate to see some 2D oppai and gore or some misguided attempt by a team of creators earnestly attempting to produce something good that sits way beyond their capabilities and budget. Add the fact that OVAs were largely sold to laserdisc rental stores where fans would rent pretty much anything based on whatever pre-internet information they had (usually limited to what was on the cover of the disc) and you end up with a system that incentivised production of plenty of content which ranged from mediocre to complete tripe. Lots of these OVAs often have baffling plots, laughable concepts and an overall air of hilarious incredulity and my God, I love them for it. The experience of sitting down to watch some dated, cheesy drivel, preferably whilst intoxicated and with mates, is a unique pleasure and in this article, I hope to explain my unusual passion for these trashy old OVAs from well before I was born with the help of some examples.

The first example I will look at is the 1986 OVA Soukihei MD Geist. The title comes from the main character, named MD Geist, whose name does not come from the fact he is a Doctor of Medicine (in fact he is quite the opposite) but as an abbreviation of 'Most Dangerous'. As we are explained in a big wall of text lore dump at the beginning of this wonderful production, our protagonist is a 'Most Dangerous Soldier', a kind of genetically engineered super soldier who has been optimised to be the most badass, hardcore, violent warrior. He wakes up from some sort of cryo-sleep and almost instantaneously begins killing people. Aside from a few sparse scenes of people establishing loosely why our friend Mr Geist might be killing people, the OVA is largely just sequences of a man who looks like a cross between Quattro Bajeena and Guile fighting and killing people in particularly violent and gory ways. This gory violence is the main selling point of the OVA, with plenty of blood and guts that most definitely would not make it onto television flying around gratuitously. Old OVAs often seek to exploit depictions of graphic sex or violence to sell laserdiscs, and MD Geist definitely falls into the latter category. In fact, when this OVA's seemingly obligatory pair of naked breasts make it onto the screen it is of part of a scene

where a woman attracted by Geist's overwhelming masculinity attempts to engage him in a sexual encounter but Geist declares he 'doesn't care' for it (absolute sigma male move), side-lining the ecchi content in favour of pure action. The whole OVA is dripping in unintentionally hilarious machismo, aided by the cheesy 80s soundtrack and art style. Although MD Geist is hardly a high concept anime, it succeeds as a 45-minute blast of testosterone in a style they just don't make anymore and is consequently highly enjoyable when you turn your brain off and just watch Geist explode some poor guy's face or blow something up every 30 seconds. Although all the characters are about as one dimensional as possible, the plot does manage one twist at the end which gives it more narrative interest than a fair few of this type of low-quality anime and when the action is eye catching enough, I would argue that there doesn't need to be some wonderfully crafted tale to keep viewers hooked. MD Geist is utter trash, but through its intense, manly action it becomes something that is incredibly entertaining and reminds us fondly of a time where all a protagonist needed to do is have muscles and kill people. What MD Geist proves is that these old OVAs are often so corny in their portrayals of action and violence they end up being totally unapologetically awesome with no regards for anything other than a very immature concept of strength and I can totally get on board with celebrating this hysterically dated and simple example of old-school MANime.



Our Manly Protagonist MD Geist



Geist stabbing a man in the face with a knife with a grenade on the end

Next up on the case study agenda is the infamous 1988 production Cipher: The Video. Produced as a promotional adaptation of a relatively popular shoujo manga series of the same name, Cipher is about two identical-looking twins who swap places and live a glamourous life as actors and models. Or at least that is what the plot synopsis said when I googled it, because absolutely none of this is clear from the OVA itself. If you had asked me what Cipher: The Video was about shortly after I had finished watching it, I wouldn't have said anything because I would have been too busy staring off into space absolutely shell-shocked at what I had just witnessed. Cipher consists mostly of fairly random sequences, set to poor covers of 1980s pop songs, interspersed with shorts sections of utterly contextless English dialogue. Due to the fact the anime is set in New York all of the dialogue is performed by whatever fifth rate voice 'actors' that the producers could find in Japan at the time that happened to speak English, in English and as a result the whole thing is full of stilted, cringey, mumbled conversations that are absolutely hilarious. Compared to the voice acting, the mediocre covers of songs originally by the likes of Phil Collins and Kenny Loggins are pretty good. About two thirds into the Cipher's unrelenting barrage of bafflement, bad English and banging 80s tunes, we are hit completely out of nowhere with a shot of the two identical brothers kissing on the lips in the middle of a sequence of one the brothers traversing New York at night. This is the moment the OVA ascends to legendary status, detonating a nuclear bomb on top of the efforts of anybody who is still trying to make sense of whatever 'narrative' this show is supposed to have. I tried reading plot summaries of the manga to try and work out if this is meant to signify an incestuous BL plotline, or if this is just what the creative team felt that American twin siblings do to each other but as far as I can be bothered to search there is no actual answer, and honestly It would take me a lifetime to find anybody who genuinely cares. After one half of the possibly incestuous pair makes it home, he kisses his brother on the lips again, says good morning and they talk about breakfast. One of the brothers mentions he would like yogurt topped with vanilla ice cream with raisins, which whoever made the OVA felt was the perfect conclusion as the credits instantly roll (to the tune of a lame

cover of 'Against All Odds' by Phil Collins), leaving the viewer with 2 questions: What did I just watch, and why are there 15 minutes of run time left. To answer the latter question (as the former is quite possibly impossible to answer), we are now treated to a behind the scenes documentary on the making of Cipher: The Video. To call it a behind the scenes video would be rather generous, as most of it consists of shaky amateur footage of a 'Location Hunting' trip to New York City which the staff behind the show obviously managed to wangle out of whoever funded this rubbish, accompanied by the same Phil Collins song we heard twice earlier. There are also interviews with some people too, but they are of course in Japanese, so I have no idea what is being said. Cipher is utterly nonsensical, and I have no idea who would want to watch it unironically. Even fans of the original Manga would be left disappointed as it does not even attempt to adapt anything coherent from the source material. As to why someone like me might enjoy Cipher in 2022 I would challenge you to find an anime more disorientating, more perplexing and more surreal to watch; you could watch Cipher five times and still not be able to recall anything that happens. These facts of Cipher's nature make it a unique beast, something that ends up as an almost indescribable experience which may be reflected upon ad infinitum without any breakthrough. The fact something so bizarre is something you can watch makes Cipher's 40-minute run time something worth experiencing, as you would be hard pressed to find anything which leaves you with the same complex mix of feelings.



One of the brothers with the Twin Towers in the background



Normal American brotherly behaviour

Next up is the 1986 OVA California Crisis. This anime could have been a classic if it were just a little better. Out of all the anime on the list, this one comes closest to being something that could be genuinely enjoyed as a piece of art rather than fodder for ridicule whilst drunk. This is what makes California Crisis so fascinating. Like Cipher: The Video, California Crisis seeks to present a stylised version of America to Japanese audiences, focusing on the west coast this time and is packed full of aesthetic Americana. Characters drink Coca Cola and Coors beer, drive old school convertibles along wide, open highways between all the classic cities on the west coast and pull into roadside burger joints when they're hungry. I can't find out if the staff managed to persuade the higher-ups to let them go 'Location Hunting' in California, but even if they didn't, they managed to create a detailed and passionate rendering of an idealised version of the Golden State that is far more immersive than Cipher's New York City. Furthermore, this anime equivalent of the Golden Gate Bridge is wrapped in a gorgeous unique art style somewhat reminiscent of a highly shaded version of a piece of Roy Lichtenstein pop-art fused with a Tatsuro Yamashita album cover. Truly if you want to surf on the vibe of all things USA and all things 1980s you can hardly do better than California Crisis. The music is also fantastic, and the Opening and Ending theme 'Streets are Hot' has found itself a permanent place in my playlist. But why is California Crisis barely remembered now days? The sad fact about California Crisis is it completely falls flat outside the aesthetics department. I have got this far without mentioning the plot, as there is barely anything to mention. The basic gist of California Crisis' story is that two people, a serial drunk driver and an annoying teenage girl need to do something with a magical orb, and there are people from the military chasing them. Mostly an excuse for two people to drive through California. Both of the characters are given about as much development as the sexy 1950s Chrysler Imperial drop top which our main character drives. For the record, our main character is called 'Noera' which is a disappointingly un-American name – with the hyper-Americana that the OVA adopts elsewhere I was

hoping he would be called Chuck Cheeseburger or something equally as stereotypically Yankee. There are attempts to develop this idea of the orb, termed the 'Space Mind' and the powers it holds, yet all these serve to do is to is separate us momentarily from our glorious journey through retro California. It seems whoever put this together had a great idea for some kind of conspiratorial supernatural story, and a great idea for a visual style and yet when putting them together found themselves way out of their depth and failed to reach the deep potential that was present in both concepts. To me, California Crisis is a beautiful symbol of the creative hope that the OVA boom represented, and also a sad reminder than not every up-and-coming creator is going to end up a resounding success despite any flashes of brilliance they may show. We see the positives of an industry which gives many unproven creators chances, and yet also many of the negatives. I love California Crisis but find it incredibly difficult to consider it anything but a curiosity from a past age. Turn your critical thinking off, turn up your aesthetic appreciation and you could get quite a lot from California Crisis, but otherwise you're left with the embodiment of style over substance.



Don't drink and drive



Damn this OVA looks cool

When writing this article there were countless low quality OVAs I could have considered to make my point, but the three I selected each prove themselves an example of one of the things that makes these old trashy OVAs appealing. M.D. Geist is a shining example of the cheesy, corny action type of trash, the type where showing people getting blown up for the sake of showing people getting blown up is a good enough excuse to produce three quarters of an hour's worth of animation. Cipher represents a different type of trash, a type of trash where everyone involved (including Osamu Dezaki who is listed as production manager) lacked even the bare minimum of motivation to produce something that achieves basic coherence to the point where it becomes a mess that should never have made it to release. California Crisis represents the saddest type of trash, trash that was made with great ambition and sadly poor execution resulting in something that reeks of wasted potential. In summary, three of the main things that make old trashy OVAs so glorious are cheesy action, comedic low effort and genuine scintillations of diamonds in the rough. This is by no means a comprehensive analysis of the subject, and of course I have completely skipped over the unbelievable quantity of amazingly awful ecchi OVAs out of fear of undermining the classiness of this high-brow publication (Kekko Kamen is indescribable among polite company), but I hope I have shed some light on the breadth of the subject of old OVAs. Furthermore, although they exemplify some of the aspects I think make this type of content so fascinating, do not consider these three OVAs as definitive of the genre. There are countless other OVAs I could have discussed just as easily. This article could have analysed Dog Soldier, Money Wars, Aoki Honoo, Angel Cop, Mad Bull 34, Psychic Wars, Cool Cool Bye or any one of the literally hundreds of examples of forgotten nonsense that was pumped out in this era. If you take anything away from this article, it should be that you should make a plunge into this deep hole of anime, as you'll either end up with something amazing to watch with friends when drunk or stumble upon a real hidden gem. Also listen to 'Streets are Hot' from California Crisis, that song goes hard.

You Will (Not) Understand: A Look at Evangelion and Human Instrumentality

By Nick Stathakis

Fond memories I have of first year after Anime Soc Mondays, sitting around the Mooch table, pint in hand, debating the meaning of Human Instrumentality. Instrumentality sits at the thematic centre of Evangelion – a central maypole around which the plot dances – yielding the deeply resonant, yet perhaps bewildering solution to Shinji's woes: rejecting Human Instrumentality. With one choice, Shinji rejects the supreme closeness of every soul; with one choice, Shinji rejects true common understanding; with one choice, Shinji rejects the idyll towards which many a modern man sleepwalks.

What is (Eva's) Purpose?

From the offset, we have to unveil the great goal Anno undertook in creating Evangelion. The name itself – 'Evangelion' – refers to the Ancient Greek name for the Biblical gospels. For Anno, Eva's purpose is deliver the *evangelium* (*eu-angelion* being ancient Greek for 'good news') of a 'new beginning' (neon genesis) or a 'new era' (*shin seiki*, the Japanese title). In essence, then, Anno's work is to deliver the good news, spread the good word, that man can reject instrumentality. The undertaking may appear grandiose and pretentious – and anyone who's seen Eva can confirm it is a grandiose and pretentious work – yet somehow Anno pulls it off, managing to make good on the claims the title promises.

Before we set off on our quest, I'd like to mention Eva's 'apocalyptic' nature. Apocalypse, from the Greek apokalypsis, means 'revelation' or 'unveiling'; the goal of apocalyptic literature and art traditionally is to unveil something hidden behind the curtain of reality and to reveal a great truth about the world. Rather than the cruder modern understanding of apocalypse as simply the end of the world, Eva harks back to this earlier understanding of apocalypse, presenting us with a mirror to show us the modern condition. Eva should not, therefore, be a depressing work which takes the death and destruction of the final arc at face value; but rather we must read the face of Eva and try and understand what emotion lies behind it.

What (actually) happens at the end of Eva?

Eva's lore is complex, so let's go over the the forces at play in the finale. SEELE, the secret cabal playing puppeteer with world governments, wants to enact Human Instrumentality, the amalgamation of all souls. SEELE, in turn, controls NERV – Gendou's organisation – who are in charge of fighting the angel's who are assaulting Earth. The angels are assaulting Earth because Adam was awoken by a team of scientists, lead by Misato's father, in Antarctica. Adam comes from the White Moon and is the progenitor of angels; Lilith comes from the Black Moon and is the progenitor of multi-cellular life like humans (hence Lilin). Now that Adam has been awoken, he is begetting angels to rid the planet of the offspring of Lilith, mankind, for the two being are not meant to coexist.



A painting I did of Lilith cradling the Black Moon

It's worth noting now that the Black Moon is the Geofront and is Eden, the birthplace of mankind. The First Impact is the awakening of Lilith who brought life to Earth; the Second Impact is the awakening of Adam by Misato's father's group who brought Angels to Earth; the Third Impact is the coming of Human Instrumentality orchestrated by SEELE using Shinji as the seed.

The lore of Eva is pretty wild sci-fi, but it isn't too necessary for understanding what's happening. What's of import is the symbolism of the different groups and institutions rather than the materialistic surface understanding through which the story is told; again, in apocalyptic art we must look *through* rather than look *at*.

What does (Human) Instrumentality mean?

The project of Human Instrumentality, the ultimate goal of SEELE, is fundamentally evil. They aim to unite the minds of man into one global super-consciousness; a world where the boundaries between you and me are perforated, and no thought is private. In End of Eva, we see Shinji watching and accessing Misato's private life with Kaji, disgusted seeing what was not meant for his eyes to see. Whether Shinji wanted to be voyeur on Misato's love life is unknown – what is for certain is that in Instrumentality, with the death of ego, Shinji no longer has agency to stop his lower self from pursuing dark curiosities. But this is only the beginning – at this early stage of Instrumentality, after all, the concept of Misato, Kaiji and Shinji still exist – and as Instrumentality proceeds, this global superconsciousness descends into phantasmagoria (a sequence of flashing images) as reality and reason collapse in on themselves in the psychic soup known as LCL.

Reality and reason are truly the two pillars vandalised by Instrumentality's coming. Firstly reality: the word's root lies in the Latin res meaning 'thing'. Let's consider quickly what a thing is; what makes a chair a thing, and not just the continuation of, say, the floor? Why is a banana plucked from the banana tree two different things, a banana and a tree; whilst to saw a banana tree from top to bottom creates merely two halves of a banana tree? There is a *thing-ness* to the chair, and a *thing-ness* to the banana which is ineffable – not merely the creation of man's cognition through either evolution or experience, but something really *there*. The quality of thing-ness the world has is an aspect of the world we take for granted every waking moment of our lives; but not while we're asleep. In the dream world, thing-ness is morphed and mangled – we see a man in our dreams, who we know is, say, our Dad, but looks nothing like him. And Instrumentality is much like a dream: a collective dream where thing-ness can't even be a distant memory – a nightmare from which none can awake.

Secondly reason: reason's etymology derives from the Latin *ratio*. As moderns, we see ratio as mere proportions, but to the mediaeval mind, ratio had a far specific meaning. *Ratio* and *intellectus* were seen as two competing aspects within the rational soul of man, wherein *ratio* was man's capability to reason and figure something out, whilst *intellectus* was man's ability to intuit, recognise and just know without thought. *Intellectus* was always seen as the higher function being shared with the angels, whilst man, being fallen, needed *ratio* in order to piece together higher understanding (*intellectus*).[1] Instrumentality, in knocking down the pillar of ratio or reason, knocks down man's capability for reaching higher truths through logic. Through the wrecking of reason, those instrumentalised are left forlorn, trapped between bursts of understanding (*intellectus*) in the form of recognising objects, ideas, or people, and animalistic wants, basal desires, and non-negotiable impulses. Without reason, Shinji is floating in a ship without a motor in the open sea.

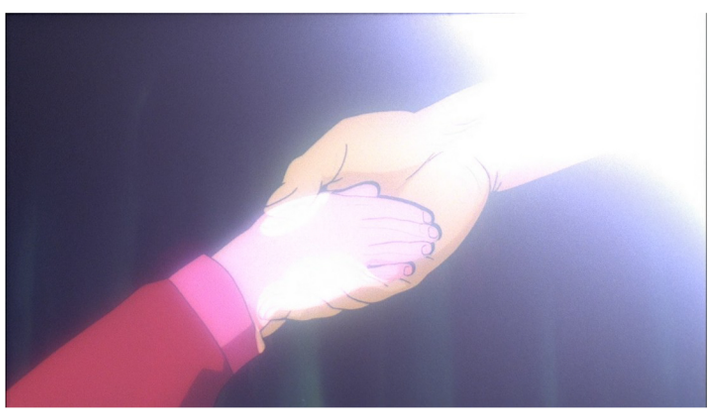
An (Excursion) into Logos

Before we continue to our next station, we'll cover the idea of *logos.* When encountering ancient Greek words, the best way to understand them is through their progeny. From *logos,* we get the English words: logic, as in sense-making; dialogue, something to do with speaking; biology, a rubric for a discipline; and simply 'logo' (what you may well have mistaken for *logos*). Each of these definitions shows us one shade of the word's meaning; but if I were to composite the various shades of meaning into an image, I'd explain *logos* as that which brings form and order to something through a name. For instance, a chair isn't an incomprehensible object since it possesses the form (or some kind of Platonic idea, if you will) of a chair: it has a chair-ness. *Logos* is that chair-ness which, through naming it 'chair', makes the object before me comprehensible. The idea of a logo is handy also; a logo is a symbol, like the Golden Arches of McDonalds, which represents the whole company. I need only glance at the logo and all the complex associations and understandings of McDonalds, the meaning of McDonalds, can be felt and understood. In as sense it's a gateway to understanding. Furthermore, we shall note that in the Gospel of John, Jesus Christ is said to be the *logos*: "In the beginning was the Word (*logos*), and the Word (*logos*) was with God, and the Word (*logos*) was God".[2] This is no metaphor, but instead a substantive metaphysical statement.

