



Rohan Kishibe

Thus Spoke Kishibe Rohan

Art By Jen Zhao

KONSHUU

vol. 56 #1.5
OVA/ONA

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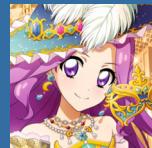
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PAST ANIME DESTINIES



TAMURA SHIGERU - MESMERIZING SIMPLICITY



MAX R.

3rd Year, Japanese

Simple is best? Perhaps.

Writer

Tamura Shigeru is a name that rarely arises within anime discourse, a major shame when considering the beautiful works he has produced. Tamura is best recognized as a picture book author and illustrator who also managed to publish a handful of short manga in a now defunct magazine. My first exposure, however, was through his original OVAs, which are quite simply still some of the most oddly mesmerizing pieces I've encountered in the medium; in fact, it could even be said that his repertoire embodies the philosophy of 'simple is best.'

While it may be difficult to convey precisely why Tamura's work is so bewitching, his background as a picture-book author shines through in influencing his aesthetic sensibilities. *A Piece of Phantasmagoria*, the earliest of his three OVAs, already stands to exemplify many trademark characteristics that would continue to be refined in his later titles, among which being vivid colors, simple designs, minimal dialogue, mellow, albeit mysterious ambiances. *Phantasmagoria* consists of fifteen short episodes, each about five minutes a piece, weighing out to be slightly over an hour in its entirety, set within the titular Phantasmagoria, a surreal, fantastical, dreamworld-esque planet of sorts. Episodes feel similar to a traveler's log, briefly showcasing different aspects of the world, be it a unique location, phenomenon, or just groups of individuals going about their lives. From a planetarium that projects the stars onto the night sky to a factory that produces colors from a materialized rainbow, to entire cities of crystal skyscrapers, to an ancient relic of a light bulb that serves no purpose, *Phantasmagoria* is a truly mysterious place, but through simple visuals in conjunction with the soundtrack, the atmosphere feels laid-back, even comfy. Everything presented is fairly bare bones and essentially nothing comes to ever be explained, enabling viewers to fill in the blanks themselves, an attribute that I would argue works in its favor.

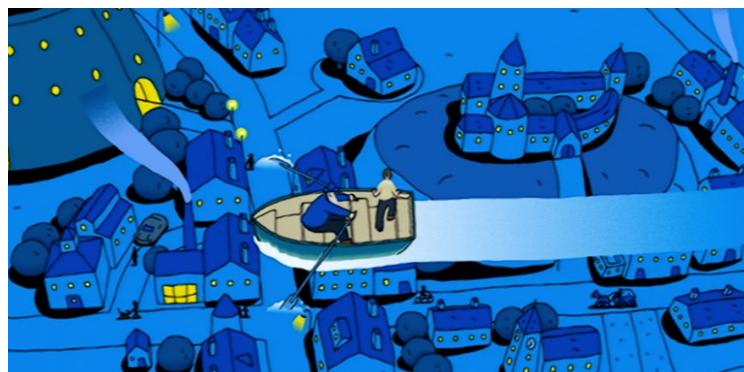
The second of Tamura's OVAs, *Ginga no Uo: Ursa Minor Blue*, is also easily my favorite, though perhaps the least recognized. This time, there is somewhat of an overarching narrative present. Peering through a telescope, Yuri and his grandfather



discover that Ursa Minor has gained extra star; the constellation gradually morphs into an ominous fish and the two embark on a voyage across the Milky Way to slay said mysterious fish as it destroys star systems, wreaking havoc throughout the cosmos. Like *Phantasmagoria*, *Ursa Minor Blue* is strange and surreal with many details remaining unexplained such as the giant stone men or sentient buildings, which perhaps simply exist to further the universe's mystique. I do appreciate how the OVA conceptually treats space as an ocean, the aforementioned Milky Way is likened to a literal sea to sail with planets existing akin to islands and spiral galaxies taking shape as whirlpools over the water's surface with shooting stars sporadically crashing down and fish leaping about. Atmospherically, it's extremely majestic and soothing in spite of its premise's darker implications and functions well as its own self-contained short story. It supplements *Phantasmagoria* well in terms of showcasing and developing Tamura's style.

