

THE LIVE-ACTION ISSUE

CAL ANIMAGE ALPHA presents

Konshuu

Volume XLVII, Issue II



KONSHUU STAFF

UC Berkeley

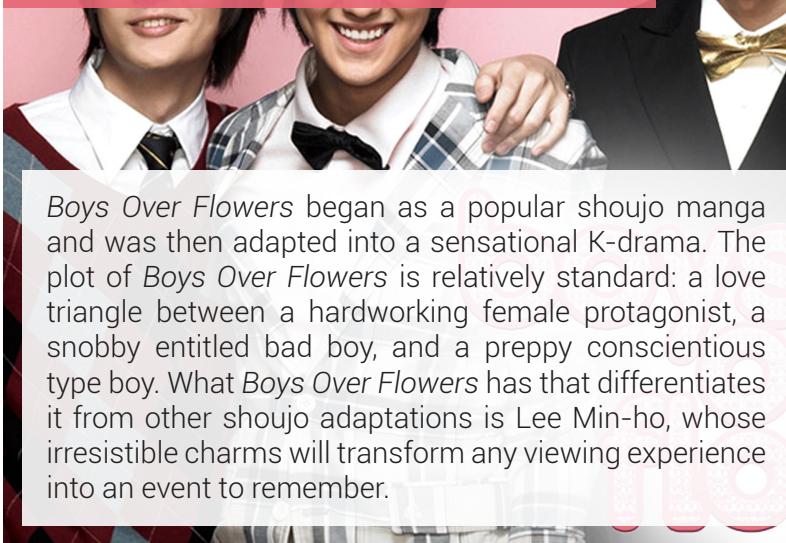
THIS WEEK'S FEATURED SERIES



WATCH ON DRAMAFEVER

DRAMA RECOMMENDATION

KKOT BODA NAMJA (BOYS OVER FLOWERS)



Boys Over Flowers began as a popular shoujo manga and was then adapted into a sensational K-drama. The plot of Boys Over Flowers is relatively standard: a love triangle between a hardworking female protagonist, a snobby entitled bad boy, and a preppy conscientious type boy. What Boys Over Flowers has that differentiates it from other shoujo adaptations is Lee Min-ho, whose irresistible charms will transform any viewing experience into an event to remember.



Winter 2009, KBS, 25 episodes
Original manga by Yoko Kamio



Fall 2015, NTV, 10 episodes
Original novel by Nisio Isin

DRAMA RECOMMENDATION

OKITEGAMI KYOUKO NO BIBOUROKU (THE MEMORANDUM OF KYOKO OKITEGAMI)

Yakusuke Kakushidate is the unluckiest guy in the world. He's always at the wrong place at the wrong time, and is often accused of crimes he didn't commit. Fortunately, private detective Kyoko Okitegami is on the scene. There's just one catch: every time she falls asleep, she loses her memories of the past 24 hours.

WASHING YOUR HANDS WHITE



ZIANA DEEN

2ND YEAR, ARCHITECTURE

Dying architect student who still makes time for manga.

STAFF WRITER

Hollywood has officially run out of ideas. Among recent releases of classic live-action remakes, and animated films where feelings have feelings, big-time producers in small conference rooms have decided that the next big money-making scheme should be American live-action films based on Asian media.

Remakes from foreign countries are nothing new. They're generally likeable and it's fascinating to see new takes on old favorites, especially across national borders. However, it's clear that there's a controversial trait evident in these films: whitewashing.

Whitewashing, the practice of casting white people in historically non-white character roles, is a subtle form of deeply ingrained racism. There are different types of whitewashing in film, such as featuring a predominant white main cast (literally any Nicholas Sparks movie), or having minority stereotypes (literally every John Green movie). Either way, both have a clear problem in the representation of minorities.

When it comes to American remakes of Asian media, a new type of whitewashing called racebending has sparked reproach across audiences. When deciding to cast the lead, casting directions decide to racebend, specifying white people, a choice many criticize as whitewashing at its finest. One example of this is *The Last Airbender*, the 2010 live-action film of the anime-inspired series *Avatar: The Last Airbender*. In a universe influenced by East Asian and Inuit culture, the casting call specifically looked for "Caucasian and other ethnicities". Fans saw this as disrespecting the diversity and cultural setting of the show. They made their dissent evident in the form of written letter campaigns, protests, and encouraged boycotts of the film. Director M. Night Shyamalan defended himself, by saying "Anime is based on ambiguous facial features. It's meant to be interpretive. It's meant to be inclusive of all races, and you can see yourself in all these characters".

