

KONSHU

vol. 56 #3
Spooky



Hu Tao

Genshin Impact

Art By Jasmine Zhang

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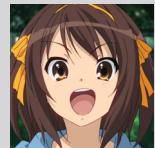


Rena Ryuugu
Higurashi When They Cry
Art By Willow Otaka



Forger Family
Spy x Family
Art By Heaven Jones

I WANT THE UZUMAKI ANIME NOW!



MITCHELL MADAYAG

3rd Year, Economics and Japanese

...as well as *Haruhi S3*, *Lupin the 3rd: Part VII*, and *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure Part 9* while you're at it!

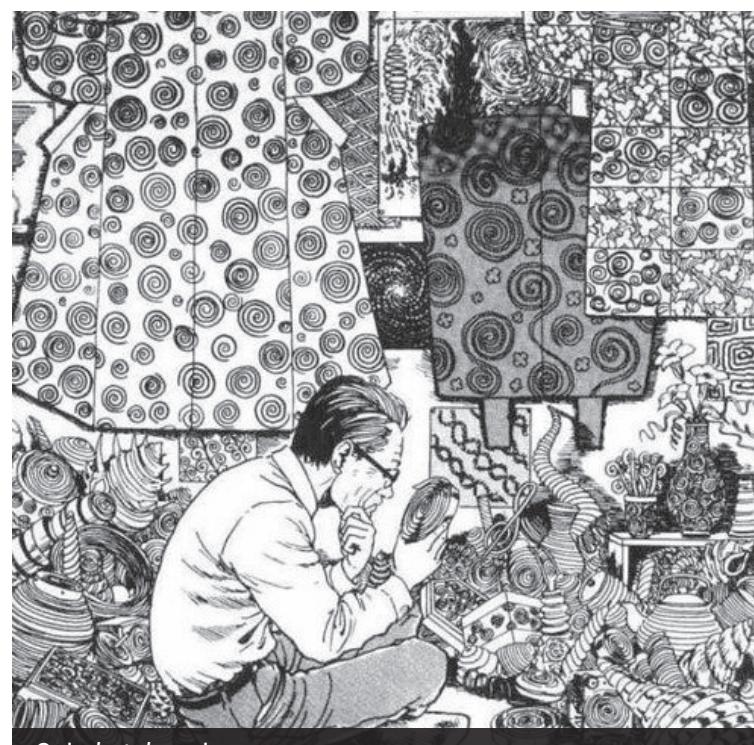
Editor-In-Chief

As we neared towards Halloween of this year, I could only be reminded of the fact that the long awaited *Uzumaki* anime adaptation has yet to be released, let alone another trailer. As much as I am dismayed over the fact that it will be delayed for the third time with no concrete release date in 2023, I still hold high hopes for this presumably faithful rendition of one of Junji Ito's greatest works. It is an anime I am very excited for, not just because I can't wait to see Ito's horrific imagery of spirals be in motion, but also because of its experimentation with a black-and-white palette. Three volumes ago in [my Attack on Titan article](#), I touched a bit on this topic how the monochrome medium of manga adds to the creepy factor in general horror scenes. The ambiguity of objects and landscapes due to the lack of color often allows for my imagination to run wild as I try to comprehend what all these little details can be. Furthermore, when I read manga, I don't necessarily try to picture what the panels would look like with color as I'd rather take it at face value. Otherwise, my personal headcanons may completely differ from the truth revealed in volume covers or anime adaptations, which slightly hinders my reading experience going forward (One Piece colors can be quite odd sometimes). In some rare cases, there are no canon colors like in *JoJo's Bizarre Adventure* so there is practically no "wrong" interpretation. Relating back to my main point, seeing this phenomenon of manga coming to life in anime form for the first time in *Uzumaki*'s anime is very intriguing to me. This adaptation is sure to catch the attention of many others like me just because of its unique black and white gradient.