On the other hand, *Kujira no Chouyaku*, more commonly known as *Glassy Ocean*, may easily be the best known and most polished of the three, following an old man reminiscing various phases of his life amidst mining within an ocean of green glass and featuring a gigantic whale suspended in the air mid-leap as surrounding scenery appears frozen in time. It should be noted that it actually gets a short segment dedicated to it within *Phantasmagoria* as well, but an extended cut which spans 22-minutes was eventually produced. Interestingly, it also sports the use of early computer graphics, which makes particular scenes slightly jarring, but more easily enables the numerous rotating shots that accentuate the atmosphere. *Glassy Ocean* follows suit after the other two titles in being poetic and tranquil in addition to adopting a comparable aesthetic; a sense of ephemerality is also present within the immobility of everything, moments in time captured in an image. Significant progress can be felt since *Phantasmagoria* as visuals feel crisper and elements at large collectively feel more cohesive in delivering emotional beats.

In a manner remotely similar to something like *Tenshi no Tamago*, it's understandable for some viewers to grow bored with Tamura's works as at an initial glance, it may seem that little if anything occurs at all, but in my eyes they succeed in their simplicity as effective mood-pieces to ruminate upon. I have yet to read any of his manga, though I intend to in the future so long as they remain accessible and I hope that they manage to capture the magic that his anime have provided.



MUV-LUV, NIETZSCHE, AND THE BENEVOLENT ÜBERMENSCH RESPONSIBILITY AND THE MEANING OF LOVE



JACOB MALACH

3rd Year, Computer Science

I do not think there is anything so bad as to ruin the effect of the series as I speak in vague terms where possible, but if you would like to experience the series blind, come back to this article after eighty hours well spent.

Guest

SPOILERS FOR THE MUV-LUV TRILOGY

Muv-Luv, a series of visual novels, I am only somewhat abashed to admit, is the work of art that has been most influential on my perspective on life. The first entry in the series, *Muv-Luv Extra*, is a rom-com where the player takes the role of Shirogane Takeru, an impish high schooler who somehow finds himself in a love triangle between his childhood friend and a mysterious zaibatsu heiress who suddenly intrudes into his life. The second game in the trilogy, however, turns the so far trope-filled story on its head. *Muv-Luv Unlimited* begins with Takeru waking up in a bombed-out version of his hometown where the only inhabited building is his high school, now turned into a military base. Takeru learns he's been brought into an alternate timeline where humanity has been pushed to the brink of extinction by an invading group of aliens called the BETA. His classmates from his home timeline are in this world training to be mecha pilots at the military base. His former physics teacher, Kouzuki Yuuko, in this world a researcher at the base, takes an interest in Takeru and enrolls him in their cadet squad. Takeru's sense of entitlement is challenged as he discovers the disparity of virtue between him and his squadmates and that many things he took for granted were luxuries. Even the harem game trope of the majority of the cast being female is explained through the fact that most boys in Takeru's age cohort have already been sent off to war in this world. Despite rapid maturation over the course of *Unlimited*, Takeru does not manage to save the world or return to his own. Kouzuki Yuuko's research project to save humanity, Alternative IV, does not come to fruition, and instead, the world's leaders decide to bomb out Eurasia to clear it of the BETA, rendering it uninhabitable, and to send out an escape fleet to find an extrasolar refuge for humanity.

Eternal Recurrence

Muv-Luv Alternative, the final entry and the longest by far, and incidentally the highest rated visual novel of all time, is where the Nietzschean themes of the series become more apparent. *Alternative* begins with Takeru once again waking up at the same time in the same timeline he found himself in at the beginning of *Unlimited*, but this time with memories of his failed attempt to save the world. It is later revealed that Takeru has been trapped in a time loop beginning on October 22nd, up till now always with the same

result. This bears semblance to Nietzsche's idea of eternal recurrence: "This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything immeasurably small or great in your life must return to you — all in the same succession and sequence" (GS 341). Although Takeru's struggle to change the outcome could be seen as discordant with Nietzsche's related idea of *amor fati*, loving even the suffering that it is your fate to eternally relive, it ties in well with the will to power, which we will explore later.

