

THE TRIGGER ISSUE

CAL ANIMAGE ALRHA presents

# Konshuu

Volume XLVII, Issue V



CODE:015 (ICHIGO)  
*Darling in the Franxx*

Art by David Chang

# THIS WEEK'S FEATURED SERIES

ANIMERECOMMENDATION

## KIZNAIVER

In futuristic Sugomori City, citizens are emotionally and physically linked together to share their pain and suffering. This city was built to test the Kizna System, and the citizens connected to it are known as Kiznaivers. Katsuhira Agata and his classmates are chosen to become Kiznaivers, which deepens their bonds but also leads to the group's collective suffering.



Spring 2016, Trigger  
Directed by Hiroshi Kobayashi

ANIMERECOMMENDATION

## UCHUU PATROL LULUCO (SPACE PATROL LULUCO)



Spring 2016, Trigger  
Directed by Hiroyuki Imaishi

Luluco and her father work for the Space Patrol in the frontier of space. Ogikubo is a colony known for its alien immigrants; when Luluco's father is frozen by alien contraband, Luluco becomes a division chief of the Space Patrol so that she can pay to save her father. From then on, Luluco goes on daily missions to protect Ogikubo from space criminals.



# DARLING IN THE PACIFIC RIM

**JOSH ROQUE**  
4TH YEAR, ENGLISH  
Zero Two > 2B!

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Studio Trigger's new show has passed under the public radar. Unlike Trigger's other hit series like *Kill la Kill* and *Gurren Lagann*, I have seen little about the new 2018 series online. Granted, the series is still running, but after several weeks of episodes I would have expected a Studio Trigger series to gain more traction. This article is an extended summary with the hope that it draws in more viewers to the series.

*Darling in the Franxx* is Trigger's typical and preferred genre: a science fiction tale set in the apocalyptic future featuring a youth in rebellion, and a story which (probably) leads to a climactic world-ending fight. Not run-of-the-mill for anime in general, but Studio Trigger has a penchant for the booming bildungsroman.

The main premise: Franxx are giant mecha (the booming part) used by genetically altered teenagers (the bildungsroman part) to defend the remainder of humanity from giant monsters known as klaxosaurs. It requires tremendous talent and effort to be a Franxx pilot. These teenagers have to be bred from birth into boy-girl pairs that can control the Franxx as a team.

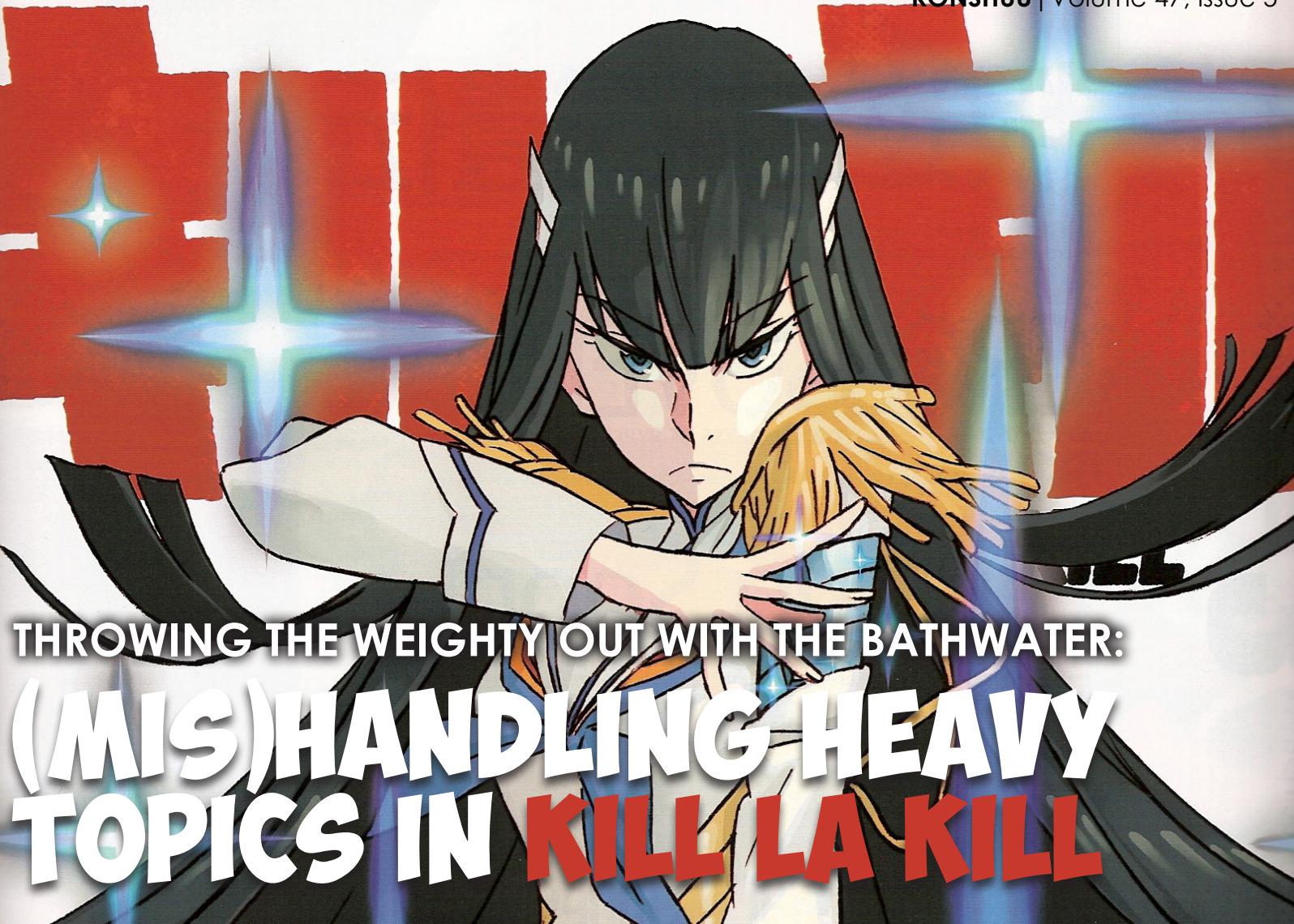
Sound familiar? *Darling in the Franxx* has loud echoes of the *Pacific Rim* franchise—giant monsters threaten humanity, so humanity develops giant mecha to fight back. Jaeger to Franxx,