The Last Airbender is not the only movie to have caused controversy over racebending. In last year's remake of *Ghost in the Shell*, Scarlett Johansson played the role of Motoko Kusanagi. People were enraged that Kusanagi would be played by a white female, especially since the film, and Kusanagi's character, is of strong Japanese origin. Filmmakers revealed they intended on using CGI to make Johansson look more Asian, causing even more backlash from fans—if you wanted to make her seem Asian, why not just hire an Asian actress in the first place?



Fans in Japan, however, were surprised that American fans had a problem with the casting. They were happy that one of their most popular franchises had hit Hollywood's hall of fame, and saw it as a representation of their storytelling. Sam Yoshioka, director of the company that holds the rights to *Ghost in the Shell*, said, "this is a chance for a Japanese property to be seen around the world". In response, Japanese-American actresses argued that the Japanese were being naive – whitewashing has influenced the beauty standards in Japan, and natives don't undergo the lack of proper representation so many Asian Americans witness in media.

Subconsciously, people do take in what they watch, and project it in their real lives. The representation of minorities in media promotes racism at a level so small, it becomes unnoticed, in the form of stereotypes and racial assumptions. The constantly established dominance of white people in media allows for the reiteration of social norms that allow white people to take roles that rightfully belong to members of minorities. After all, you don't need to be white to be a hero.



LIVE ADAPTATIONS

The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly



JOSH ROQUE

4TH YEAR, ENGLISH

EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

Does God stay in Heaven because he lives
in fear of what he's created? -Spy Kids 2

In his book on screenwriting, *Story*, Robert McKee suggests that film adaptations should not create a one-for-one retelling of a story that is told in a different medium. Instead, film should tell a story in its barest components and use visual elements to fill in the rest. How about turning television, with hours of visual storytelling, into a two-hour production? Anime into live-action film has been the disastrous trend of the past two years—so how did two fully televised anime and a manga do it?

The Good



BOKU DAKE GA INAI MACHI (FILM)

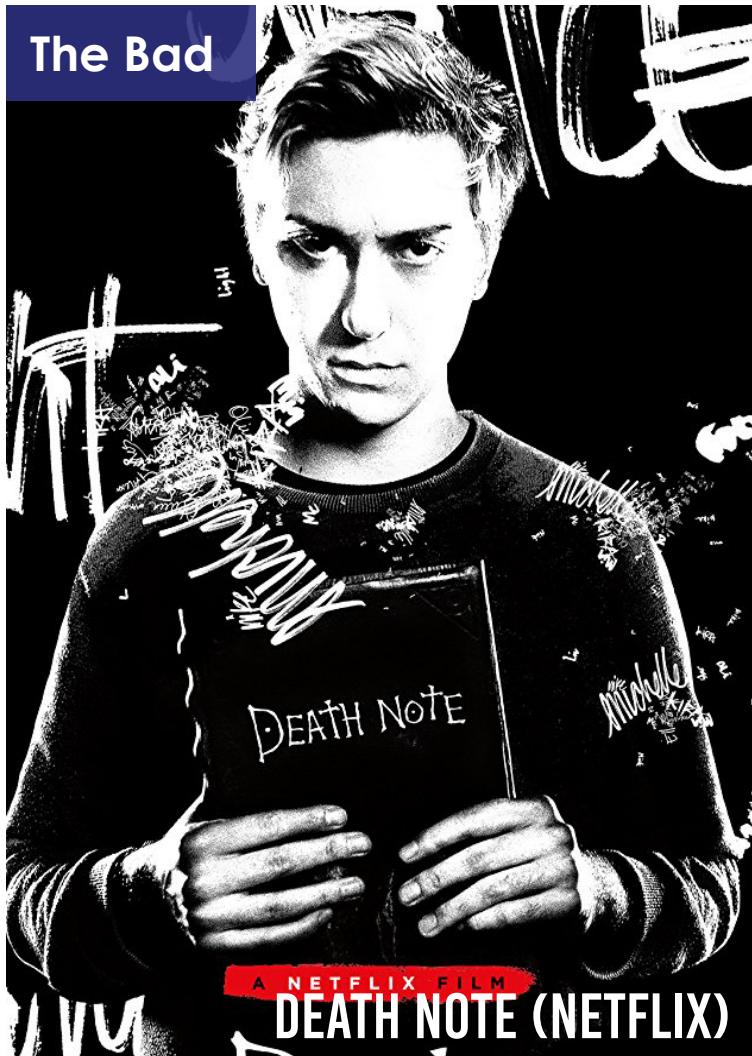
In terms of adaptation, *Boku Dake Ga Inai Machi* (*Erased*) does not fit the bill for Robert McKee's advice on being different from the source. Almost every single shot in the film is taken from the anime. Each camera angle, set piece, and dialogue leaves no stones unturned—the live-action is the anime, save for some trimming on the pace. The scenes that deserve emphasis get their limelight, while some less important scenes (usually involving Satoru's well-meaning but easily forgotten friends) get shafted in order to fit the two-hour runtime.

