LIBERTY UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF DIVINITY

Apologetics and Popular Culture Phenomena: A Critique of Ted Turnau's Method Concerning

Anime

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by

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Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION

"I thought if she saw what death looked like, she'd stop saying she wanted to kill herself. I didn't

know what else to do."[1]

These ominous words are uttered by Nishimiya Yuzuru in conversation with Ishida

Shoya, explaining the pictures of dead animals studding her walls. Such heavy dialogue is the

norm throughout *A Silent Voice*, an anime film centered on bullying, suicide, and broken

relationships. Yuzuru, of course, is concerned with the suicidal state of her sister, Nishimiya

Shoko, and in near morbid desperation takes photographs of deceased creatures to prevent her

death. One must wonder how the protagonist, Ishida, feels when entering the room. In many

ways, his story is paralleled by that of Nishimiya. He too possesses a strong desire to kill himself

and struggles greatly with his past, especially as it relates to his earlier relationship with her.

This broken dynamic travels back to elementary school, where Ishida finds himself as a

popular individual within a flourishing friend group. Interrupting this flow of everyday life was

the insertion of Nishimiya, a deaf girl who transferred into his class. Despite attempts to

communicate with people using notebooks and sign language, she begins to be bullied by the

other students. Ishida is no exception to this, and in many ways, pushes it farther than anyone

else (broaching even physical abuse and psychological torture), to the point where Nishimiya is

forced to leave the school.[2]

The movie then fast-forwards several years, to when both Nishimiya and Ishida have

finished high school. This time, however, circumstances are different. Because of his bullying,

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[1]*A Silent Voice*, directed by Noako Yamada, screenplay by Reiko Yoshida, featuring Miyu Irino and Saori Hayami (Kyoto Animation, 2016), Stream (Shochiku, 2016).

[2]The viewer is left feeling bad for Nishimiya, because of her overwhelming desire to fit in, be loved, and to have a friend, only to have all attempts brutally rejected.

Ishida himself has become bullied, and has been outcast by people fearful of his reputation. He can't even meet the eyes of others because of self-hate for how awful he's been, and the harassment and negligence of others have reinforced this notion. The film subtly portrays these broken relationships by placing an X in front of everyone's faces. Anytime Ishida regains a connection, the X peels off like paper and flutters to the ground.

Because of his depression and feelings of being unloved, Ishida intends to kill himself. Before doing so, however, he realizes the need to make amends with Nishimiya. Thus, he enters a strained and psychologically fraught friendship with her. *A Silent Voice*, in many ways, is centered around the basic human need for connection. Ishida attempted to make friends by bullying; he wanted to keep friends by bullying. Nishimiya has only desired to have loving relationships with the people around her. One of the most potent effects of the film is its ability to generate compassion for the bullied and the bully. The humanity within everyone is highlighted and brought to the forefront.

Amidst his struggling connection with Nishimiya, Ishida begins trying to make restitution/atonement for his actions, recognizing this as the best way to be at peace. The path of doing so is filled with discomfort and pain, as Ishida manages to disturb many of the relationships he yearns to heal. A vivid example of this is when everyone involved in harassing Nishimiya gathers, at the behest of Ishida, to apologize for previous offenses. The situation quickly devolves into an arguing match, with each member attempting to shift blame from themselves. This ends when Ishida finally breaks down, falling to the ground, and begins calling out everyone's contribution to the bullying.

The gathering is exceptionally hurtful for Nishimiya, who sees herself as the source of disharmony for a group that was once so close. Because of her disability, she has erected a self-

narrative of being a cultural outlier, someone who continuously ruins things for others. And because of this, on the night of a fireworks festival, Nishimiya attempts suicide by jumping off a balcony. However, the person who ends up falling is Ishida, as he rushes to prevent the death of his friend and now lies comatose in a hospital bed.

Naturally, Nishimiya is distraught over the events (especially after being slapped by her mom) and only further desires to kill herself. These feelings meet their peak in a wonderful, stressful scene where Ishida, waking in the middle of the night, rushes to meet Nishimiya on a bridge, where she kneels crying. There they talk about him bullying her, and finally, Ishida manages to apologize properly for what he did as a child. In heart-rending fashion, Nishimiya falls to the ground, wailing that everything was her fault and that "things would get better if I were gone." To which Ishida quietly replies with this beautiful line, "Don't cry Nishimiya…hey, Nishimiya… I want to help you live." Gently grabbing her hands, he clasps them together, which in Japanese Sign Language means – friend.

At this moment, Ishida apologizes and takes accountability for what he did. He even extends this notion further and earnestly apologizes to those involved in the affair. As a result, in the movie's final scene, Ishida is invited to his high school's end-of-year festival. As he walks through the crowd, Ishida stares at his feet, X's attached to the faces of everyone around him. The music gradually builds, and then, gently, Ishida begins hearing the crowd's noise. Suddenly, every sensation rushes upon him, and he sees his friends, sees his family. Sees the people whose love he had a hard time accepting. There is a beautiful moment where Ishida looks up and realizes for the first time that he is forgiven and loved. He finally accepts other people's love and, after such a long time, lets them into his heart. Tears begin streaming down his face as the X's cascade from the crowd around him. He forgave himself.

"And depression doesn't go away, doesn't lift for most people, it's something they still have to wrestle with. It's still there. But there is this capacity to feel again and there's a capacity to experience joy… the cure for so many things is connection."[3] *A Silent Voice* is a beautiful story told through heaviness. It is a messy, complex anime that prides itself not on entertainment but on creating empathy within the viewer. The music, produced by Kensuke Ushio, is gorgeous, practically telling the entire story itself.[4] While most scholarly works focus on the intersection of disability and bullying portrayed throughout the film, it foremost is a story about connection.[5] The thesis of human existence is the collection of relationships shared with others. It emphatically shows the cathartic ability of forgiveness and atonement within fellowship.[6]

Statement of the Problem

A Silent Voice, and more broadly, anime (the media form to which this film belongs), are known as "popular culture." This term can be defined *as "*made up of cultural works whose

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[3]Alan Seawright and Jonathan Decker, "Therapist Reacts to A SILENT VOICE," September 7, 2021, Youtube video, 22:52, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h8VHaNeuw3o&t=1209s. Much content here is derived from this video.

[4]Paul Ocone, "Dis/joint: Unification of Sound, Music, Narrative, and Animation in Liz and the Blue Bird," *Mechademia* 13, no. 2 (2021): 26-46.

[5]Amanda Weber, "A Silent Voice (Koe no Katachi): The Intersection of Gender and Disability in Japanese Society," *East Asian Studies Presentations* 2, (2021); Drew Berkowitz, *Framing School Violence and Bullying in Young Adult Manga: Fictional Perspectives on a Pedagogical Problem* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020); Akihiko Ieshima, Yi-Shan Tsai, Brent Allison, and Tomoya Yamamoto, "Positive use of visual media to understand and prevent bullying: The popularity and possibility of manga," *Tackling Cyberbullying and Related Problems*, ed. Yuichi Toda and Insoo Oh, 46-65 (New York, NY; Routledge, 2021); Gracie Marsden, "American and Taiwanese Conceptions of Suicide in Emily X. R. Pan's *The Astonishing Color of After*," *Narrative Art and the Politics of Health*, ed. Neil Brooks and Sarah Blanchette (New York, NY: Anthem Press, 2021); Agnieszka Kiejziewicz, "Bullying, Death and Traumatic Identity : The Taboo of School Violence in New Japanese Cinema," *Maska* 39, no. 3 (2018): 75–89.

[6]Considering the small controversy that erupted, it should be noted that a more literal translation of 聲の形 (Hepburn romanization: *Koe no Katachi*) is "The Shape of Voice," rather than "A Silent Voice." The latter title has greater conventional use, and therefore will be the term used throughout this thesis.

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media, genres, or venues tend to be widespread and widely received in our everyday world."[7]

"Popular culture" includes entities such as Netflix, Crunchyroll, movies, comics, manga, amusement parks, concerts, fast food franchises, video games, YouTube, advertisements, journalism, celebrities, news networks, etc. Like an influential friend constantly whispering in one's ear, these semiotic phenomena constitute an ocean of material, pressures, and ideas that flow around people's everyday lives. People are fish in water, adept at navigating through this ubiquitous environment that serves to orient their basic conceptions of the world. As Kelton Cobb states, it is from "this plethora of material whole generations now attempt through *bricolage* to invest life with meaning and find a justification for their lives."[8] More than ever, communities spend time plugged into the media world of popular culture, only aiding its all-pervasive and influential presence.[9]

As one would naturally expect, the assumptions and attitudes of the culture people live in shape and orient them to a radical degree. Gone is the concept of the neutral, unattached actor, who is sovereign to the conditioning of history, identity, and tradition. Culture develops worlds of meaning through which people are immersed (subsist) and interact in.[10] These "worlds" provide interpretive frameworks that mold believing, desiring, and performance. They are the "sensed context in which we develop our beliefs" and affections that have "sunk to the level of

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[7]Ted Turnau, *Popologetics: Popular Culture in Christian Perspective* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2012), 6. "Popular culture," (and anime, for that matter) is a notoriously difficult term to define. Many cultural theorists would take issue with the preliminary definition that has been put forth. More analysis will be devoted to the subject in Chapter 2.

[8]Kelton Cobb, *Blackwell Guide to Popular Culture Theology and Popular Culture* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 7.

[9]Ibid.

[10]Kevin Vanhoozer, "What is Everyday Theology? How and Why Christians Should Read Culture," *Everyday Theology*, ed. Kevin Vanhoozer, Charles Anderson, and Michael Sleasman (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), 38.

such an unchallenged framework, something we have trouble often thinking ourselves outside of, even as an imaginative exercise."[11] This occurs not only in broader cultural spheres (national, ethnic, virtual, etc.) but also in the shared environment, material, and conventions of everyday life. Through continual bombardment of values and meaning, people begin to be subtly cultivated toward what philosophers call the transcendentals of life: that which is good, true, and beautiful.[12] "It is the cumulative effect of viewing the world portrayed in the popular arts that has the power to persuade – over time and with the influence of many, many films, TV shows, and CDs."[13] As such, works of popular culture serve to "colonize" imaginations by structuring the very existence of collective humanity and its habits of thinking and acting in the world.[14]

The potential ramifications of everyday culture's cultivating power are great in scope and magnitude.[15] On the one hand, concerns emerge about the ready appropriation of popular material and attitudes by Christian congregations that prove antithetical to Scriptural thought.[16] More specifically, Andrew Root (drawing from the understandings of Jean Baudrillard) argues that an image-laden world serves to "liquefy and thin out… very consciousness, making it harder… to construct meaning that connects to experiences and relationships outside the image-based mediated machines themselves."[17] This growing inability to process meaningful

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[11]Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 549.

[12]Vanhoozer, *What is Everyday Theology?* 40-46.

[13]William Romanowski, *Eyes Wide Open: Looking for God in Popular Culture* (Grand Rapids: Brazos, 2007), 31-32.

[14]Vanhoozer, *What is Everyday Theology?* 47.

[15]"Everyday culture" and "popular culture" are not necessarily synonymous nomenclature. Further in the thesis they will be disentangled, but for our purposes in Chapter 1 they may be considered synonymous.

[16]James K.A Smith, *The Devil Reads Derrida and Other Essays on the University, the Church, Politics, and the Arts* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2009), xii.

connections between symbols and reality highlights how faith is formed or disassociated in the marketplace of images, a space governed by the influence of the screen.[18] Further, considering how culture-proper functions as a norm for theology's construction,[19] everyday culture is also an important context for theological reflection.[20]

On the other hand, everyday culture also affects those who reside in the secular realm. Like church congregations, non-believers are constantly formed and programmed by the indirect orientations of popular media. These cultural frameworks shape how a person engages in a particular issue, interprets data, and receives explanations, among other things.[21] A keen understanding of their derivative influences is necessary if one desires dialogue in this media-saturated era. Successful gospel proclamation, therefore, is greatly aided by a working literacy of the popular sphere.[22]

Of what relation are these notions to anime like *A Silent Voice*? Like all film and television series, anime is a popular culture product. This is because of its impermanent and widespread nature, fulfilling the needs of an ever-expanding market.[23] More accurately, it can be

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[17]Andrew Root, "A Screen Based World: Finding the Real in the Hyper-Real," *Word & World* 32, no. 3 (2012): 238.

[18]Matthew Wonjoon Lee, "Paul's Culturally Contextualized Apologetics," PhD Diss., Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2020.

[19]Kathryn Tanner, *Theories of Culture: A New Agenda for Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1997.

[20]Gordon Lynch, *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture* (Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishing, 2005), 97.