Mishima and the Will to Power

Nietzsche's influence on *Muv-Luv* can also be seen indirectly through Yukio Mishima, whose own work draws heavily upon Nietzsche. In his novel, *Runaway Horses*, the protagonist orchestrates a coup attempt on the Japanese government to restore the Emperor to de facto sovereignty over the nation and in part to curtail the influence of the West on the country. Following his failure, he commits suicide. This bears an eerie resemblance to Mishima's own death. In 1970, Mishima and some of his followers entered a base of the Japan Self-Defense Forces, apprehended the commander, and harangued the bewildered soldiers to remember the samurai spirit and give their loyalty to the emperor. He then became one of the last people to ever seppuku. Mishima's coup attempt is heavily alluded to in *Alternative*. While in the timeline of *Alternative*, the Shoguns of Japan were not displaced from power by the Emperors, Japan still became heavily reliant on the United States for its security and was forced to adopt a parliamentary-style government following WW2. A major plot point of *Alternative* is an attempted coup by a rogue army officer to restore the Shogun to direct rule and push out the Americans. This patriotism is quite baffling to Takeru who was inculcated with different values in his original timeline, and as a result, he cares more about ensuring the survival of Japan and humanity as a whole. Despite this, he comes to understand the nationalist perspective with the help of what a comrade once said to him: "Simple survival is not the be-all and end-all of our existence... And 'living' is not the same as being 'kept alive.' It is a matter of whether or not it is what the person wants. Whether or not they have the ability to affect the outcome." The attitude towards death espoused here meshes well with Mishima's fascination with it throughout his writings.

Boldness in the face of death, so contrary to our biological imperative to spread our genes, brings us back to the will to power. Just as is asserted in *Muv-Luv*, Nietzsche does not see life as a struggle for survival. "Anti-Darwin. As for the famous 'struggle for existence,' so far it seems to me to be asserted rather

than proved... where there is struggle, it is a struggle for power" (*Tl Skirmishes of an Untimely Man* 14). Nietzsche sees the will to power, the desire to enforce one's will on the world, as the fundamental driver of all life. The idea of bending the world to one's will features prominently in *Muv-Luv*, as Kouzuki Yuuko explains "human willpower can strongly influence the fabric of reality... The power to project one's will onto the world is an extremely rare gift. It's not something any old person can do." The atypical ability of the main characters to warp the world to their will is crucial to the outcome of the trilogy. It is significant that Yuuko is the one to discuss willpower, as she embodies a certain Nietzschean archetype inexorably tied to the will to power.

The Übermensch

The Übermensch is a superior man who creates his own values, contrary to established views of good and evil, and whose surplus of vital energy translates into a formidable will to power. In contrast to the Übermensch, the last man is a pathetic figure who only seeks to live comfortably and eke out whatever pleasure he can from existence. At the beginning of *Muv-Luv*, Takeru in some ways resembles the last man. Upon arriving in the world of *Unlimited* and *Alternative* he is shocked to find that the activities its inhabitants turn to for diversion are far less stimulating than the video games and other entertainment available in his world. Furthermore, he retains a puerile view of morality, complaining about the decision to abandon Earth at the end of *Unlimited* and other impositions from on high. Due to their inability to retaliate or resist the will of the strong, the weak develop hatred, or as called by Nietzsche, *resentiment*, towards the strong. And in the vein of the Melians, they begin to invoke morality to condemn what they cannot avenge.

These psychological forces come to a head in Takeru after he suffers a great personal tragedy in *Alternative*, leading him to beg Yuuko to let him leave the twisted world he has entered, similar to the woman as the temptress moment in the Hero's Journey. Yuuko deviously obliges him, leading Takeru to even greater suffering in what is one of the most harrowing sequences in literature. The pain, however, strengthens Takeru's spirit and gives him the motivation he needs to complete his quest, in what can be interpreted as atonement with the abyss, again from the Hero's Journey.