What is an (AT) Field?

Returning now with our new-found knowledge, we'll discuss the meaning of the AT field. For Instrumentality to come about, the AT fields of all of mankind must break down, lest the coming together of minds – the intent of Instrumentality – cannot occur. Kaworu puts it best in episode 24 describing AT fields as, "The holy region that must not be invaded by anyone. The light of the mind. You Lilins must be aware of that. Aware that the A.T. Field is the wall of the mind that anyone has." AT fields, we can then infer, are the barrier between my mind and your mind, my perception and your perception, me and you, this and that, here and there: they are what give the world structure and meaning. In short, AT fields are the *logos*.

To continue then, *Deus est caritas*: God is Love. AT fields are the *logos*, which is God, which is agapic love – the agapic love which holds the structure of reality together. Shinji struggles to love himself, the world, and others, and consequently can't participate in the order of creation (love), leaving him feeling ostracised and pained. Yet in the world of LCL where no one exists, there is no one and no thing to love – there is no logos, after all. If there's no me and you, how can there be love? After all, it takes two for there to be love. Without anchorage, without love, without AT fields, there truly is *nothing*.



When I find myself in times of trouble
Mother Mary comes to me
Speaking words of wisdom
Let it be
-The Beatles

In EoE, Asuka's fight against the Mass Production Evas is preceded by her receiving Marian visions and insight into what AT fields are.

> Asuka: Mama... So this is where you were, Mama!
> Asuka: Mama, Mama, now I know!
> Asuka: The meaning of the A.T. Field!
> Asuka: It's protecting me!
> Asuka: It's looking after me!
> Asuka: You've always, always been with me, Mama!

Asuka realises she has always been protected by AT fields. Even after her mother rejected and spurned her as a young girl, Asuka awakens to the value of love and *logos*. No longer does she want to paint the world black in tsunderic nihilistic rage, but instead shows a gentle smile for the first time in the series – albeit only briefly. Even though her mother was never there for her, Asuka connects with a force beyond her immediate mother who gives her world colour again.

What is the (Lance) of Longinus?

I'll begin this section by cleaning up a smear on Anno. Many an Eva fan hollers the same false quip: that Anno said the Christian symbology in Eva is meaningless. After doing some digging, the quote in question was not said by Anno, but rather by Tsurumaki (the creator of FLCL),[3] who says the staff used "a religious theme to help distinguish us. Because Christianity is an uncommon religion in Japan we thought it would be mysterious. None of the staff who worked on Eva are Christians. There is no actual Christian meaning to the show, we just thought the visual symbols of Christianity look cool."



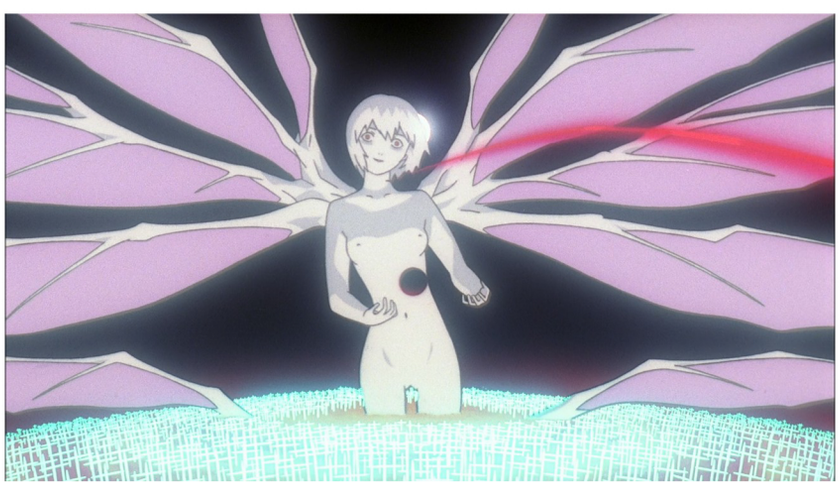
Average Eva Fan

And Anno confirms he isn't a Christian, saying about Western civilisation, "I don't care that much about it, I can make use of it. If I were a Christian believer I couldn't have inserted Christian elements [into Eva] in that way. I would have been scared to."[4] Despite Tsurumaki's comments, Anno has a good understanding of Christian ideas and theology, which are thematically relevant in both Eva and Anno's other works like Nadia. Anno doesn't have to be Christian in order to tell the themes of his story through Christianity. After all, Anno is a well read man, paying homage to various philosophers and psychologists throughout his works (just look at the character Jung Freud from Gunbuster). Also, Anno is often a man of few words; amongst the sharp deadlines of Evangelion, he might not have had the time (or more likely not have wanted to) go into the theological significance of the work. Either way, much of this confusion and hearsay is caused by Anno's strong reluctance to explain Eva in interviews; but this is a good thing: he's an artist, not an essayist.

To return, Longinus is the name of the soldier who pierced Christ's side with a spear whilst He was dead on the cross. John's gospel recounts, "So the soldiers came and broke the legs of the two men crucified with Jesus. But when they came to Jesus, they saw that he was dead already, so they didn't break his legs. One of the soldiers, however, pierced his side with a spear, and blood and water flowed out. This report is from an eyewitness giving an accurate account; it is presented so that you also can believe."[5] The Lance of Longinus in Eva is that which can pierce through AT fields, those barriers that structure reality. In other words, the Holy Lance pierces the *logos*: Christ. Anno knows what the Christian symbolism means – he may, as he states above, be able to use the symbolism because he's detached from it and doesn't participate in it – but that doesn't mean he's using it as Pollock would use a paint brush. Anno often says in interviews that in Eva he managed to put in everything he finds interesting; and one thing he certainly finds interesting, for it's found across his work, is Christianity.

What is the (Rejection) of Instrumentality?

Rei: This is the sea of LCL,
Rei: ...the primordial soup of life, the world in which you've lost your AT Field and your own form,
Rei: ...the vague world in which you can't tell where you end and other people begin,
Rei: ...the silent world in which you exist out to infinity, and thus, exist nowhere.
Shinji: Am I dead?
Rei: No, it's just that everything's united into one.
Rei: This is the very world you wished for.
Shinji: But this is wrong. I think it's wrong.
Rei: If you wish the existence of others now, the walls of the heart will separate everyone again.
Rei: The fear of others will start again.
Shinji: That's fine.
Shinji: Thank you.
Shinji: I feel there were only disgusting things back there.
Shinji: So I'm sure it was okay to run away from it.
Shinji: But there's nothing good in the place I escaped to, either.
Shinji: Because I don't exist here,
Shinji: ...which is the same as no one existing.



Lilith's death and the rejection of Instrumentality

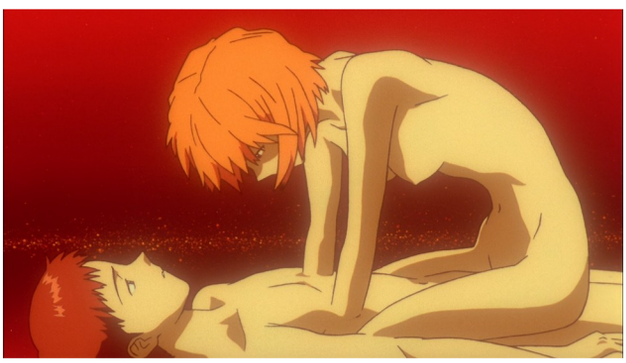
And with these words, Shinji rejects Instrumentality. Instrumentality: the death of God. The abandonment of Truth and the *logos* – that structure of the world which Truth holds together. When everything is questioned and nothing from the past is trusted – every source cross-referenced and "debunked", every value transvaluated – the world becomes arid of meaning, and man is left without trust, without *faith* in the world.[6] Through experiencing Instrumentality – the annihilative finale of the logos-less path – Shinji sees that when all is one, all is nothing, not even himself. The last target destroyed by Instrumentality is the human soul. Consciousness, existence, identity: this is the Terminal Dogma, the final, greatest truth of nature left hamstrung and limping by our terminal doubt. The result of becoming no one, the death our identity, is forgetting the image of man and reducing ourselves to mere animals and experimental objects.

What then does it mean to reject Instrumentality? To reject Instrumentality is to recognise Truth. To recognise the *logos* and how beautifully the world is structured. To recognise the world isn't evil nor tormenting, but inviting and facilitating. To recognise that the beliefs we're quick to discard are profound and are the pillars and supporting beams which hold up today. Shinji realises, when rejecting Instrumentality, that the real world is something he can trust; as his mother's voice resounds in the closing moments of End of Eva, "It's all right as long as the Sun, the Moon, and the Earth are still there."

To reject Instrumentality is to recover our humanity – that final dogma eroded by the waves of doubt-inducing philosophers. As Rei proclaims in the sea of LCL, "Anyone can return to human form if they can imagine themselves in their own hearts," bringing hope to those ensnared in the nihilism of Instrumentality.

> Shinji: But what are you two within my heart?
> Rei: "Hope." ...that people may be able to understand each other.
> Kaworu: Along with the words, "I love you."

Shinji realises that through love he can understand others, and by caring and loving for those around him, reality will be healed. Love heals AT fields, for AT fields are made of love; it is through our adriftness and waywardness from Truth that man's heart seizes and ceases to love: only through the participation in the *logos* does reality restore itself.



Shinji rejects the sex-crazed eros - a coming together - of minds ...



... In favour of the handshake, the way which through love mankind can understand one another

What is the (Point)?

So what is Evangelion evangelising: what is the good news of the new era? The good news is that man *doesn't* have to accept the nihilism of Instrumentality. The *logos*, the structure, the meaning of the world *isn't* fake and *needn't* be vanquished and decimated by materialism's military march lead by scientific centurions. The world outside of us is real – true understanding between people can occur, for man is not isolated in a cramped bubble of our own solipsistic making. Love, for instance, is real and profound – not some chemical in our brain, but truly real; the *logos* is really there, not just a product of our culture and imagination. We boil the pot of water to attempt to find what is dissolved inside but find nothing; but should reality be boiled at such a temperature? Should we not appreciate the water in the pot without the hot flames of science and Derridean deconstruction to evaporate it away into effervescent memories?

This path towards Instrumentality on which the story plods is one in which we do too; Evangelion is but the *revelation* of it. Where Eva talks of Instrumentality, many today talk of transhumanism and uploading one's consciousness: is technology the Holy Lance with which modern man wishes to pierce himself to escape the fear and pain of reality? I cannot say. All I can say is that Eva is a truly illuminating work of art – a work of art which will reverberate across generations – a work of art more complex and profound than Gainax could've ever believed they could make. You may not agree with the interpretation I've presented, but I implore you to rewatch Eva and particularly EoE and come up with your own interpretations. Eva is, after all, the good news of the era we all should hear.

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1. *The Discarded Image,* C.S Lewis, p156-158
2. *John 1:1*
3. *https://www.gwern.net/otaku#p-9*
4. *https://www.gwern.net/otaku#p-4*
5. *John 19:32-35*
6. Nihilism, *Fr. Seraphim Rose* (a good read for anyone interested in these ideas)

Freedom Explored Through Two Contrasting Personalities

By Joseph Thomas
Cover art by Chloe Henry



Introduction

Freedom is a concept that has interested, intrigued and been essential to all human beings. Freedom as a whole idea has a multitude of interpretations depending on the individual or group of people. This shows that freedom as a whole is a subjective concept. This article will focus on two characters in two very different anime, one might argue they have no connection, however these two characters from two separate worlds both desire one thing Freedom, yet how they perceive it and try to achieve it is very different. The First Character is the protagonist of the Shounen anime and manga One Piece, Monkey D Luffy. This character is one of my all-time favourite characters in anime and One Piece is my favourite anime so I have a lot of high regard for the man who wants to be the most free of them all. The Second Character is the protagonist of the Psychological School drama anime, manga and Light Novel Classroom of the Elite, Kiyotaka Ayanokouji. This character has also become one of my favourites due to his unique personality and his apathy and logic. This personality intrigues me especially considering he still desires to have freedom despite his seemingly emotionless view of human nature. This article will contain spoilers for One Piece and Classroom of the Elite. Specifically One Piece anime episodes 385 to 405, One Piece Manga chapters 490 to 513, Classroom of the Elite Season 2 anime which is scheduled for July 2022 and Classroom of the Elite Light Novel Volume 4, 5, 6 and 7.

Naive, child like freedom in a world of Persecution- Monkey D Luffy's concept of Freedom

Monkey D Luffy the Protagonist of One Piece is a character full of happiness and childlike behaviour despite his troubled past, which influences his desire to be the most free in the entire world resulting in him wanting to get the One Piece and become the King of the Pirates. The world in which Luffy inhabits is restricted by the world government, the 7 warlords, the Four Emperors of the Sea and the Revolutionary Army, as all these engage in conflicts with one another for a multitude of motivations, Luffy's motivation is very simple he desires to be completely free of this, showing an almost child-like naivety to the world that is very charismatic for those who witness it allowing his view of freedom to be almost infectious in the world of persecution that has domain over One Piece. For Monkey D Luffy I will be focusing on two specific points, The King of the Pirates and Sabaody Archipelago.

Logical, Apathetic freedom from a world of inequality- Kiyotaka Ayanokouji's concept of Freedom

Kiyotaka Ayanokouji the Protagonist of Classroom of the Elite is a character obsessed with knowledge and understanding and as such escapes his cage in order to see how everyone else uses their ugh manipulative relationship with Kei Karuizawa (Tool) cost of knowledge and how he can also be normal. This is achieved by him almost adopting an unremarkable and invisible persona that disguises his true motivations and thoughts, making him simply come off as ordinary and a ghost. This further shows his commitment to being free of his cage to live in a place where he is free to be whoever he wants even if that is him hiding his true nature and personality. Yet the school he inhabits is based off of inequality and as a result to protect himself he starts to manipulate those around him promoting his class forward despite wanting to be an invisible free living entity. For Kiyotaka Ayanokouji I will be focusing on two specific points, his Selfish Freedom through manipulation and the White Room.

The King of the Pirates

Gol D Roger the King of the Pirates, the man who found the One Piece and was acknowledged by all as the king, the man who was the most free in the world. Yet even he was held back by illness and the government resulting in his infamous execution that started the Golden Age of Piracy. This man became a symbol for most people who desired to become pirates and be free from the world government. For Luffy it became a symbol of the purest freedom that he ultimately desired, and an opposite to his

Grandfather, a hero of the navy. This is further solidified by Red Haired Shanks, a former crewmate of Gol D Roger and the Captain of the Red Hair Pirates. Shanks influences Luffy to become a pirate through being a role model to him and saving his life from a Sea King. These two men provide a considerable influence in Luffy's determination and motivation of achieving the purest freedom. This then forms the basis of the One Piece to Luffy, the ultimate treasure, the ultimate freedom from the world that is full of persecution. A treasure that makes you recognised by the world as something above status, above birth, above history, it makes you completely free from everything the world commits. Yet even so this does not corrupt Luffy's personality since the freedom he is yearning for is childlike freedom, this naivety is a charismatic tool that has helped him form a crew of trustworthy friends and allies who will help him achieve his dream, achieve his freedom almost elevating him to a plane of existence that will surpass Gol D Roger, a state of freedom that is the purest form, unrestricted by human imperfections and human failings.

Selfish Freedom

Kei Karuizawa, a fellow student of Class D which Ayanokouyji belongs to perfectly represents his selfish freedom. This is through his manipulation of her as a character and the relationship they formulate in order to both guarantee freedom from their past. This relationship is developed in the Zodiac Exam, this is when they are placed in the same group despite not having any previous interactions other than the fact that she was Hirata's girlfriend, one of the pillars of Class D. In this exam Ayanokouji learns about her past, the fact that she was bullied in her middle school throughout and in order to avoid this in high school she begged Hirata to let her be his girlfriend in order to take a position in the class that could protect her from everything, Hirata accepts due to his own flawed personality. This position leads her to bully others in order to not be bullied, this results in some girls from class C in the exam to be hateful to her. Ayanokouji in order to preserve his freedom he utilises her as a tool by causing her to be bullied by these girls and him saving her and then forcing her to accept her role as his subservient weapon in exchange for his protection of her. This parasitic relationship is formed and really highlights the selfish freedom of Ayanokouji, he is willing to manipulate and twist any person in his scope in order to protect his normal highschool life, also the fact that he breaks down Karuizawa first makes him able to use her for any other manoeuvre in the future, which he uses her status to orchestrate further movements to ensure his freedom remains intact, endangering a person's sanity and freedom to protect his own, truly selfish. Yet despite this his selfish freedom is also put in a position of question when he consolidates the significance of their partnership when he defends her from Kakeru Ryuen (Leader of Class C). This fight ends in the utter defeat of Ryuen and his gang by the hands of Ayanokouji fully protecting Karuizawa and freeing her from her past of bullying, giving her freedom but also further destroying it by making sure that she will always be devoted to Ayanokouji as he is her protector and her host. This position of questioning his aims however I do not agree with as this seemingly selfless act is still supporting his selfish freedom as now he has removed an enemy that was interested in him and made sure he has a tool completely at his disposal.

Sabaody Archipelago, the antithesis

Sabaody Archipelago is an Island that is necessary to travel through in order to reach Fishman Island which is necessary for entering the New World, the second part of the Grand Line and where the One Piece is supposedly located. Further showcasing Luffy's desire to reach his purest freedom. However this island contains a Slave Market, making Sabaody Archipelago the antithesis of Luffy's freedom. The concept of destroying one's freedom and self identity is the greatest enemy to Luffy's purest freedom. This freedom is further threatened by the existence of the Celestial Dragons, these are beings that have the bloodline related to the founders of the world government and as a result have the highest status in one piece, if one is threatened the entire world government will defend them with the utmost force. This grants them a level of protection that is almost unsurmountable. They also are extremely prejudiced against all other forms of life. This entire faction of overarching antagonists in One Piece oppose the entirety of universal freedom and Luffy's childlike freedom as it would destroy their status and special

protection. This direct antithesis to Luffy's freedom is expressed the fullest when Camie a mermaid who becomes friends with the straw hats is captured and put as merchandise at a slave market. This makes Luffy desperate to save his friend's freedom from being destroyed and enslaved. The situation escalates when Hatchan, a fishman who is also friends with the straw hats is shot by a celestial dragon simply for being a fishman, a lower life form. This enrages Luffy as his friends that are an essential part to his life and his freedom are being enslaved and tormented. This causes Luffy to knock out the celestial dragon in spite of the tremendous consequence of becoming an enemy of the world government and alerting them to his presence at the island. He endangers his freedom in order to save his friends, in order to preserve his desire for the Purest freedom, the ultimate form.