[21]Joshua Chatraw and Mark Allen, *Apologetics at the Cross* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2018), 196.

[22]Vanhoozer, *What is Everyday Theology?* 52.

[23]Susan Napier, *Anime from* Akira *to* Howls Moving Castle*: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation* (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2005), 3.

thought of as global popular culture.[24] One cannot overstate its meteoric rise to ubiquity internationally and domestically (U.S.). According to Roland Kelts, anime is the biggest cultural "invasion" in the United States since the Beatles in the twentieth century.[25] The transition from a primarily Japanese media form to a U.S. staple can only be accurately described as a boom.[26]

Despite this, the ubiquity of a particular media form does not necessarily demand attention be paid to it. However, because anime is a popular culture text with communicative ability and narratological complexity, it accesses many of the same concerns (stated above) as other everyday phenomena.[27] Given how film forms and is emulated by its audience, these ideas and practices tend to ingrain themselves into the embodied existence of their recipients. Any popular culture form is ultimately participatory. By engaging with the medium of anime, fans absorb values and ideas of a worldview framework at an intimate level. These engagements have a slow, subtle, but profound effect on their imaginations and worship.[28] While often insightful and helpful, anime can also present counternarratives to Christian teachings that "take hold" of its audience.

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[24]Manuel Hernandez-Perez, "Looking into the "Anime Global Popular" and the "Manga Media": Reflections on the Scholarship of a Transnational and Transmedia Industry" *Arts* 8, no. 2 (2019): 57.

[25]Roland Kelts, "Soft Power Hard Truths: Overseas Anime Markey Online Only," *The Daily Yomiyuri*, 2011.

[26]Michal Daliot-Bul, and Nissim Otmazgin, *The Anime Boom in the United States* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Center, 2017), 2.

[27]Matthew Millsap, "Playing with God: A theoludological framework for dialogue with video games," PhD Diss., Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, 2014.

[28]Antonia Levi, "The Americanization of Anime and Manga: Negotiating Popular Culture." *Cinema Anime: Critical Engagement With Japanese Animations*, ed. Steve Brown, 43-65 (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 61.

Yet despite these concerns, there has been little to no academic engagement on how evangelicals should navigate the collision of differing (but interlaced) worlds.[29] This has been especially apparent in recent times, where:

> A generation ago serious theological thinkers such as Paul Tillich, Reinhold Niebuhr, Martin Buber, and many others, played significant roles in the contemporary disputes and discussions about the meaning and impact on society of politics, the arts, literature, science, and technology. Since that time dramatic changes have occurred in the social order. A whole new complex and interconnected social-cultural situation confronts theology—yet theologians seem to be rendered mute in face of it. The silence of the theologians has consequences. Thinkers who do try to understand and to interpret what is happening in our world today do not look to theology to assist them in the task of making sense of our cultural and social lives.[30]

Having such a void in the literature has its consequences, apart from not addressing the concerns noted above. For one, this gap has been filled by the overzealous Christian Right, who tends to propagate an unconstructive, polarizing opposition to certain aspects of secular culture (or worse, weaponize it for political purposes).[31] There is also a risk of simply not understanding everyday culture due to a lack of perspectives on the subject.

Further, Christian engagement with popular culture seems to represent a ripe opportunity for apologetics. The everyday sphere shapes worldview and worship in ways often antithetical to cruciform lives. It also is the hub of activity through which American missional dialogue takes

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[29]Jessica DeCou, "Parables of Freedom: Toward a Barthian Pneumatology of Culture for Engaging Popular Culture in the 21st Century," PhD Diss., University of Chicago, 2012.

[30]David Klemm and William Klink, "Constructing and Testing Theological Models," *Zygon* 39, no. 3 (2003): 496.

[31]Decou, *Parables of Freedom*, 7. A poignant (and perhaps extreme) example of this could be the Christian Right's early reaction to Pokemon, arguing that it "contains Satanism" whereby Pikachu's tail is "in the shape of the satanic Z" and Mewtwo's outstretched fingers clearly mean "hail Satan." Jarvis Johnson, "Jarvis Johnson & Kurtis Conner React to Satanism In Pokémon (ft. Ruxin34)," January 13, 2022, Youtube video, 58:34, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ZtQGXY3KT0. Such misrepresenting and sensationalist responses only serve to delegitimate Christianity in the eyes of others, whereby "one of the reasons that theology has made a limited impact on wider cultural debates is that, fairly or unfairly, religious responses to popular culture are sometimes perceived to be reactionary, superficial, or ill-informed." Lynch, *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*, 111.

place. Understanding this matrix enables believers to persuade others to the faith more efficaciously. Both these points demand some form of apologetical engagement with popular culture. While several works have approached popular culture from a theological standpoint,[32] there is yet to be any significant work done in the field of apologetics. To this date, only one scholarly work has been produced in this area of study: Ted Turnau's *Popologetics*. This thesis will engage such a cultural gap through a critique of Turnau's work. His book should be appreciated for trailblazing the application of apologetics to popular culture. It is fair, astute, relevant, and lays a reliable foundation for future research. However, the method which Turnau puts forth could be better served through increased precision and awareness to the contributions of "anime studies." Issues like these serve to bridge a more specialized yet prevalent form of media to the project of apologetics.

To summarize our problem: Popular culture phenomena slowly influence and cultivate people over time. While this is inevitable and not necessarily harmful when approached correctly, it typically results in several problems. American congregations often appropriate popular culture material that is antithetical to Christian teaching. This can both disconnect and shape them away from proper faith formation. Often, theological reflection is situated in the context of popular culture, affecting its formation. Yet the everyday also presents an opportunity for gospel engagement. An efficacious understanding of popular culture enables better missional activity. As a part of this matrix, anime is an increasingly ubiquitous media form that contains material simultaneously insightful and potentially antithetical to a "gospel-centered outlook."

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[32]See Vanhoozer *What is Everyday Theology?*, Lynch *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*, Cobb *Blackwell Guide to Popular Culture Theology and Popular Culture*, Steve Turner, *Popcultured: Thinking Christianly About Style, Media, and Entertainment* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2013), Nancy Usselmann and Craig Detweiler, A Sacred Look: Becoming Cultural Mystics: Theology of Popular Culture (Eugene, OR: Cascade Books, 2018), etc.

Many of the concerns above about general popular culture texts also apply to anime. There is precious little academic material in this area, and what currently exists requires refinement to constitute an acceptable apologetical method concerning anime. Therefore, a solution is necessary to address these needs.

Purpose of the Study

Considering the above problems, the purpose of this thesis will be thus: a critique of Turnau's method concerning anime. Turnau proposes a five-step diagnostic approach to critically engage this form of animation. The five parts are: (1) What's the story? (2) Where am I [the world of the text]? (3) What is good, true, and beautiful about it? (4) What's false, ugly, and perverse about it (and how do I subvert that)? (5) How does the gospel apply here? These steps can be subsequently broken down into two categories: anime as a cultural text to be "read" or "interpreted" before the performance of apologetics.

This thesis shall focus on the first element of Turnau's methodology. This is not to say that the second phase, the conduction of apologetics, is unimportant. However, to deeply understand an object of study, one must first develop a rigorous methodology regarding its investigation. As Gordon Lynch states, "Asking theological questions about popular culture therefore requires us not only to identify the values, beliefs, practices, and experiences of popular culture, but also to think critically about these in relation to our understandings of the absolute."[33] For our purposes, "theology" here can be replaced with "Christian apologetics," that is, the art and science of presenting an appeal and defense for the faith.[34] The risks of reading a cultural text "inadequately" is an unconstructive caricature that only serves to make irrelevant

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[33]Gordon Lynch, *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*, 98. While some of Lynch's conceptions of theology can be debated, his basic ethic here is excellent.

[34]Chatraw and Allen, *Apologetics at the Cross*, 17.

any conclusions derived from it, especially to target communities. Therefore, a necessity for a productive performance of apologetics is proper discernment. A central claim of this thesis is that the material and technology of anime have processes that affect how viewers inhabit and orient themselves in the world, which in turn influences their formative practices and habits. Turnau's preoccupation with a cognitive understanding of narrative tends to obfuscate the functional impact of media forms. A "full" understanding of discernment includes not only how anime behaves as a text but also how they work and how they work on the world.

Turnau's methodology can be further enhanced by including work produced by experts specializing in "reading" or "interpreting" anime. Many tools have been developed for analyzing Japanese animation within the field of "anime studies."[35] For instance, ethnography, reception, aesthetics, art history, literary, and performative approaches have all established themselves as legitimate scholarly outlets for reading Japanese animation.[36] Exploring each one as it relates to Turnauian methodology would be beyond the scope of this thesis. Instead, his methodology will be critiqued using the thought of Thomas Lamarre. His work is formative in anime studies, and very few serious works are constructed without citing him at least once. While Turnau utilizes guidelines involving narratological criticism, medium, and formal film elements to interpret anime, his sole use of such is critiqued by Lamarre. He argues for the concept of an "animetic machine" that defines the technological/material characteristics of anime (such as the multiplanar image, distributive field of vision, modulation, exploded projection, character animation, etc.)

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[35]Jaqueline Berndt, "Anime in Academia: Representative Object, Media Form, and Japanese Studies" *Arts* 7, no. 4 (2018): 1-3.

[36]Rayna Denison, "Christopher Bolton, Interpreting Anime Thomas Lamarre, The Anime Ecology: A Genealogy of Television, Animation and Game Media," *Screen* 60, no. 3 (2019): 492; Jolyon Baraka Thomas, *Drawing on Tradition: Manga, Anime, and Religion in Contemporary Japan* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 2012), 8; Stevie Suan, "Anime's Performativity: Diversity through Conventionality in a Global Media-Form," *Animation* 12, no. 1 (2017): 62.

and the subsequent meanings generated by these effects.[37] Each of the previous points either is

not addressed by Turnau or, at their core, opposes some feature of his methodology. Critiquing

Turnau through Lamarre will aid the project of apologetics in four manners. (1) It will sharpen

Turnau's methodology concerning anime, allowing it to be better employed, (2) create headway

into how popular culture apologetics should appropriate tools from other fields, (3) specifically

investigate *how* one can read anime apologetically, and (4) remove stigmatizations surrounding

anime while breaking new ground and operating as a foundation/gateway for future work in the

field.

Introductory Issues

Brief Definition of Anime

"Anime" is a notoriously difficult term to define. We might liken our experience in this

pursuit to Augustine's musings about time, where he famously declared, "What, then, is time? If

no one asks me, I know; if I want to explain it to someone who asks me, I don't know."[38] Similar

to expressions like "religion" or "culture," many of anime's factors are too diverse and complex

to be captured in a simple description that identifies a common condition. Such issues are well

articulated by Thomas Lamarre, who states:

> In sum, on the contemporary scene, anime is clearly a baggy term, which ranges from
> designating animation in general, to singling out a distinctively Japanese style, concept or
> culture, to delineating a specific lineage of television animation within Japan (in contrast
> to manga eiga or to dōga, for instance). The protean nature of the term anime is a
> function of the vast and unruly variety of animations produced in, for or by Japan. Even
> in its most constrained usage, anime still comprises so many different forms, formats,
> genres, franchise strategies and markets that it is impossible to define it in any one simple
> way. Different takes on anime imply different sets of interests and divergent worldviews,

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[37]Thomas Lamarre, *The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2009); see also Marc Steinburg, *Anime's Media Mix: Franchising Toys and Characters in Japan* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

[38]Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. Maria Boulding (Hyde Park, NY: New City Press, 2012), 295.

and frequently they mobilise those interests or worldviews explicitly. As such, a simple neutral definition of what anime is, is impossible, as is a neutral account of the relationship between anime and cinema.[39]

Because of this, some authors prefer to speak of anime in terms of "where it is being screened" as opposed to "what is it."[40] Others prefer a meta-analysis of its various conceptions, seeking a "sense" of *how* anime's meanings are used.[41] Some still argue for a "suspensionist" viewpoint, whereby anime has no definition apart from a fandom's cultural dynamics.[42]

As tempting as some of these options may be, anime cannot be relativized to mean anything. While diverse, it is a category of media that can be given structure to make itself meaningful.[43] While this structure might not be *singular* or *neutral*, it still can be descriptive enough for an "idea" of anime to be recognizable. Perhaps that is because, despite the variegation of its constituent aspects, some broad yet undefinable/amorphous phenomenon(s) finds themselves incongruently common to anime, allowing us to distinguish between it and other entertainment. The question then becomes, how or what kind of structure can be applied to

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[39]Thomas Lamarre, "Anime: Compositing and switching: An intermedial history of Japanese anime," *The Japanese Cinema Book*, ed. Hideaki Fujiki and Alastair Phillips, 310-325 (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020), 310-311. Manga eiga essentially translates to "manga films." Manga dōga means "manga moving pictures." Further terms include *anime-shon* (animation), *anime manga*, *komikku eiga* (comic book films), *manga fuirumu* (manga films), *bideo gemu anime* (video game anime), etc. Tze-Yue Hu, *Frames of Anime: Culture and Image Building* (Aberdeen: Hong Kong University Press, 2010), 101. These have been the different terms used throughout history to refer to anime, along with the infamous "Japanimation." Toshiya Ueno, "Techno-Orientalism and Media-Tribalism: On Japanese Animation and Rave Culture," *Third Text* 47, no. 13 (1999): 97.