Two Nietzschean themes emerge. The first is the need to defeat nihilism. Nietzsche feared that the collapse of religion would lead to man becoming purposeless, and in turn becoming shadows of himself, the last man who only seeks comfort and pleasure. The antithesis to this is the Übermensch, who by creating his own values, escapes the trap of nihilism. Takeru, who unlike the other characters lacks a spiritual-nationalistic reason to fight, is unable to remain steadfast in the face of adversity. The second theme is suffering. Rather than being something to avoid, according to Nietzsche, suffering is necessary to evolve as a person and to become an Übermensch. Suffering strengthens. "If we have our own *why* of life, we shall get along with almost any *how*. Man does not strive for pleasure; only the Englishman does" (*Tl Maxims and Arrows* 11).

After undergoing his ordeal, Takeru changes his relationship with Yuuko, an Übermensch figure, becoming able to deal with her without being used as her pawn. He is capable of looking past her

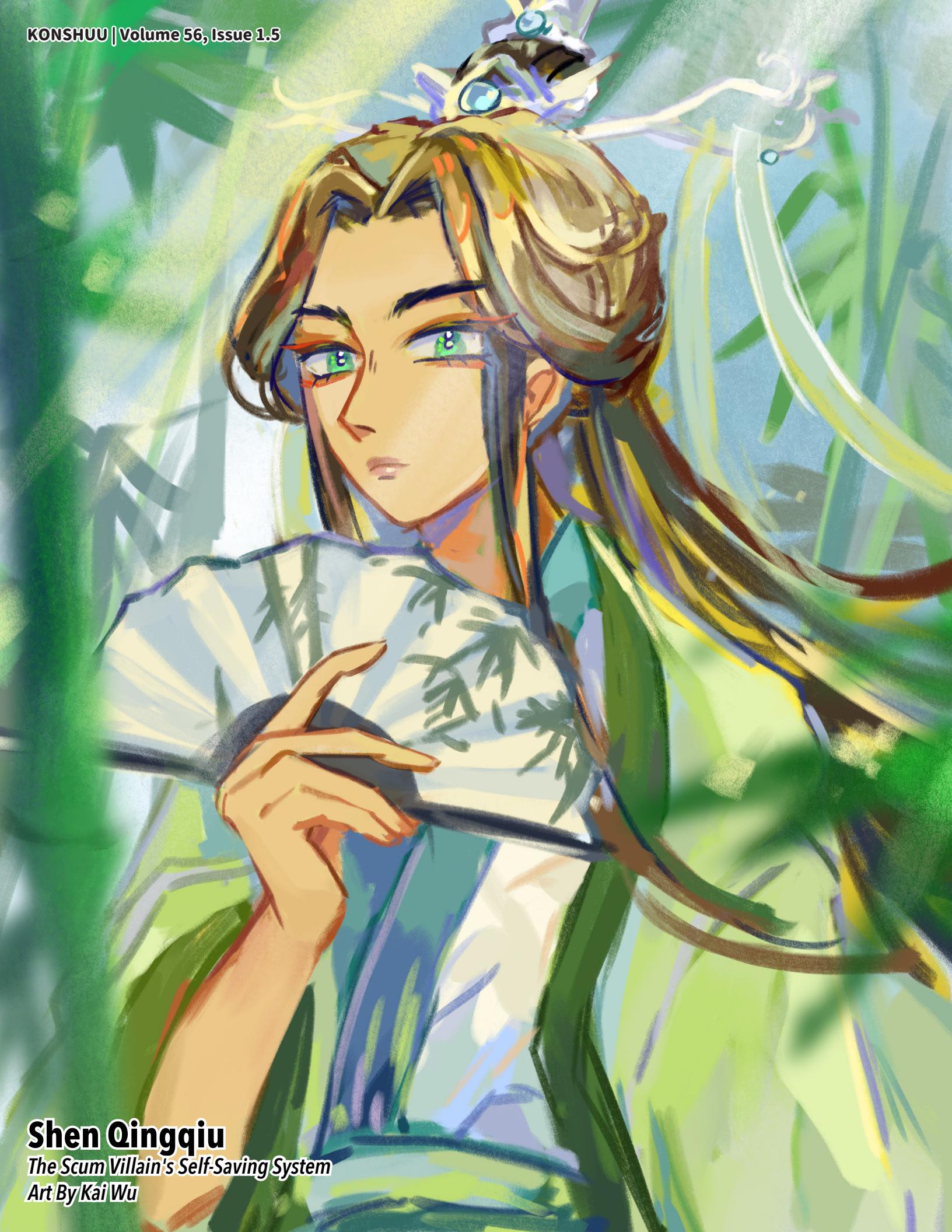
unethical actions and working together with her "I'm not going to keep using my childish sense of right and wrong as an excuse to justify my own weakness. I'm done with arguing for the sake of arguing." Takeru resists being consumed by *resentiment* upon hearing of the amoral actions Yuuko has taken to save humanity "And yet... while I'm furious with her... While I'm so disgusted I can puke... If we didn't have people who were capable of such atrocities... humanity would have gone extinct ages ago...!!" Yuuko, taking on the mantle of the Übermensch, or perhaps the yoke of necessity, acts beyond good and evil, and as Nietzsche asserts those who engage in evil sometimes do, advances humanity in the process.