The White Room

The White Room is an educational institute founded and led by Professor Ayanokouji, the father of Kiyotaka Ayanokouji. This institute was founded on the premise that any human being no matter their biological disposition can achieve the level of genius through a rigorous and restrictive method of learning. This resulted in the culmination of the archetype and personality of Ayanokouji, his desire to learn obsessively comes from his father's teachings in the bird cage that was The White Room. However in order to satisfy this obsession with knowledge and learning Ayanokouji would have to have his freedom from the White Room, he would have to escape the cage developed by his father in order to further satisfy his obsession. This further contributes to his selfish freedom as he rebels against his father when the White Room is suspended for a year, ayanokouji takes refuge in the Advanced Nurturing High School, where Classroom of the Elite takes place. His Father, the Professor fully believes that the White Room is the ultimate form of education despite the extremely restrictive nature of it, this is proven by the fact that Ayanokouji his own flesh and blood thrived in this setting, yet despite this he left to pursue freedom due to the restrictive White Room as it gave his son the obsession of learning which would then make the desire to be free from the confines of the White Room very probable, the setting of confinement produced Ayanokouji's genius and his desire for freedom, the selfish freedom which dictates and rules his state of mind. As a result the White Room has the biggest influence over Ayanokouji's actions and desires for freedom. This is showcased when it is revealed that the person who helped Ayanokouji escape, his son is expelled from the Advanced Nurturing High School and then every other school in Japan rejects him due to the Professor's involvement leading to the man who saved Ayanokouji to commit suicide. This fully shows the length that the Professor is willing to go to get his son back into the White Room, yet despite this Ayanokouji still will not leave the school as he has experienced freedom from the White Room and as a result he will never go back despite his respect from his father and the White Room as an institution of learning.

Similarities

As showcased in the points above both characters ultimately desire freedom in similar worlds of inequality and persecution. The Advanced Nurturing High School is a setting that encourages inequality and constant competition and prejudice. The world of One Piece is also ruled by status and nobility causing a world of constant prejudice, which is most successfully highlighted by the Celestial Dragons. One of the most interesting similarities is that both value other people in relation to their own freedom. Monkey D Luffy forms a pirate crew of strong and kind individuals that he himself believes in and forms strong friendships with. This is due to the fact that he himself recognises that in order to achieve his freedom he needs the help of others as everyone needs strong allies in order to achieve their own goals. Kiyotaka Ayanokouji on the other hand forms friendships and relationships in order to pursue his selfish freedom. Throughout the story he utilises Suzune Horikita, he manipulates her to become a leader of Class D and for him to utilise his strategies through her as a proxy, he makes her the public face of his own methods. As aforementioned his relationship with Kei Karuizawa is just as significant in showing how he value other people in relation to his freedom as he recognises that her superior status in terms of popularity within Class D gives him an extremely useful amount of knowledge that he can utilise to protect his selfish freedom from the White Room.

The Integral Difference

(Spoilers for volume 11.5 of Classroom of the Elite) Despite the similarities listed there are two fundamental differences that separate these two characters and it's their basic ideology in relation to whether freedom is shared or singular. Luffy values his freedom as something that should be shared with everyone, it is a selfless freedom as shown through his disgust and anger at the celestial dragon in Sabaody Archipelago and the fact that he accepts that he cannot reach his dream alone he needs friends who will help them and he himself wants to share his dream with them. He regards freedom as a shared, equal feeling and state of being which goes directly against the corrupt world he is in. Ayanokouji values freedom as an individual state of being that in order to safeguard requires the manipulation of people as tools to further his agenda of a normal highschool life. This selfish freedom is integral to Ayanokouji as a character because this desire to rebel against his father and gain more and more knowledge due to his education at the White Room, the constructed cage for Ayanokouji by his father results in him having a twisted sense of cooperation. Yet at the same time Ayanokouji does not hate anyway but neither does he truly like anyone, this could be argued to change as the story goes on but even the Ayanokouji group his main friends are seen as secondary to him, the only one on a level playing field with him in terms of his view of his own freedom, is Karuizawa due to her being the parasite that cannot live without her host. As a result he would prioritise Karuizawa as her freedom is directly linked to his also this is further supported by the fact that they become a relationship at the end of the first year.

The Most Supreme Freedom

The evidence provided throughout the article shows the two contrasting views of freedom, the childish selfless and shared freedom of Monkey D Luffy and the twisted realism of the selfish freedom of Kiyotaka Ayanokouji. Both views of freedom are supported by the examples shown and both are integral to their character's ideologies and viewpoints of life and how they interact with the world. The childlike freedom of Luffy is more idealistic and is definitely a form of freedom we all would want to achieve. However despite his twisted view of the world, Ayanokouji's selfish freedom is more superior due to the fact that it is more effective and less likely to be manipulated due to it being purely based on the manipulation of others.

Why are there so many murders in Detective Conan?

By Cameron Johnson

Detective Conan is an anime that has been airing since 1996. It is about Shin'ichi Kudou, a high school detective, who helps solve crimes with the Tokyo police. He becomes Conan Edogawa after he spots men from the Black Organisation doing an illegal gun deal and they give him poison which shrinks him. As Conan, he deduces crimes all over Japan to find out information about the mysterious organisation; in order to get his body back.



If you've watched any of Detective Conan, you'll know how frequent murder happens on the show. Often it happens at least once every case or every other case at most with Conan solving almost all of them. For a peaceful country like Japan, you might be wondering why does it happen so much and how does Conan keep stumbling upon them? In 2013, there were 0.3 homicides per 100,000 citizens in Japan. That means that were less than 400 murders in Japan in 2013. Up to episode 724 which was the last episode in 2013; 947 people had been murdered in Detective Conan including all the movies up to 17. If we go for the canon timeline of Conan taking place over only one year. That would put the homicide rate at 0.74 per 100,000; over twice the real figure. While the data isn't the most reliable, the point stands that murder is way more common in Detective Conan but why?

In the world of Detective Conan, you have to remember that the black organisation exists and I believe they are having a bigger effect on the homicide rate than you might think. The black organisation is a secret criminal syndicate (similar to the Yakuza) who commit various crimes to maintain its secrecy. In order to maintain this secrecy, they'll commit assassinations of anyone who knows too much. Examples of people who knew too much were from all aspects of life including doctors and politicians showing how the black organisation has corrupted many people. They also leave very little evidence in their crimes and manage to get away every time. I think this sends the message to the society within Conan that society isn't safe and that certain people can get away with murder. This impacts the mindsets of would-be murderers giving them the push they need to cross the line and actually commit the crime.

If real psychological effects don't convince you, there is also a somewhat magical affect I think the black organisation has on society too. Through Detective Conan's predecessor, Magic Kaito, we know magic does exist within the Conan universe through characters like Akako Koizumi. She is a witch with real magic and can effect the real world with this magic. Therefore I believe that either members of the black organisation or the organisation itself has some of this magic. Perhaps this magic, either intentionally or not, is effecting society by manipulating the minds of citizens causing them to consider murder as a solution to their problems. When we see Gin and Vodka, especially when they're committing a crime, they have an ephemeral appearance almost like a shadow so maybe they're using magic to give themselves this appearance to make slipping away from a crime scene much easier.

This might explain why Conan never manages to capture Gin and Vodka but always finds the culprit of non black organisation cases because the normal civilians don't have this magic power to hide their actions.

Now the only question that remains is why Conan keeps coming across murders and how he always manages to solve them even if he lets others take the spotlight. As we know, Conan lives with the detective Mouri Kogorou at his agency and often joins him on his investigations as a 'good luck charm'. This explains why he witnesses more crime scenes than even some police officers as people often go to Mouri's agency before the police because he's unaffiliated with them. However, Conan and Mouri happen to be, more often than not, in the wrong place at the wrong time for murders. We know from a few cases that the motivation for some murders is because the murderer wanted to test the famous detective Mouri Kogorou to see if they can outwit him. I think because of the aforementioned reasons; this motivation is more common than is let on explicitly. If the murders are seen as the dark side of society corrupted by the black organisations activities, then Conan and Mouri are seen as the light side trying to bring out these murderers from the shadows. This then brings about the conflict of the light and dark as one side tries to outwit the other. Justice must always prevail though in these kind of shows and Conan always figure it out in the end as he will with the black organisation eventually.



Conan also definitely has magic as he has time and time again proven that he has a 'Ran-sense' and can sense when she is in danger even if he has no idea how she's in danger. If Edogawa Conan ever does solve the mystery of the black organisation and brings them down thus ending their corruption, I believe that the society of his world would become similar to the society of the real japan with half to three times less murders except for maybe a gentleman thief or two kicking about.



The Many Oddities of The Monogatari Series and Their Meaning

By Matt Fieldsend

Warning: Spoilers for the entire series

Heavy Stone Crab



Senjougahara



Kanbaru



Rainy Devil



Hachikuji



Karen



Tsukihi





Numachi/Sir Devil

Lost Cow/Snail

Flame-Wreathe Bee



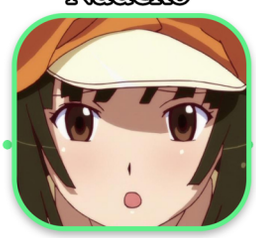
Shide no Tori



Jagirinawa



Nadeko



Kuchinawa



Tadatsu Teori



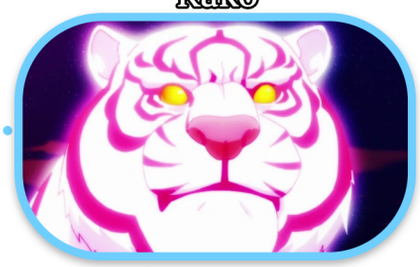
Sawarineko



Hanekawa



Kako



Oshino Shinobu



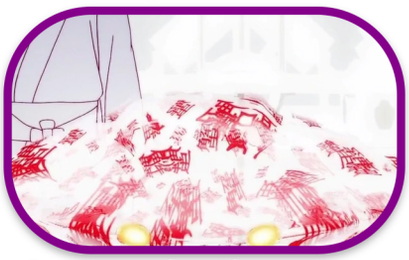
Koyomi



Oshino Ougi



Heavy Stone Crab



A crab god that steals the weight and emotions of those it affects. Its name is a play on words of crab ((蟹, kani) and god (神, kami) deriving from *omoishi-gami*. This term originates from the words omoi (重い, heavy/ 想い, feelings/思い, thoughts), shigamitsuku (しがみつく, to cling), and shigarami (柵, bonds). The characters needed to write the name has the kanji of stone weight (重し, omoshi) and crab.

Duration possessing Senjougahara Hitagi: 2 years

Lost Cow/Snail

Causes people without a wish to go home and become lost. Only affects people who are walking on the road and can be avoided by walking on other pathways, such as fencings or walls. Hachikuji's oddity is called "lost cow". Lost cow is spelled 迷い牛 (mayoi ushi). In fact, her name (Mayoi) means "lost". Hachikuji looks like a snail because of her backpack. Snail is spelled 蝸牛. The kanji for cow is 牛.

Duration possessing Hachikuji Mayoi: Forever

Rainy Devil



Immortal deity that acts violenty according to the hidden desire of its victim's wishes, taking form of a mysterious figure wearing a raincoat and a pair of boots. Originally a whole entity created by Tooe Gaen, it was defeated by its creators and had its body parts scattered. Initially mistaken for a Monkey's Paw by Kanbaru.
Duration possessing Kanbaru Suruga: 10~ years

Jagirinawa



A snake oddity that attacks victims through constriction. Enacted through the placing of a curse. Invisible save for the occasional white sheen that illuminates parts of its body.

Duration possessing Sengoku Nadeko: A few days

Sawarineko



An oddity assuming the form of a deomesticated cat with a pure silvery-white coat; one distinct trait that a sawarineko has is the absence of a tail. Possesses Hanekawa, creating the alternate identity "Black Hanekawa" where her hair changes to the same silvery-white pigment of the cat's coat and she gains cat eyes. Hanekawa cannot recall anything that happens while the sawarineko is in control. A sawarineko who possesses a person slowly overwhelms that person's consciousness until a complete merge is made, causing the victim to lose their existence. Its abilities include superhuman strength and the ability to drain the vitality and energy of a target by touching them, this can also suppress the abilities of other oddities.

Duration possessing Tsubasa Hanekawa: A few months

Flame-Wreathe Bee



An oddity recorded in the 15th chapter of an Edo period book called The Illustrated Compendium of Eastern Discord (東方亂圖鑑, Touhou Rantokan). This oddity inflicts a paralyzing infectious fever to thos bitten by it, in more severe cases causing the victim to perish, but it may be suppressed by those with stronger bodies. Claimed by Kaiki Deishuu to be a fake oddity entirely.

Duration possessing Araragi Karen: A few days

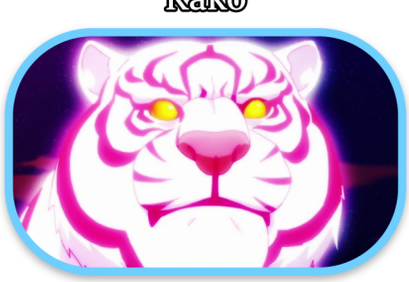
Shide no Tori



"Immortal oddity" with incredibly powerful passive regeneration ability, able to revert any injury or sickness. Dies at the end of its lifespan, laying its offspring in the womb of another mother. It was known primarily as the lesser cuckoo (ホトトギス, hototogisu) and few remembered its association with phoenixes yet it is one of the most familiar birds in Japanese culture. One example of this is the Man'yoshu, the oldest compilation of Japanese poetry during the Nara period. There are 150 poems dedicated to the cuckoo where it is utilized as the symbol for the summer season. Tsukihi is affected by a rather unusual side effect - faster hair growth.

Duration possessing Araragi Tsukihi: Forever

Kako



The manifestation of Hanekawa's envy, also known as the Hysteria Tiger. Tiger-shaped oddity that burns down the victim's sources of envy, in this case burning down places Hanekawa has slept in as she longed her own room to sleep in. Known to possess "unparalleled" power among other oddities.

Duration possessing Tsubasa Hanekawa: Hanekawa absorbs the Tiger, causing permanent white stripes in her hair, but is no longer affected by its power. Technically forever

Oshino Shinobu A.K.A Kiss-Shot Acerola-Orion Heart-Under-Blade



Shinobu Oshino is the "human name" of the incredibly powerful, 598 years old vampire Kiss-Shot Acerola-Orion Heart-Under-Blade. She generally is called this, depending on the person talking about her or her power level at the time. This vampire name was conceived by Deathtopia Virtuoso Suicide-Master, who was very proud of how meaningful the name is. Kiss-Shot, the 'first name', is a reference to the fairy tale of cursed princesses being healed by a kiss from a prince. This also mirrors Araragi, who saved her from death, and became her 'prince'. Also, "Kiss-shot" is a reference to the Japanese deity of beauty, Kisshouten, which mirrors her cursed beauty and attempt to become a goddess. Acerola-Orion, the 'middle name', is composed of Acerola, Princess Rola's (Shinobu's human name before becoming a vampire) self given alias after the start of her journey, and Orion, which is a constellation on the equator east of Taurus represented as a hunter with a belt and sword, which reflects her nature as a vampire, that being to hunt and eat humans, as well as furthers Deathtopia's comparison of Princess Acerola to a sword.

Finally, Heart-Under-Blade, the 'last name', is born from Deathtopia's impressions of Princess Acerola as a strong woman, like a sword, but with a kind heart. This name is also the inspiration for the name Shinobu (忍), as it is literally made up of the kanji for heart (心) under the kanji for blade (刃). Also this name connected with Kizumonogatari's plot, where her heart was hunted by three vampire hunters and each of them has wordplay with word "blade" in their names.

Duration possessing Araragi Koyomi: Forever

Sir Devil



The ghost of Numachi Rouka, who forgot her own suicide. She finds delight in collecting the misfortune of others and the Rainy Devil's body parts. Passes on after losing a one-on-one match against her former basketball rival - Kanbaru Suruga.

Duration alive: ???

Kuchinawa



A god in the form of a white snake; at one point the local deity of Kita-Shirahei Shrine. At some point the object of worship, a snake cadaver, was stolen, causing the places to be abandoned and forgotten. Nadeko comes into possession of this object, becoming the next god of the shrine and reviving the Kuchinawa after it promises to grant her wishes. He claims to be the god of the snakes Nadeko killed during the Jagirinawa arc, but this is a delusion spawned by Nadeko finding out Koyomi had a girlfriend and he only becomes real upon Nadeko's deification. His personality is based entirely on Nadeko's image of what a god would be like. Much like the Heavy Stone Crab, its body is adorned with floating Kanji. Disappears after Nadeko decides to revert to being human.

Duration possessing Sengoku Nadeko: A few days

Tadatsu Teori



Tadatsu Teori underwent a forbidden ritual to turn into an oddity and become immortal. The ritual failed, killing him and sending his human self to hell. However, he gained power to control puppets of himself in the real world. **Duration alive: ???**

Oshino Ougi



An entity created by Koyomi's long-building self-hatred and doubt ever since he met Kiss-Shot. A reflection of Koyomi's negative emotions. Orchestrates incidents that push those close to Koyomi away and leave him isolated, reflecting his desire to be punished for, what he sees, as his bad decisions through-out the series. Says they have a job of "punishing liars" and falsely claims to be the apparition killing "Darkness", a force of nature that swallows up oddities who lie about what they are or stray too far from their description/purpose, an anti-existence phenomenon. Decides to live a normal life after barely being spared death at the hands of the true Darkness.

Duration posessing Koyomi: Forever

Why it's Right to Pirate

By Nick Stathakis

Piracy is a topic forever calling forth brave souls to morally grandstand and proclaim to all of anime-kind, "You should support the creators!". But truth be told, I've pirated every piece of anime I've ever watched. Unlike the past, today we have Crunchyroll, Netflix, and Funimation to stream *most* of our favourite anime on, right? What excuse do we have left? Today we'll be investigating why, contrary to moral bastions online, piracy is right.