[40]Stephen Brown, "Screening Anime," *Cinema Anime: Critical Engagement with Japanese Animations*, ed. Steve Brown, 1-22 (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 2.

[41]Rayna Denison, *Anime: A Critical Introduction* (New York, NY: Bloomsbury Publishing, 2015), 14.

[42]Matt Hills, *Fan Cultures* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), xiii.

[43]Brian Ruh, "Conceptualizing Anime and the Database Fantasyscape," *Mechademia* 9, no. 1 (2014): 165.

anime? For our thesis, we shall be concerned with finding a definition of anime suitable for the intentions of this study.

We shall prefer a broad idea to be as inclusive as possible. This will account for the many media platforms, fan activities, aesthetic conventions, and modes of production involved in anime. It is ultimately a medium, although one that can be termed, as Jonathon Clements claims, a "discursive genealogy." The interaction of delivery systems, cultural context, and technology can periodically transform anime along new trajectories at specific points in history. These radical changes do not erase existing forms as much as they add to them.[44] As such, any definition of anime is a contemporary "snapshot" of a process supported by a database of historical construction.

With these ideas in mind, our definition will be quite simple: "*Anime* refers to animation from Japan that tends to share recognizable formal and functional similarities which help audiences identify them as such."[45] While not particularly inventive, it emphasizes two points of contact, that of "animation" and "Japan," which allows us to simultaneously focus on large swathes of animation technologies localized to a particular geography. This will be crucial to us as we evaluate Turnau's method through the "animetic" eyes of Lamarre and Steingburg. A disadvantage is that this definition "can still fall apart at the quantum level, depending on how much we want to quibble about the nature of 'animation' and to what extent it can come 'from Japan.'"[46] But, as Clements notes through Foucault, all disciplines will fall apart under their own

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[44]Jonathon Clements, *Anime*: *A History* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013), 3.

[45]Jonathon Clements and Helen McCarthy, *The Anime Encyclopedia: A Guide to Japanese Animation since 1917* (San Francisco, CA: Stone Bridge Press, 2015), np. Thomas Lamarre, "From Animation to *Anime*: Drawing Movements and Moving Drawings," *Japan Forum* 14, no. 2 (2002): 329-367.

[46]Clements, *Anime*, 2. It is being increasingly recognized that there are transnational producers of anime outside of Japan. South Korea and China posture as the most prominent figures here, with some products even rivaling their Japanese counterparts, such as *Link Click* (2021) or *Heaven's Official Blessing* (2020).

weight if exposed to an excessive amount of hypercriticality and deconstruction.[47] Given this,

our "simple" definition will be sufficient for the task.

Limiting Factors

Several limiting factors will be placed on the thesis. The first is restricting our scope to

only "animations from Japan." Anime is part of a giant media-mix involving manga, video

games, toys, and other items. Each aspect is irreducibly connected to anime and plays a role in its

formation and dispersal. While important to study in their own rights, including such entities

would only enlarge our project beyond what is feasible. Therefore, even if something like manga

significantly impacts the anime (as is the case with *A Silent Voice*), it will receive a footnote at

best. The second limiting factor involves geography. We will be focusing our attention on the

American reception of anime. While this form of entertainment is transnational, piercing the

boundaries of countries across the globe, the natural context of our thesis is in North America.

Not only in place of writing but Turnau and Lamarre both assume American audiences and

popular culture forms when constructing their ideas. Therefore, we will assume an American

context for this project.[48] Finally, only the thought of Lamarre and Steinburg will be interacted

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[47]Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2002), 231-231, cited in Clements, *Anime*, 1. Perhaps the best response to our definition is that it is ultimately "irrefutable" given its wide breadth. Carl Silvio, "Animated Bodies and Cybernetic Selves: The Animatrix and the Question of Posthumanity." *Cinema Anime*, ed. Steve Brown, 113-139 (New York, NY: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006), 135. However, as noted above, there is debate surrounding if anime needs to originate from Japan, or if even all animation from Japan can be considered "anime" (Claymation, stop-motion, etc.). This effectively provides ground for challenging the definition presented above.

[48]Most scholarship on anime tends to emphasize the cultural and economic exchanges between Japan and the United States. Brian Ruh, "Conceptualizing Anime and the Database Fantasyscape," *Mechademia* 9, no. 1 (2014): 167. "Where studies of anime as a global phenomenon do exist, they tend to understand the globalization of anime as its Americanization." Rayna Denison, "The Global Markets for Anime: Miyazaki Hayao's Spirited Away (2001)," *Japanese Cinema: Texts and Contexts*, ed. Alastair Philips and Julian Stringer, 308-322 (New York, NY: Routledge, 2007), 308. This has the unfortunate effect of erasing other nations presence, especially those with historical connections to anime (East Asia, Australia, Europe, etc.). Such critiques are valid, and further efforts should be made to rectify these concerns. It remains, however, that the intersection between Japanese and American popular culture is the driving force behind much of the medium's international popularity. Ruh, *Conceptualizing Anime and the Database Fantasyscape*, 167. Several Japanese scholars and film directors have highlighted this unique relationship between Japan and the United States when

with Turnau. As mentioned above, when interpreting anime, many different considerations must be examined. These include issues of ethnography, industry dynamics, directorial intention, etc., that Lamarre and Steinburg do not cover. As necessary as these issues are, they would again expand the grounds of this thesis too far. Since this is the case, strict adherence to Lamarre and Steinburg will be preferred.

Importance of the Problem

The importance of our problem is comprised of many interrelated, dynamic parts. The following information will therefore be presented in modules to be contextualized into an overall argument at the end. The sections that will be covered include the popularity of anime, the psychological aspects of anime fans, and the religious formation within anime.

Popularity of Anime

As mentioned above, anime is increasingly a ubiquitous phenomenon not only in the United States but worldwide as well. Its global market size as of 2022 was USD 26.89 billion, with a forecasted revenue of USD 56.39 billion in 2030 (9.7 CAGR), up from predictions made with 2020 data.[49] In terms of domestic markets, the golden age of anime occurred between 1998

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it comes to anime. As Azuma Hiroki states, "the history of otaku culture is one of adaption – of how to 'domesticate' American culture." Hiroki Azuma, *Otaku: Japan's Database Animals*, trans. Jonathan Abel and Shion Kono (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2009), 13. "To Oshii and Ueno this deliberate de-Japanizing of the characters is in keeping with their view of anime as offering an alternative world to its Japanese audience. In fact Oshii suggests that this is part of a deliberate effort by modern Japanese to "evade the fact that they are Japanese," quoting a provocative statement by the director Miyazaki Hayao to the effect that "the Japanese hate their own faces." Oshii sees the Japanese animators and their audiences looking "on the other side of the mirror," particularly at America, and drawing from that world to create, "separate from the reality of present day Japan, some other world" (*isekai*)." Napier, *Anime from* Akira *to* Howls Moving Castle, 25-26. Hilariously, Napier's mention of "isekai" (異世界, literally "other world") here has proven to be prophetic, as a popular and somewhat-controversial genre of anime based around this concept gained steam in the 2010's with the inception of *Sword Art Online* (2012).

[49]Precedence Research, *Anime Market (By Type: TV, Video, Movie, Internet Distribution, Music, Live Entertainment, and Others) - Global Industry Analysis, Size, Share, Growth, Trends, Regional Outlook, and Forecast 2021 – 2030* (Ontario: Precedence Research, 2021), https://www.precedenceresearch.com/anime-market; Grand View Research, *Anime Market Size, Share & Trends Analysis Report By Anime Type (T.V., Movie, Video, Internet Distribution, Merchandising, Music), By Region (MEA, Japan), And Segment Forecasts,*

to 2008, peaking at nearly USD 5 billion in 2003. That number dipped in later years due to

market saturation, coming in at USD 2.74 billion during the 2009 period.[50] This trend has

seemed to reverse in recent years. While U.S.-specific market share numbers have not emerged,

the overseas market (dominated by China and America) has snowballed since 2014, finally

overtaking Japan's market in 2021 (up 103.2% from the previous year).

[Figure 1, cited from Association of Japanese Animations]

[Figure 3] Comparison of Domestic and International Anime Markets (Broad Anime Market/Units of Hundred Million Yen)

Based on questionnaires conducted by the Association of Japanese Animations
※The annual average rate of Principal Global Indicators is adopted as the exchange rate.
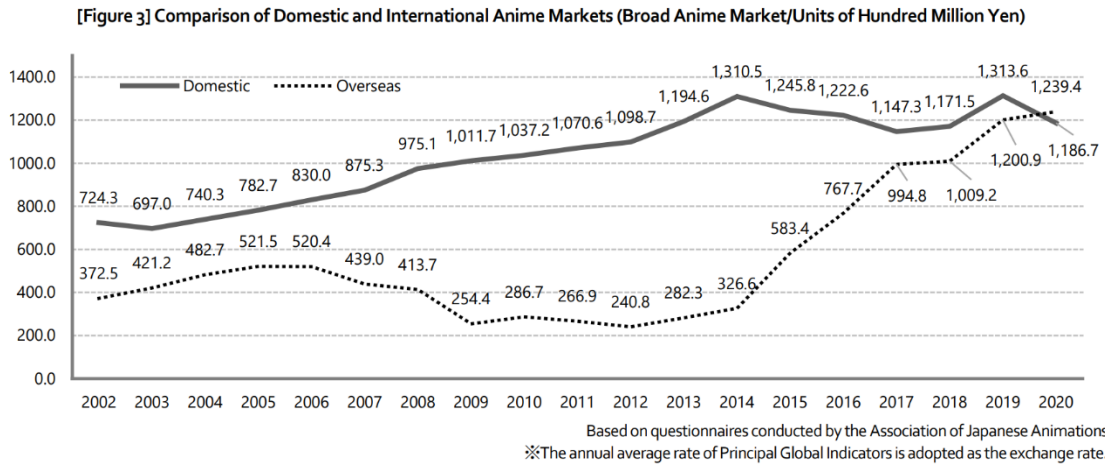
Given that the U.S. owns the highest number of streaming contracts of any country and is the

most enthusiastic market for anime in the world (.95 demand expressions per 100 capita[51]), it is

fair to say U.S. markets have seen a resurgence since 2009, contra Daliot-Bul and Otmazgin.[52]

2022 – 2030 (San Francisco, CA: Grand View Research, 2022) https://www.grandviewresearch.com/industry-analysis/anime-market.

[50]Daliot-Bul and Nissim Otmazgin, *The Anime Boom in the United States*, 2.

[51]A demand expression is the expressed total demand an audience has for a title within a market.

[52]Masuda Hiromichi et al., *Anime Industry Report 2021* (Tokyo: The Association of Japanese Animations, 2022), https://aja.gr.jp/english/japan-anime-data; Parrot Analytics, "The global content marketplace: Audience demand for anime," *Parrot Analytics*, last modified August 2018, https://www.parrotanalytics.com/insights/the-global-content-marketplace-audience-demand-for-anime/.

Anime is the third most-most demanded sub-genre in the world, trailing only crime and sitcom drama. According to consumer data, 36% of the world's total viewer base enjoyed watching anime in 2021 (up 24% from 2018). Anime streaming platforms, such as Crunchyroll and Netflix, have experienced extreme growth in recent years and do not look to slow down any time soon.[53] Among adults in America, 31% find anime somewhat favorable or better. Japanese animation is especially popular with younger people and has strong connections to Gen Z and 18-35-year-olds. As if to fulfill a stereotype: retired, white, conservative, Trump-supporting evangelicals are among the least likely to find anime favorable.[54] More data is available in Appendix A. Anime has also had a broader cultural impact, finding its way into U.S. toy markets, the music industry, big live-action films (*Kill Bill*, *The Matix Trilogy, Pacific Rim*, etc.), video games, etc.[55]

What do these numbers mean? They (1) show the incredible growth of anime and its impact upon America, (2) indicate a massive and pervasive fanbase not only in America but around the world, (3) these fanbases are willing to spend significant financial capital on anime, something that various companies reciprocate, (4) audiences devote significant amounts of time watching anime, (5) youths are highly receptive and involved with anime, (6) American children, in particular, are exposed anime and anime-related merchandise (think *Pokemon, Yu-Gi-Oh*, or

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[53]Parrot Analytics, "Growing Global Demand for Anime," *Parrot Analytics*, last modified October 2018, https://www.parrotanalytics.com/insights/growing-global-demand-for-anime-aug-2021/. Rory Gooderick, *Sony acquires Anime streaming service Crunchyroll for $1.175bn* (London: Ampere Analysis, 2021), https://www.ampereanalysis.com/insight/sony-acquires-anime-streaming-service-crunchyroll-for-1175bn; Netflix, *NETFLIX BETS BIG ON ASPIRATIONAL AND DIVERSE ANIME ADDING FIVE MAJOR PROJECTS* (Lost Gatos, CA: Netflix, 2020), https://about.netflix.com/en/news/netflix-animeslate. Specifically, Crunchyroll has seen an almost 100% year-on-year growth in subscribers over the past five years. Netflix reported that 100 million households globally chose to watch at least one anime title on their platform in 2020, growing at a 50% rate year-over-year.