Of course, I am aware that anime used to only be in black and white, and I do not believe applying a monochrome filter over any

show will possibly achieve the same thing the *Uzumaki* anime is trying to do, but the deliberate experimentation with monochromaticity is something that surprisingly has not been done yet. However, I don't think there is any better way to showcase this than through Ito's manga. They capture this raw feeling of grotesqueness, specifically through Ito's creative portrayals of body horror. If you couldn't already tell, I am in no way capable of expressing this opinion I have on the art of manga using any technical terms, but in the case of *Uzumaki*, the repetitive depiction of all things spiraling is both visually interesting to look at while still being unsettling. It's disturbing as the city of Kurouzu quite literally spirals downward as everything slowly transforms into spirals, with the citizens following suit as well. From snail people to spiraling haircuts, all of which culminates to the dramatic amalgamation of bodies at the end, Ito doesn't hold back in displaying this spiral imagery as much as he can. Sociating horror with simple concepts has always been Ito's expertise, but there are multiple good reasons why *Uzumaki* is seen as one of the best manga Ito has produced, one of them being the nightmarish artwork that constantly instills paranoia within the reader. I don't believe many other manga could follow suit by retaining a black and white palette when animated, which goes to show how special *Uzumaki* and Ito's manga in general is.



Spiral otakus rise up

HOW NOW? A RAT?

THE HAMLET MANGA: THE SCARIEST ADAPTATION IS THE SHODDIEST ONE



BLAKE MORRISON

3rd Year, English and Japanese

The year is 2422: *Sword Art Online* is required reading in freshman literature classes

Writer

SPOILERS: HAMLET DIES

The light novel scene in 1600 wasn't doing so hot. In fact, it didn't exist yet. The idea of the "novel" didn't even exist yet. The popular entertainment that did exist, however, was plays. Yeah, that's right, that Shakespeare guy you were taught to regard as high art in grade school English class was actually campy pop media at the time. The patrician art snobs of the bard's time looked down on his plays just as the ones of ours look down on most movies (and as they would on most of what anime and manga have to offer if they even paid attention to those mediums). But 400 years have done a lot to change artistic standards, and so the once campy has become the canonical. This is all to say that 400 years down the line *Sword Art Online* will be taught in literature classes as the great Japanese light novel. But while *Hamlet* the play was written around 1600, it took until 2011 for *Hamlet* the manga to be released as part of *Manga de Dokuhā*, a series published by East Press of manga adaptations of literary classics and other well known works (and I mean *manga* *manga* here, unlike the western graphic novel versions of *Hamlet* that erroneously call themselves manga). But while the critics of today seem to agree that *Hamlet* is a masterpiece, what would they think of the *Hamlet* manga? As the resident English Major of Konshuu, I thought it would be fun to put my critic's conical hat on and answer that very question.



What have they done to Hamlet's face here? Also, you read this scan left to right

Notwithstanding its many cuts, the *Hamlet* manga follows the play faithfully, and in assuming that my readers know the gist of the original story, I'll hold off on critiquing the narrative itself. Instead, I'll be digging into how the manga adapts the source material, but before I get into the nitty gritty of it, it's worth noting that this adaptation is one volume long. All told, the *Hamlet* manga is 190 pages, and this is simply not enough space to fit the sheer size of the original. The play, at a length of almost 30,000 spoken words, takes on average just over 4 hours to perform. Incidentally, 4 hours is the

length of one 12 episode cour of anime sans the openings and endings, which tells us that if *Hamlet* was adapted faithfully (to a fault) into a TV anime, it would be exactly 12 episodes long, but ideally it would be longer given that plays tend to have more words spoken per minute than movies or TV shows. Most anime adaptations of manga will go at a pace of 1 volume per 3 or 4 episodes, and so, by imagining *Hamlet* as a hypothetical anime, we can reverse-engineer the ideal length of an entirely faithful *Hamlet* manga: 3 to 4 volumes. With its one volume, this manga may adapt the skeleton of *Hamlet*, but it fails to capture its full scale and soul. At a rate of adapting one act per chapter, the *Hamlet* manga often resorts to cramming panels with text at the expense of the medium's greatest asset, visuals, resulting in perhaps the worst interpretation of the "to be or not to be" soliloquy I've ever seen: it starts with generic panels of Hamlet talking to himself and eventually devolves into just his dialogue bubbles against bland hallway backgrounds. Meanwhile, Lawrence Olivier's 1948 *Hamlet* movie starts that same scene with an x-ray of a human brain that fades into a shot of the raging sea beneath a perilous cliff that Hamlet wavers atop. To its credit, though, the manga does pull off one gag through cramming so much text into so little space by taking a shot at the mastodon length lecture Polonius gives Laertes in Act 1 Scene 3.