This country was built on piracy

To begin, let's take a look at the history of Albion; specifically, to the time of Queen Elizabeth I, her trusted privateer Sir Francis Drake, and her not so trustworthy Walter Raleigh. During Elizabeth's reign, England obtained incredible quantities of gold and silver from Spanish fleets (which they themselves had pillaged from local tribesmen), kickstarting Britain's climb to a world superpower. In short, we have piracy to thank for the affluent lives each of us live today.

Piracy isn't Theft

Unlike Elizabeth's privateers, piracy on the seven seas of the internet isn't theft. Simply put, there isn't anything being lost; files on the internet are infinitely replicable, and to 'lose' one file to torrenting doesn't remove even a drop from the anime reservoir. In other words, the internet is a cornucopia of anime: an infinite supply. To return to Elizabethan England, when Drake obtained Spanish gold, the Spanish were dispossessed of their gold – gold which they now can't go and sell on – however, if I were to torrent an anime, the anime company doesn't lose any anime which could've been sold elsewhere, since they have an infinite supply. In so far as gold's market value is derived from its scarcity, and the value of Ikea chairs is dependent on how many chairs can be produced, is it not true that when there's an infinite amount of digital media it's 'innate value' is nought? Not to say of course that anime is value-less – anime is brimming with value – just that as an *object* is has no value, and consequently can't be thieved. After all, unlike the bullion of the Spaniards, anime has no form, no mass, nor any position in space; it's a purely aethereal existence.

Sharing is Caring

Here's a quick thought experiment I like to tell people. Imagine I've bought a disk for, I don't know, say *The Asterisk Wars*, and I invite some friends around to watch it with me. Are they pirating? Let's say I lend a disk of *The Asterisk Wars* to a few friends who take it in turns to watch it. Are they pirating? Now, let's say I share my disk with many friends – the internet is full of friends, after all – through a site for torrenting. Are they pirating? Many say yes, but how come? Theoretically, if I had enough friends, just as many people could watch my disk through me lending it to them as if I were to upload the contents online. What's the difference? What makes one piracy and the other not? Is it because they can use the contents synchronously, or because they are likely strangers? Then we have shops like CeX who sell second hand disks, with none of the profits going to 'support the creators'. Surely then if you think everyone should buy official releases or stream using Crunchyroll to 'support the creators', then you must also see CeX as a den of dirty pirates? In short, we've always shared media with our friends, whether that meant sharing novels or DVDs; the internet has only made the experience a whole lot fuzzier.

The Internet doesn't need Merchants

In the digital age, information can be sped to you faster than any horse, train, or plane. I can receive data from the other side of the Earth in the blink of the eye, even if it's Japanese anime. Why then in this age of instantaneous travel do we need ferrymen like Crunchyroll, Funimation, and Netflix acting as anime merchants? Surely on the internet where data travels at near the speed of light, there is *no* need for a merchant to sail our anime across the Indian Ocean and around the Cape of Good Hope? These antiques of the pre-internet age, merchants with imaginary cargo, have changed their role from merchants to slavers. In the holds of the Crunchyroll corporation's vessels are cages; cages carrying your waifus, chained to iron bars, locked up wearing rags. These companies aren't delivering you anime: they're caging it off from you.



I'm proud to put :conanpiss: in the zine

As we discussed prior, anime is not a physical thing, but rather an aethereal and immaterial one; should these distribution corporations not exist, it would be far easier to obtain anime in the West. In reality, companies like Crunchyroll exist for the sole purpose of *preventing* you from obtaining anime through other avenues, whether that means through the cannon fire of DMCA strikes on piracy sites, or by puppeteering popular YouTuber ghost ships to shame you for 'not supporting the industry'. Instead of letting you see anime through the better means, they force you to use their broken video players, with grainy audio quality, and badly translated, typo-ridden subtitles. These legal video streaming sites exist merely to try to monopolise and choke organic demand for anime by wrestling control of the seas from competitors.

Buy Real Things

I hope insulting companies like Crunchyroll who offer nothing but a broken web player hasn't given you a similarly bad impression of the fundamentally different companies distributing physical media. Manga is a great example of this. Those against manga piracy who expect fans to purchase all the manga they read physically are utterly delusional. The average volume of manga is just under £10, which is far too steep for the average consumer interested in giving a new title a go. The paper manga printing industry works in Japan *because* manga is so cheap, with your usual Shounen Jump magazine costing around £1.70. And those are thick Argos-catalogue sized magazines; your average manga tankobon is around £3 to £4, so you can easily afford to give a new title a go. Do bear in mind: a manga tankobon can be read far faster than a paperback novel; that isn't to say that the manga is *worth* less, just that it's a riskier investment in terms of cost-value.

Manga in the West means something completely different. Sailing the seas and pirating is how Western fans *find* new manga they like and want to *buy*. Piracy is the prelude to purchase; not its scourge. Disks are similar, yet slightly different, since anyone with a disk drive and a computer can burn an identical product, but the same cannot be said for a volume of manga. Nevertheless, you're buying a physical item which, by virtue of being physical, must have a value. Anime disks and manga are rightfully collector's items in the West, and not the primary mode of consumption for exploring new titles. Companies should be targeting those who are *already* fans of a franchise or show, since they will want to own a physical version of their favourite show to make flesh their adoration for what is by nature immaterial and aethereal.


Shounen Jump's logo appears to be pro-piracy

If you're plagued by the bugbear of 'supporting the industry', do so with physical items, like merchandise and physical media – not by feeding the Jabba the Hut-like streaming conglomerates!

The Big Issue

The internet is still in a relative infancy. After sailing across the Atlantic to find the Americas, we've sailed again to discover the endless ocean of the internet. Once it was the cowboy's wild west; now it's laden with factory farms. These factory farms, many with familiar names, have managed to make immense wealth off of the internet without producing anything of value. During the Shogunate era of Japan, many turned up their noses at merchants, who occupied the lowest wrung of the feudal ladder, for not producing anything of worth; but what does that make the pseudo-merchants of today? The merchants of the past had to transport physical, heavy objects past bandits and thieves, whilst Crunchyroll have no responsibilities other than basic server maintenance. After all, if they lose merchandise to piracy and banditry, they haven't lost a thing. Why, when these modern merchants transport no cargo, do they command such power? From the chaos of anarchy always arises authoritarian rule, and the internet is much the same. The raw power and energy of its Human Instrumentality-like effects have to be blocked somehow, lest the terror of true democracy – mob rule – run amok.

As I was saying before my tangent, the internet is still young, and we are still yet to comprehend how this aethereal world of aethereal possessions is to operate. How can money be made when there is nothing physical being sold? Granted, there are experiences one can have like skydiving or taking the bus, but they both require physical exhaustive value, like the time of your instructor, the equipment, the petrol in the bus, or the driver's skills. Now, the anime production team are of course abound with skills, but we aren't paying for their time exclusively. There are only so many seats on a bus, but there are an infinite number of potential seats to watch an anime: the animators time is being given to as many people as are willing to watch.



They don't seem to understand



Crunchyroll HQ

Antique notions of property just don't work on the internet. I have no keys with which to unlock the future unfortunately, but as the next generation it's our responsibility to try. My faith is with the economists, computer scientists, and great thinkers of *our* generation – the thinkers who've grown up with and understand the internet – many of whom might be at this university today; for the ones to solve this problem have already been born and walk amongst you and me.



The Library of Akihabara

By James "iklone" Thackway

I awoke in my cramped, four-and-a-half tatami mat room, light pouring in through the open window and the low mumble of the city crowds passing to and fro beneath it. The clock on the wall opposite said a quarter past ten, and while I hardly had an action-packed day ahead of me, I really should get up. I folded up the futon haphazardly and shoved it into the closet beside the door. When I first moved here I had never even seen a futon or a tatami mat in my life, they were a novelty to me: but now I gave them almost no thought. I set the kettle to boil, and peered down out of the window to the street below. The never-ending river of people flowed past, shimmering in the glaring sun, all headed into the city centre. Looking up I could see neon signs poking out above the tops of the tower blocks across the street, and further up still I spied one of the advertising blimps floating overhead declaring to the world "*AKIBA EXPO NOW OPEN FOR BUSINESS*" in an eye-catching font. It was unfortunate I had an errand to run today, or otherwise I would have gone along. But such events were commonplace now I lived in Akihabara, so it wouldn't be long until the next one.

It was just past eleven when I took the lift down to the lobby. I picked out my umbrella from the rack (merely a habit, it was always summertime here) and left through the sliding front door, the android-secretary giving me an ever-cheery farewell as I did so. And then it was out into the busy thoroughfare. This was Akihabara City, the "Electric Town", the capital of anime and otaku heaven. The city itself was set out in a grid pattern. Wider roads encircling large city blocks, while smaller streets criss-cross perpendicular at irregular intervals. This uneven nature left strangely sized plots of land to which the buildings dutifully squeezed themselves in to. Tall thin buildings precariously holding themselves up with struts, or buildings that stretched themselves across the dissecting streets entirely, leaving dark passageways underneath that were the common and appropriate locations for the less respectable establishments of the city.

Most of the buildings here are also exceptionally tall. Much taller than I was used to in my home town. The main routes are alive with neon and LCD screens night or day, all displaying adverts for newly released anime, video games and the like. Lining each street are countless restaurants, internet cafes, work-garages, bars and shops selling everything one would expect in the "Electric Town". From the latest manga releases or second-hand Blu-ray sets to spare computer parts and old video game cartridges. It's said that one is never more that 10 feet away from this weeks copy of Shounen Jump here, and I believe it. The tallest structure in the city, sat in the centre of this grid pattern, is that strangely shaped building they call "Big Sight": four pyramids of steel turned on their heads and suspended in the sky on four pillars of concrete; surely put there by some unknown ancient giant. It is here the city's famous "eternal Comiket" is held, a market where artists and fans buy and sell their comics and other crafts. Over many generations the popularity of this once twice-a-year event grew and grew, and so the duration was extended and extended until it reached a full 365-day fling, dubbed "C∞": the endless convention.

It was towards this monument of subculture I made my way, following the general flow of traffic as we all made our daily pilgrimage toward the centre, but today I wasn't headed to Big Sight itself, but somewhere rather more specific. I pulled out the folded piece of paper that sat in my back pocket, a hand-drawn map showing directions to today's destination. It had been given to me by the owner of a manga shop that had forwarded an order of mine to another shop at this location.

One thing you learn quickly here is that without a clear map, you may never be able to find the same place ever again. In fact it is such a problem that most shops like to give out fliers giving directions, a scourge on my apartment's tiny mailbox. I turned left into a cross-cutting street, this one populated with a few small tea-houses with names written in indecipherable cursive kanji. Despite being less than ten minutes from my house I was already unfamiliar with this locale, an experience very common here but which always made me uneasy: the sheer scale and density of the city made losing your way a dangerous prospect. I hoped I wouldn't get into such a difficulty today, as I passed through the little jasmine-scented tea-town and out into another heaving boulevard.

A flurry of loud noises arrested my ears and the crowds parted to let a troupe of brightly painted vehicles pass through: each decorated in the traditional "itasha" style which consists of adorning your car with vivid depictions of anime characters. This was the infamous "765 Pro gang" I noted, who were often the cause for my rude awakening at impolite hours of the day. I had once been involved in a brief incident with the driver of the Yayoi Takatsuki car after his loli-clad Toyota nearly ran me down as I was walking home late at night. But unexpectedly enough I received a polite handwritten apology and four pounds of beansprouts in my post the following day, so I did hold a certain level of respect for the group despite their disruption.

I stood still and watched as the steady stream of cars rolled past, blasting "Are You Ready? I'm a Lady!" at full volume. Suddenly, from behind, someone bumped into me with quite some force; the impact catching me off guard and sending me sprawling to the tarmac. My assailant helped to my feet at once, mumbling apologies in a stilted voice. I brushed myself off and assured him I was alright. The man was friendly enough, if of a clearly nervous disposition. He looked the spitting image of your stereotypical otaku: a round body with short limbs, attire consisting of a plaid shirt, backpack and a sweatband pulling up his greasy hair out of his eyes: all topped off with the classic coke-bottle glasses perched high on his nose. I accepted his apology for the accident and was about to move on, when I realised my precious map was no longer in my hand! Furtive glances up and down the nearby pavement were in vain, and the endless stomping of passers-by made my chances of recovery worse every second. My day was about to be ruined when a nasally voice ejaculated from behind me: "Uh, sir, excuse me, a-are you looking for the Library of Babel?"

I span around. The rotund man was peering at me anxiously through his thick, spiralled glasses.
"I am indeed," I responded, for I was, indeed.
"Ah." The man continued, "I had a feeling it was you."
He had a peculiar manner of speech, pausing between each statement as if he did not intend to continue. Bewildered at the mention of my destination I asked, "However did you know?"
"I go there a lot," he explained in his apologetic tone, "To Babel that is. It's one of my favourite places. And I was there – I was there last week when your order came in to the manager – Oh I wasn't eavesdropping, I mean – I just happened to overhear the messenger. And now you are heading to pick up your order I suppose. The…"
His words trailed off as I gave him a sharp look. I didn't particularly want this information spoken out in public, not that it was dirty, rather just that it was private. My secret voyeur looked at me sheepishly.
I felt I had been a bit harsh, replying "Sorry, but I'd rather it weren't said out loud if you don't mind. It's something I'd prefer was kept quiet. If you know what I mean."
He pulled back from me and puffed out his chest, adjusting his glasses in such a way that a flash of reflected light lit them up for an instant and made me shade my eyes.
"Hoho!" he laughed, in a clearly forced arrogant tone, "we all have our kuro rekishi! But for a man like me something like that is nothing! You must be an amateur with these things."
I was taken aback by his sudden change in character, and by his saying such ridiculous things with a serious expression. Although any instinct of disgust I may have had toward his conduct were overshadowed by a secret admiration of his character. Keeping a straight face I followed up with: "well I was headed in that direction, but I seemed to have dropped my map, could you help me look for it?"

“No need!” he snorted, “I know this city like the back of my hand. A man like me doesn’t need a map to get anywhere in Akiba.”
“Really?” I said with an unintentionally incredulous voice, “I can barely find my way to the nearest convenience store.”
The man, who’s arrogant bravado was started to grate on me a little I must admit, again shifted his glasses with his forefinger, sending yet another beam of light into my eyes. “Online I’m known as *The Human Computer*, and you don’t get a name like that in a crowd like mine without the skills to back it up! I’m the number one man for directions in all of Akihabara! Let me take you to,” and he lowered his voice for the final words, “*The Library of Babel*...”

I followed my new friend closely as we weaved in and out between the crowds. The sun was at its apex now and the harsh rays beat down on our backs as we made our way up the busy road. For such a large man he could surely move quickly. He raced forward at such a pace it was no wonder, I thought, that he would bump into people often. It was all I could do to keep him within my sight. At some point we made a sharp right turn into a side street, followed by another, and then another. I hadn’t the time to work out the plan of our route in my head at all, but after all, how could a mere human compete with a computer? For fifteen minutes we ploughed on, him not once looking back at me. Slowly but surely the distance between us widened until he disappeared around a corner and was out of my sight. I went to call out to him, but I realised I hadn’t asked his name, and I couldn’t just shout out “*Human Computer*" with a straight face now could I? Panting, I turned two more corners until I emerged into a small square, lined with pastel coloured cafes with parasolled dining tables out the front. My man was nowhere to be seen. I stopped to catch my breath in the shade of one of the cafe’s awnings.

“Welcome to Sea Side Maid Cafe!” a voice exclaimed from beside me. The girl it had emanated from stood by the door of the cafe, in full gothic-lolita maid attire, a sickly sweet smile across her face. “How may I be of service today, goshujin-sama? ❤ ” I assure you the “ ❤ ” was audible, although not strictly verbal.
“Ah sorry, I was just catching a little break from the sun here. I hope you don’t mind.” Maids are a special weakness of mine, albeit it one I had never quite got over the embarrassment of. Maid cafes like this are very common in this city, near the centre there are truly gargantuan ones that hold hundreds of clients at once, and smaller ones litter the streets covering every specific niche you could possibly imagine. This one seemed to be going for a late 19th century Parisian mode, with moe stylings taken from shoujo manga of the early ‘oos, somewhat of a hybrid between “Maria-san” and “Pia Carrot”. A unique but not abrasive pairing indeed. Although I do think the skirts are on the long side, you can’t really call yourself “Parisian” when the skirts go beyond the knee now can you?
I snapped out of my maid-dream, and asked the girl whether she had seen a sweaty man wearing a plaid shirt and thick glasses. She cocked her head to the side and put a finger to her mouth, looking upwards. An action which caused me considerable stress.
“Hmm, well we have quite a few customers matching that description. I wonder if you could mean the gentlemen that has just arrived?” She pointed behind her into the cafe.
I peered in and my eyes immediately landed on the very man I was looking for, sitting like a pudding right there in the cafe! He was red-faced at a table, staring unnaturally hard at a menu while a raven-haired maid stood by with a patient smile. I let out a yell and he looked over at me with the demeanour of a defeated man. I beckoned him and, in a comically rigid manner, he stood up and bowed excessively to the waitress, who waved away his unnecessary apologies. He looked worse for wear, his all so pompous attitude from before extinguished like a lamp.
“I-I find it hard to talk to girls. hehe,” he explained as we resumed our journey, giving a wave and a goodbye to the girls. “I always end up just saying yes to anything they ask.”
The way he said this gave me a pang of nostalgic understanding, like so many of his ilk his social skills quickly degraded to that of a fourteen year old boy in the face of the fairer sex. Although no man worth his manhood can resist the guiles of a cosplay-maid for any extended period of time, so being harsh on such a mistake would be hypocritical.
“How much further until the Library now?” I asked, brushing the matter aside.

"Uh, we are nearly there now, its the next block over," my compatriot told me, his complexion returning from the beetroot red it had been in the cafe back to his usual tomato.