And yes, I totally mean the scene where Kayo, a friend who had been abused and never given a proper breakfast other than instant ramen or a few dollars strewn on a kitchen table, is offered her first proper family breakfast in the Fujinuma home.

A series of flashbacks in the anime becomes a completely silent scene at a breakfast table in the live-action. Instead of an outburst, just a single tear in a silent kitchen, watched and shameless in the spotlight of her saviors. A perfect example of translating from anime-style flashback, sound cue, and background music into real time, live action storytelling.

The scene is wonderfully adapted and is a palatable change from the anime's interpretation, which hands *Boku Dake Ga Inai Machi* the spot of "The Good."

The Bad



A NETFLIX FILM

DEATH NOTE (NETFLIX)

We all knew that this one was coming. Light Turner rears his angsty mug at last in "The Bad." There were plenty of candidates, but Mr. Turner wrote all of their names in his Burn Book, and Willem Dafoe took care of it. With the support of Mia Sutton, a horrifying subject not worth approaching here.

Netflix's *Death Note* is an interpretation of the original *Death Note* manga. Light Yagami, a brilliant and amicable college student given the power to kill people at a whim, becomes Light Turner, a high schooler from Seattle whose mother was killed by a criminal.

I will keep this short: the adaptation fails at the get-go because they failed to understand what makes the story of Yagami Light so compelling. Compare the anime's first "killing" scene to the live-action and it becomes obvious.

Light Yagami is a smart and charming young man who believes he can rule the world with his newfound power to kill—his first murder is a famous criminal on television, and he experiences shock, but also joy, in the privacy of his bedroom. He justifies his actions with philosophy, in his own room, as if it were the confines of his own mind. At the end of his ink-blotting, blood-spilling day, he believes he is a good person. The scene being inside his own room makes this anonymous godhood even better.

Light Turner's first murder is the local school bully who punched him earlier in the morning, and after learning that the bully has a difficult home life, sentences him to a beheading anyways. He is sitting in detention when he watches this happen outside of the window, and he finds the experience traumatic...only to use this power later to exact revenge on the criminal who killed his mother.

Nothing about Light Turner in his first kill scene gives off the feeling of a protagonist—instead, he's just an awful kid with the power to kill. And that is not compelling. It just turns a good story into a bad one.

The Ugly



UZUMAKI

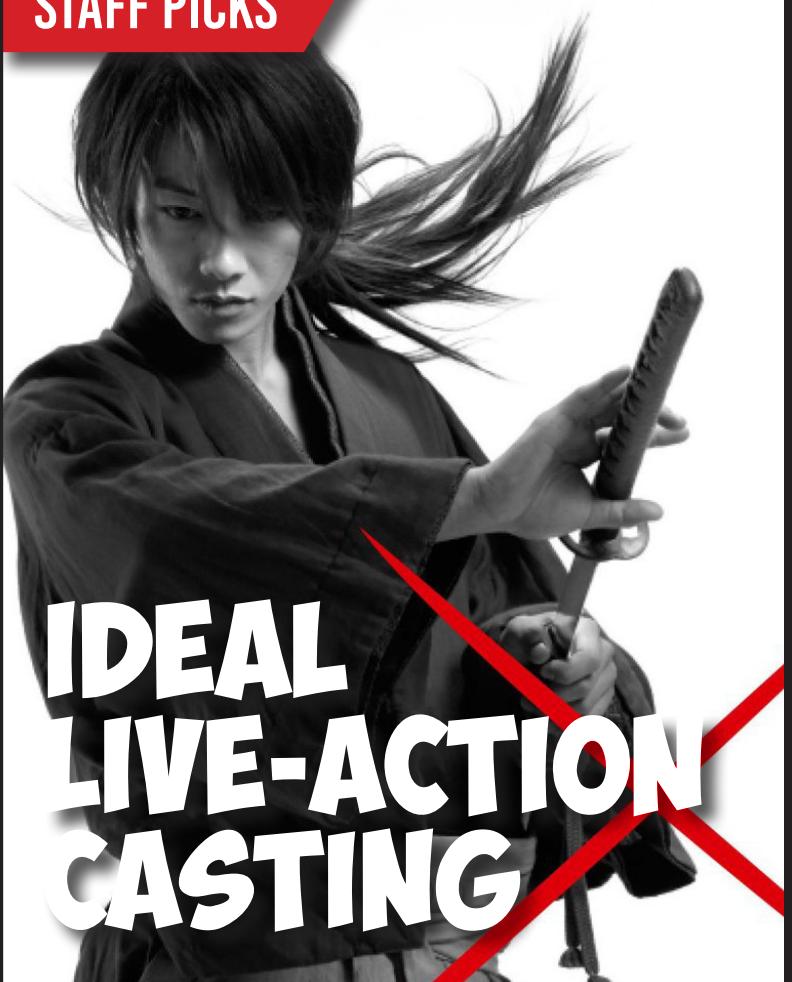
Junji Ito's horrific manga adventure about a small town obsessed with spiral shapes becomes an equally disturbing live-action film. The adaptation makes slight alterations to the personalities attached to the story, but the main tenets remain the same—a young woman recalls a strange phenomenon in her town involving grotesque and paranormal occurrences based on spiral shapes.