My boy Laertes just wants to go to France to sow his oats

As you can tell from the previous images, the art in the *Hamlet* manga is fairly mediocre, even subpar at times. The parts that do have more detail are usually Hamlet's deranged anime facial expressions a la Lelouch from *Code Geass* or Light from *Death Note*, a choice that doesn't do his character justice. Rather than striving to portray his internal conflict between being a moroseless revenger and an idealistic renaissance man, the manga makes him look like a bland edgelord, a la Lelouch from *Code Geass* or Light from *Death Notes*. Overall, this manga adaptation kind of blows. It was fun pretending to seriously critique it for a while, but it's an inferior version to the original in every way. Just watch and read the play you weevs.

OTOMO KATSUHIRO AND WHY NARRATIVE CAN BE OVERLOOKED



TONY T.

3rd Year, Economics and Data Science

My favorite anime directors are Tomino, Oshii, Anno, Miyazaki, and Otomo. Fairly cliché, perhaps.

Managing Editor

Best known for directing a certain seminal film that influenced not just Japanese but worldwide pop culture, Otomo Katsuhiro is an artist whose works deeply fascinate me. It isn't necessarily that I'm wholly captivated by every aspect of his works. That aforementioned classic is a film which, I consider highly frankly just due to how its production values make up for a somewhat limited narrative with fairly passé twists and concepts. Its manga source material, also penned by Otomo prior to and subsequent to the release of its more well-known adaptation, is arguably worse due to not featuring the film's breathtaking visuals (particularly its depiction of a cyberpunk Tokyo skyline) and animation. While I'm not someone that typically gets swayed by production values alone, the unique qualities of that film are so superb and transcend the rest of the medium to where I don't particularly mind the limited story. The manga's choice to instead delve further into its storyline by making more complex connections between characters and parties seems to initially answer my issues with the film, yet it isn't terribly unique in its own right, being long since surpassed by works influenced by the film. That is to say, it lacks the strengths of its adaptation and makes up for it with qualities that don't terribly interest me. I'd never call it bad, as I own the entire series in traditional Chinese, but I probably wouldn't if it weren't tied to a film that is so widely beloved to the point where it's what my grandparents probably think of when I tell them I like Japanese anime.

However, though I've discussed what I consider to be Otomo Katsuhiro's shortcomings in writing, I should reiterate that his skill at directing animated media is enough to where I can look over those faults in said medium. Just as *Akira*'s strengths lie with its kinetic animation, unique atmosphere, and engaging visuals, *Memories* is a unique collection of short films which, though lacking in narrative, more than make up for it in substance as animated works. Produced by Otomo, *Memories* shows the directorial strengths of him and other directors like him, as a triple feature that more than deserves recognition akin to his more well known works.

The first short within *Memories* is likely the best. Directed by Morimoto Kouji with a screenplay from Kon Satoshi, *Magnetic Rose* embodies the platonic idea of science fiction as it portrays a far flung future where elements like spacecraft and the like are themselves considered dated. With its narrative focusing on space salvagers exploring a decaying abandoned spaceship, the

way *Magnetic Rose* portrays technology is horrifying. The line between the characters' hallucinations of individuals long since past, along with AI holographic representations of said individuals, is extremely thin and up to interpretation, adding to *Magnetic Rose*'s atmosphere of unease. The short is reminiscent of the tone of early 1900s science fiction, in its pessimistic speculation of humanity's future, and the conclusion that technological advances ultimately change very little of how people act. In a sense, the way *Magnetic Rose* portrays technology is somewhat reminiscent of works like James Cameron's *Terminator*, with futuristic elements being less of a utopic dream and far more of a sinister threat. While not mainly directed by Otomo himself, *Magnetic Rose* is ironically probably the short that feels closest to *Akira*.

The second and perhaps the least celebrated of the three films within *Memories*, *Stink Bomb* is still a humorous and entertaining short satirizing the incompetence of government authorities. In its dark-comedic take on the mass hysteria revolving around the Gloria Ramirez complication, *Stink Bomb* is a well-needed break from the melancholy of *Magnetic Rose* and the oppressive atmosphere of *Cannon Fodder*. With the most cogent storyline of the three shorts, *Stink Bomb* isn't what I would consider anything groundbreaking, but it provides a notable and admirable role as a comic relief second act that allows *Memories* to work as one complete viewing experience.