A few more winding streets lead out onto another bustling boulevard, over which we directly crossed and plunged once again into a side street, this one darkened by overhanging buildings. A *Torii Gate* guarded the entrance to it, something I'd noticed before on other streets. Exactly what they signified I wasn't sure, but I had learnt that beyond them you needed to keep your wits close. As we passed under the gate I heard a faint tingle of bells coming from... somewhere. The air was much cooler here, the buildings bent over us preventing the sunlight from reaching the ground. A few street lamps hung here and there giving sufficient lighting to this underbelly of a street to see. The contrast between it and the brilliant boulevard from before was stark. The shops we passed here seemed mainly to be workshops for spare parts: mechanical, electronic, android. Most of them so hyper-specific it was a wonder they could afford to exist with such a small clientele, how many people were looking for Laser Disc recorders in this day and age? But *nothing* is too niche for Akihabara.
We arrived at a quiet crossroads, still under the silent canopy of concrete. Here my guide stopped. "It is either of two ways from here," he said, "it's impossible to tell which."
"So much for The Human Computer," I thought to myself.
But seemingly reading my mind he responded with the cryptic: "Even a computer cannot predict the outcome of a random event."
I was about to ask him what on Earth he meant by that, when a loud crashing sound interrupted my thoughts. Something heavy clattered down from above us and crashed into the path a few feet from where we stood. I recognised it from my travels abroad in my youth: it was one of those green neon signs you see in some countries that indicates a pharmacy. The ones with the snake curled around a rod, although this one seemed to have two snakes rather than just one. The green light flickered on and off intermittently as the pair of us stared at it, it looked heavy enough to kill if had hit us over the head. I looked at my companion and recognised on his face a distant thoughtfulness that seemed uncharacteristic of him. He leant down to the sign and touched it. Nothing happened. Standing up he glanced at me and simply said: "This way," pointing us down the path in which the sign had fallen, "It's this way."
Maybe I should have questioned this decision making process, but at the time I thought it completely sound. I silently followed him as we turned what was to be our final corner. At the end of a dark, narrow corridor of a street, sat the rustic frontage of a run-down bookstore. The shutters were open, and a red tint to the light than came from within shone out into the street. Above the entrance hung large, worn letters that made up the shop's name; once a bright red, but now weathered with rust and in peeling paint it read: "THE LIBRARY OF BABEL".

It felt like a jungle inside. It was densely packed with bookcases, leaving only narrow gaps between them that only one man could fit through at a time. Each unit had shelves from the floor to the ceiling, and each shelf was packed head to tail with books and magazines of all kinds, crammed in next to each other without much regard for uniformity or neatness. Several bare, red-tinted lightbulbs hung from the ceiling, not strong enough to illuminate the dark building fully. The air was hot and stuffy, a far cry from the air-conditioned shops on the main streets. It felt a lot like suffocation in there, and I caught myself inadvertently holding my breath as I squeezed past the bookshelves and up to the counter.
But it looked like the shopkeeper was away, and there was no note of absence. However I noted spent ashes still smoking in the ashtray, so I surmised that he couldn't be far off. Thanking my friend for his great assistance, I told him I would wait here until the shop-keep returned.
"Uh, I think I'll have a look around while I'm here. It's not all the time I get to visit, so I wouldn't want to waste the trip," he said, taking a grubby handkerchief from his back pocket and wiping his dripping forehead.
I watched him as he wandered off deep into the bowels of the shop, occasionally stopping to yank out a thin book and flip through the contents at such a speed I doubted he could really be taking a word of it in. Eventually I lost sight of him in the sepia gloom and I was all alone. It was deathly quiet in the shop. With such a dingy alley outside it was no wonder there was virtually no footfall.

All I could hear was the low humming of the lightbulbs and a persistent dripping sound from somewhere indiscernible. I glanced up and down the shelves closest to me to occupy my mind: it seemed their chaotic appearance did actually have some semblance of order to it. Each block of shelves was labelled, with the one closest to me reading "C99": the old-fashioned formatting for the names of the Comiket conventions, back when they were a biannual affair. The shelf contained doujin sold at that particular convention, and there sure as a lot of it. This whole section was under that label. I wasn't sure of what year that particular convention had been held, but it must have been a long time ago since the spines all looked worse for wear. I was about to pull one out to have a look when a door opening and closing sounded from the opposite side of the room. After a few shuffling footsteps someone I guessed must be the shop's manager appeared. He was a tiny man, sporting dark sunglasses and a large, grey-white handlebar moustache. In one hand he held a bundle of books and in the other one of those long handled Japanese tobacco pipes: the end burning orange. He hastily ducked under the counter and jumped up onto the stool, placing his books on the counter and taking a deep puff on his pipe. I looked down at the man and was about to speak when he exhaled, blowing thick smoke right into my half open mouth.

"And what may you be after?" he said in a hoarse voice, as I spluttered and my eyes watered up. He gave a small chuckle and sat forward in his chair. "My apologies, that was rude of me. It's not often we get a stranger in here."

I cleared my throat with a cough and shook my head. "I-I was told a book I requested has been delivered here. Has it arrived?"

"Delivered?" the little man said with a laugh, "we don't get deliveries here."

This puzzled me, as I was told word would be sent to this shop ahead of time about it. I said as much to the old man, to which he retorted with a snort.

"Not delivery," he said in a patronising tone, "there is no need for deliveries to the Tower of Babel. We hold every doujin work here already: whether that be magazine, self-published book or garage kit, the problem here is that we have so much, it is oh so very hard to track anything down."

"Everything? What I am looking for is exceedingly rare, I've checked hundreds of shops around the city and have had no luck at all."

"Everything," he replied definitively, "everything that has ever been published in the history of otaku culture, and..." he leant a little closer, "and even everything that has yet to be, or that never even was published."

I looked at him in astonishment. It was such a ridiculous statement but I sensed no jest in his voice. "How on Earth can that be?"

"We ask no questions to the library. We treat it as a gift. Although it is impossible to verify, even I have seen only a small portion of what is housed here. You could spend your entire life reading the works we have in store and still have an uncountable number still to go. Most people who visit say that it is infinite, but I don't like to think in those terms. To me it's just a catalogue so great that we humans can never count it. But it's a dangerous place. There are many people in this city who could waste away their whole life in a place like this, cataloguing, documenting, and collecting data. This place turns us otaku-folk into beasts: database animals trapped in a spiral of data. That's why I prefer to keep the shop so hidden, I'm surprised you found your way here at all." He took another puff on his pipe, this time directing the smoke delicately up into the air away from me.

"No," I started, still not really understanding what this strange little man was talking about, "I was guided here by a stranger. Although I never caught his name. He's just back there." I pointed off into the darkness deeper into the building.

"Ah I see," replied the keeper, not bothering to turn his head in the direction I pointed. "That'll be young Okada. He's the only one who always finds his way back here despite any effort I make to hide myself. I suppose he's the only one headstrong enough to stand a place like this for so long, sometimes he spends weeks in there at a time: God knows what he's doing, but this place is so big I would never be able to find him even if I tried."

I peered hard into the darkness that had swallowed up my at last named companion so completely. A slight draft seemed to blow from somewhere in there, and I felt that I may not have been able to see the back wall even if the room was lit with the midday Akihabara sun.

A shiver raced down my spine as I turned my eyes sharply away from the abyss and back toward the little old man whose very existence was becoming more mysterious with every word he told me.

"Oh yes your book," he said in a voice that snapped me back to reality. I had forgotten all about "my book", but the reminder of the real reason I was here settled my heart somewhat. "I did locate it after considerable searching. A difficult find indeed but in the end it wasn't stored so far away as I feared it could have been. I did think you'd never come though, so I haven't brought it over yet. If you'll follow me I'll take you there now."

He hopped off his little chair and tapped out the ash from his pipe, setting the slender instrument down on a small stand on the counter. And, with his bony hands clasped behind his back he started off at a pace faster than I would have imagined an old man of his stature to take, but nothing to Mr. Okada's Olympic pace. And in we went into the enigmatic but deeply uninviting innards of this "Gate of Babylon" of doujinshi. The Library of Babel indeed...

As we went I peered at the various shelves we passed. There were self-distributed works from various labelled doujin circles, semi-licensed anthology manga, and even printed comics that looked like they could have been nothing more than high-school art projects. It did seem like this place had everything. The building indeed went on deeper than was physically possible, but the concept of this library didn't make physical sense either, so I was ready to ignore the objective incongruity for the sake of my sanity. It seemed, as we delved deeper inside, that the room widened out progressively. At the entrance it could have been no more than twenty foot across, but now I couldn't even see the opposite wall through the gloom. And as we plunged off to the right I slowly lost sight of the final left wall too: my last grasp on a concrete indicator of reality. Passing back and forth between these cramped corridors of paper and wood reminded me a lot of the backstreets of Akihabara itself: with its seemingly simple structure turning into a chaotic nightmare once you weren't sure of your location. I started to ponder the implications of what the old man had told me. A finite space that contained an indefinite volume. A collapse of time itself into one space: the past and the future, that which could have been and that which could be but will never be. There was something deeply unsettling about the notion. I no longer wanted to be here at all, but I kept on going regardless.

Then we arrived at our destination. The old man ran his finger along the shelf in front of him, searching for my request. He stopped and pulled out a thin, colour-printed volume and wiped the dust off the front with his long sleeve.

"Here it is," he said, turning to me and holding out the piece. "I only take cash so I hope that won't be a problem."

I took it from him with both hands and looked over the magazine I had helped create so long ago. "University of Nottingham Anime Society: The Zine Issue #13" Here it was. I looked back up at the man with a smile.

"I only have cash."

A short story by James "iklone" Thackway: "The Library of Akihabara".

The Conan Piss

By Cameron Johnson

If you've been in the University of Nottingham anime society discord in the past 2 years, you may or may not have seen the emote commonly known as the 'Conan piss'. If you are familiar with the Conan piss, you'll understand it without knowing why but for those who are not should keep reading.



The Conan piss in question

The Conan Piss depicts Edgogawa Conan from the series Detective Conan urinating on the logo of Crunchyroll. As to the origins of the image, it is unknown although it is known that it was discovered by James (iklone#8298) on 4chan. Then when covid happened and the anime society was forced to create a discord server, the Conan piss was added as a standard emote. It has seen great use in the servers but when is it appropriate to use and what does it mean exactly?

Any emote can have many different interpretations but the Conan piss has 2 most common meanings; the literal one and the metaphorical one. The easiest way to use the emote is when you disagree with Crunchyroll examples include the anime awards, the service Crunchyroll provides or the subtitles. If Crunchyroll has done something that doesn't please you then a Conan Piss is the most powerful way to express your disgust.

The other way a Conan piss can be used is when you disagree with someone. If for example someone voices an opinion which you believe is wrong, then you can use the emote on their statement. The emote is seen as a declaration of disagreement or digust just like urinating on something is disgusting and often means you don't respect it just like you don't respect the person's opinion.

However, the Conan Piss isn't just limited to Crunchyroll and derivatives of the emote have been created which show either disgust or displeasure with a certain thing.


Example of Conan pissing on Nintendo

I hope this article has taught you the meaning behind the Conan Piss and the art of how to use it so go forth and express yourself through the Conan Piss...



crunchyroll



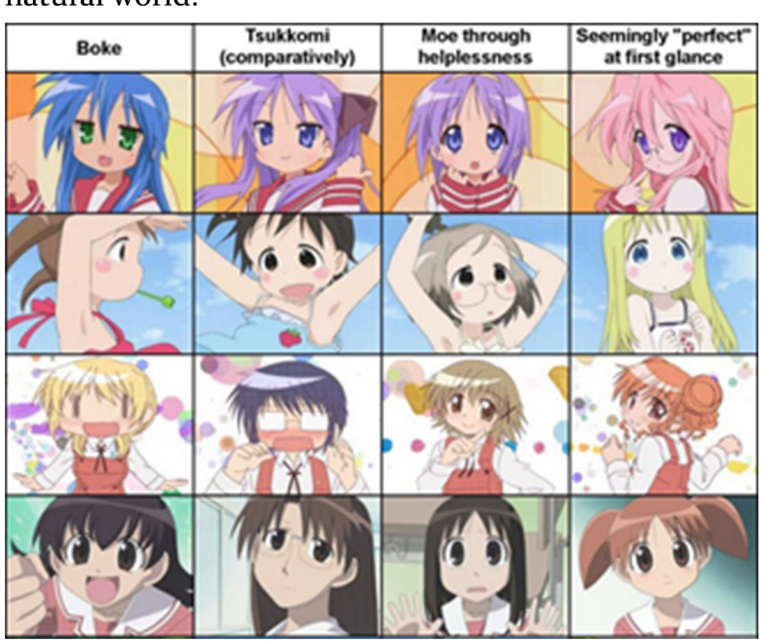
A Slice of Ramble

By Joseph Wallen

The term Slice of Life is in murky waters, meaning different things to most. And like the problems with the terms “shounen” and “shoujo” (they’re not genres, they’re demographics), the average image board poster likes to point out that everything is Slice of Life, because everyone lives. But what is the use of a phrase if not to actually be useful for characterisation? In order to clear the waters, I will attempt to introduce (or ramble about) a few key concepts that are core to Slice of Life anime.

It is an important realisation that core to Slice of Life is a lack of a distinct, overarching narrative, heroes don’t go and slay dragons, or save the princess. But that is not to say that the characters don’t do anything, and in fact a “doing scale” can be realised for Slice of life anime as a spectrum. On one end of the scale, the characters engage in specific activities, often under the pretext of a school club. And this acts as the enabling catalyst for moe. The specific activity of the doing anime can be carefully tuned to dial into specific interests, acting synergistically to draw specific otakus in. Key examples at this end of the spectrum, include anime such as Yuru Camp and Yama no Susume.

On the other end of the spectrum, the characters do not engage in a specific activity, but rather the moe derives from the, often comedic, interactions between the characters; Purely none doing are rather rare with examples being Hidamari Sketch, and GJ-bu, typically employing a large comedy element to supplement the show. Most fall somewhere in the middle of the spectrum, with shows like K-On, employing the doing activity of a music club to drive short narratives, along with the non-doing character of eating cake and talking. This balance is vital to Slice of Life, without the non-doing character of the show, k-on would just be a music anime; Slice of Life’s ambience is truly built by the non-doing aspects of the show, this grounds the anime into something that feels relatable (like a *slice of life*), but also something that is both ideal and platonically ideal and therefore unattainable in the natural world.



Next, an analysis of the characters of Slice of Life shows a clear trend. Firstly, we can characterise a main group of four key characters, which can be further broken down into two sets of two, usually having a dominant two and a background two, looking to Hidamari Sketch, Yuno and Miyako occupy the former, and Sae and Hiro the latter. It is important to note that other interrelations between the characters can often be identified, however the groundwork is laid by the aforementioned. The first set of two is the “old friend” archetype, this can take the form of childhood friends, or even of twins in the case of Lucky Star. The next set is the classic Manzai pairing of boke and tsukkomi. These

two sets do not necessarily encompass each of the 4 characters in the main cast, and there can be overlap: namely Kagami of Lucky Star taking the role of both tsukkomi, and one of the "old friend" pair.

Along with the two sets, each of the characters in turn have an individual identity within this set of four, namely the boke and tsukkomi, along with "moe through helplessness" and "perfect at first glance". Supplementing the main cast, often a 5th (or 6th) character is introduced, typically being underclassmen, having less of a spotlight and serving to give the main cast something to adapt to, or to bring a feeling of mentorship.

The 4-character archetypes bring us nicely onto to concept of Moe, the life blood of Slice of Life. Whilst it is often true that most of the characters could be described as moe, we have a clear "moe through helplessness" archetype. This character is often directly portrayed as the moe character of the show, take Haruhi's Mikuru for example, who is explicitly stated to be the moe mascot of the SOS brigade. These moe characters often have a juvenile persona to them, appearing young, and displaying characteristics of that of a daughter. It is these aspects that creates the storge feeling that is *moe*, a feeling directly opposed to feelings of sexuality. It is this distinction from sexuality that often necessitates Slice of Life shows to take part in an all-girls scenario, either explicitly in an all-girls school, or with a lack of attention paid to male characters, or more rarely having a self-insert character, often acting as more of an observer, as the viewer is.

The lack of a distinctly romantic aspect brings us onto the aspect of spiritual, or *easygoing* yuri. Whilst there is not an explicit love for each other as in classic yuri, unless played for gags, there is a unique, spiritual yuri that was recently truly perfected and exemplified by Akebi Chan no Seifuku. We can think of this spiritual yuri as a sort of divine femininity, which can only exist within the fiction of anime, characterised by purity and platonic love.

Ultimately, Slice of Life is a very conservative type of anime. It avoids grit and dirt of reality, depicting a kind of abstracted, heavenly ideal of moe and spiritual yuri, embracing specific circumstances that could not normally exist without a separate medium (i.e anime) to depict them.

Osamu Dezaki: The Making of Modern Anime

By Nick Stathakis

Osamu Dezaki (1943-2011) is one of the Godfathers of modern anime. Any show you watch today will be littered with references and homages to his work; the very style of modern anime is to a large extent his. For instance, what is anime without the post card memory, the triple take, and the cross counter? The what, you ask? What anime did this man even make, you say? Well, for those interested, read on, and come learn about one of the most important pillars of anime history.

The triple take is a Dezaki classic. In making anime affordable for weekly episodes, corners must be cut. Techniques like limited animation – the act of using fewer frames to convey movement – was innovated by the other Osamu, Osamu Tezuka, a friend and colleague of Dezaki at Tezuka's anime studio Mushi Pro. The technique of the triple take, showing the same shot or scene three times, is in a similar vein; instead of showing a single panning shot and moving on, you can show the same scene *three times*. That's three times as much time taken up – and often a little extra, since the final take often pans slower than the former two. But to call the triple take a mere cost-cutting technique would be to undersell. Dezaki, after all, is a master of the art. When Dezaki uses the triple take, he's playing with time, making you sit and think about what just happened. Shock! Someone was slapped in *Ace wo Nerae*; a knockout punch in *Ashita no Joe*; an insult thrown in *Ie Naki Ko*. In moments that leave a crowd holding their breath, it's as if time pauses; but it's more than a pause, for it's as if that action, that moment reverberates, echoes, in time. That evanescent richness, Dezaki captures perfectly, and it's no wonder the technique has embedded itself into the anime director's handbook.



The man himself

The postcard memory is similarly common and found in all of anime. A terrific, triumphant, or precarious event precipitates; the episode cuts to a painted image of the shot, sits there, and cuts to the ED. We've all seen the shot as it appears in nearly every anime under the sun, but the shot has an origin: and that origin is Dezaki. The name postcard memory with which Dezaki christened his technique is very much an apt one. It evokes a kind of nostalgia for the present, as if you're peering through a window to see this ancient and profound story unfold – much like how the single shot of a postcard transports you to a far away Romantic land. No longer are we merely watching an anime, but are instead peering into the past, into a timeless story. A moment, a feeling, an intuition can be distilled, epitomised, quinessentialised through a single shot: that is the power of Dezaki's directing.