Kaiju to Klaxosaur. Both of these series just so happen to require two (or three, in one specific *Pacific Rim* case) pilots with a synchronous mind to work together. The series is basically the lovechild of Guillermo Del Toro and Studio Trigger.

Who are our pilots? Hiro is a very sad boy. He was a child prodigy when he was younger, but a few failed pilot's tests has led to emotional stress, and now he is unable to control the Franxx because he cannot properly connect with his original lifelong partner. He loses all motivation. Meanwhile, every other pilot pair has succeeded. His partner blames him for their failure and decides to leave the program, but dies at the hands of a klaxosaur as she leaves the colony. Hiro blames himself for this incident, but the attack reawakens his desire to fight the klaxosaurs.

Zero Two is a special elite pilot who has a history of killing her previous partners; she is not human, but a half-klaxosaur with two horns protruding from her head. When the two meet outside of the colony, Zero Two becomes attached to Hiro and asks him to become her new partner (the previous one recently died). Although Hiro shows some reluctance, he is practically seduced into the idea, and the two later team up during a klaxosaur attack. From then on, the two become partners, and Zero Two refers to Hiro as "Darling." (Hence the name of the series, roll credits.)

I recommend jumping into the first episode and letting the worldbuilding take you by storm, especially if you like *Pacific Rim*. Hopefully it doesn't bother you that the pilots are 1:1 with the cast of *AnoHana* (see image above).



# THROWING THE WEIGHTY OUT WITH THE BATHWATER: (MIS)HANDLING HEAVY TOPICS IN *KILL LA KILL*

**CONTENT WARNING:** Detailed description of sexual assault; incest; child sexual abuse. **SPOILER WARNING:** *Kill la Kill*.



JAMIE YOU

2ND YEAR, COGNITIVE SCIENCE

Apparently the new Yume Nikki game was made in Unity. Yunity Nikki? Yunne Itty?

STAFF WRITER

The bathhouse scene in episode 16 of *Kill la Kill* is two minutes long and incredibly uncomfortable. The majority of my discomfort at that scene is, I think, intentional on Studio Trigger's part, which I appreciate. The rest of my discomfort concerns Studio Trigger's approach, which I find tasteless and counterproductive.

A quick rundown for those who've forgotten since they last watched *Kill la Kill*: After battling the protagonist (Ryuko), the pseudo-villain Satsuki Kiryuin is asked to meet her mom, Ragyo Kiryuin, at the Grand Bathhouse. Her mom proceeds to molest her under the guise of caring for her, while giving her a lecture on humanity's nakedness. Afterwards, she takes Satsuki to see the original Life Fiber.

This synopsis alone does not reveal the problem. Child sexual abuse is a thing that happens, and its portrayal is not inherently immoral. (I refer to this incident as child sexual abuse because while Satsuki, at age 18, is legally an adult, she is Ragyo's daughter and has been for the past 18 years, and numerous context clues suggest that Ragyo has been molesting her daughter for some time now. Beyond that, mother-daughter incest is inherently abusive, especially when the daughter is just barely legal.) The problem is the execution.