Moving On

Despite all these Nietzschean parallels, like most that draw upon the philosopher's work, *Muv-Luv* breaks from it in significant ways. Yuuko does not act obviously and trample over the weak for the sake of greed, but out of a heartfelt desire to save humanity from annihilation. The main theme, love, drives the characters to heart-wrenching displays of altruism that defy all self-interest, which suggests a different prime mover of life than the fearsome will to power. Love is treated as an inexplicable force, the sheer weight of which crushes reason and saves humanity. Love, and the traditions of one's community, are reason enough for life. The self-made ideals of an Übermensch are not required to vanquish nihilism.

The interaction between the main themes of the game and its Nietzschean influences precipitates the strange mixture of the benevolent Übermensch. This figure, exemplified by Yuuko and later Takeru, resembles the philosophy of Nietzsche in its strong will to power, but diverges from it in the motivation of love. True love means taking responsibility. Taking responsibility means authority. Authority means making decisions that cannot please everybody, and that surely will lead to the deaths of innocents. But subordinates, even when given suicidal missions, can accept their fate, and obey, because they do not act for themselves, but are moved by a love that brings them to forget themselves. The benevolent Übermensch undergoes suffering and becomes strong, but in a reversal, acts harshly yes, but only for the tenderest purposes. Authority paradoxically combines the cold Machiavellian calculus that is inevitable in the struggle for power with a warm loving affection for all those within its charge.

What binds this societal order together is love: love that in better times would not be put to such a terrifying purpose, but love nonetheless. To truly live out one's love, it is necessary to accept the responsibility circumstances obligate one to take, and responsibility means overcoming the selfish desire to not bloody one's own hands. But the benevolent Übermensch who from a position of authority leads mankind to salvation is not lionized as superior to the common man, in the manner that Nietzsche disparages the herd compared to his ideal. The proper functioning of society is dependent on the efforts of every person. Individual nations and humanity as a whole are only able to cohere in the face of the alien menace because of people who, motivated by love, are willing to put their lives on the line. Like a lake whose remote depths can only be plumbed by sinking under a heavy burden, the font of love from our souls contains fathoms only the direst of circumstances can reveal.



Shen Qingqiu

The Scum Villain's Self-Saving System

Art By Kai Wu

THE 2 CENT CORNER

What do you think about the OVA format being replaced by the ONA these days?

Although the convenience of streaming anime on my phone and laptop is something I'm very grateful for, I do miss going to my local Target to buy DVDs of all the *Pokémon* and *Ghibli* movies to watch in my mom's minivan.



Mitchell Madayag
Editor-in-Chief

I honestly overall don't feel too strongly about ONAs replacing OVAs, but I can say that I've seen far fewer good ONAs. *HoloGra* may be the only one that I actually like.



Max R.
Writer

Despite watching anime back when collecting physical anime was popular, I never really got into collecting OVAs. I ended up collecting manga instead to meet my parent's reading status quo (for those of you that remember the read-at-home program, you know what I mean). I don't really feel strongly about ONAs replacing OVAs, but I understand that OVAs are nostalgic, and thus, they might hold a place close to OG anime fan's hearts.



Willow Otaka
Artist

I don't feel either way about it. I got into anime through online means so I have no attachments to the OVA format.