The power of this Dutch-angled postcard memory from Ace wo Nerae is palpable!

The cross counter is a shot beyond introduction – but I'll give it a go. Do you ever see two people punch each other in an anime at the same time? That is the cross counter. Describing the cross counter hurts, because it can never do justice to the emotions of the cross counter. In a cross counter, each puncher conveys their masculine spirit through their fists – either one will fall, or both will fall. It's a punch rich with a heart-felt respect; the kind of punch delivered to a great rival, or friend – a shadow or a mirror. If you start looking for the cross counter, you'll find it everywhere, from Gurren Lagann, to Porco Rosso, to Shadows House; the cross counter is truly the gold standard of fight climax.



A shadowed cross counter with his shadow in Shadows House

To end, I'll give some recommendations for Dezaki's works. Dezaki's magnum opus is certainly *Ashita no Joe*. Joe is a true masterpiece of both story telling and direction, telling the story of a delinquent from the suburbs of Tokyo meeting a bedraggled, drunken former boxing teacher who trains him into a world-class brawler. The effect on Japan – for anime as a medium was still young – was also enormous: a 700 strong funeral was held for one of the characters; and there was also the hijacking of the Japan Airlines Flight 351 by the Japanese Red Army, a communist terrorist organisation, who began the hijacking with a terrorist standing up, unsheathing a katana, shouting "We are Ashita no Joe". Joe is a real tour de force of Dezaki's style, making a great work of art on a shoe-string budget. The plot itself is also one you'll never forget – don't forget to watch *Ashita no Joe 2* also for one of the best narrative conclusions… ever. *Ace wo Nerae*, or Aim for the Ace, is another series I'd heartily recommend. As one of the original sports anime (after Attack No. 1), Aim for the Ace is the progenitor of many of the idea, themes, and tropes of the genre (with Gunbuster being an explicit homage to it). In particular, I recommend the recap film Dezaki directs, for in it you can see Dezaki at his most Dezaki-est, playing with all the techniques described and far far more. *Versaille no Bara* is another truly classic show directed by Dezaki taking place under the reign of Louis XVI just before the revolution. Court drama, strategic posturing, and a growing revolutionary fervour all told from the perspective of Lady Oscar, a daughter raised as a man to be the head of the royal guard. A brilliant story with all the tragedy and heartbreak one would expect.

In short, Dezaki's works are not only a must watch to understand the heart of anime, but also great works in of themselves, and I implore you all to give some of his catalogue a watch.

Concentric Womb Theory Part 2 - Fascist Rebirth and Regression to the womb-cage

By Joe Peake

In my article for 2019-2020's zine, The concentric wombs of Shingeki no Kyojin: a uterological model of the protagonist's journey, I argued that the character of Eren Yeager undergoes a series of Jungian rebirths as his journey through the walls bestows upon him new knowledge. This follow-up essay will show how Eren's rebirth process in the final act of the series stands in for rebirth of his homeland itself, and that Isayama explicitly uses this narrative as a commentary, and critique, of fascism. In Concentric Womb Theory terms, the concentric walls of Paradise Island serve as incubators for a fascist popular sentiment brought on by justifiable fears of outside enemies. By depicting fascism as something that emerges less from hatred as from fear, and by placing the viewer in the shoes of the very characters who fall under its spell, Shingeki no Kyojin forces its audience to interrogate their own potential for complicity in such movements.

As was the case with last year's article, I will be relying only on source material from the anime as it exists so far and not on content from the manga that has not yet been adapted. As a result, the ending of the manga and of the anime will certainly change the validity of any conclusions drawn here. Where manga spoilers have had a bearing on my argument I have elected as much as possible to apply my views of the story at the point at which I had only recently read the portions of the manga leading to the series four finale.



The fascist symbolism of the Shingeki no Kyojin manga and anime

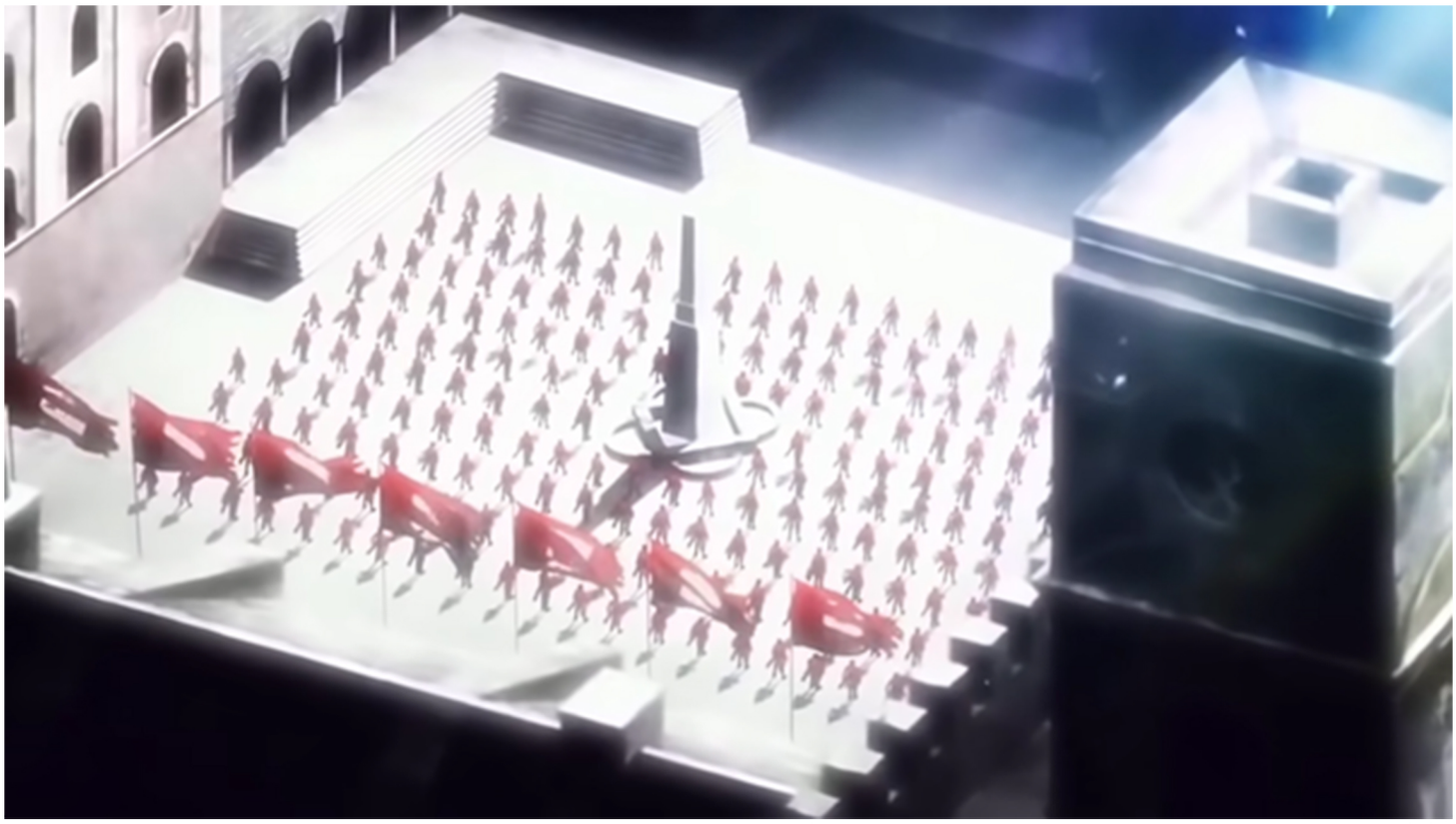
Numerous media commentators have drawn attention to the supposed fascist undertones of Shingeki no Kyojin. In a 2019 article for Polygon, Tom Speelman gives his appraisal of what he terms 'the ugly side of the manga and anime', accusing the series of having 'Anti-Semitic and pro-fascist leanings.' (Speelman, 'The fascist subtext of Attack on Titan', Kotaku, June 18, 2019). Speelman cites a number of reasons for this damning judgment: the unsettling, inhuman appearances of the mindless Titans to him resemble Nazi propaganda images of Jews, being treated very similarly to the Jews; the depiction of military organisations and leaders as the rightful protectors and leaders of society; the Eldians in Marley forced into ghettos and to wear armbands in an allusion to the ghettos of Nazi Europe; the fact that Isayama by his own admission based the character of Dot Pixis on Second World War Imperial Japanese military general Akiyama Yoshifuru (something which caused a stir among

Korean readers in particular); and the aesthetics, ideology, and apocalyptic goals of Eren Yeager and his most fanatical followers toward the end of the series (Speelman drawing anti-Semitic inferences by viewing this in relation to the Eldians-as-Jews parallel mentioned previously). Online media types aren't the only ones seemingly troubled by the content of this series. The Chinese Government went so far as to ban the Shingeki no Kyojin manga and anime (along with several other series) ostensibly for its depictions of bloody violence, but one can speculate that a story of an isolated, highly militaristic island nation breaking free from the shackles imposed on it by its much larger neighbour is one that may have hit slightly too close to home for the Chinese censors (Karen Ressler, 'China Blacklists Attack on Titan, Death Note, 36 More Anime/Manga', Anime News Network, 9 June 2015).



Left: Commander Dot Pixis. Right: Admiral Yoshifuru Akiyama of the Imperial Japanese Army

At first glance, the critiques of Speelman and others seem to have a lot to recommend them. The imagery of an island beset by hostile outsiders of ambiguous or questionable humanity, the emphasis on personal sacrifice for the collective good, and the frequent instances where characters rally around inspirational leader figures, and the positive portrayals of militarism all at first glance point in this direction. These parallels are present not only in the manga, but also in content exclusive to the anime. During the first opening, there is an image of the Survey Corp stood in rows in the presence of numerous banners and flags, all facing diagonally while performing the Corp's salute in a manner reminiscent of German Nazi propaganda film Triumph of the Will (1935). It is therefore hard to take seriously any notions that these themes or allusions are there accidentally, and this lends credence to the argument that the series' message is one of subliminal fascist and Japanese revanchist sympathies (or at the very least, least nationalist ones). These readings, while justifiable given the progress of the story at the time they were published, are fundamentally mistaken given the turns the narrative takes during the final third of the story. Before explaining why, it would be worth first providing an overview of the concept of fascism itself, of the common disputes over its meaning, and of the definition of fascism which this essay subscribes to.

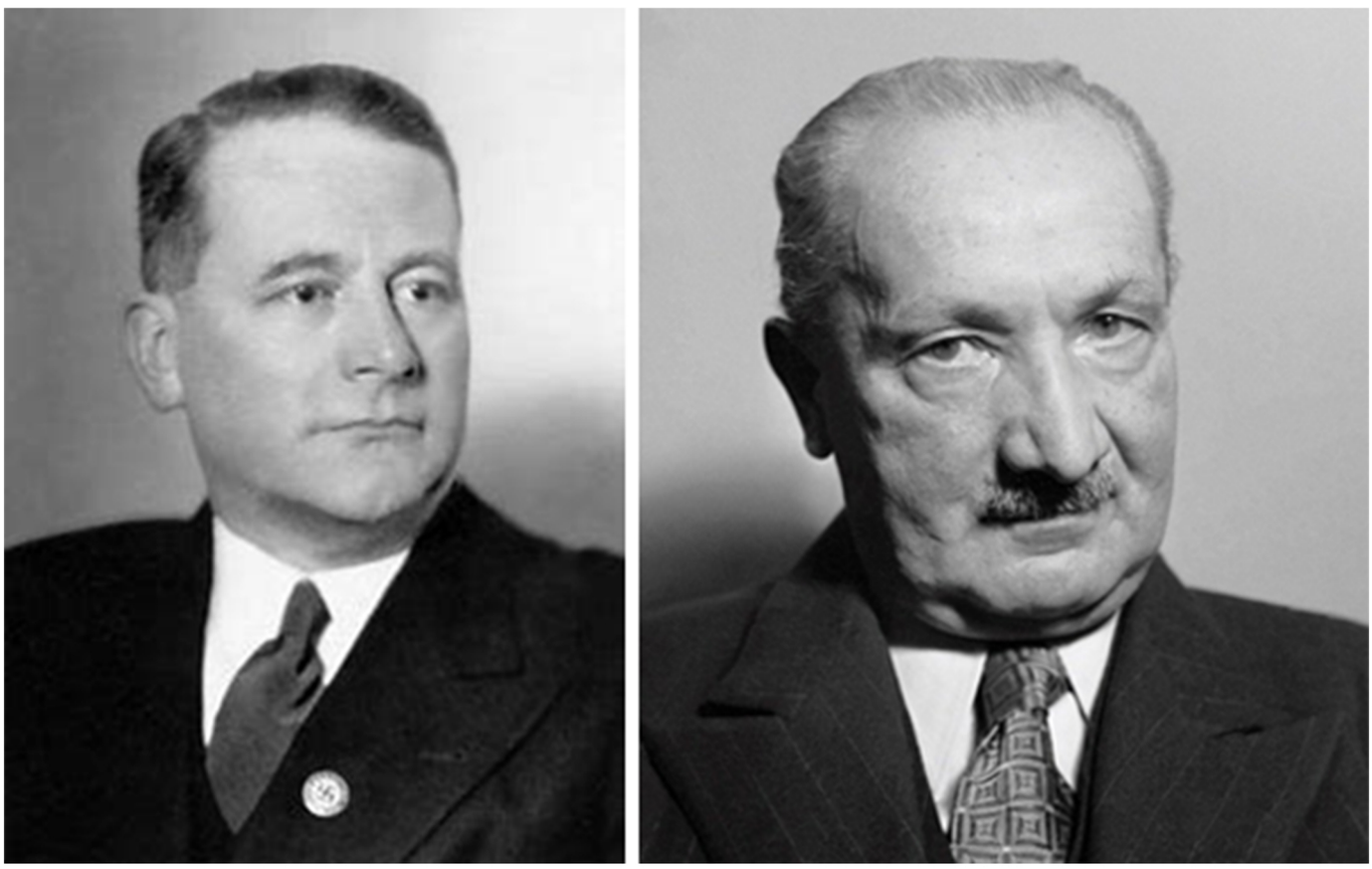


What actually is 'fascism'?

There is probably no concept in modern political terminology more slippery, more emotionally-charged, more overused and misused than fascism. To most people around the globe the term is simply an invective, and a convenient way for people of all political stripes – be they liberals, conservatives, communists, atheists, or religious – to denigrate ideas and people they don't like. This has made it difficult even for academics studying fascism to find common ground when defining it. Liberal scholars and public figures have generally identified racism, xenophobia, populism and opposition to both democracy and civil liberties as the core elements of fascism; conservatives have emphasised its modernist and revolutionary aspects as well as the amassing of power into the hands of the state and the leader, sometimes drawing parallels with Soviet communism; Marxists meanwhile have characterised it as an project born of capitalism in crisis, with elites channelling genuine revolutionary sentiment against structural failings into hatred for other groups of people. However, none of these interpretations really get to heart of what fascism is, i.e. what distinguishes it from other authoritarian movements. There have been many authoritarian, racist, collectivist and imperialist regimes throughout history that pre-date fascism and did not behave in a similar way to the regimes of Mussolini and Hitler: Roman emperors never attained the fanatical cult of devotion among their people that Hitler did, medieval kings and lords persecuted Jews but had little ambition to spread their own race to every corner of the world at the expense of all the others, and rulers like Napoleon were military dictators who imposed their power from above rather than summoning it from the energies of a populist movement.

Conveniently, there is one model for understanding fascism that, in my view, resolves many of these problems and which fits perfectly with a Jungian approach toward both sociology and media criticism. The historian Roger Griffin defines fascism as 'palingenetic ultra-nationalism', or more specifically, 'a genus of political ideology whose mythic core in its various permutations is a palingenetic form of populist ultra-nationalism' (Griffin, The Nature of Fascism (1991), p. 26). The word palingenesis comes from the Ancient Greek palin, meaning 'again' or 'anew', and genesis meaning 'birth' or 'creation' (Griffin, Nature of Fascism, pp. 32-3). Fascism therefore arises only in specific circumstances, where the nation is believed by a substantial portion of the population to be in a state of near-irreversible decline, or under threat from an outside force or internal enemy, or in the grips of a sudden systemic shock that

could cause law and order to break down – all three of these elements must be present to varying degrees, although the specific problems besetting each fascist nation, and the degree to which the citizens' fears are justified, vary considerably. Fascism can be thought of as an extremist movement centred on the idea of national rebirth, and more so than most other extremist movements, it places considerable importance on the role of an individual charismatic leader in bringing about this rebirth.



Left: Nazi jurist and political theorist Carl Schmitt. Right: Philosopher and Nazi Party member Martin Heidegger

The importance of the charismatic leader is one that fascist leaders themselves were self-aware of. Carl Schmitt was a Nazi jurist and an ally of Adolf Hitler who helped to pass the 1933 Enabling Act, which allowed Hitler's government to bypass the German parliament in its decision-making. In his writing Schmitt was particularly concerned with the idea of sovereignty, that is, the idea of a person or group of persons holding exceptional powers to decide when a 'state of exception' to the conventional business of state applies. What follows is the suspension of the rule of law and rule by decree by the sovereign; 'Sovereign is he who decides on the exception' (C. Schmitt, 'Definition of Sovereignty', in Political Theology, trans. G. Schwab (1922/1985), pp. 5-6.). It is during exceptional circumstances, such as during a crisis, that sovereignty reveals itself rather than in times of normal governance, and it is the sovereign who decides when the situation has become extreme enough for a 'state of exception.' Crucially, while earlier philosophers such as Hobbes as well as contemporary liberal theorists saw sovereignty as something that could be held by collectives as well as individuals, in Schmitt's writing the sovereign is always framed as an individual leader.

A few more features of fascism are pertinent to the analysis of Shingeki no Kyojin, put forward by the author Umberto Eco in 1995. Eco lists 'fourteen properties' of fascist ideology. Points three (glorification of action without intellectual reflection), nine (rejection of pacifism due to life being characterised by permanent warfare), and eleven (encouragement of heroism to the point of sacrificing one's life), are all relevant both to Eren Yeager and to the worldview of the Survey Corps more broadly. The heroic themes that have persisted throughout the series of self-sacrifice, action under pressure, and fighting for one's survival and the survival of one's loved ones, are all subverted into something twisted and reprehensible during the series' final act.

survival and the survival of one's loved ones, are all subverted into something twisted and reprehensible during the series' final act.