Have a more detailed breakdown of what happens. We see Satsuki hugging herself tightly, seemingly cold in the middle of a steaming hot bathhouse. She sinks into the water slowly and shudders. Ragyo appears, emitting rainbow light as usual, and walks towards her while expressing concern about Satsuki's recent battle. Then Ragyo grabs Satsuki by the chin, comments on her skin, and looms forward, telling her "entrust your heart to me" and that she will "purify" her. Shot of Satsuki's hair coming down. Shot of water. Shot of Ragyo massaging Satsuki's

breasts, illuminated diffusely by Ragyo's rainbow beams. Shot of Satsuki's face, eyes squeezed shut. Pan up over Satsuki's naked body lying just under the bathwater's surface, in a pinup poster position with her hands above her head. Ragyo leans over her, fixing something in Satsuki's hair, and beginning to talk about how humans desire to cover up their nakedness in clothes. Pan down. Cut to Satsuki's hands, trembling. Cut to Satsuki's legs, closed and rubbing against each other. Shot of Ragyo's mouth as she speaks. Shot of Ragyo's hand creeping down her daughter's crotch while continuing to talk about how humans are fragile. Everything is still in that soft rainbow lighting. Zoom out from Satsuki's blushing face to the rest of Satsuki's body, which flashes an overlaid chakra diagram and radiates white light. Fade to white. Cut to Satsuki lying with her arms down and eyes closed. Ragyo tells her to get out, that they have somewhere to be. This whole time, a sultry piano and guitar theme has been playing in the background, punctuated by Satsuki's gasps and moans.

What the heck is going on here? Why is the lighting soft, puffy and rainbowy? Why do we get closeup shots of Ragyo stroking her daughter's privates? Why is there porn music? Why is Satsuki laid out like an anime girl in a hentai, when the Satsuki we've known otherwise is rigid, upright, and forceful? And why is she making those noises?

There are two answers here. One answer is: Satsuki is habituated to this kind of abuse and her reaction in this scene - passively enduring Ragyo's molestation - is her way of surviving it. She knows that it's dangerous to try to resist, so this is the quickest way to get it over with.

The other answer is: this is all yuri fanservice and we're supposed to find it sexy.

Studio Trigger's answer seems to be somewhere in the middle. This scene plainly indicates a history of abuse. Why would Satsuki, proud and composed, submit to it otherwise? Why would Satsuki, without a peep, let the mother she loathes grope her in such a humiliating fashion, when she has been building a rebellion against her all these years—when the Elite Four, the people she trusts most, hardly dare to touch her? And furthermore, why would Satsuki hug herself tightly upon entering the bath, as if anticipating something terrible, when the rest of the anime has her strutting around like she owns the world? It's out of character. Abuse is the only logical explanation.

At the same time, abuse doesn't logically explain the rest of the way this scene was shot. The sexy music, for instance, could easily be replaced with scary chords, or something more eerie than sweet—something representing Satsuki's disgust and discomfort. The

rainbow lights coming off Ragyo don't have to be soft and diffuse; instead, they could be harsh and stark, casting sharp shadows, to illustrate the way Ragyo is exploiting her daughter. And Satsuki doesn't have to writhe around and moan like that. She could be stiff as a board, which, on top of being a realistic sign of distress, is also more in line with her character.

Yet those three things, lighting, music, and posing, remain dissonantly "sexy" in the actual scene. The ultimate answer is that Studio Trigger was probably trying to unsettle viewers by conflating incestuous sexual abuse with traditionally pornographic imagery, and then, using that discomfort, have viewers question the contents of other fanservice they'd typically enjoy.

Now, how much that actually worked is up for debate. For one, it's possible that for some, the scene reinforced associations between incestuous molestation and "sexy." The fact that YouTubers can even make videos with titles like "EPISODE 16: WAS IT RAPE?" indicates that Studio Trigger wasn't clear enough. Child molestation is rape. It ruins lives and leaves scars for years afterwards, and it's more common than you'd expect. In the USA, a whopping 10% of the population has been molested before their 18th birthday. In Japan, the number ranges anywhere from 5% to 30%.

What could be changed to make this scene clearly abuse and clearly damaging? Beyond the suggestions to the scene itself I made earlier, another important step is explicitly acknowledging it as abuse. There would be no room for debate if Satsuki "wanted it" or was OK with it if she mentioned it later as a reason to hate Ragyo.

Sure, it's implied that by hating Ragyo, Satsuki hated everything that came with her. But in her betrayal speech to Ragyo, and in further mentions of her mom, Satsuki only brings up Ragyo's overall motive of enslaving humanity. If we never saw those twisted two minutes in the bathhouse, we would have no idea that Ragyo had been sexually abusing Satsuki to begin with. This reinforces the illusion that survivors of child sexual abuse walk away unscathed. And in that case, what's the point of including a never-again referenced molestation scene... beyond fanservice?