Heaven Jones
Artist

I think that the OVA format is better in terms of the overall experience with watching media, even if I can't deny the convenience of online streaming outright. I particularly remember my parents owning anime VCR tapes (before they bothered to switch to DVDs) that introduced me to anime likely before I can even remember.



Tony T.
Managing Editor

Physical OVA wasn't quite accessible back in my hometown when I was little so I have been watching OVA through online sources anyway so it doesn't really make a real difference for me.



Sophia Xue
Artist/Graphic Designer

Which places in Japan would you like to visit next time you go and why?

The first and last time I visited, I stayed mostly in the Chūgoku region where the climate was pretty humid so I think it would be fun to visit the colder climates in Hokkaido next time! I've also seen snow only twice in my life.

Maybe the theaters, would need to check if anywhere would be screening *Gothicmade*.

When I visited Japan back in 6th grade, I don't think I fully appreciated everything because I was too young. Revisiting places I remember like Fushimi Inari Taisha in Kyoto, visiting a limited-time café collab, buying art books, or attending a concert live would be cool. Hopefully the next time I visit Japan, I can do so surrounded by friends and family.

I want to go to the Sailor Moon museum for its 35th anniversary. I would love to see the costumes in real life and some of the art.

Probably some place in Hokkaido. It's been a while since I snowboarded, but last time I went, I had a blast on the slopes even though the ski lifts repeatedly blasted anime music which was annoying.

I want to visit Ikebukuro where there is the famous Otome Road. Really want to go on a shopping spree for doujinshi and merches. I believe there must also be a lot of restaurants around the area.

WE CAN ALL LEARN SOMETHING FROM GOLDEN BOY



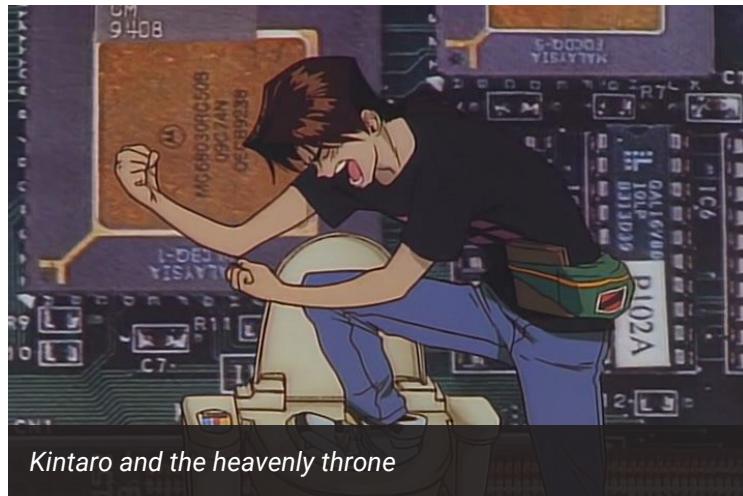
MITCHELL MADAYAG

3rd Year, Japanese and Economics

Instead of writing articles, I should probably study study study study study study study study study...

Editor-In-Chief

On the surface, *Golden Boy* may seem like another one of those low-quality ecchi anime, but its lack of dependability on lewd scenes as it integrates genuinely funny jokes is what sets it apart from the rest. Full of juvenile comedy and sexual innuendos, *Golden Boy* focuses on 25 year old Tokyo University Law School dropout Kintaro Ooe who is now a student of life as he wanders through various part time jobs. Our titular golden boy is what defines the show with his stupid clumsy nature that somehow manages to always save the day. Kintaro is often misunderstood by the women around him as having a secret agenda, which is often not helped by the fact that he is a devout toilet worshiper, but deep inside Kintaro's got an undeniable heart of gold. He does indeed have morals and never really takes advantage of the people around him. In the end, Kintaro is selflessly striving to help out the women he meets in his own dumb way, and it's not until he's gone that they realize Kintaro's true intentions. This is mostly what makes Kintaro an appealing character even if he is the main character of an ecchi series. *Golden Boy* succeeds as an enjoyable anime to watch because it does more than have expectedly sexy shots, since the fleshed out protagonist, Kintaro, and the wholesome conclusions he brings to each episode carry the show.



Kintaro and the heavenly throne

For an ecchi OVA from the mid 90s, *Golden Boy* has surprisingly good production value. I can't necessarily comment on the original sub, but I still find the amateurish over the top voice work of Doug Smith to be one of the most amusing dubs out there.