[54]Morning Consult, *National Tracking Poll #200158 January 23-24, 2020* (New York, NY: Morning Consult, 2020), 78-80.

[55]Daliot-Bul and Otmazgin, *The Anime Boom in the United States,* 22.

Hello Kitty) that can form their most nostalgic memories, (7) the continued fascination of America with Japanese popular culture texts.[56] In other words, anime is a still-growing phenomenon that substantially influences the American population.

<div align="center">Psychology and Demographics of Anime Fans</div>

In many senses, anime fans are part of a broader transcultural fan community, that is, "a group in which people from many national, cultural, ethnic, gendered, and other personal backgrounds find a sense of connection across difference, engaging with each other through a shared interest."[57] The North American side of this fandom, which shall be our focus, is situated along a spectrum. Some people are highly devoted fans (*otaku*), while others may only have a passing interest in the subject.[58] Because of this wide range, we will focus on a general description of American anime enthusiasts that highlights common denominators pertinent to our study.

Perhaps a vastly misunderstood aspect of anime culture is that of isolation. Frequent stereotypes associated with fans are those of anti-social or lack social skills, hence the turn inward to anime worlds. Contrary to these notions, studies have shown that the anime fandom is

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[56]Daliot-Bul and Otmazgin, *The Anime Boom in the United States*, 22.

[57]Sandra Annett, *Anime Fan Communities: Transcultural Flows and Frictions* (New York, NY: Palgrave MacMillan, 2014), 6.

[58]*Otaku* generally refers to a dedicated fan of Japanese popular culture, particularly anime and manga. Often used pejoratively in 1980's Japan (especially after the famed Miyazaki incident), the term has gradually undergone a process of normalization. There is even evidence to suggest that "otaku culture" has been pushed externally by the Japanese government as part of the "Cool Japan" policy. Although there are many conceptually overlapping terms in the West, "otaku" or "nerd" is increasingly acceptable. Post Covid, there is even discussion about how the culture of *otaku* has permeated all levels of society, given a new obsession with knowledge, meaning-finding, and fellowship in knowledge. Perry Hinton, "Negotiating otaku : a social group, its social representations and the changing cultural context," *Papers on Social Representations*, 27, no. 2 (2018): 2.1-2.20. Susan Napier, "Introduction: New Formulations of Otaku," *Mechademia* 14, no.2 (2022): 1-6.

remarkably social and networked, involving online and offline connections.[59] Instead of being

passive consumers, anime fans tend to seek interaction with each other. This can take place

through a variety of venues. Like most contemporary communities, fans have developed rigorous

online ecosystems to connect and seek out new collaborative endeavors. Despite the current

predominance of online activities, anime fandom finds its origins in sharing recordings or "fan-

subbing," manga, artwork, and fanfiction at in-person ensembles. This has led to the current

norm of conventions, meet-ups, and school anime clubs.[60] While online engagement sometimes

can be derided as an inferior form of social engagement, it is becoming increasingly harder to

deny its efficacy in developing relationships, especially post-Covid. Both online and convention-

going fans listed anime as important in maintaining their friend groups.[61]

Not only has significant inter-relationality been demonstrated in the anime community,

but it has also shown surprising mobility in external affiliations. While no dedicated studies have

been produced highlighting how anime fans interact with the outside world, there are some

indications that the fandom does not seclude itself. For instance, one of the significant ways that

someone becomes an anime fan is through the introduction of another friend. Access to a local

anime club also strongly influenced whether a person became an anime fan.[62] Whatever the case,

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[59]Lawrence Eng, "Anime And Manga Fandom As Networked Culture," *Fandom Unbound: Otaku Culture in a Connected World*, ed. Mizuko Ito, Daisuke Okabe and Izumi Tsuji, 158-178 New Haven: Yale University Press, 2012), 158.

[60]Reyson et al., *Transported to Another World: The Psychology of Anime Fans* (Commerce, TX: International Anime Research Project, 2021), 247-248. Victoria Berndt, "Anime Fan-Oriented Works: Encountering Fan Narratives in Anime Crimes Division and Its North American Contexts." *Mechademia* 14, no. 2 (2022): 159-182.

[61]Ibid., 251.

[62]Ibid., 246-247.

especially in an online and interconnected world, stereotypes about the "isolated" subculture should be increasingly dropped.

In demographics, anime fans tend to be young and politically liberal (or not identify with a particular political group). When tested for characteristics such as gender and sexual orientation, ethnicity, income, and interests, results began to diversify. In terms of education, many anime fans have completed some college or above (about 77.5%, with most still going through college, note that this does not include ages below 18 years old).[63] Perhaps the most significant statistic for this study is the religiosity of anime fans:

> The story of anime fans' religious beliefs is telling in the relative lack of a story. On a 7-point scale of religiosity, anime fans scored particularly low – an average score of only about 2.48. Measured another way, only 20.7% of online anime fans identified as Christian and 3.8% identified with another major religion. In contrast, 64.1% reported having no religious affiliation and 7.1% indicated by agnostic or atheist. While its true that younger Americans are becoming decreasingly religious with each generation, recent studies put the number of 18-29-year-old Americans with no religious affiliation at 39% (Cooper et al., 2016). The rates of non-affiliated anime fans are thus significantly higher than the general population. While certainly not a defining feature of anime fans, this lack of religious belief is nevertheless a prevalent feature of the fandom, one warranting future research.[64]

In terms of personality (using the Big Five personality traits[65]), anime fans tend to be fairly introverted, with relatively low scores in agreeableness and conscientiousness. However,

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[63]Reyson et al., *Transported to Another World: The Psychology of Anime Fans*, 59-87. All of these traits are important because they affect the attitudes and culture of the anime community.

[64]Ibid., 82-83.

[65]Big Five: (1) Extraversion: trait which predicts outgoing, energetic, and positive emotion (2) Agreeableness: trait which predicts cooperativeness, warmth, amiableness (3) Conscientiousness: traits which predict dependability, organization, and punctuality (4) Neuroticism: traits which predict worry, reactions to stress, and negative emotion (5) Openness: traits which predict creativity, open-mindedness, and aesthetics. D.C. Funder and L.A. Fast, "Personality in Social Psychology," *Handbook of Social Psychology*, ed. S.T. Fiske, D.T. Gilbert, and G. Lindzey, 668-697 (Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2010), 679. Dark Triad: Narcissism (entitlement, egotism, supremacy), psychopathy (low empathy, impulsiveness, antisocial behavior), and Machiavellianism (manipulation). Reyson et al., *Transported to Another World*, 324. D.L. Paulhaus and K.M. Williams, "The Dark Triad of Personality: Narcissism, Machiavellianism, and Psychopathy," *Journal of Research in Personality* 36, no. 6 (2002): 556-563.

they also score exceptionally high in openness and possess reasonable levels of neuroticism, both in the online and in-person portions of the fanbase. Despite the explanatory prowess of the Big Five paradigm for character prediction, social psychologists have also developed criteria for evaluating negative personality. Anime fans scored very low in these categories compared to the rest of America, specifically regarding narcissism and Machiavellianism (psychopathy appeared to be higher than average). This suggests a relatively low level of dysfunctionality in terms of personality.[66]

Lastly, there are many different motivations for becoming and remaining an anime fan. Research indicates that fans are motivated to participate in anime for various reasons: entertainment, belongingness, escapism, and eustress. The fandom and medium also appear to satisfy several psychological needs, such as self-esteem, meaning in life, friendships, group involvement, and distinctiveness. Unexpectedly and most relevant for this thesis, many anime fans felt that *worldview* was a psychological need most met through participation in the fandom.[67] In other words, one of the primary functions of being in a group of anime fans was the shaping and formation of an individual's worldview.[68]

Religious Elements Within Anime

Given the negative response of Christianity to the advent of anime (more below), American observers may be surprised to find a substratum of religious elements undergirding the medium. One could even go so far as to say that spiritual, supernatural, and religious content are

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[66]Reyson et al., *Transported to Another World*, 313-328.

[67]Ibid., 293-311.

[68]It should be noted that with survey research general traits can vary from context to context. For instance, one study reported finding significant differences between convention attending anime fans and online anime fans, especially when it came to extraversion.

one of the main characteristics of anime.[69] Various settings can include Hell (*Hozuki's*

Coolheadedness, 2015) or the cosmology of Second Temple Judaism (*Angel Sanctuary*, 2001);

protagonists might incorporate Jesus Christ, Buddha, Ganesha, or some other religious figure

(*Saint☆Young Men*, 2012, *Is it Wrong to Try to Pick Up Girls in a Dungeon?*, 2015); and

religious themes involve epic apocalyptic climaxes (i.e., *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind,*

1984, which has significant parallels to the Book of Revelation, *Neon Genesis Evangelion*,

1995).[70] Interestingly, despite perceptions given by Japan's low quantity of believers,

Christianity has a heavy presence in anime.[71] Salient instances include stories of angelic beings,

various iconography, Christian holidays (Christmas), and ecclesial structures.[72]

Representations of religion in anime can often be satirical or irreverent rather than pious.

Many bodhisattvas have been weaponized as a kind of fighter (*Hunter X Hunter*, 2011), Shinto

kami are reduced to humorous beggars (*Noragami*, 2014), and slanted crosses are present in

Gintama (2006). Still, despite the cavalier appropriations by authors and anime directors, some

shows can ask deeply theological and nuanced questions. For instance, in *Vinland Saga* (2019),

Vikings challenge a monk about how God could be more powerful than Norse deities

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[69]Katherine, Buljan and Carol Cusack, *Anime, Religion and Spirituality: Profane and Sacred Worlds in Contemporary Japan* (Sheffield, UK: Equinox, 2015), np.

[70]Jolyon Baraka Thomas, "Manga, Anime, and Religion in Contemporary Japan," *Dharma World* 46, (2019): 3-4; Anette Reed, "The Afterlives of New Testament Apocrypha," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 134, no. 2 (2015): 419; Michael Broderick, "Making Things New: Regeneration and Transcendence in Anime," *The End All Around Us: Apocalyptic Texts and Popular Culture*, ed. John Walliss and Kenneth Newport, 120-148 (New York, NY: Routledge, 2014), 120; Napier, *Anime from* Akira *to* Howls Moving Castle, 259.

[71]Patrick Drazen, *Holy Anime! Japan's View of Christianity* (New York, NY: Hamilton Books, 2017), 5.

[72]Adam Barkman, "ANIME, MANGA AND CHRISTIANITY: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS." *Journal for the Study of Religion & Ideologies* 9, no. 27 (2010): 25-45; Adam Barkman, ""Did Santa Die on the Cross." *Anime and Philosophy: Wide Eyed Wonder*, edited. by Josef Steiff and Tristan D. Tamplin, 287-300 (Chicago: Open Court Publishing, 2010), 287.

considering their raping and pillaging of His believers. Takahata Isao, a *Studio Ghibli* director, made direct references to Buddhist devotional art and Japanese folklore in his *Pom Poko* (1994) to connect Japanese youth with their cultural heritage.[73]

Increasing evidence also suggests that "Japanese animation" has the power to form and influence the religious lives of its consumers. Studies have suggested that young spiritual seekers, who are tired of both organized religion and American popular culture, are highly influenced by anime. Much of this has to do with rich and integrated fashion of anime's religious content, which owes no allegiance to a particular institution.[74] Further analysis on this subject will be given in Chapter 4.[75]

Putting it all Together

So how should we interpret this conglomeration of data? Why is it important to address the oft-disregarded formative powers of anime? Christian apologetics can be said to have two primary purposes: to defend and contend for the faith. As humanity progressively marches away from the clutches of modernity/postmodernity toward postmillennialism, popular culture has a greater impact on people's lives than institutional religions (such as Christianity). This being the

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[73]Thomas, "Manga, Anime, and Religion in Contemporary Japan," 4.