Ragyo is a horrific person and easily one of the best (worst?) villains in anime—that much is obvious by the end of the show. Rapist status can be used to highlight her depravity, but it must be done with care.

Sexual abuse is not trivial, it's not funny, and it's not sexy. BDSM and nudism can afford to be portrayed like that by *Kill la Kill*. Incestuous sexual abuse cannot. And the kicker here is that it looks like Studio Trigger did try to handle it properly—they just didn't try hard enough.

# A BEWITCHING TALE



**ANDREW OEUNG**

3RD YEAR, EECS

Loves Thai Basil.

STAFF WRITER

Welcome to Luna Nova Magical Academy, a school for young girls training to become prospective witches! Unlike your standard tale of magic (aka *Harry Potter*), *Little Witch Academia* is a world in which magic is being phased out in favor of technology. Humans may be persecuted in Harry Potter for their archaic ways, but it's the opposite in this case!

Originating from the historical Salem Witch Trials, Luna Nova holds a witch hunt parade in which humans discriminate against witches. Our unfortunate heroine Atsuko Kagari must lead the planning of this parade. But "Akko" has another idea in mind: celebrating the idea of witches. Together with her friends Lotte and Sucy, Akko wishes to make an unforgettable parade in *Little Witch Academia: The Enchanted Parade*.



From left to right: Lotte, Atsuko, and Sucy.

The film's charm is evident from the very beginning: Akko's overwhelming positivity can't help but make the viewer smile. She can be self-absorbed in her thoughts, but she does have good intentions. *Little Witch Academia: The Enchanted Parade* opens up with Akko, Sucy, and Lotte conjuring up a foul mushroom beast in the middle of class. After the professor cleans up their mess, they must organize the academy's annual parade.

Akko envisions a parade of grandiose proportions: dancing, fireworks, and magical spectacles will dazzle the town. But Akko has a reality check when she realizes that their magic

essentially won't work in the city. Akko's friends argue with her about the viability of her selfish "Happy Time Project," eventually leaving her to deal with parade planning on her own.



Nevertheless, Akko does not give up. Although she is merely a regular girl inspired by a famous witch named Shiny Chariot, Atsuko inherited a relic called the Shiny Rod, an item that will be indispensable to her in this parade. Using the Shiny Rod, Akko puts together a giant wooden ship and stores energy in the Shiny Rod so that she can use magic in the town of humans. Her friends have a change of heart and decide to help Akko at the last moment, and she will definitely need it. A slumbering giant awakens during their parade! Akko and her friends eventually fend off the giant.

The ending may sound a bit corny, but the film is rife with charm and childishness. When the giant awakens in the town of humans, their magical instructor fancifully narrates the wreaking havoc so that the humans will believe it's a "scripted" part of the parade! Akko's facial expressions are also hilarious and over-the-top.

One complaint about the film is that its short length means that side characters could not be developed further. I can hardly remember the names of the witches that tag along with Akko for the parade. Jasminka? Constanze? One of them never even talks for the entire duration of the film, but I suppose that was intentional.

If this franchise interests you, *Little Witch Academia* has two short films and a two-cour anime series. At the moment, I've only watched the second film, *Little Witch Academia: The Enchanted Parade*, but I'm sure that in the future I'll learn more about Akko's crazy magical adventures at Luna Nova.

# Dear Konshuu-sensei

Got a question about school? Need some advice?

Don't worry, Konshuu-sensei is here for you! This advice column features answers to questions that our readers posed last week.

*Mom's Spaghetti* asked:

**How do I make the most out of Cal?**

Don't be afraid to take risks. The little voice inside your head that holds you back from doing things you want? Ignore it. If you want to make the most out of Cal (and life), get out of your comfort zone and do the things you've always wanted to. Join a club, take non-mandatory classes, and ask that cute person out.

*Anon* asked:

**How do I get a girlfriend?**

First, become the person you would want to date. We attract the kind of person who we are (for example, if you have unresolved issues, chances are you'll find someone who also has unresolved issues, which rarely ends well). We also accept the love we think we deserve, which can make us have low standards. The ability to self-love and recognition of self-worth allows you to date someone who you deserve and who really deserves you.

Ask a question at [tinyurl.com/konshuusensei](http://tinyurl.com/konshuusensei) and it might be answered by Konshuu-sensei in the next issue!

**Disclaimer:** Konshuu-sensei is not responsible for any consequences that result from following their advice.



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Konshuu accepts guest submissions from club members! If you'd like to have content featured, please visit:  
[J.MP/KONSUB](http://J.MP/KONSUB)

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**ZERO TWO**  
*Darling in the Franxx*  
Art by David Chang