Finally, *Cannon Fodder*, directed by Otomo himself, is not nearly as contemplative as *Magnetic Rose* nor as humorous as *Stink Bomb*. However, it is perhaps the most artistically impressive of the three. Its somewhat withdrawn narrative is almost certainly intentional given a fog-of-war narrative set in a propaganda-driven authoritarian state. One could easily make connections to the Cold War era of American history, or perhaps the current state of North Korea. Yet, more than what *Cannon Fodder* states to the viewer, the aspects that the film shows its audience are what truly make it stand out, with its portrayal of human beings as interchangeable pieces in a steampunk setting, fighting seemingly infinite yet ultimately undetectable enemies. *Cannon Fodder* is a film which truly embodies why animated media deserve merit as a form of art in much the same way that *Akira* continues to stand out as a Japanese animated film well regarded in film circles. In this sense, the short along with the *Memories* triple feature as a whole demonstrate why Otomo Katsuhiro receives so much acclaim, in its brilliant directing which transcends the medium. Just as Otomo's work is rarely anything to write home about with regards to story, none of the three *Memories* shorts are amazing in their story; still, this can be overlooked as they imply a greater artistic message and utilize the medium to its maximum extent.



Nagito Komaeda

Danganronpa 2: Goodbye Despair

Art By Jen Zhao

Skull De Morte

Katekyo Hitman Reborn

Art By Sharrel Narsico



AND SO THE BLOODY HUNT BEGINS

SCARY THEOLOGY/THE CONCEPT OF GOOD AND ITS RELEVANCE



ALEXANDRE HAÏOUN-PERDRIX

Writer

3rd Year, Philosophy

What it takes for one to be happy? A well-furnished bookcase, food, and between 2.5 and 3 tanks of tea. And – maybe – omnipotence.

SPOILERS FOR MIRAI NIKKI

Gasai Yuno: two words that hardly evoke innocence or goodness at all. However, this character may easily be deemed as within her right, which I will try to prove subsequently.

The first argument one could use to endorse such a thesis is alas the worst: the tragic events that happened to Ms Gasai during her whole life before the survival good began are no justification. At best, they may erase here guilt by making her someone irresponsible for her own acts, mentally almost destroyed by years-long use of techniques of education one may qualify as somehow questionable. Step by step, Yuno's capacity to be guilty might have been taken away by the decline of her mind. She would thus be the embodiment of that to which leads harassment and pressure in their worst forms.

"Fortunately", this is only the direct cause of one or two very targeted murders in Ms Gasai' she long saga. If events were to be the cause of her relaxed readiness to kill, it would rather be that one which thanks to the kindness of the scenario opens the series itself: one death, but more than it the impossibility to reverse it – that is, as it will be treated upper, the inexorability of the world. Yuno would become the embodiment of something else, possibly even much more disturbing than the previous idea: that hardly limited madness, that indifference to most of things and people which may sleep in the very heart of each of us, only waiting for "the last straw" to break every wall that hitherto retained it and rule over minds.

But that would still make Yuno Gasai out of responsibility rather than out of guilt. To respond to the question of whether any morals may absolve or even justify her actions first requires to determine whether morals is an inner or transcendent matter – does something such as morals exist, absolutely, outside persons? If it does not, by her very standards Yuno is exceptionally more righ-

teous than most of humanity: she rarely has to regret or express doubt regarding her own actions – and when she does, which especially occurs in the last three episodes of the anime, that is most often because the concerned question is that of which constitutes the core of her morals – Yukiteru himself. Her morals is much simpler, much better-built and much more systematic than most: the question of whether an action or thought is good or not is easily processed, for there is but one criterion, Yukiteru. Ms Gasai has not abdicated her morality: she has made it more "efficient" (and thus less human) by only keeping one centre of gravity, and coordinating everything on its basis. The very goal of the whole system becomes the accomplishment of one only goal, which frees from any other constraint the means to be used, whereas usual morals makes it harder because of general rules and lesser ends. That system is not the classical web, with treacherous entanglements which makes one's decision harsh, for one has multiple parameters to take into consideration: it is a star, with a central point out of which departs each path.

Ms Gasai may thus also become the embodiment of something paradoxically much more positive: the perfection one may attain in devoting the whole of one's person to one desire or wish only – one's soul, body and life, as well as, in Yuno's case, others'. It is thus hard to make her a new figure of hubris – excessive pride leading to defiance of the gods or morals : it is morals, simply a new one, maybe the most individualistic version of romanticism turned into ethics that one may ever have seen, and thus the freest. It is not only that she is innocent, but that she is among the most righteous.