[74]See Jin Park, "'Creating my own cultural and spiritual bubble': case of cultural consumption by spiritual seeker anime fans," *Culture and Religion* 6, no. 3 (2005): 409-410; Tracy Zielinski, "OF BROKEN WINGS AND OTAKU EMPATHY: REPAIRING FRACTURED RELATIONSHIPS USING ANIME TO RECONNECT DISENFRANCHISED YOUTH WITH THE GOSPEL," Ph.D. diss., United Theological Seminary, 2014; Niklas Sauramaa, "The Use of Religion in Anime and Manga and the Effects it has on the Viewer," Master's Thesis, University of Eastern Finland, 2021.

[75]Several notes should be made about the intersection of religion and anime. The first is that spiritual elements are hardly monolithic in anime. Boundaries are often overlapping and porous, leading to a mix of spiritual elements appropriated by each work for its ends. Because of this reason, Buljan and Cusack choose to distinguish between religion and spirituality in their work. Second, we have only observed visual representations of religious themes, narratives, and iconography in anime. As such, it has not addressed issues of technology, audience interaction, etc., often present in the literature.

case, apologetics has a responsibility to engage and dialogue with pop culture phenomena winsomely.

In particular, anime is a virulent form of everyday life that has received a massive following in America. Not only this, but it is proliferated with a fountain of religious elements. This highly charged environment influences and determines the identities of its fanbase to such a degree that participation in anime can be a spiritual activity. These spaces are embedded with concepts of "the good life," which become implanted in people through active engagement with their rhythms and practices.[76] In such a way, anime presents a different way of being in the world that can be antithetical to the goals of the kingdom of God. While this media form shouldn't be "Otherized" or demonized, it certainly can draw people/believers away from Christianity. Responding to this is the *defense* portion of apologetics.[77]

Anime fans are also largely "non-religious" in the sense of organized religion. They are hardly secluded and demonstrate significant inter and extra-communal engagement. Further, they show remarkable amounts of openness to ideas beyond themselves. This suggests a rich yet empty environment for performing gospel engagement that apologetics can take up. Responding to this issue is the *contention* portion of apologetics.[78]

Beyond the apologetical ideas of *defense* and *contention*, anime has gained unwarranted stigmatization within conservative Christian communities. Many believers see this entertainment

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[76]James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom: Worship, Worldview, and Cultural Formation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2009), 34

[77]"Defense," of course, is being used broadly here. This term can sometimes criminalize that which is being "defended" against, to such a degree that it creates a "them vs. us" binary. This type of thinking has led to harsh and polarizing responses from apologists. That is not the sense which "defend" is being used here. "Engagement" and "exploration" are concepts which far better fit the goals of this thesis, and ones that serve not to unjustly otherize anime.

[78]More development on these lines of thought will be given in Chapter 4.

as "[o]ften graphically violent and sexual," which can "range from comic romances about high school students to pornographic tales of demons whose penises are larger than skyscrapers."[79] Some might bring up more general issues of addiction, "wasting time," and societal deviance. The response to anime by many believers, therefore, is criminalization and neglect. There are many reasons for these adverse reactions, stemming from unfamiliarity, orientalism, and nationalistic attitudes.

However, this isn't to say that some critique isn't warranted. But the seeming carte blanche rejection by Christianity causes more harm than health. It has only served to alienate the anime fandom from themselves and fails to appreciate the wide variety of shows that exists.[80] Not every anime contains gratuitous sexual content and violence; in many cases, it might not possess any of these features. Such an ethic even ignores the contributions that anime can make toward the Christian life. A complete address of stigmatization is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, deconstructing such negative responses allows for further Christian engagement that would otherwise be missing.

Finally, the problem is important simply because no one else has addressed it. As of this date, only five scholarly articles have been written which explore anime from an evangelical perspective. This shockingly low number belays that some of the above stigmatization has worked its way into the academy, preventing work from being done in this field. While popular level engagements are more widespread, they are still not great in number.

In summation, there are multiple reasons why studying anime's formative power apologetically is important: (1) the medium is intensely prevalent, (2) anime is a religious sphere

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[79]Annalee Newitz, "Magical Girls and Atomic Bomb Sperm: Japanese Animation in America," *Film Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (1995): 2.

[80]Reyson, *Transported to Another World*, n. 12, 340.

that can shape people away from the good things of the gospel, (3) it enables better missional activity in a field dripping with latent potential, (4) it implicitly deconstructs stigmas that often ignore the proposed problem, (5) breaks new ground for further study, (6) recognizes the contributions that anime can make to Christianity, and (7) helps lay the practical groundwork for gateway discussions with individuals and groups in anime communities.

Summary of Chapters

Chapter 1, as can be seen above, discussed the necessity of applying apologetics to anime, as well as the purpose of the Thesis. We shall critique Ted Turnau's method concerning this media-form, noting that the material and technology of anime have processes that affect how viewers inhabit and orient themselves in the world, which in turn influences their formative practices and habits.

Chapter 2 shall provide a literature review of the relevant fields. First, a provisional definition of popular culture will be provided, as well as a brief history of development within popular culture. Second, apologetics will be situated with anime. This includes any instances of overlap between Christian scholarship and anime, the work within popular culture apologetics, and the broader umbrella of cultural apologetics. Most of the works in the aforementioned fields are derivative of movements within Theology and Popular Culture, as well as Theology and Film. This shall constitute the final portion of analysis.

Chapter 3 seeks to explicate the apologetic method Ted Turnau uses to approach popular culture. For him, every work of culture can be seen as a text, a communicative human action that possesses meaning and the capacity to be interpreted. Each text projects an imaginative world, exhibiting all the same features of God's creation. Part of God-imaging is the integration of worldview, i.e., a lens from which to view and understand reality. For Turnau, all worldviews are

structured top-down, starting with assumed foundational beliefs (presuppositions) and building a hierarchal ecosystem based on these. Popular culture apologetics aims to engage the Christian worldview with whatever worldview is present in a popular culture text. These works are mixtures of grace and corruption and should not be thought of as monolithically one or the other. Humans follow their Creator by creating, yet because they are ultimately sinful, make worlds that are centered around something other than God (i.e., functional idolatrous religions).

To engage popular culture texts apologetically, Turnau has developed a series of five diagnostic questions: What is the story (narratological analysis)? Where am I (what medial, technological, formal, thematic, and genre "textures" shape the world of the text)? What is good and true and beautiful about it (how does this popular culture phenomena reflect fragments of God's grace)? What is false and ugly and perverse about it (in what ways is the work antithetical to the Kingdom of God or destructive)? How does the gospel apply here (in what ways does the gospel answer the most profound desires echoing throughout popular culture)? This method was then applied to the anime *One Piece*, examining how Turnau unpacks its constituent parts.

Chapter 4 seeks to critique Turnau through the work of Thomas Lamarre, a distinguished scholar in the field of anime studies. Using cinematism as a point of departure, Lamarre develops the concept of an "anime machine." This is a material/abstract integrated-whole, localized to an apparatus (animation stand), which generates a field of orientations by channeling the force of the moving image. This is encapsulated in the animetic interval, which presents a visual perspective and networked information that impacts human thought. In this way, Lamarre is examining how anime "thinks" technology (or some other feature).

In order to critique Turnau, this thesis was interested in how to apply the animetic interval to religion. In a sense, all anime is *generalized* religion, in that it teaches viewers how to

inhabit the world around them, which gives rise to ultimate oriented practices. In another sense, anime engenders salient demonstrations of religiosity (i.e., ritual cosplay, pilgrimages, etc.) that can be termed *particularized* religion. That is, the animetic interval facilitates *affective* imagination, working to suppress awareness of the gaps between layers of the image. The resulting immersion of the audience implicates a simultaneous "blurring" of fictive and actual worlds, influencing audiences to superimpose particularized religious content/symbols over empirical reality. This leads to a continuum of religious practices and/or beliefs to be appropriated into viewers' lives, with variegated degrees and intensities.

Chapter 4 finishes with an explicit critique of Turnau. This criticism was made along three fronts: (1) Turnau tends to ignore considerations of medium in favor of narrative. While analysis of theme and story are helpful, an overemphasis on such ignores the way that the material and technology of anime generate formative practices. (2) When Turnau does consider medium, he only catalogs various formal features. This ignores the manners in which anime works with and on the world. (3) Finally, Turnau's method contains little consideration for unbelievers. Popular culture should be unabashedly audience focused, since the point isn't to propagate readings of a certain text, but rather engage the understandings of those who watch anime.

Chapter 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

A Definition of Popular Culture

Much talk has been given about "theology," "apologetics," and "popular culture." Before continuing further, an introductory definition of the latter is required. Not only is popular culture essential nomenclature for this thesis, but it is also a complex concept that should be specified. This is because popular culture has many synonyms with similar but differing connotations (like "mass" or "everyday" culture). These terms are easily entangled with each other and serve only to confound a thorny issue.

"Popular culture" is a vacuous conceptual category that can be filled with various conflicting ideas, depending upon its operative context. Popular or "pop" culture is often defined implicitly or explicitly by what it is *not*, as compared to other cultural disciplines (such as high/low culture, mass culture, folk culture, middle-class culture, etc.). A certain "otherness" is attached to the term, whereby whatever "absent other" pop culture is contrasted to has a powerful effect on its connotations.[81] Naturally, such considerations create significant difficulty when providing an actual definition. As Raymond Williams claims, culture is "one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language,"[82] even more so when it is compounded by the qualifier of "popular."

The process of attempting to define popular culture is dense and storied. Given that this is a thesis concerning anime and apologetics, it would not be appropriate to delve into the

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[81]John Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture: An Introduction* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), 1.

[82]Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 1983), 87.

voluminous and complex literature about popular culture.[83] That task would be better left for other works centered on apologetics/popular culture, anime/popular culture, etc. Thus, for our purposes, we shall define popular culture *as "*made up of cultural works whose media, genres, or venues tend to be widespread and widely received in our everyday world."[84]

Most pop culture theorists would critique this definition as too simplistic or missing an essential element. For instance, some popular culture texts are not widely spread or received, among other things.[85] Examples include Nomura Kazuya's *Run with the Wind,* Kobayashi

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[83]Generally, culture is understood as "a system of symbolic and expressive structures that a particular group of people develops and utilizes to enhance solidarity, understanding, and transmission of knowledge." Michael Danesi, *Popular Culture: Introductory Perspectives* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2019), 22. It is undecided how one should comprehend the corresponding adjective "popular." Musings began in the 1950s and '60s with the work of Raymond Williams, Richard Hoggart, and E.P. Thompson, who sought to study values and conventions within the public sphere. Some of the earliest work was produced by the Frankfurt school, for whom popular culture was juxtaposed against "high culture" or "folk culture." These Marxist-influenced theorists argued that popular culture was essentially mass culture, a tool of the elite for proliferating ideologies that preserved institutional dynamics. The effect of such was the destruction of folk culture (a response of people to their social conditions). Concurrently, other intellectuals like Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adorno defined popular culture against that of "high" or "avant-garde" culture. The latter required intellectual exertion on part of the consumer, while the former was passively received. DeCou, *Parables of Freedom: Toward a Barthian Pneumatology of Culture for Engaging Popular Culture in the 21st Century*, 26. Some scholars posited that folk culture and popular culture could be equated. Extending from the 1970s, Antonio Gramsci and his concept of hegemony heavily influenced debates. Rather than the populace being passively dominated by asymmetric power relations, popular culture now was conceptualized as the institutions, forms, and practices that seek to win the consent of the people. Derived from this tradition are the theories of Stewart Hall (producers "encode" ideology into cultural forms which are then "decoded" and reconstructed by consumers) and John Fiske (everyday life; popular culture is what people make of cultural products) DeCou, 28. The 1990s placed a much larger emphasis on cultural nationalism, interrogating categories such as race and gender. Postmodernism generally sought to dissolve the distinction between "high" and "popular" culture. Finally, also emerging from this overall timeframe was the sense that popular culture was that which is widely favored or liked by many people. Storey, *Cultural Theory and Popular Culture*, 5; Tony Bennett, "Popular Culture: A Teaching Object," *Screen Education* 34 (1980), 20-21. From this short overview, we can discern three general paths of definition/understanding: popular culture as opposing the avant-garde or high culture, popular culture in relation to both high culture and folk culture, or at least displacing folk culture, and popular culture as resisting dominant/mass culture. Gordon Lynch, *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*, 3. B.S. Turner, "Popular Culture," *Cambridge Dictionary of Sociology*, ed. B.S. Turner (New York, NY: Cambridge University Press, 2006).