Despite lacking an impressive resume in anime dubbing, Smith sounds like he was practically born to play Kintaro. He captures Kintaro's awkward goofy personality just right through his constant shouting and moaning, and combining that with Kintaro's occasionally grotesque facial expressions makes it a joy that is hard to not laugh at. As expected of ADV Films who have also produced personal favorite dubs of mine like *Full Metal Panic!*, *Kanon* (2006), and the infamous *Ghost Stories*, the various side characters also have fitting voice actors that seem to have fun working on this wacky series.



Yet I'm thankful that the rest of the original manga of *Golden Boy* by Tatsuya Egawa was not adapted as it is nowhere close as captivating as its OVA counterpart. In the first one and a half volumes, the story follows the episodic setup seen in the OVA, but the series takes a very different direction afterwards. Gone are the one and done girls Kintaro has the pleasure of teaching the ways of life, since the manga shifts towards longer arcs that gradually connect with one another. This isn't inherently a flaw in itself, but it made reading feel like a chore as I wasn't invested in the actual plot *Golden Boy* had developed. In addition, the attention shifts from actually decent humor to fetish fulfilling ecchi to the point where it felt rather forced and annoying instead of it being creative. Although Kintaro's perverted antics have always been ordinary, it eventually becomes replaced with gaudy sex scenes, which is ironically a turn off. Egawa's art is nothing really spectacular, too, so the sex scenes neither come off as stimulating nor humorous. The story just ends up becoming boring as sexual intercourse later turns into a central plot device. Embarrassing as it was to write that, I can't emphasize enough how disappointed I was in the *Golden Boy* manga as it goes against everything I liked in the OVA adaptation. I recommend that people just experience *Golden Boy* through the OVA alone. The manga does have some interesting things going for it, such as revealing Kintaro's backstory, but don't expect it to be as entertaining. Hope this has been educational.



@skyesongss

BlueCravat

Mercury and Cybele
Original Characters
Art By Skylar Li

A TIMELES



TONY T.

3rd Year, Economics and Data Science

WELCOME BACK!

Managing Editor

Aim for the Top! *Gunbuster*, like *Nadia: The Secret of Blue Water*, in many ways demonstrates sparks of ideas that its director, Anno Hideaki, and his staff would later become famous for in *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. As I mentioned in my article on *Nadia*, Anno's previous works before *Evangelion* all seem to have the same elements of staying power in the same way that his most popular work has remained relevant for almost thirty years. Yet, whether it be because of its shorter length, more consistent quality, or continued relevance in the form of a sequel, *Diebuster*, *Gunbuster* hasn't faced the same adversity in being remembered as a classic compared to *Nadia*. Given its inspiration, with its premise merging two seemingly disparate works in the 1970s tennis shoujo manga *Aim for the Ace!* and the popular American film *Top Gun*, my proclamation of *Gunbuster's* timelessness may feel strange. Yet beneath that initial impression lies a series which perfectly balances a sports series-esque drive to be great, a narrative which has world-implicating stakes, and some rather poignant existential dread.

The initial plot of *Gunbuster* doesn't really point towards that last aspect, instead playing up the first two. The series initially resembles a sports series. This is particularly notable with its focus on how its protagonist, Takaya Noriko, lives under the shadow of her father, a famous admiral. In framing the initial conflict under that dynamic, *Gunbuster* manages to take the setting of a military school and twist its dynamics to resemble a sports drama. While not being quite as tense as the military setting would normally indicate, *Gunbuster* retains strong elements of such a backdrop, such as its highly detailed robots, which are designed complex enough to (in my second hand experience) wow mech otaku. This early part of the series also highlights another aspect of *Gunbuster's* DNA, its existence as an *Aim for the Ace!* homage. Underlying the military theme is a strong sense of training and self improvement, with the characters continuously realizing their limits and striving to surpass them. The existence of rival character Amano Kazumi is a perfect example in representing a goal to be strived to, a staple of sports se-

ries and shoujo as a whole. What more, her characterization, that of the idolized perfect individual who in reality puts an extreme amount of effort, seems extremely in line with shoujo tropes while simultaneously fitting the logic of *Gunbuster's* military setting.