Giant snails with human appendages climb up buildings and clouds start to exclusively form spiral shapes in the sky. The two versions of *Uzumaki* are negotiable between each other, but they both work, unlike *Death Note*. Although the manga retains the impact, story, and disgusting details only accessible in manga form, the live-action uses the stillness of real actors, stiff and uncomfortable faces, to introduce a new aspect of the horror.

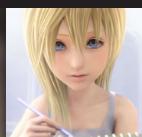
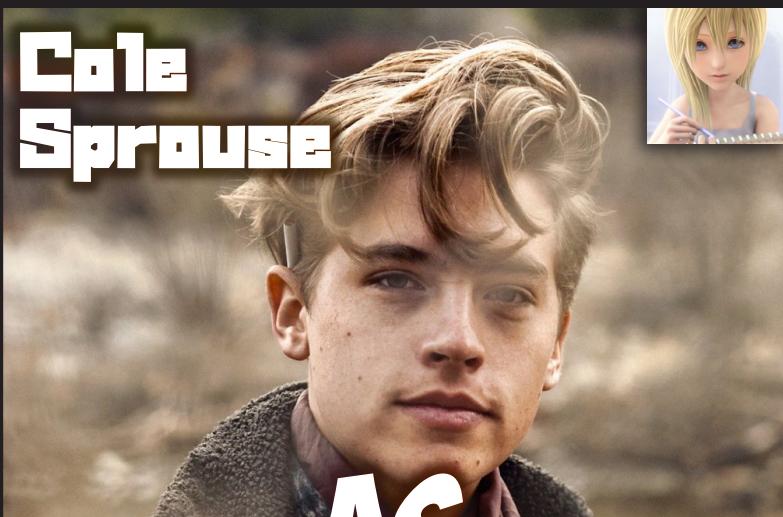
The citizens of the live-action are more disturbing by way of the uncanny valley; no doubt they're human, but their actions and twitchy faces really sell the live-action as an interesting twist. The bad CGI on the more supernatural moments of the film only direct more attention to the creepy denizens.

This adaptation is "Ugly." It is a complicated and negotiated adaptation of a great manga into a decent film. Despite swaying from the source material various times, it makes it work with what it has. The two are close enough to be recognizable, but far enough for someone to have a preference for one over the other and to not be wrong either way. It's merely two different ways of telling the same, good story.

STAFF PICKS



Cole
Sprouse



Zac
Efron



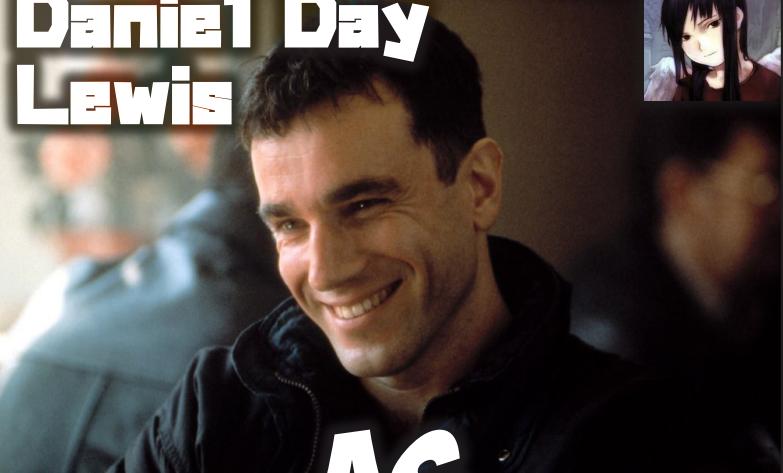
As



50
Cent



Daniel Day
Lewis



AS



Arthur
ARTHUR

AS



Spike Spiegel
COWBOY BEBOP

Eminem



Dwayne
Johnson



As



Cyrus
POKÉMON

As



Nappa
DRAGON BALL Z

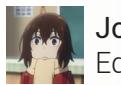
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GREED-LING
Full Metal Alchemist