Or rather it is so with a definition of morals as an inner matter and from Ms Gasai's point of view. If morals is something that lives independently of men and only applies to them, the question is trickier, for it leads to how this morals comes to become compelling, which requires to ask the second question of its source. And if it is an absolute source, able to impose itself to humans regardless of their consent or will, it must precede them and be of a higher essential rank: which leaves few candidates, such as gods or one god, and Nature. The fact is there is one god in *Mirai Nikki*'s world : but adopting his stance means that any action taken to win the survival game is good in itself, and other actions irrelevant, for the first help to save the world, and the second do not prevent it – only if they did would they become evil actions and be the source of guilt. Thus, either Yuno's actions as a whole are evil, for she got the question of the survival of the world asked again, and in that case it is pointless to deem "minor" actions as guilty or not, because guilt is not in them (they are even rather better, for they help to come once again to the conclusion), or they are absolutely good as her murders have for goal that the game comes to its end, so that either Yuno kills and becomes God, or he does not and she has to take this place (and is ready to do so).



But that is if Deus is to be considered as God, which chronologically he is but technically and at that very moment : as long as Ms Gasai eventually replaces him or has replaced him, she becomes the centre of morals and its source. It would subsequently require for her actions not to be righteous that she does not deem them as righteous. She is in some way the perfect fusion of ancient gods and the God of many monotheistic religions: for sure she is born at a given moment, but she is free from the determination of time and even from its rule; she is very human in her passions and emotions, but she is the sole god; she might be terribly irate, cruel or soulless, but she is moved by love and at the very end, she is almighty. The words of God are the law of that world, and thus if a "sinner", a "guilty one" there must be, it is rather Yukiteru, who tries to prevent her plans at the very end: and he is absolved because she absolves him, not by making his will hers but by once again imposing her will in a purely active fashion. If he was in the "right path", it was at best because he loved God.

She does play the game, but only because she decided it : she knows the rules, the players, has only made it so that she forgets parts of it before the reiterated beginning of the game itself. And thus, albeit initially in the supreme position, she chose to come to the arena and risk everything, to let her passions burst out and go wild and wilder again. And here is to be found the very core of the ethical problem of *Yuno: Mirai Nikki* is not a mere horror series in which one wreaks havoc and happily slaughters, it is a tragedy – that is, a play ruled by the Things rather than the Beings, whose action is bound to be helpless, if not pointless. The end of the series itself does not free its characters from tragedy: it destroys them, as it is required in this genre. Amano Yukiteru and Gasai Yuno as we may see them, happy, at the end, are part of the general Idea of those characters ; for they existed simultaneously to the versions that were caught in the tragedy, and are not them. Every Yukiteru is Yukiteru, but not Yukiteru-as-a-whole, and thus not the-other-Yukiteru. There is no happy ending for the real main characters. And this comes from that Thing which rules the series : Inexorability.

The Inexorability of world finds no better expression than the sentence of Yuno in the twenty fourth episode : "What is insane, is that the world will not let me be with Yukki !". It is pointless whether she means Yukiteru-as-a-whole or any of the Yukiteru; which is important is that even though she has become a god, her project may not be fulfilled otherwise, for she is not truly almighty – and not to be almighty, in the final analysis, is desperately equivalent to being powerless. That is why she truly is innocent and exempt from guilt: as every character of a tragedy, she has no choice but to bind herself to the clockwork mechanism. She does not kill Yukki for instance because she does want to do it, but because he is so that he cannot accept the idea of killing her: to love "Yukiteru", she can only find another one, who will not be less Yukki than the previous one – still the one it's whom she fell in love.



Her morals absolved her, for sure: but it could precisely be so because that morals was that of a desperate love confronted with the impossibility of its permanence without such means.

GETTER ROBO ARMAGEDDON: EXEMPLARY REBIRTH AND HORROR



MAX ROTHMAN

3rd Year, Philosophy and Biology

Writer

As a deep lover of the mech genre, I feel compelled to both view and extoll its greats in entry to the world. As far as the concept goes, some of the true 'firsts' in mech anime in the form we recognize today lie mainly within two series- *Mazinger Z* by Go Nagai, and *Getter Robo* by Ken Ishikawa. Cornerstones such as *Gundam* and others would arise albeit later- and all standing in some way on the shoulders of their predecessors. As far as *Getter Robo* goes it remains one of my personal favorite super robot series of all time, maintaining an unusual level of broader introspection, creeping deep cosmic horror, unanswerable questions, graphic violence, and a shocking frankness of the brutality of fighting often eschewed in many other shows in the interest of a child-friendly final product. It went on to inspire works like *Gurren Lagann* and *Evangelion*, each considered iconic in their own right. And at the very pinnacle of all that lies *Getter Robo Armageddon*, the 13-episode self-contained OVA from 1998. It combines everything one might desire in a powerful series: top-tier OPs, extreme hot-bloodedness and guts, enormous hype, and fantastic animation and fights.