[84]Ted Turnau, *Popologetics: Popular Culture in Christian Perspective* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 2012), 6.

[85]For our purposes, a popular cultural work is a "text" in so far that it can be interpreted. A more specified and nuanced definition of this concept will be provided in Chapter 3.

Hiroshi's *Mobile Suit Gundam: The Witch from Mercury*, and Ichikawa Kazuya's *Romantic Killer*. These anime would be considered "popular," yet they are not well known outside their dedicated fanbases. In this sense, neither anime extends beyond their localized contexts but must be included in any discussion of "popular culture." This phenomenon of non-widespread texts, proliferated by new media technologies and market dynamics, is an element not adequately addressed by the above definition.[86]

Still, our definition is sufficient for the work at hand. While not inclusive of every characteristic of what one would term "pop culture," this is hardly a unique criticism. Such a flaw is shared by practically every description put forward to date, with some scholars even wondering if the term has run its course as critical nomenclature.[87] Our definition includes many concepts necessary for developing a sense of "popular culture" and emphasizes media networks' role in its formulation (important for anime studies). The description also has the benefit of being used in Ted Turnau's apologetic of popular culture, which is one of the objects of study for this thesis.

Situating Apologetics and Anime

As mentioned above, there has been limited interaction between "anime/manga" and orthodox Christianity, especially at the academic level.[88] To this date, only six works have been

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[86]Turnau would contend that his definition does indeed consider texts which are limited in their distribution, hence the wording "*tends* to be widespread and widely received [italics added]." This will be further explained in the next section.

[87]David Morgan, "Studying Religion and Popular Culture: Prospects, Presuppositions, and Procedures," *Between Sacred and Profane: Researching Religion and Popular Culture*, ed. Gordon Lynch, 5-21 (New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 21. As Tony Bennett declares, "The concept of popular culture is virtually useless, a melting pot of confused and contradictory meanings capable of misdirecting inquiry up any number of theoretical blind alleys." Bennett, *Popular Culture: A Teaching Object*, 18.

[88]It will be useful to note at this point various methods in reading or conceiving anime. Beginning in the 1990s and 2000s, research on anime was a product of Japanese studies departments. Scholars in this field were concerned with representations of Japanese culture and society in anime, both in its utilized and textual aspects. In other words, anime was situated as a conduit for Japanese cultural analysis, itself being a form of

written that attempt to explore such an intersection. Virtually all are not comprehensive and

concentrate on very particular issues (that leave much to be desired in terms of building a bridge

between anime and theology). One could say that they are the seedlings indicating an academic

subfield's start. Most of this work has been produced from a singular scholar, Adam Barkman,

who examines thematic connections between Christianity and various anime.[89] While Barkman

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Japanese pop culture. In such a way, anime is conceived as a bounded or self-contained object. Literary scholars continued this trend, reading anime through a socio-cultural lens. Prominent works here include Napier, *Anime from* Akira *to* Howls Moving Castle*,* and Christopher Bolton, *Interpreting Anime* (Minneapolis, MN: Minneapolis University Press, 2018). Percolating in the early 2000s, a second phase of anime methodologies rose up to critique the first. These were not concerned with *what* anime as a bounded text represented (thematically, etc.), but rather, *how* anime itself worked within a transmedia ecosystem. While different terms, like media-philosophical, have been applied to some works, they ultimately explore a media theory and aesthetic analysis of anime. Prominent works include Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, Thomas Looser, "From Edogawa to Miyazaki: cinematic and anime-ic architectures of early and late twentieth-century Japan," *Japan Forum* 14, no. 2 (2002): 297-327, Livia Monnet, "Towards the feminine sublime, or the story of 'a twinkling monad, shape-shifting across dimension': intermediality, fantasy and special effects in cyberpunk film and animation," *Japan Forum* 14, no. 2 (2002): 225-268, among others. Conjoining and extending this operation was a third generation of scholars, motivated "by a shift from the exchange of contents to the interconnectivity of distribution platforms." Marc Steinburg and Jinying Li, "Introduction: Regional Platforms," *Asiascape: Digital Asia* 4, no. 3 (2017): 180. There is a methodological focus on the "material, generic, historical, or aesthetic and media industry" modes of anime's technosocial existence, to borrow a term from Thomas Lamarre. Prominent scholars include Marc Steinburg, *Anime's Media Mix*, Ian Condry, *The Soul of Anime: Collaborative Creativity and Japan's Media Success Story* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2013), Rayna Denison, "Anime's distribution worlds: Formal and Informal Distribution in the Analogue and Digital Eras," *Routledge Handbook of Japanese Media*, ed. Fabienne Darling-Wolf, 578-601 (New York, NY: Routledge, 2018), Annett, *Anime Fan Communities*, Alexander Zahlten, *The End of Japanese Cinema: Industrial Genres, National Times, and Media Ecologies* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017), Stevie Suan, "Consuming Production: Anime's Layers of Transnationality and Dispersal of Agency as Seen in *Shirobako* and *Sakuga*-Fan Practices," *Arts* 7, no. 3 (2018): 27, Suan, *Anime's Performativity*, and, Ōtsuka Eiji and Marc Steinburg, "World and Variation: The Reproduction and Consumption of Narrative," *Mechademia* 5, (2010): 99-116, among others. See Berndt, *Anime in Academia*, 56, Denision, *Christopher Bolton*, 492, Marc Steinburg, "INTERPRETING ANIME," *Pacific Affairs* 93, no. 2 (2020): 443-445, Thomas Lamarre, *The Anime Ecology: A Genealogy of Television, Animation, and Game Media* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2018), 10.

[89]Barkman, *ANIME, MANGA AND CHRISTIANITY: A COMPREHENSIVE ANALYSIS*, while hardly comprehensive, provides comparative analysis between Christians themes/imagery in anime and orthodox belief (focusing specifically on pluralism, divine entities, apocalypticism, Catholicism, LGBTQ+, censorship, and Christian appropriations). Barkman, *Did Santa Die on the Cross*, discusses essentially the same content as the above article, although written at an earlier date. Adam Barkman, "Platonic Eros, Ottonian *Numinous*, and Spiritual Longing," *Marburg Journal of Religion* 15, (2010): 1-11, covers spiritual longing in the anime fandom. Adam Barkman, "'The Earth Speaks to Us All': A Critical Appreciation of Filmmaker Hayao Miyazaki's Shintō Environmental Philosophy," *Christian Scholar's Review* 48, no. 4 (2019): 323-335, interacts the values and ontological assumptions of Miyazaki's environmentalism with Christianity's ecological ethics. Adam Barkman, "C.S. Lewis' Aesthetics," *Sehnsucht: The C.S. Lewis Journal* 3, (2009): 79-100, (very) briefly mentions anime/manga in relation to C.S. Lewis's aesthetic philosophy.

tends to focus on narratological elements, the lone dissertation (by Tracy Zielinski) is written on how *otaku* can be reclaimed for the gospel via small group methods.[90] Of interest to both Zielinski and Barkman are how audiences can connect spiritually to anime. However, despite the relative sparseness, some of this void in the literature looks to be filled in the near future. Nicholas De La Noval and David Armstrong's forthcoming *Anime and Theology* promises to have diverse articles covering many aspects of anime and theological reflection.[91] Lastly, Ted Turnau devotes a section in his book, *Popologetics*, to exegeting *One Piece*, an ongoing and highly influential anime.[92]

Turnau, of course, is the primary scholar in the empty field of apologetics and popular culture. In fact, he is the only person to publish any explicit work on the matter (implicit apologetics is performed when any Christian-oriented work engages with popular culture, but that is not the focus here). Besides Turnau's book, he has written an article, "Popular culture, apologetics, and the discourse of desire," arguing that apologetics and popular culture both occur in the context of human desire. The former must utilize this fact to be effective in the contemporary world.[93] Several more works have involved the concept of popular culture (mainly to highlight the importance of addressing it) but do not ponder it in any substantive lengths.[94]

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[90]Zielinski, OF BROKEN WINGS AND OTAKU EMPATHY: REPAIRING FRACTURED RELATIONSHIPS USING ANIME TO RECONNECT DISENFRANCHISED YOUTH WITH THE GOSPEL, np.

[91]Nicholas De la Noval and David Armstrong, *Anime and Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Lexington Books/Fortress Press, [Forthcoming]).

[92]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 267-280.

[93]Ted Turnau, "Popular culture, apologetics, and the discourse of desire," *Cultural Encounters* 8, no. 2 (2012): 46.

[94]This includes: Guilherme Braun, "A Trinitarian modal-spherical method of apologetics and cultural redemption: perspectives on religion and contemporary culture," PhD. Diss., University of the Free State, 2016, Elaine Graham, "Jews, Pagans, Sceptics and Emperors: Public Theology as Christian Apologetics" (Lecture, Kings College London & Westminster Abbey Faith and Public Policy Seminar, London, January 16th,

The subfield of "popular culture and apologetics" is included under the broader umbrella

of what is known as "cultural apologetics." Lately, scholarship defending the faith has seen a

"cultural turn." This pivot, while not abandoning methods of the past, recognizes that appeals to

rationalism are increasingly ineffective in the current social milieu. Instead, there is a need for

"'local' or 'audience-sensitive apologetics' that take the particular culturally embedded outlooks

of the changing audiences into account."[95] While specific projects have been launched

addressing elements of a far more integrated approach to bearing witness,[96] a growing field

2013), https://www.chester.ac.uk/sites/files/chester/Westminster%20KCL%20Apologetics.pdf, David
Wilkerson, "The Art of Apologetics in the Twenty-First Century," *Anvil* 19, no. 1 (2002): 5-17.

[95]Bernard Van Den Toren, *Christian Apologetics as Cross-Cultural Dialogue* (London: T&T
Clark, 2011), 11. See also James Sire, *Apologetics Beyond Reason: Why Seeing is Really Believing* (Downers
Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2014); Myron B. Penner, *The End of Apologetics: Christian Witness in a
Postmodern Context* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2013), Alister McGrath, *Mere Apologetics: How to
Help Seekers and Skeptics Find Faith* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2012), Allen and Chatraw,
Apologetics at the Cross, Beverly Jameson, "God, Post-Truth," *Theology* 121, no. 3 (2018): 180-187, Christina
Gschwandtner, *Postmodern Apologetics?: Arguments for God in Contemporary Philosophy* (New York, NY:
Fordham University Press, 2012), David Pickering, "Reflections on the changing landscape of apologetics,"
New Blackfriars 103, no. 1103 (Jan 2022): 99-112, David Pickering, "New directions in natural theology,"
Theology 124, no. 5 (2021): 349-357.

[96]There is "joy-based" apologetics: Randy Newman, *Bringing the Gospel Home: Sharing Your
Faith with Family and Friends* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway, 2011); "imaginative" apologetics: Holly Ordway,
Apologetics and the Christian Imagination: An Integrated Approach to Defending the Faith (Steubenville, OH:
Emmaus Road, 2017), Justin Bailey, *Reimaging Apologetics: The Beauty of Faith in a Secular Age* (Downers
Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2020), Joseph D. Wooddell, *The Beauty of the Faith: Using Aesthetics for Christian
Apologetics* (Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2011), Makoto Fujimura, *Culture Care: Reconnecting with Beauty for
Our Common Life* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2017), Makoto Fujimura, *Art and Faith: A Theology of
Making* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2020), Tawa Anderson, "Apologetics, Imagination, and
Imaginative Apologetics," *Trinity Journal* 34, (2013): 229-251; "moral" apologetics David Bagget and
Marybeth Baggett, *The Morals of the Story: Good News about a Good God* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press,
2018), Mark Coppenger, *Moral Apologetics for Contemporary Christians: Pushing Back Against Cultural and
Religious Critics* (Nashville, TN: B&H Academic, 2011); "sapiential" apologetics, Kevin Vanhoozer, *Pictures
at a Theological Exhibition: Scenes of the Church's Worship, Witness, and Wisdom* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP
Press, 2016); "Pauline or ancient" apologetics: Raymond H. Bailey, "Acts 17:16-34," *Review & Expositor* 87,
no. 3 (1990): 481-485, J. Daryl Charles, "Engaging the (Neo) Pagan Mind: Paul's Encounter with Athenian
Culture as a Model for Cultural Apologetics (Acts 17:16-34)," *Trinity Journal* 16, no. 1 (1995): 47-62, Peter
Colaclides, "Acts 17:28a and Bacchae 506," *Vigiliae Christianae* 27, no. 3 (1973): 161-164, Lars Dahle, "Acts
17:16-34: An Apologetic Model Then and Now?" *Tyndale Bulletin* 53, no. 2 (2002): 313-16, N. Clayton Croy,
"Hellenistic Philosophies and the Preaching of the Resurrection (Acts 17:18, 32)," *Novum Testamentum* 39, no.
1 (January 1997): 21-39, Patrick Gray, "Athenian Curiosity (Acts 17:21)," *Novum Testamentum* 47, no. 2
(2005): 109-16, Joshua W. Jipp, "Paul in Athens: The Popular Religious Context of Acts 17," *Themelios*
40, no. 3 (December 2015): 524-26; Joshua W. Jipp, "Paul's Areopagus Speech of Acts 17:16-34 as Both
Critique and Propaganda," *Journal of Biblical Literature* 131, no. 3 (2012): 567-88; Mark J. Keown,
"Congregational Evangelism in Paul: The Paul of Acts," *Colloquium* 42, no. 2 (November 2010): 231-51.