As the series progresses, the stakes progress as Noriko moves from striving to be chosen as a top pilot, to fighting the aliens which threaten Earth. In this, *Gunbuster* unveils the last crucial part of what makes it so compelling: time dilation. Given Noriko and Amano's status as space pilots, the time they experience differs from the progression of time on Earth. This is utilized to a good effect, demonstrating what the characters have given up in order to be the best in their field, and to save the world. One of the most poignant scenes occurs partway through the series when Noriko returns to Earth. While Noriko has been in space for a relatively short amount of time, 10 years have passed on Earth, demonstrated when Noriko visits her childhood friend who is already a parent while Noriko remains a teenager. In order to protect her home, Noriko gives up her place within it. This portion of the series is especially poignant when one considers *Gunbuster's* role as a military series, and the sequence as a representation of how those in active combat have difficult times reentering society after the fact. What further drives this home is how short *Gunbuster* itself is; with only six episodes, its own timeline taking place over the course of a few decades gives audiences a similar feeling as its characters.

'S CLASSIC

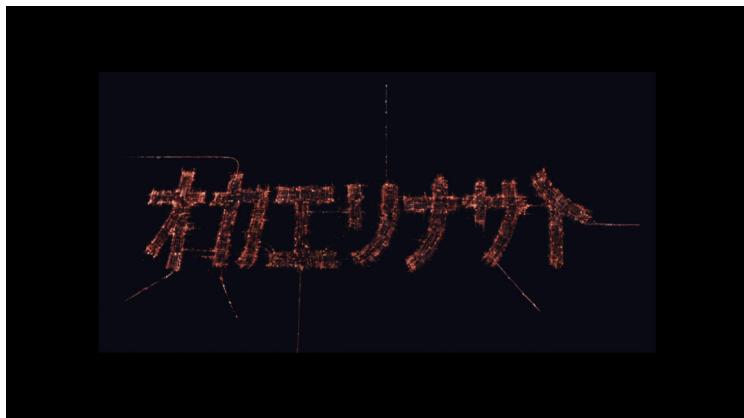


Of course, *Gunbuster*'s most memorable portion is its final one. After over a decade of waiting on Earth, the main threat reemerges, forcing the characters to return to combat. The final sequence is particularly amazing, as Noriko and Amano enact a plan which destroys their enemy, at the cost of stranding them in space for several days. Again, given time dilation, the characters only experience a small bit of time, yet Earth elapses twelve thousand years. It may be a cliché choice of mise en scène, but the fact that the final episode is in black and white and letterboxed also adds to this effect. If I were to describe the unique brand of melancholy that *Gunbuster* evokes, I think of Kansas' song "Dust in the Wind". In the grand scheme of things, the characters in their heroism, fight for humanity while everything they knew and loved about

humanity fades away. They close their eyes, only for a moment, but everything that tethered them to Earth is but dust in the wind. And yet this conclusion is satisfying, as the characters choose this path and knowingly make that sacrifice, and are rewarded with a large sign indicating that while those that the main characters knew are gone, their heroism has not been forgotten.



Gunbuster is a work that succeeds on numerous levels. As a sports shoujo, it has elements of competition that are inherently entertaining on a narrative level whilst keeping the same emotional character development common in shoujo manga. With its military setting, it keeps the characters' fight for the Earth grounded in a commonly understood construct. This also allows for the threats to scale up in a realistic manner, as *Gunbuster* somehow smoothly transitions from its character grappling with living up to her father's legacy to fighting for the greater survival of mankind against extraterrestrial threats. Finally, in its later sections, the characters are faced with existential dread in a manner which may not be terribly unique in the grand scheme of science fiction (I remember reading the extended *Ender's Game* universe which had similar narrative elements), but is all the more dramatically fulfilling given its presentation. *Gunbuster* takes advantage of the fact that it is a six episode OVA and delivers a tightly produced package of touching moments in a display of homages that perfectly demonstrate the otakuism that its director has become famous for. And in that way, it has rightfully become recognized as a timeless classic.



VOLUME 56, ISSUE 1.5

OCTOBER 13, 2022

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