First published in 1974, the original manga tells the story of the three protagonists, the hotblooded and headstrong Ryoma, cautious and scheming Hayato, and the heart of the team Musashi. Together they pilot the mysterious eponymous Getter Robo, a combining robot created by Dr. Saotome with three separate forms composed of 3 separate jets to combat the evil Dinosaur empire, repelled by the mysterious 'Getter Ray' energy that powers the heroes' machine. Following the original manga, sequels concern the rise and fall of new foes, each greater and eviler and more abstract than the last with goals from world domination to extinction of humanity, to an unrelenting pursuit to destroy the Getter Robo and its successors.

What seems briefly to be a childish monster-of-the-week episodic series rapidly unmasks itself, depicting unstable and often outright psychotic protagonists (a known factor of an effective Getter pilot is stated to be having a less-than-sane mindset) fighting visceral, unrelenting foes who commit horrific atrocities to gain an upper hand. Unlike its contemporaries and many other series following, in a narrative and metacontextual way Getter needs its trio of primary protagonists to support each other equally and show the growth of each as a necessary component- without one of them, the other two are simply not complete. It is not a series led by a hero and his support, but by a full equal cast.

As the narrative evolves with its entries, both the audience and characters begin to wonder the ultimate question often posed throughout the series: what exactly is the Getter energy, and what is the fate of those who make use of

it? As its pilots witness grotesque premonitions and both their machine and its creator act increasingly unusual, the true nature of both is revealed. The results are something likened to HR Geiger; to spoil it would ruin the buildup and delivery- it is something to be experienced.

Certainly however, the series is not without flaws. Stilted writing, a few offensive characters, and not truly getting off its own feet for a good while stifles an otherwise good mech series, but it is not prohibitive to the core of the experience. Graphic violence is less a detractor and more a forenote; it's a bit more intense than something like *Evangelion*, to relate it to something well-known.



The series would receive several anime, most of the early ones in a very toned-down and significantly safer manner- suffice to say, the true impact of the story was trapped within the manga. In 1998 however, Bandai decided to splurge to celebrate the anniversary of one of its animation studios, deciding to hand Ishikawa the opportunity to create a high-budget OVA on his series. The subsequent creation, titled *Change!! Getter Robo: The Last Day of the Universe*, localized/shortened as *Getter Robo Armageddon*, was born. Ishikawa used *Armageddon* as both a hybridization of his prior Getter work and as a wholly independent narrative unto itself. Entirely OVA-original, the story takes cues and setups from the source material- character names and actions, locations, and designs, yet creates its own path. It absolutely does not feel like cheap repetition or creative bankruptcy- in fact, those that enter already well-read will know barely more of what is going on as a newcomer. This itself is a masterclass showing how to reuse content or obtain more of something that has come before, but not in a cheapening or repetitive way. As for the OVA itself, the hand-drawn animation is downright glorious- the extremely expressive and distinctive, heavily lined Ishikawa character art is crisply rendered, and the unrealistic, almost morphing changes of the Getter between forms are depicted with creative yet slightly grotesque organic mechanical function. The music is extremely fitting with powerful openings and driving heroic tracks compelling the narrative forward, and the voice actors deliver to match, from Ryoma's hotheadedness to a downright maniacal sounding Dr. Saotome. To spoil the narrative itself I feel would be a spoiler to the epic hype the OVA itself cultivates; this is something most certainly best experienced first, and ideally in good company.



Kokichi Ouma

Danganronpa V3: Killing Harmony

Art By Miranda Zhang

NAOMI IWATA - WHOLESMOME HORROR



MAX R.

4th Year, Japanese

Horror sucks except sometimes it doesn't.