focuses on the embodied human that shapes and is shaped by cultural frameworks. Aptly termed "cultural apologetics," it seeks to contextualize itself within the local frame and mobilize cultural material for defense and persuasion.[97]

Bernard Van Den Toren's *Christian Apologetics as Cross-Cultural Dialogue* is one of the first explicit works to tackle this concept. He frames apologetics as caught up in the interactions between modernity/postmodernity and addressing a "global village" of multiculturism. More than others, Van Den Toren applies missiology to his work, arguing that despite the former's efficacy in speaking to enculturated audiences, "defenses of the faith" have yet to integrate its insights fully. With the rapid decline of older apologetic models, a robust biblical anthropology should be emphasized alongside a moderated epistemology, rather than the latter dominating discussions. The great diversity of cultures at the global and local levels offers both challenges and new opportunities.[98] A culturally minded apologetic "involves cultural communication that subjects itself to thinking and attitudes deeply embedded in particular traditions of the audience."[99]

Paul Gould's *Cultural Apologetics: Renewing the Christian Voice, Conscience, and Imagination in a Disenchanted World* is another critical addition to the field. In many ways coining the term "cultural apologetics," Gould defines such as "the work of establishing the

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[97]Beyond the sources mentioned below, David Pickering also sets out a method of cultural apologetics based on G.K. Chesterton. He was "a pioneer in the depiction… of Christianity as a courageous insurgent against an unjust secular hegemony… Apologists today might ponder how to find contemporary analogues for his strategy of subversion and for the rhetorical pincer movement he constructed, in relation to largely secular elites… His creative use of cultural context might assist contemporary apologists…" David Pickering, "Apologetics and Cultural Context: a Case Study," *Heythrop Journal* 63, no. 2 (2021): 245-254. Pickering's work is more derives insights from Chesterton, rather than outlining a comprehensive method, therefore he is relegated to a footnote. See also David Pickering, "Chesterton, Apologetics, and the Art of Positioning," *Journal of Inklings Studies* 10, no. 1 (2020): 37-51.

[98]Van Den Toren, *Christian Apologetics as Cross-Cultural Dialogue*, 7-8.

[99]Lee, *Paul's Culturally Contextualized Apologetics*, 10.

Christian voice, conscience, and imagination within a culture so that Christianity is seen as true and satisfying."[100] Central to his arguments is Paul's discourse on Mars Hill, where the apostle "outflanked" (utilized domestic concepts) and "confronted" (transitioned from domestic concepts to Christianity) the Athenians.[101] Humanity longs for and pursues truth, beauty, and goodness. According to Gould, cultural apologetics seeks to show how the gospel and Christ satisfies these needs through reason, conscience, and imagination, demonstrating Christianity to be desirable *in Excelsis*.[102] The performance of apologetics involves the removal of internal and external cultural barriers. Christianity is public truth, centered on Jesus as a person of wisdom, and thus challenges formative institutions (such as universities, media, arts, governments, etc.). This missional encounter is focused "upstream," toward the sources of secular material, and "downstream," where the masses consume such material.[103]

Matt Lee's cultural apologetic builds on the work of both Gould and Van Den Toren. In many ways, it seeks to specify the general claims made by both authors through analyzing Paul's discourse on Mars Hill. Lee argues that Paul presents a model of culturally contextualized apologetics.[104] This defense form utilizes cultural connections and addressal of antagonistic cultural issues. The former engages unbelievers through points of contact, solidarity, and enculturated communication. The latter deals with cultural roadblocks to conversion, the virtue

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[100]Paul Gould, *Cultural Apologetics: Renewing the Christian Voice, Conscience, and Imagination in a Disenchanted World* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2019), 21.

[101]Ibid., 25-27.

[102]Ibid., 28-32.

[103]Ibid., 32-34.

[104]Matthew Lee, *Cultural Contextualization of Apologetics: Exploration and Application of the Apostle Paul's Model* (Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock, 2022), 4.

of the Christian life, and the account of Christ's resurrection.[105] Prominent second-century

apologists appropriated Paul's methods in their missional endeavors. This paradigm offers an

efficacious model of apologetics to a postmodern world over the traditional fourfold system,

which relies on (increasingly obsolete) logical discourse.[106]

Theology and Popular Culture

While it belongs under cultural apologetics, a sharp reader will notice that Turnau's

Popologetics precedes most works in the field. This is because his project (and simultaneously,

"popular culture and apologetics") more properly emerged from formations within "theology and

popular culture." Influence (particularly of the evangelical bent) can be seen at all levels of

Turnau's thought, from his "world-language," framing, and formal analysis, to his approach to

popular culture. While "theology and popular" is demonstrably richer in content than its

apologetical counterpart, activity has fallen off in recent years, as significant progress has not

been produced post-mid-2010s. It is also a field lacking maturity, as few works deal with

methodological issues or a comprehensive approach to its content.[107]

Several demarcations can be made within the broader category of "religion and popular

culture." Some scholars of religious studies are interested in the interactions of religion with the

resources, environment, and practices of everyday life. This involves questions about religious

groups' appropriation of popular culture and the representations of faith in the common milieu.[108]

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[105]Lee, *Paul's Culturally Contextualized Apologetics*, 202-205.

[106]Ibid., 205-206.

[107]John Lyden, "Introduction," *The Routledge Companion to Religion and Popular Culture*, ed. John Lyden and Eric Michael Mazur, 1-3 (London: Routledge, 2015), 1.

[108]Lynch, *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*, 20. For example, see Lyden, *The Routledge Companion to Religion and Popular Culture*, Elisabeth Arweck and Christopher Deacy, *Exploring Religion and the Sacred in a Media Age* (London: Routledge, 2016), Bruce Forbes and Jeffrey Mahan, *Religion and Popular Culture in America* (Oakland, CA: University of California Press, 2017), Colleen McDannell,

Other scholars explore how audiences' appropriate everyday material to serve various religious functions. Theologians, "on the other hand, tend to explore popular culture for the purpose of formulating a missiological response or to understand it 'as a medium for theological reflection.'"[109] Gordon Lynch has identified four methods by which theologians approach popular culture. There is (1) the applicationist approach, where fixed theological values and beliefs critique popular culture forms, (2) the correlational approach, based heavily on Paul Tillich's method, whereby theology provides the answers to questions raised by popular culture, (3) the revised correlation approach, where theology is in a mutually beneficial dialogue with the everyday, whereby insights/answers in the latter can inform the former, and vice versa, (4) finally, the praxis approach, where liberation of people is the central criterion in analysis.[110]

Material Christianity: Religion and Popular Culture in America (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998), Gordon Lynch, *Between Sacred and Profane: Researching Religion and Popular Culture* (New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 2007), Adam Possami, *Religion and Popular Culture: A Hyper-Real Testament* (Lausanne: Peter Lang Group, 2007), Dan Clayton and Terry Clark, *The Oxford Handbook of the Bible and American Popular Culture* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, [Forthcoming]).

[109]DeCou, *Parables of Freedom*, 23. DeCou has done an excellent job at outlining and distinguishing many factors within "popular culture and theology," so much so that there little need to move beyond her organization. Thus, this section will draw heavily from her thought.

[110]Ibid., 23-24. Lynch, *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*, 101-105; [1] Applicationist Approach: Brian Godawa, *Hollywood Worldviews: Watching Films with Wisdom and Discernment* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP, 2002), Michael Medved, *Hollywood vs. America* (New York: HarperCollins, 1993). [2] Christopher Deacy, *Screen Christologies: Redemption and the Medium of Film* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2002), Robert Jewett, *Saint Paul at the Movies: The Apostle's Dialogue with American Culture* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1993). [3] David Tracy, *Analogical Imagination: Christian Theology and the Culture of Pluralism* (Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder & Herder, 1998), Donald Browning, *A Fundamental Practical Theology* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 1991), Clive Marsh, "'High Theology'/'Popular Theology'? The Arts, Popular Culture and the Contemporary Theological Task," *The Expository Times* 117, no. 11 (2006): 447-451, Larry Kreitzer, *Gospel Images in Fiction and Film: On Reversing the Hermeneutical Flow* (Sheffield: Sheffield Academic, 2002), Tom Beaudoin, "Popular Culture Scholarship as a Spiritual Exercise: Thinking Ethically with(out) Christianity," *Between Sacred and Profane: Researching Religion and Popular Culture*, ed. Gordon Lynch, 94-111 (New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 2007). [4] Anthony Pinn, *Noise and Spirit* (New York, NY: NYU Press, 2003), Robert Beckford, *God and the Gangs* (London: DLT, 2004), Margaret Miles, *Seeing and Believing: Religion and Values in the Movies* (Boston, MA: Beacon, 1996).

Due to the litany of individual articles and projects covering some aspect of "theology and popular culture," we will only focus on comprehensive or essential works in the field.[111] Two books stand out: Gordon Lynch's *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture* and Kelton Cobb's *The Blackwell Guide to Theology and Popular Culture*. Both works reflect extensively on methodological concerns, relying on Tillichian-derived approaches that explore the theological dimension of popular culture in Western societies.[112] Jessica Decou similarly discusses issues of method, although she prefers to base her project on Karl Barth's theology of "freedom in limitation."[113] Other endeavors have also made significant contributions to the field.[114] From an evangelical perspective, Kevin Vanhoozer's "What is Everyday Theology? How and Why Christians Should Read Culture," William Romanowski's *Eyes Wide Open: Looking for God in Popular Culture*, and Craig Detweiler and Barry Taylor's *A Matrix of Meanings: Finding God in Pop Culture* show themselves as the most rigorous writings on the subject.[115]

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[111]Individual articles can range from focusing on a theme/world: M. Jess Peacock, *Such a Dark Thing: Theology of the Vampire Narrative in Popular Culture* (Eugene, OR: Resource Publications, 2015), Gregroy Stevenson, *Theology and the Marvel Universe* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2019), to works that apply the thought of a specific theologian to popular culture: Ryan G. Duns and T. Derrick Witherington, *René Girard, Theology, and Pop Culture* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2021).

[112]Lynch, *Understanding Theology and Popular Culture*, 106. Kelton Cobb, "Reconsidering the Status of Popular Culture in Tillich's Theology of Culture," *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 63, no. 1 (Spring 1995): 64, Cobb, *The Blackwell Guide to Theology and Popular Culture*, 131.

[113]Decou, *Parables of Freedom*, 380.

[114]Tanner, *Theories of Culture*, np. Conrad Oswalt, *Secular Steeples: Popular Culture and the Religious Imagination* (London: T&T Clark, 2003); Clive Marsh, "Theology, the Arts and Popular Culture: An Annotated Resource List," *The Expository Times* 119, no. 12 (2008): 589-595, offers a selective literature review of valuable sources published pre-2008.

[115]Vanhoozer, *What is Everyday Theology?* Romanowski, *Eyes Wide Open*, Craig Detweiler and Barry Taylor, *A Matrix of Meanings: Finding God in Pop Culture* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2003). See also Steve Turner, *Popcultured*, Nancy Usselman, *A Sacred Look*, Stanely Grenz, "What does Hollywood have to do with Wheaton? The place of (pop) culture in theological reflection," *JETS* 43, no 2 (2000): 303, Ted Turnau, "Reflecting Theologically on Popular Culture," *Calvin Theological Journal* 37, (2002): 290-295, Ernest Simmons, "Theology of the Cross and Popular Culture," *Word & World* 23, no. 3 (2003): 253-262.

The development of "theology and popular culture" was influenced by two trends in religious studies and theology. The first was a shift in interest toward studying material culture by religious studies, which occurred in the late 20th century. The second and most important for anime was the advancement of "theology and film/popular entertainment."[116] Emerging from film studies, this rich subfield diversified into various subsets. William Telford organizes such approaches into three categories[117]: religious studies,[118] biblical studies,[119] and theological engagements.[120] Within this broad landscape, certain actors branched off to explore other avenues of popular entertainment. While their impact would not be fully felt until the mid-90s, they successfully opened a space for studying pop culture theologically in an environment subject to the hegemony of "high culture."[121] This space eventually led to what is better known contemporarily as "theology and popular culture."