Let's get ready to rumble

At the close of the previous essay, we last left Eren at the beach, pointing at the horizon and questioning whether his and his friends' freedom depends on wiping out their enemies on the other side of the ocean. In the previous article, the discoveries in the basement were identified as bringing about the last and most significant Jungian rebirth of Eren's character up until that point. Later scenes however shed further light on Eren's final transformation. It is revealed that by kissing Queen Historia's hand, her royal blood combined with the Attack Titan's ability to see its past and future owners' memories caused Eren to experience a further revelation to the one he endured in the basement: that he will perpetrate a massive global genocide of all who live outside of Paradis Island.

Once again, it is new knowledge that instigates the most dramatic of rebirths in Eren Yeager – in this case the knowledge of his own, possibly predetermined role in manipulating past, present and future events for this gruesome end. Though at first glance the founder Ymir appears to act as embodiment of the Eldian people through her position as coordinate where all the 'paths' intersect, it is Eren who changes the status quo – who decides that the 'state of exception' is now in play.

Carl Schmitt's views on the role of the leader in fascist society have already been outlined, and it is easy to see how Eren embodies at least some of those same qualities: it is he who decides that the situation has become so dire that radical action must be taken, that the existing government is no longer fit to rule, and that only he possesses the will and the power to reverse the island's fortunes. Another relevant concept developed by Schmitt is the 'friend/enemy distinction.' To Schmitt, an enemy or foe was a political category based not on concepts of good and evil, on economic competition, or on personal animosity, but on the fact that said foe's existence is a threat to one's way of life (C. Schmitt, The concept of the political, trans. G. Schwab (1932/2007), pp.26-8.). Likewise, Eren bears no ill will towards the millions of people he intends to kill; they are merely in the wrong place at the wrong time. But their

status as technologically superior outsiders makes them not only a threat in the present, but also a potential future threat given how far behind Paradis lags in its industry and how many other nations bear resentment toward them.



It is also worth also mentioning a concept developed by another prominent philosopher who was, like Schmitt, a member of the Nazi Party. Martin Heidegger's relationship with Nazism is more complicated than that of Schmitt's. He does not appear to have been antisemitic, taking on many Jewish students and being a close friend and lover of Jewish political theorist Hannah Arendt. He did however actively collaborate with the regime, informing on colleagues and students, and there are aspects of his philosophy that overlap with the fascist view of the individual and of the nature of reality. His most celebrated work, Being and Time, associates selfhood not with the individual mind in a cartesian sense or with the existence of a soul, but with the experience of 'being-in-the-world,' or dasein. Experiences and actions over the course of one's life are what make us the people we are. At numerous points Eren brings up the fact that he was 'born into this world' as both an explanation and justifications for his actions, meaning that he was born with the freedom to fight against the world's cruelties and for his and his friends' survival, and to carve his own path forward. Eren begins the story as an angry, bull-headed child, and his experience in the world – of being – and his unique relationship to time itself – through the glimpses of the future shown to him through the paths – lead to his rebirth into something that resembles his former self, but which at the same time transcends it. Both the younger and the older Eren are preoccupied with the need to 'keep moving forward', but while the former was driven by a rootless and indiscriminate anger and longing, the latter has honed these traits into something more controlled and directed, though equally driven.

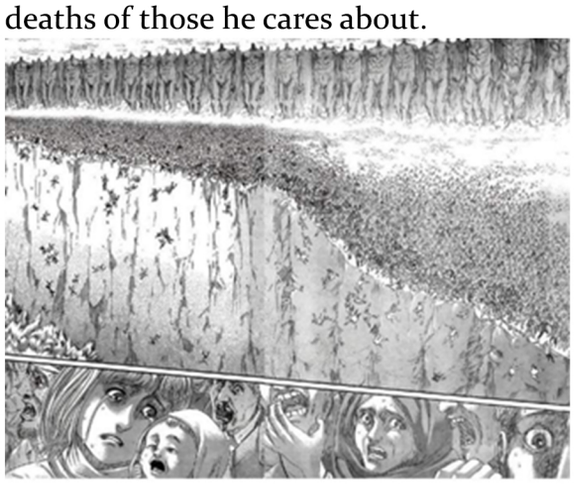
Two other concepts developed by Heidegger are relevant here: care and being-towards-death. To Heidegger, care for one's fellows was a fundamental aspect of the human condition and can be defined as akin to devotedness, to concern for what one cherishes or values (Heidegger, Being and Time, pp. 241-44). In the case of Eren Yeager, the primary objects of his devotion are his friends, family, community – those who he has grown up with inside the confines of the walls. This applies primarily to his immediate circle, but extends next to all of humanity within the walls. When Eren encounters the lame titan close to the beach at the end of the third series, he responds not with disgust and anger as he has before, but with a sense of remorse for one of 'his' people who has been so brutally mutilated by the island's enemies. And despite Eren's cold and brutal rejection of his friends in episode fourteen of series four, this is merely a ruse to dissuade them from trying to stop his plans out of concern for him. Eren

clearly cherishes his friends dearly, and it is precisely this desire to save their lives and ensure their freedom that constitutes the core motive behind his genocidal agenda.

Eren also knows that he has only a limited time left alive to complete his goals due to each titan shifter living only thirteen more years from the time at which they gained their powers. This is where the connection between Heideggerian care and the 'being-toward-death' becomes relevant. To quote Heidegger:

> 'In the publicness with which we are with one another in our everyday manner, death is 'known' as a mishap which is constantly occurring – as a 'of death'. 3 Someone or other 'dies', be he neighbour or stranger. People who are no acquaintances of ours are 'dying' daily and hourly. 'Death' is encountered as a well-known event occurring within-the-world. As such it remains in the inconspicuousness characteristic of what is encountered in an everyday fashion... everyday Being-towards-death is a constant fleeing in the face of death. Being-toward-the-end has the mode of evasion in the face of it – giving new explanations for it, understanding it inauthentically, and concealing it. Factically one's own Dasein is always dying already; that is to say, it is in a Being-towards-its-end.' (Heidegger, Being and Time, pp. 296-8.)

However, Heidegger also claimed that being-toward-death was 'grounded in care', that is, that our understanding of death is tied to our relationship and experiences with others (Heidegger, Being and Time, p. 303.). Everybody faces death, everybody learns about death and probably has been told by others what they believe happens to you when you die, and everybody has at some point in their life had some experiences with death, be it a relative dying or witnessing the death of an animal or insect. In Shingeki no Kyojin, our protagonists have certainly had to come to terms with these truths in a much more visceral sense than most. Eren's own experience of 'being-in-the-world' has seen countless people, including friends and family, die all around him. The repeated references to the 'cruel world' throughout the first series are pertinent here: Eren's understanding of the world is one where death looms large, ever present, and ever hungry for more. In something akin to the Freudian concept of the 'death drive', death and inflicting death on others are as much a part of his world as is mourning and preventing the deaths of those he cares about.





At the same time, death separates one's own dasein from every other person, as well as from the uncertainty and anxieties of being-in-the-world (Heidegger, Being and Time, pp. 307-8). Anticipation of death also guards against stagnation, of listlessness, of the loss of potential. For Heidegger, death and the anticipation of death are fundamentally liberating – anticipation of one's own death produces a 'freedom toward death', a mentality where one is free of comfortable illusions and able to take decisive action. I can think of no other fictional character that truly embodies this Heideggerian attitude to death and freedom than Eren Yeager. Having been raised within several concentric wombs of violence and disillusionment, and having come to terms with his own impending death, he is finally free to birth the horrors he has carried with him for the past thirteen years onto the world at large. In the moment that Eren's true nature and goals are finally revealed to the characters and to the audience, the walls that have come to define the series almost to the degree as the titular titans rupture, and like a colossal womb torn open by a monstrous infant, countless colossal titans spill forth in a shower of rubble. Here, too, Eren experiences his final

rebirth, transforming into a three-hundred-metre-tall insect-like creature consisting mainly of a giant ribcage which then begins scuttling across the surface of the earth, stomping to death men, women, young and old, mothers and babies alike. Hobbes' Leviathan has thus been made manifest in its most literal form. And there is nothing quite like looking out of the window and seeing a gigantic genocidal ribcage-centipede crawling toward your house to remind anyone of their own being-towards-death.

Eren, Erwin and Floch

In Carl Jung's analysis of the three 'great dictators' of Europe, Jung draws a sharp distinction between the character of Hitler and of Hitler's mode of dictatorship, and those of Mussolini and Stalin. Whereas Mussolini and Stalin resemble war chiefs with their perceived physical prowess and thuggish natures, Hitler reminds Jung more of a shaman or medicine man whose authority rests on his followers' belief that he possesses magical powers or the favour of the gods. Hitler is a dreamer, wild-eyed and frenzied as he channels his own magic – that is, the desperation and adoration of the German people. Where Mussolini's and Stalin's power was imposed from above, Hitler's came from the ground up, as the German people projected what they wanted from a leader in the 1930s onto this otherwise unremarkable man (C. G. Jung, 'Diagnosing the Dictators', in C. G. Jung speaking: Interviews and encounters (1977), pp. 115-35).



In the case of Eren and his right-hand-man Floch Forster, these characteristics of Hitler and specifically Hitlerian fascism can be seen split almost evenly between them: Eren is the source of magical energy that excites and revitalises the populace, while Floch acts as the shaman who channels it into decisive action. Eren tasks Floch with ruling the island while he is away enacting his program of genocide. Eren is motivated solely by a desire to protect those closest to him and to free the islanders from the threat of the titans. Though Floch certainly shares these goals, his own motives quickly shift to not only saving his people but establishing their dominance over the world by restoring the Eldian Empire, an imperialist power responsible for much of the historic bloodshed that paved the way for the Eldians' own persecution. He also quickly establishes himself as the most ruthless of Eren's supporters, gleefully executing anybody who voices any opposition to his and Eren's plans. His Yeagerist faction certainly resembles a gang of fascist blackshirts in their uniform and tactics, though they also bear striking similarity to another gang of twentieth-century totalitarian enforcers: the Red Guard of Mao's China. During the Chinese Cultural Revolution, gangs of primarily young people in their late teens and twenties assaulted, tortured and murdered millions considered to be holding back the progress of Mao's communist society. Floch too encourages violence against those he considers relics of the past, as seen

when he first assassinates the military leadership council of the vengeful and sadistic poo-fetishist Darius Zackley, and when he has his former teacher Keith Shadis beaten to a pulp by young Yeagerists who themselves had been trained by Shadis.



Floch, like Eren, experiences his own rebirth during Shingeki no Kyojin, although his is far more sudden and less staggered than that of our erstwhile protagonist. He is the lone survivor of the suicide cavalry charge led by Commander Erwin Smith during the Battle of Shiganshina, where Eren's brother Zeke Yeager bombards the Survey Corps with projectiles while Eren and the other titans battle one another. Prior to the battle, Floch is shown as naïve, vain, and ignorant of the danger he has put himself in. When the first bombardments begin, his nerve quickly fails him, leading him to break down sobbing with his head in his hands. However, he is able to muster up enough courage to join Erwin in his suicide attack, where every cavalry member is cut down by barrage after barrage. The time spent in cover anticipating one's death, followed by a charge into enemy fire is reminiscent somewhat of the experience of trench warfare, which Adolf Hitler himself experienced during the First World War: men sent into battle the likes they had never seen before, their survival chances dependent on luck more than anything else. Floch undergoes his bloody rebirth through trauma followed by being struck with the absurdity of finding himself the only survivor, despite his cowardice and inexperience. During the battle Floch comments on the meaningfulness of death, or lack thereof in such a bloody and chaotic situation. Having survived his first brush with death, Floch becomes conscious of his own 'being-towards-death', as well as the terrifying nature of the enemy they are fighting.

Following the battle and surrounded by the corpses of his comrades, Floch drags the dying commander back to the surviving squad where Armin lies mortally wounded. With only one titan serum available to save just one of the injured, Floch makes the case that Commander Erwin is 'the devil we need' to overcome the enemy on account of his ruthlessness in putting the collective good of the mission above himself and his fellow soldiers. He is later harshly critical of the others – including Eren – for saving Armin instead of the commander, and callously tells them as such, among other harsh truths, during the memorial service and medal ceremony held upon returning from the basement.



It is worth as well turning for a moment to the character of Erwin Smith and his unwitting role as inspiration both for Floch Forster and for the new recruits that become the Yeagerists. Erwin is consistently portrayed throughout Shingeki no Kyojin as a man who is willing to go to extreme lengths to achieve the greater good for the people within the walls, as well as to further his own goals. Like Eren his goals are partly selfish – Eren wishes to save his own friends at the expense of others, while Erwin wishes to discover the world outside the walls. Erwin ultimately sacrifices this lifelong desire along with his own life as a tactical gamble to distract the enemy and ensure victory at the Battle of Shiganshima. Floch has clearly taken considerable inspiration from Erwin's leadership style on that day, even attempting to model himself on his hero. Erwin's cry of 'dedicate your hearts' at the onset of the final charge is transformed by Floch into the new mantra of the Jaegerists, becoming their 'seig heil', so to speak. Floch himself leads a chant of this phrase from the podium after announcing the start of the new Eldian Empire.


Dedicate your hearts!


...dedicate your hearts!

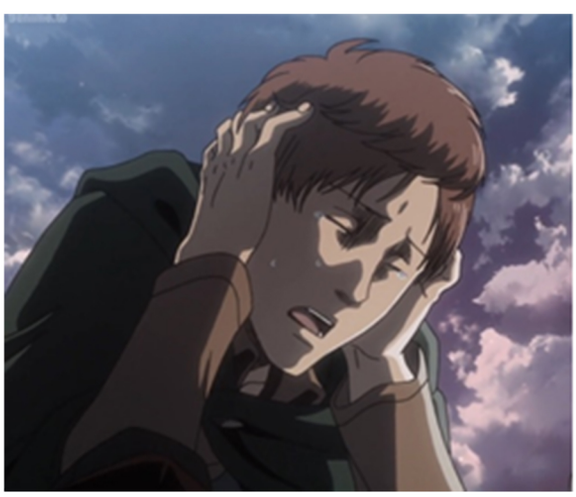



Dedicate your hearts!



In this way, Isayama shows how even the most noble of actions and worldviews can be perverted by those who claim to follow them. Floch's brutality, sadism, and power-mad ranting are depicted not as glorious but a perverse and twisted version of the Survey Corps ethos under Erwin, Floch does not follow Eren out of any personal loyalty; as mentioned, prior to the timeskip he regards Eren as short-sighted and overly emotional, while afterwards there is rarely any sense of camaraderie between them even once they are in cahoots. Floch instead recognises that Eren must be the one he follows because Eren is the only one who can bring about a genocide – he is Floch's new 'devil we need.' The vision is Eren's, quite literally when considering the paths, but Floch is instrumental in bringing about the necessary conditions for it to be realised. Floch is the one who radicalises the younger members of the Survey Corps and has them overthrow the old regime, the one who whips the crowds into a frenzy upon Eren's ascension while claiming to speak on Eren's behalf, and crucially the one who stands atop the podium announcing the arrival of the new Empire in a scene which is again reminiscent of The Triumph of the Will. He is the dreamer-mystic described by Jung; Eren is the source of magical power (in this case, literal rather than figurative magic) that enables Floch to hijack and then embody the will of the people.

Floch's zeal and personal innovations that he brings to Yeagerism is a prime example of the fascist practice historian Ian Kershaw calls 'working toward the Fuhrer' (I. Kershaw, "Working Towards the Führer': Reflections on the Nature of the Hitler Dictatorship', Contemporary European History (1993), pp. 103-118). Kershaw argues that Hitler's style of rulership was to inspire others to devise strategies and policies that fitted their impression of what he wanted, in contrast to the more involved style of dictators like Joseph Stalin. Though Eren is by no means a 'hands-off' fascist leader in the manner of Hitler, he like Hitler (and indeed any leader of a large and complex society) is too preoccupied to be working out the minutiae of how his specific brand of fascism will work in practice. Therefore he relies on Floch, a typical high-ranking fascist subordinate who will go above and beyond in carrying out his master's wishes. Floch is thereby midwife to the Rumbling, Eren the parent guiding his child along its mission of death.





It is common to refer to fascists as motivated primarily by hatred – to outsiders, to the weak, to those they don't understand. In Floch's case, and perhaps in the case of many real fascists, it is not hatred that drives him but fear. It is fear that breaks him down during the battle of Shiganshina, and it is fear of the enemies beyond the sea that spurs him to embrace the role of the brutal strongman. Floch's Jungian rebirth, unlike Eren, is a rapid and premature one, transforming him from a pathetic coward into a cruel, manipulative, and petty bully. From this, it is difficult to see how one could accuse Shingeki no Kyojin of glorifying fascism; rather, Floch shows how understandable fears can lead to paranoid reactions, how otherwise good institutions can become corrupted by dogmatism, and how victims of trauma can go on to inflict further trauma upon many others.