Writer

I'll say upfront that I not only don't care for horror, but despise it, and on top of that, good horror anime is painstakingly difficult to come by. Of course, there exists obvious picks among *Mononoke* and *Perfect Blue*, though those have already been discussed to death over the years as the go-to examples. Also, *Mononoke* is typically more lauded on a visual front than it is for being downright terrifying. Ignore that for now though as Naomi Iwata, responsible for other titles such as *Pecola*, *Net Ghost Pipopa*, and more recently, the renowned *Pingu in the City*, has succeeded in producing 'horror' anime that have genuinely captivated me, namely *Gregory Horror Show* and *Midnight Horror School*, albeit the latter not actually being horror at its core.

Gregory Horror Show is a series of shorts revolving around the Gregory House, a nightmarish hotel in the depths of a shrouded forest, which at first glance, may appear as just your standard dilapidated inn, though upon entering, one is overwhelmed with unease. The house is run by Gregory, a sly mouse who puts on airs of being helpful to any guests that arrive, despite actually conspiring to steal their souls. The series concerns itself with these guests' escapes, the episodic framework revolving around guests encountering different inhabitants or discovering different parts of the house, while gradually spiraling into insanity in the process. It goes to say that Iwata works largely in CG, with cube-shaped characters that may as well be straight out of Roblox. Initially, this may seem to contrast the series's intended atmosphere, but strangely, the dissonance works in the show's favor in terms of enhancing its ominous qualities. Additionally, the camera perspective is almost entirely first-person, going hand-in-hand with the *Popeye the Performer*-esque general model jankiness in regards to further playing into the immersion.

The cast of *Gregory Horror Show* is brimming with eccentrics such as Catherine, the pink lizard nurse who becomes aroused by drawing blood from her patients; Hell's Chef, a candlestick cook who despises smoking and waves a colossal cleaver at offenders, and Judgment Boy, an anthropomorphic set of scales that aimlessly wanders the halls only to randomly ask guests about making decisions between two extreme choices, to name a few. While some residents act neutral or (rarely) even helpful, the majority operate under Gregory and set out to wreak havoc, often sadistically tormenting the guests. Said guests, on the other hand, each have their pasts explored, as the illusory TV-Fish projects the memories of anyone it comes into contact with, bringing trauma to light. The series retains its twisted nature as it delves further into the psyche with visits to purgatory, with souls being severed from the body, and protagonists nearly dying at every corner. As it slowly unravels itself, it's implied that guests became bound to the hotel in the first place through their own internal strife, which rein-

forces the psychological angle of horror that assumes center stage.

Meanwhile, *Midnight Horror School* is nothing short of a legitimate hidden gem. As with *Gregory Horror Show*, I actually really appreciate *Midnight Horror School* on an aesthetic level, in spite of its noticeably dated CG. I would describe it as what could be expected out of a kindergartener's Halloween decorations. Once again, Iwata's staple blocky designs make a return, though rather than providing dissonance, they actually feel appropriate for this type of series. Aside from how, as previously stated, it's hardly 'horror' in the slightest, I would call it my favorite horror anime aside from how, as stated, it's hardly 'horror' in the slightest. It's actually rather wholesome, concerning itself with the after hours of a school and its long lost forgotten objects brought to life, one for each letter of the alphabet; the bulk of the objects serve as students with their aim being to hone unique abilities known as 'wonders,' to eventually qualify as a 'wonder of the world' and have their existence be recognized once more. Said 'wonders' relate to the specific object embodied by a character, be it a decaying banana peel commanding an army of flies, a colored pencil able to bring drawings to life, or an umbrella that causes deluges upon shedding tears. Bizarre shenanigans constantly ensue with how various abilities interact and students try to one up each other.

As opposed to *Gregory Horror Show*'s three-minute segments, *Midnight Horror School* episodes break in at a slightly meatier twelve-minutes, granting more time to dedicate to the ensemble cast's character introspection, showcasing individuals' insecurities, conflicts and corresponding resolutions; in this regard, the series takes a rather episodic approach, but given its formula and underlying positive energy, it ends up resembling the small lessons and epiphanies out of *Aria the Animation* on occasion, much to my surprise. Dilemmas range from anything as minor as aspiring to impress someone, to heavier stakes, such as winning a race to salvage another's reputation after accidentally swapping bodies. Seemingly, everyone shares a piece of the spotlight at some point in terms of focus episodes. Guiding the students as the backbone of the community are the teachers, staff, and everything in between, including a sentient fountain that maintains the water supply, and a skeletal dragon that's used as a jungle gym. They collectively assist in upholding the facility's order and functionality. I must reiterate that the school as a whole functions as a community where the entire population sporadically develops through their interactions in a similar vein to series like *Rilu Rilu Fairilu*, *Ojamajo Doremi*, and *Tanoshii Muumin Ikka*, a type of show that I have personally come to enjoy.

