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Anime and War

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Comments

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Anime and War

by Carol Sun

Japanese Animation and the Pacific War

- highly influenced by Disney
- narratives focused on the individual within a societal context
- themes of the apocalypse, a nostalgia for the fading past, and monster/mecha fantasies

By the 1980's, anime had grown far more sophisticated, challenging, and diverse than the Disney cartoons, begging audiences to question the trajectory of humanity.

Human enhancement ...is an intervention that causes either an improvement in the functioning of some subsystem...beyond its normal healthy state in some individual or the addition of a new capacity.

- eyeglasses, meditation, routine physical workouts
- integrated robotics (cyborgs), pharmaceuticals, genetic engineering

Techniques used for military purposes ought to be considered weapons and regulated under international law.

Evolution of War

The warrior itself is ultimately the military's best and oldest weapon.

<u>STRATEGY</u>	vs	<u>CAPITALISM</u>
organization		military
ingenuity		science
manpower		technology

Despite the topic of human enhancement being a discourse regarding military imperatives, Japan has thoroughly discussed this topic through animation.

- predictive quality
- social implications

Anime critiques the society that relies on technology, particularly human enhancement, as a means to prevent or discourage war and conflict.

AKIRA (1988)

- What should the role of science be in a time of social crises, political corruption, and instability?
- Do enhanced technologies increase agency?
- Progress is a myth. Decay is necessary and beautiful.

Technology as a physical manifestation of desire: Where does man end and machine start?

- Visual distinction between human body and machine disappears
- Haunting choir music
- Color palette – is it dawn or dusk? Cape is the brightest and warmest, catching audience's eye.
- Character – Tetsuo grimaces in pain and suffering. Strong silhouette with a slightly bowed posture



SHINSEKAI YORI (TV series, 2012-2013) translated: From the New World



- There is a disconnection and/or skewness between history and the present reality.
- Does technological advancement equate to human advancement?
- What does it mean when technology can no longer be distinguished from the human self?

Is the enhanced human one that does not wage war?

- Visual replacement of lost loved one (memory, spiritual) with the Other (physical body)
- Same music theme when there is a very powerful, supernatural presence
- Color palette – sun rising. The light behind pops. Earthy colors.
- Characters – looking at each other in the eye.

PSYCHO-PASS (TV series, 2012-2013)

- Relying on technology can be counter-intuitive
- Should we trust computerized decisions over human decisions?
- In quantifying, we lose a lot of dimension.

The truth behind the truth: playing god

- Visual portrayal of a grimy Michelangelo painting. *The Creation of Adam*, as the common man goes about his typical evening
- Music is somber, slow, unnoticeable
- Color palette – dark greens, bright red and gold. Adam's body looks bloody.
- Characters – voiceovers speaking loftily of philosophy and literature



It can be said that the history of science is a history of the expansion of the human body's functionality. In other words, the history of man's cyberization.

—Senguji

Being reduced to a cog in a machine isn't very appealing to me.

—Makishima