Eren and Zeke

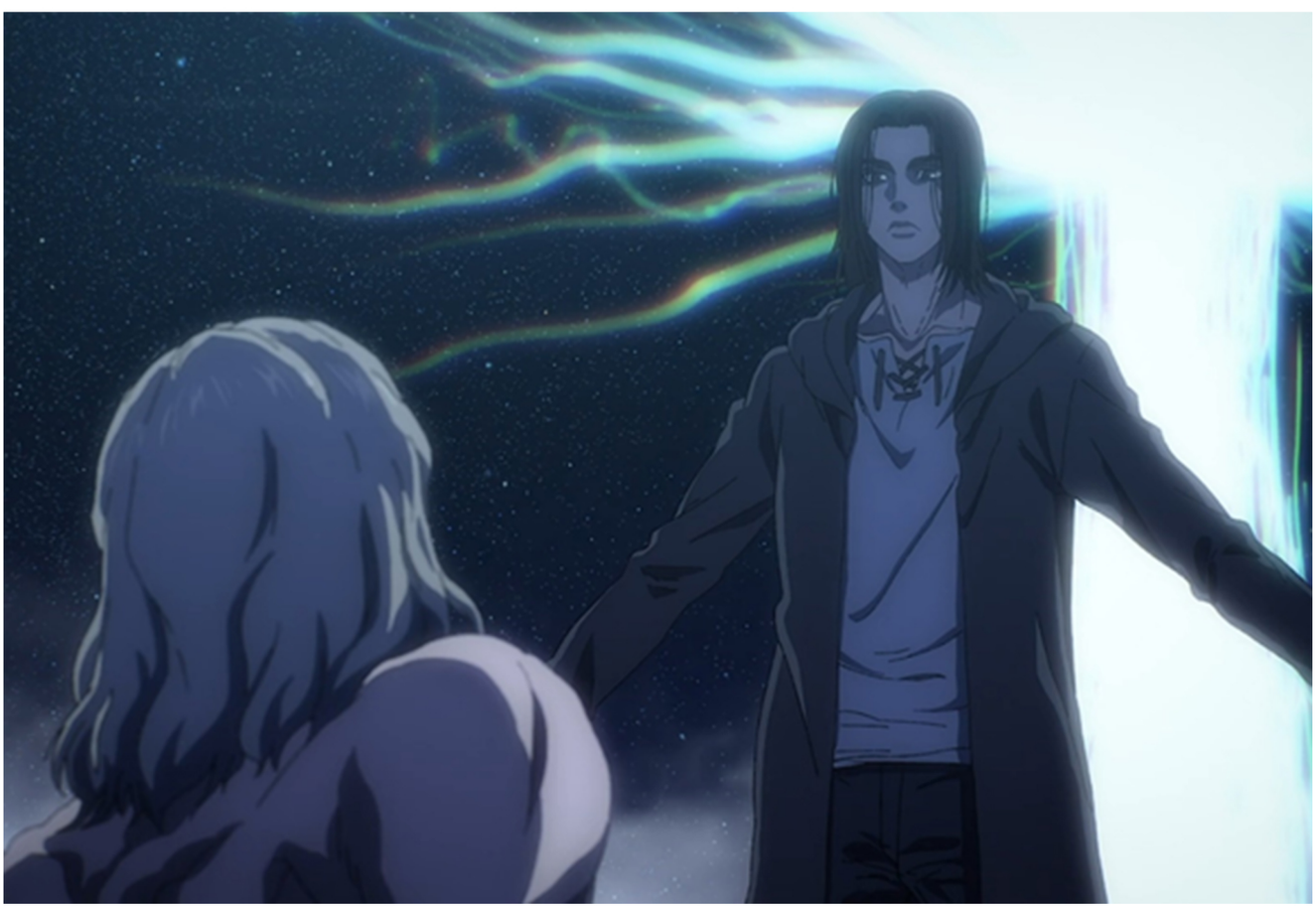
It is worth briefly addressing the dichotomy between Eren Yeager and his older half-brother Zeke in relation to Shingeki no Kyojin's handling of fascism. To use the parlance of the modern internet fascist, Zeke represents the archetypal 'cuck' or 'cuckold.' While this term traditionally refers to a man whose partner freely cheats on him with other men, in fascist circles the definition has since expanded to include those in positions of influence who would pollute the race by letting outsiders interbreed with the native population, or allow the replacement of the race by allowing native birth rates to decline (V. Romo, "'Ghost Skins' And Masculinity: Alt-Right Terms, Defined', NPR.org, 2017).



Zeke is a cuck on two fronts. First, we will address his desire to sterilise his entire race to rid the world of titans and to spare his people a painful death through warfare and oppression. This plan is effectively a form of ethnic suicide. Zeke's desire for a slow but relatively painless death stands in stark contrast to Eren's bloody quest for victory at all costs. Secondly, Zeke can be said to have been 'cucked' by Eren in that he is emotionally manipulated, has his whole plan subverted, and then is forced to watch powerless as Eren births his own, more violent form of extermination. Aside from racial treason a core aspect of the fascist idea of cuckoldry is weakness, of the feeble being displaced by a stronger foe. Similarly, the scheme that Zeke has nurtured for so many years is effectively killed in the womb – at the moment before its birth, no less – and replaced by that of his younger brother.

That Zeke played such a key role in Floch's transformation further emphasises how this dichotomy is embodied in two of its most monstrous characters: Zeke is the race-traitor who slays his own people by the dozens and intends to bring about the disappearance of the Eldian people from the world; Floch is the young patriot radicalised by the actions of Zeke and his associates and who subsumes his entire identity into the mission of ensuring his people's survival. These different characters all feed on one another's insecurities and on the consequences of one another's actions, with the bloodshed of one justifying the bloodshed of the other.





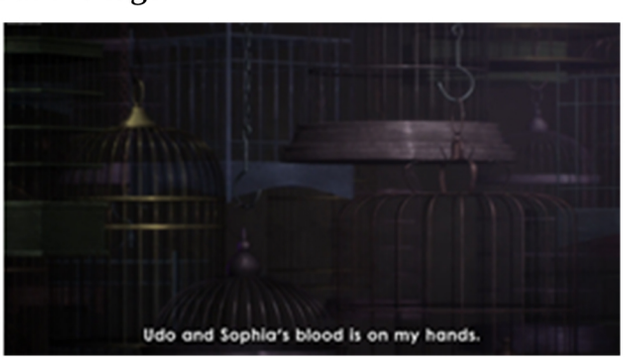
Epilogue: The Bird in the Cage

To conclude, Shingeki no Kyojin draws from both political theory and historical inspiration in its exploration and critique of fascism. Eren Yeager and Floch Forster are fascists in both a Schmittian and Heideggerian sense, taking the friend/enemy distinction to its most extreme extent and believing their cause important enough to put them above law and morality. At the same time, both Yeager brothers are ultimately depicted as broken people, embodiments of how fascism, excessive militarism and obsessions with bloodlines and collective guilt can pose a danger as much to those who hold these beliefs as to their enemies. By initially portraying Eren as a heroic character and encouraging us to root for him, Isayama by extension makes us almost complicit in the fascist violence on screen, showing how we too could be swept along by such a movement as are so many of the Survey Corps. It is up to the readers and viewers of Shingeki no Kyojin to decide whether this humanisation of such despicable characters as Floch and Eren, their portrayals as sincere in believing themselves to be in the right, and the portrayal of fascism's rise from the point of view of these fascists strays too close to glamorising or excusing these extremist politics.

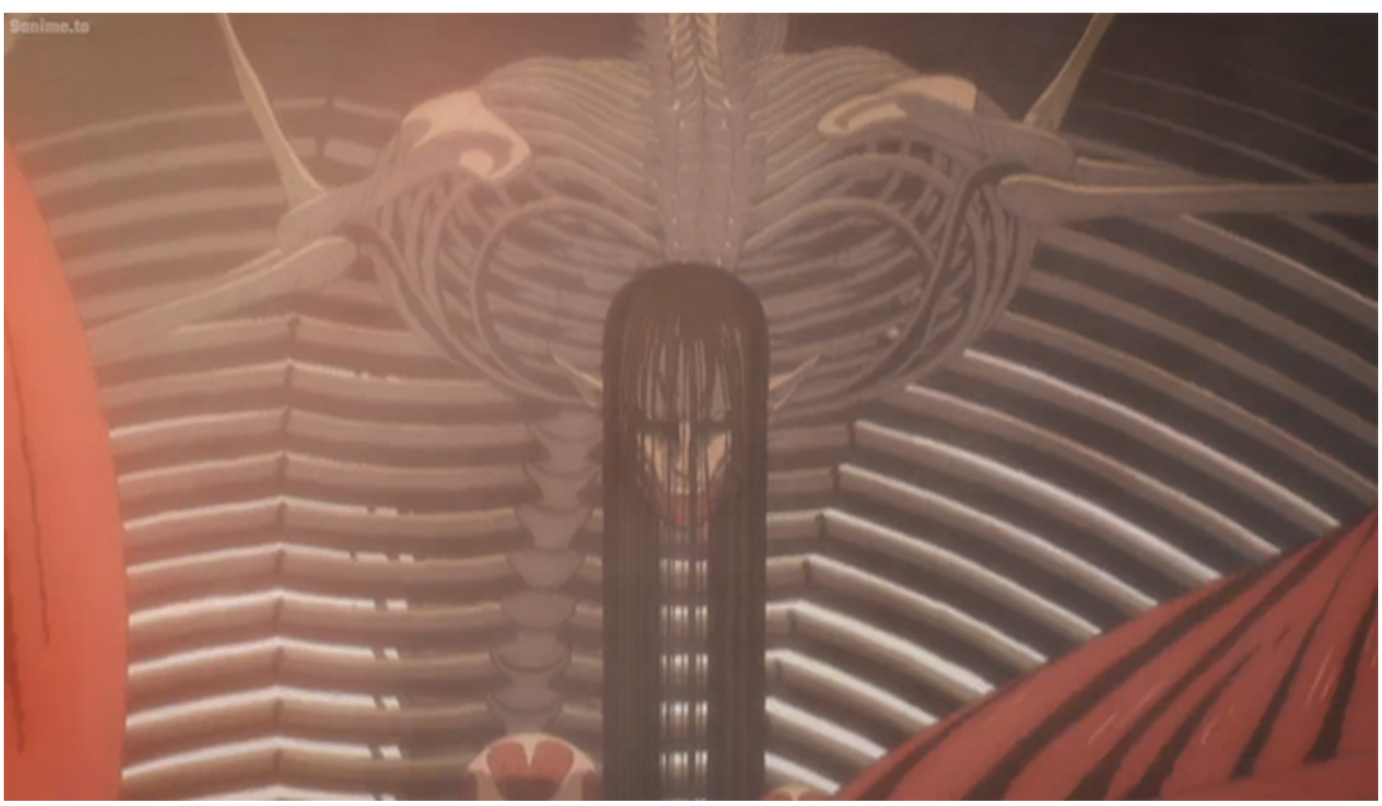


I personally do not believe this to have been Isayama's intention. To explain why, it is necessary to briefly examine some of the visual cues present in the final season in relation to recurring motifs in previous seasons. To begin with, life within the walls is frequently likened to living in a cage. In contrast, the sight of birds flying overhead – creatures that can come and go from within the walls as they please – is often shown at key moments in the story where characters are in a state of contemplation, longing, or out-of-body experiences. Birds appear during Eren's dream at the start of episode one of the first season, at the opening of season three as Eren looks out at the ocean, and at the very beginning of season four when Falco lies dazed on the battlefield. Birds represent the freedom that Eren is so desperate to attain. And yet his final titan form resembles not the bird, but the cage.





That this is significant is reinforced by a previous scene in which Falco and Gabi take shelter in an abandoned building full of birdcages. Gabi speaks of realising the error of her previous beliefs, beliefs that resemble in different ways those of Eren (animosity to other races) and of Zeke (animosity to one's own race). As Gabi speaks, we are shown images of empty bird cages with the doors hanging open, images exclusive to the anime. When Falco speaks of the guilt he feels for his past mistakes, mistakes that led to countless deaths, we are shown other cages, this time with the doors shut. Gabi has liberated herself from the grips of her jingoistic worldview, her brainwashing, and her need to please her unworthy masters. Falco, like Eren, is still a prisoner. That Eren himself is a prisoner is shown later in the manga as his sanity slips away midway through his massacre, wondering what his mother would think of his actions and regressing to a childlike state within the otherworldly landscape of the paths – a return to the womb, yet not a comfortable one in the Freudian sense, or in the sense of the womb as Eden or paradise as was discussed in the previous article. At the same time, the rebirth of the Eldian Empire is similarly portrayed not as a glorious moment but as people becoming akin to the monsters – human and titan – that had oppressed them previously. If fascism can be defined as rebirth-ultranationalism, then the simultaneous rebirths of both Eren and Eldia have by the end become not ones of progress as described by Jung but as a regression or wrong turn. At the time that this essay is written, Eren is currently hanging within a cage of his own making, surrounded by bars made of his own ribcage, trapped by the fatalistic knowledge granted to him by the paths and his inability to see any other way forward besides fascism and genocide. Rather than achieving freedom, Eren remains a bird in a cage.



Samurai Champloo Art

By Finlay Hill



Manga Book Club - Year Review!

By Joe Green (BensMB)

Top Series



1. Sousou no Frieren Score: **8.10**

Our highest rated series of the year tells the tale of Frieren, an elf mage who searches for meaning in her immortal life after her journey to defeat the Demon King is over. From the hauntingly beautiful portrayal of the passage of time, to the intricate fantasy world building, this series is a guaranteed great read and well loved by all members of Manga Book Club.



2. Lucifer and the Biscuit Hammer Score: **7.90**

Given the power to save the world from impending doom, Yuuhi dedicates this power to Samidare instead, who promises to destroy the world once it has been saved. This simple shonen premise develops deeper emotional characters and relationships throughout, with a fantastic cast. It is worthy of Manga Book Club's mantra: Read Lucifer and the Biscuit Hammer.



3. Yokohama Shopping Log Score: **7.84**

This gorgeous tale follows the daily life of robot barista Alpha running a small café, set in a gentle yet desolate post-apocalyptic Japan. Slowly unravelling the mysteries of this world whilst encountering new ones is a true delight. Stunning water-coloured pages makes this a truly enchanting series, and a personal favourite of some Manga Book Club members.



Honourable Mention: Immortal Hounds Score: **Over 9000**

The Citizen Kane of Manga... I hope, as of writing this we have yet to read it together. However, as the most consistently nominated series (thanks Matt) it became a subject of curiosity for us all. The story of people able to resurrect themselves to heal, hunting those without this ability. Will it be good? Will it be dreadful? One thing is for certain, it will be bloody!

Anime Society 2021-2022: The Year in Review

By James Frost & Matt Fieldsend

When the Anime Society held it's AGM a few days early back in March 2020, we had no idea that is was to be the start of multi-year long pandemic that would see so much of common sense upended. We were only just able to run the AGM; it was the very last in-person SU event before lockdown, and we got the email saying that events could no longer go ahead about halfway through the evening.

Lockdown necessitated a very different Anime Society from prior years. The committee quickly threw together a Discord server for the society, which despite some incidents, was largely successful, and managed to keep the society ticking along even as many other societies struggled to stay alive. Many fun evenings were had watching Kosmi struggle to stream the shows of the week, or hopping on voice chat with the other members of the society.

As much as we managed to do online, it was clear to me that it paled in comparison to the in-person experience that the society had offered. We had also gained very few new members that year, though speaking to people who were in first year at the time it appears that the existence of societies was somewhat lost in the slue of year start emails that they got. There is also the obvious issue of anime society being just as much about the social aspect as the anime, and the lack of an in-person element made this much harder.

As such, when the 2021 academic year rolled around we got back to in-person as a matter of priority. We threw ourselves into the Welcome Fair at the start of the year, and were meet with an overwhelming response. We handed out hundreds of fliers for the society, and got to speak with loads of people. It was interesting to note that there were a lot of people who had only just gotten into anime, with a large portion of those we spoke too having only started watching anime over lockdown and only having seen Attack on Titan or Demon Slayer. The other anime that stood out as a common one was Full Metal Alchemist: Brotherhood, which even a decade on from its release is still proving it deserves its number one spot on MyAnimeList.





The first event of the year was a movie screening of PROMARE. We managed to fill A41 completely, with people having to sit on the stairs, and by my count it was over one hundred and twenty people! The action packed movie from Studio TRIGGER certainly left an impression on the audience, as we continued having large numbers coming to our Monday sessions since.

What felt like right after the welcome week, we had the trip to London Comic Con. This was another very fun event, though I would be lying if I said it wasn't somewhat stressful as well. Everyone seemed to enjoy themselves, and we managed to get everyone home safe and sound. I was impressed that we managed to fill the massive double decker coach that we had hired, but that just made the trip even more fun.



We have had many good events since. During the Halloween pumpkin carving it was great to see everyone's designs, though I must apologies for finding some of the hardest pumpkins in existence. In December we had our Christmas meal at the Rose and Crown, which also proved successful. The society has also continued ticking along nicely into 2022 where we recently had our Cardboard Cosplay night, where we saw some very creative designs.





Personally I have really enjoyed Manga Book Club, as it has gotten me reading much more manga than I have before, as well as experiencing various genres that I haven't previously experienced. I need to give a massive thank you to Joe (AKA BensMB) for running these fantastic sessions.

Whether it is the Anime Mondays, Manga Book Club, or even the great social circle that exists around the society, I hope you have all found something in the Anime Society. It has been a huge part of my time at University, and I wish the society continues to find success for many years to come.

The Committee

Matt (the editor) here, I want to hijack James' article here to just give a massive thanks to him for this year. We had probably the most successful year in the society's history in terms of membership and turnout for events and he did a good 60% at least of the work all by himself this year and I don't think we could have kept things running as smoothly as they did without his leadership. Not only James though, I want to thank the rest of the committee for giving me a warm welcome when I took over Karan's position as Communications Officer in October and for everything they've done to keep anime society running along. I hope I've been able to contribute a sufficient amount to this society during my tenure.

Speaking of the committee for this year (2021-2022), here they are:



Joe Green
Treasurer

Paid for things and ran Manga Book Club which was great!



James Frost
President

He did a lot. Like, a lot.



Nick Stathakis
Mascot

Old man of the committee, gave good advice and helped steer us in the right direction.



Matt Fieldsend
Communications Officer

Fought a war with the SU e-mail system and made the Zine, also forgot to update the website much...



Kayan Rubio
General Secretary

6'1" Car Owner

Did an amazing job at poaching freshers at the welcome week stall, he also took minutes once



Joseph Thomas
Welfare Officer

He was here.



Tobi Holmes
Social Secretary

Organised Comic Con very well

I would also like to wish good luck to next year's committee, consisting of:

President - Joe Green

Treasurer - Matt Fieldsend

Communications Officer - Ben Eaves

General Secretary - Finlay Hill

Social Secretary - Venisa Sivakumar

Mascot - Cameron Johnson

(Represented by a stuffed Nero Claudius Saber plush)

As we come to the end of this year's Zine, I leave with you two iconic and very important images from this year at Anime Society:



This year's 6'1" General Secretary Kayan locked in mortal battle with a group of furries at Comicon back in October



Next year's committee after being voted in at the AGM (along with a hefty amount of empty pizza boxes)

From Left to Right -

Cameron - Ben - Venisa - Joseph T. - Matt - Finlay - Joe G.

And that concludes Issue 13 of the Zine! It was a challenge to put together but I've had great fun procrastinating my coursework by doing so!

Thank you to everyone who sent in articles and thank you in particular to Finlay Hill for helping with the front cover and teaching me how to use Photoshop, the Zine would've looked a lot worse without her help. Big thank you to the current President and previous Comms Officer James as well, I stole a lot of design elements from Zine 12.

Thanks for reading and remember to read Lucifer and the Biscuit Hammer!

- Matt Fieldsend

(Communications Officer 2021-2022)



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

Contained within are articles relating to anything anime or manga related, from explaining the end of evangelion to the wild antics of anime director Nabeshin.

The Zine Will Return...

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