There still remains a number of Iwata's works that I've been meaning to check out, but both *Gregory Horror Show* and particularly *Midnight Horror School* have already made lasting impressions on me through their distinct presentation and atmosphere. I'm just always reinvigorated with hope for the medium when I stumble upon the existence of fairly under-the-radar creators who nevertheless churn out interesting works and I hope it remains this way.

Staff Picks:

SCARIEST CHARACTERS

BIG MOM

ONE PIECE

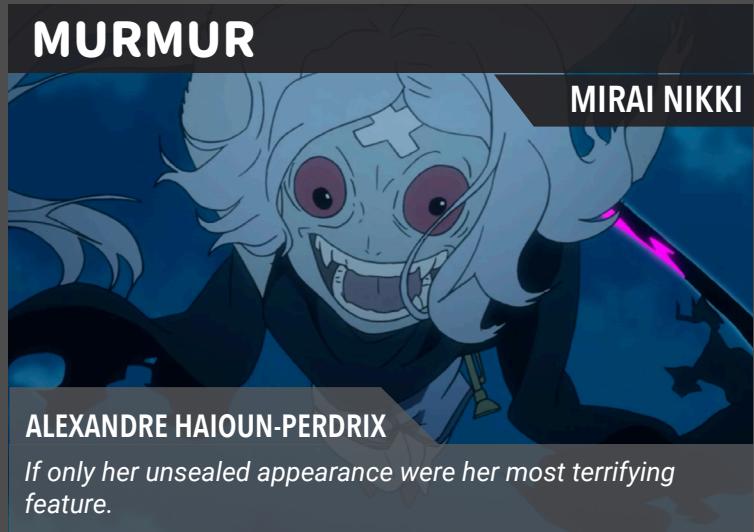


MITCHELL MADAYAG

The one mother you don't want to make a "your mom" joke about.

MURMUR

MIRAI NIKKI



ALEXANDRE HAUOUN-PERDRIX

If only her unsealed appearance were her most terrifying feature.

RICARDO MARTINEZ

HAJIME NO IPPÔ



TONY.T.

Fictionalized character based on Finito López. Fittingly, a ridiculously invincible end boss.

YAMI SUKEHIRO

BLACK CLOVER

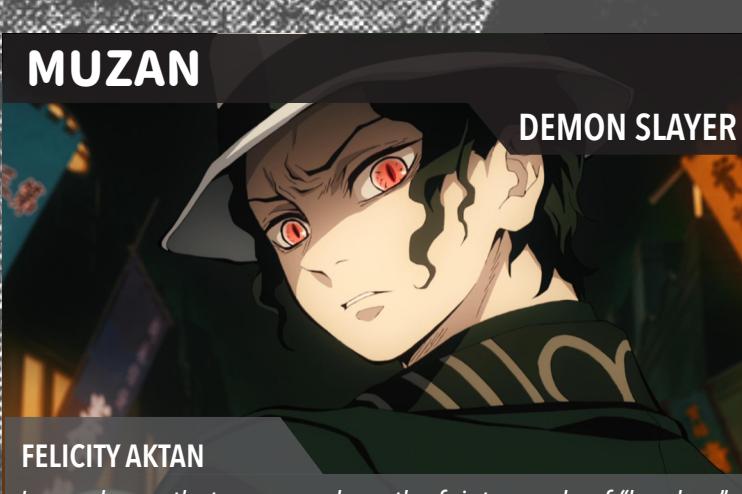


ANGEL MENDEZ

Will protect you with his life, but just don't get him angry.

MUZAN

DEMON SLAYER



FELICITY AKTAN

Legends say that once you hear the faint sounds of "hee hee" in the dead of night, it's already too late for you.

MILLENIUM EARL

D.GRAY-MAN



SHARREL NARSICO

I mean, look at him. His sheep eyes and huge teeth is just the icing on top of his Victorian suit and pink umbrella ensemble. If you see him, RUN.

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Weekly Socials:

Thursday 8-9pm Dwinelle 182

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Shonen Bat

Paranoia Agent

Art By MADHOUSE