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[116]Jessica DeCou, *Playful, Glad, and Free : Karl Barth and a Theology of Popular Culture* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2013), 14-16.

[117]William Telford, "Through a Lens Darkly: Critical Approaches to Theology and Film," *Cinéma Divinité: Religion, Theology and the Bible in Film*, ed. Eric S. Christianson, Peter Francis, and William R. Telford (London: SCM Press, 2005), 27ff.

[118]For example, Joel Martin and Conrad Oswalt, *Screening the Sacred: Religion, Myth, and Ideology in Popular American Film* (London: Routledge, 1995).

[119]For example, George Aichele and Richard Walsh, *Screening Scripture: Intertextual Connections Between Scripture and Film* (Harrisburg, PA: Trinity Press International, 2002).

[120]For example, Peter Fraser and Vernon Edwin, *ReViewing the Movies: A Christian Response to Contemporary Film* (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2000), Craig Detweiler, *Into the Dark: Seeing the Sacred in the Top Films of the 21st Century* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2008), Robert Johnston, *Reel Spirituality: Theology and Film in Dialogue* (Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2006) Robert Johnston, *Reframing Theology and Film: New Focus for an Emerging Discipline* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2007), Clive Marsh, "Film and Theologies of Culture," *Explorations in Theology and Film: Movies and Meaning*, ed. Clive Marsh and Gaye Ortiz (Malden, MA: Blackwell, 1998), John May, *New Image of Religious Film* (Kansas City, MO: Sheed & Ward, 1997).

[121]Marshall McLuhan, *The Gutenberg Galaxy: The Making of Typographic Man* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1962) [the shaping effect of mass media], Robert Short, *The Gospel According to Peanuts* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1965) [theology in *Peanuts* cartoons], Robert Jewett, *The Captain America Complex: The Dilemma of Zealous Nationalism* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 1973) [theology in comic book heroes], Andrew Greely, *God in Popular Culture* (St. Merrimack, NH: Thomas More College Press, 1988). Jeffrey Mahan, "Reflections on the Past and the Future of Religion and

To summarize, despite rigorous methods of reading anime, there have been limited interactions between anime and theology/apologetics. Ted Turnau provides a loose link between the two magisterium, articulating a form of apologetics and popular culture. While belonging to the broader category of "cultural apologetics," it more properly finds its origins in "theology and popular culture." This is because Turnau borrows much of his material and framing from it. "Theology and popular culture" emerged from an interest in material studies and formations within "theology and film." These categories overlap and interact, although neither is fully included in the other. Turnau, especially when analyzing anime, draws upon many innovations in "theology and film" interwoven through "theology and popular culture," as will be seen in Chapter 3.

Popular Culture," *Between Sacred and Profane: Researching Religion and Popular Culture*, ed. Gordon Lynch, 47-63 (New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 48. Decou, *Parables of Freedom*, 22.

Chapter 3: OUTLING TURNAU'S METHOD CONCERNING ANIME

Introduction

To quote Paul Gould, Ted Turnau has written "an energetic exploration of pop culture and apologetics."[122] The book is lucid and light, intended to whisk readers through its pages via accessible material. Although constructed for a general populace, it retains vestiges of scholarly nuance by including footnotes. If more technical works existed in popular culture and apologetics, Turnau's book would be brilliant: an effective introduction that easily communicates to non-scholars, yet still immersing them in complexity. But since the writing of these works is still pending, Turnau is the standard within the field. This means that many of his points should be further fleshed out. While such a critique more naturally finds its place in Chapter 4, the current chapter will devote itself to teasing out Turnau's methodological outline. Several conceptual ideas operate as the background for his thought, like the religiosity of pop culture worlds, which need to be discussed before unpacking any methodological content. The chapter will finish by applying Turnau's approach to anime to the influential TV show *One Piece*.

Conceptual Backgrounds to Turnau's Method

Defining Popular Culture

Turnau defines popular culture as "*made up of cultural works whose media, genres, or venues tend to be widespread and widely received in our everyday world*."[123] Several items in the definition deserve highlighted attention. For Turnau, popular culture is comprised of "cultural works." These are the creative products of human expression presented in literature, film, performance, digital media, etc. It is the result of *doing* culture, which involves transforming

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[122]Gould, *Cultural Apologetics*, n. 10.

[123]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 6.

diverse raw materials into something significant. Individual or collective cultural works are simultaneously cultural texts (communicative human action that possess meaning and the capacity to be interpreted).[124] In the context of popular culture, these texts "are human actions, events, and material works that embody meanings that are widely spread."[125]

Turnau considers the terms "widely spread/received" and "everyday world" as the defining parameters for identifying a work of popular culture. [126] Popular culture studies have historically focused on differentiating the field from "high/low" or "folk culture." One criterion proposed is the widespread availability of a cultural work to the general public. The emphasis lies on the *context* of a cultural text's reception rather than on its inherent qualities or distinctions. Despite this, there exist texts which are not widely spread or received, among other things. Examples include Nomura Kazuya's *Run with the Wind,* Kobayashi Hiroshi's *Mobile Suit Gundam: The Witch from Mercury*, and Ichikawa Kazuya's *Romantic Killer*. These anime would be considered "popular," yet they are not well known outside their dedicated fanbases. In this sense, neither anime extends beyond their localized contexts but must be included in any discussion of "popular culture." This phenomenon of non-widespread texts, proliferated by new media technologies and market dynamics, offers a problem for most definitions of popular culture.[127]

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[124]Vanhoozer, *Everyday Theology*,

[125]Romanowski, *Eyes Wide Open*, 57.

[126]Some scholars, like John Fiske, prefer to use the terminology of "everyday" rather than popular culture. "Everyday" refers to the routine and commonplace aspects of embodied existence, characterized by familiar and mundane activities that speckle daily life. It is the realm involving and concerning what sustain ordinary life. This includes the physical, moral, intellectual, and spiritual atmospheres that we live in. Vanhoozer, *Everyday Theology*, 26. Turnau intends for "everyday" to be that space juxtaposed to high culture, that which is not a rarefied or sacred environment (i.e., the academy, museums, concert halls, libraries, etc., presenters of the "fine arts"), Turnau, *Popologetics*, 5.

[127]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 5-6.

To account for this, Turnau offers a two-criteria framework for identifying popular culture phenomena: that they *tend* to be widespread/received (a nod to works with narrow audiences) and that *popular* better refers to the type of work received. In other words, "*popular culture*" refers to specific *media* that inform our everyday world (television, radio, cinema, magazines, Internet video files, and so on), and in *genres* that are widely accepted and enjoyed in a given society (rock, hip-hop, detective novels, science fiction, crime drama, comedy, and so on)."[128] *Venues* (the third part of Turnau's definition) are places where various activities are undertaken. This could include sports stadiums, conference centers, exhibition spaces, temporary events, etc. With this set of criteria, both folk culture (unique practices, traditions, and expressions entangled in the ordinary life of a community) and mass culture (neoliberal products disseminated to large audiences via mass media) would qualify as popular culture, thus theoretically solving a tired debate. For Turnau, pop culture is characterized primarily by access, as it is a culture that arises and dwells in spaces adjacent to everyday life.

Most pop culture theorists would critique Turnau's definition as too simplistic or missing an essential element. For instance, Turnau does not pay significant attention to how audiences participate in popular culture or how their activity could constitute creative human expression. This privileges those works developed by producers, hilariously mirroring the elite/hoi polloi relationship envisioned by Frankfurt Marxists. In many ways, Turnau is concerned with the passive consumption or reception of cultural works rather than allowing room for reciprocal processes on the part of the audiences (i.e., fanfic writers, who develop personal worlds from pre-constituted material).[129] Qualities such as impermanence or market consumption could also

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[128]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 6.

[129]Henry Jenkins, *Textual Poachers: Television Fans and Participatory Culture* (New York, NY: Routledge, 1992), 63.

have been further ruminated upon, given their historical importance in conversations about popular culture.

Still, Turnau's definition is sufficient for the work at hand. While not inclusive of every characteristic of what one would term "pop culture," this is hardly a unique criticism. Such a flaw is shared by practically every description put forward to date, with some scholars even wondering if the term has run its course as critical nomenclature.[130] The definition includes many concepts necessary for developing a sense of "popular culture" and emphasizes media networks' role in its formulation (which is vital for anime studies).

Worldview Apologetics

Turnau's method relies heavily on what he terms "worldview apologetics." In brief, this form of apologetical argumentation desires to engage a "Christian perspective" imaginatively and intellectually with some other noetic framework. To comprehend how he uses this concept and how it plays a crucial role in Turnau's overall approach, it is essential to examine his idea of a worldview. Derived from James Sire, Turnau defines a worldview as:

> A worldview is a commitment, a fundamental orientation of the heart, that can be expressed as a story or in a set of presuppositions (assumptions which may be true, partially true, or entirely false) which we hold (consciously or subconsciously, consistently or inconsistently) about the basic constitution of reality and that provides the foundations on which we live and move and have our being.[131]

When unpacking these concepts, Turnau prefers utilizing the example of a tree, which is a system that extends from the roots to the fruit. For him, every worldview is rooted in

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[130]David Morgan, "Studying Religion and Popular Culture: Prospects, Presuppositions, and Procedures," *Between Sacred and Profane: Researching Religion and Popular Culture*, ed. Gordon Lynch, 5-21 (New York, NY: I.B. Tauris, 2007), 21. As Tony Bennett declares, "The concept of popular culture is virtually useless, a melting pot of confused and contradictory meanings capable of misdirecting inquiry up any number of theoretical blind alleys." Bennett, *Popular Culture: A Teaching Object*, 18.

[131]James Sire, *Naming the Elephant: Worldview as a Concept* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press, 2004), 122.

presuppositions, i.e., assumptions people make about the nature of reality. These presuppositions are "basic" or fundamental to all other beliefs within the worldview.[132] That is, they are not derived/supported on any basis prior to themselves.[133] All proceeding beliefs are ultimately anchored to this inviolable and non-revisable foundation. Turnau is not clear as to the content of presuppositions other than vaguely referring to them as "prejudices," "assumptions," or "pre-judgmental lenses." Are these assumptions beliefs in the form of propositional statements? A sprawling narrative lacking a true/false binary? A subliminal affective milieu that cannot be easily articulated into coherent thoughts?

More than likely, Turnau follows in the footsteps of his shining light, Cornelius Van Til, when defining a presupposition.[134] Van Til was a twentieth-century Christian philosopher and theologian who held that all reasoning begins with presuppositions. These are "ultimate commitments to a particular view of reality" (read – basic beliefs) which underlie all thinking. Rather than being explicitly propositional/intellectual, beliefs for Van Til involve volition, emotion, and values, i.e., the whole being of personhood. Functionally, when Turnau speaks of assumptions or beliefs, he refers to something closer to propositional statements.

Such a conceptual framework put forth by Turnau is intimately related to epistemic foundationalism. Classical (or "strong") foundationalism divides beliefs into two categories: those that need to be supported by others and those without justification that can support other beliefs. Hence, a distinction is made between "non-basic" and "basic" beliefs.[135] The project of

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[132]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 8-9.

[133]Alvin Plantinga, *Warranted Christian Belief* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2000), 82-83.

[134]Turnau appears to follow Van Til also in his apologetic methodology. This is a form of presuppositionalism, which asserts that all human reasoning is fundamentally shaped by presuppositions, and that the Christian faith provides the only coherent and rational basis for understanding the world.

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strong foundationalism was an attempt to overcome human limitations by grounding knowledge in invincible certainty.[136] Therefore, its epistemological moorings consist of unquestioned beliefs or first principles (fundamental or immediate) from which knowledge can proceed.[137] These are allegedly context-free, universal, and accessible, self-evident to the rational person. Non-basic beliefs are justified only in their relationship to basic beliefs, i.e., there must be a proper basing relationship between them.[138] In such a way, the epistemic certainty of basic beliefs can be transferred to their derivative counterparts. This is done through the logical inferences of deduction (conclusion follows necessarily from the premises of an argument) or induction (conclusion does not follow necessarily from the premises of an argument, truth is derived from sense impressions of the material world).[139]

Classical foundationalism reigned supreme in the post-Enlightenment philosophical world, beholden to metaphysical realism and the correspondence theory of truth. However, in recent times, strong foundationalism has found itself with weak reception among thinkers. Merold Westphal notes, "That it is so philosophically indefensible is so widely agreed that its demise is the closest thing to a philosophical consensus in decades."[140]

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[135]Sven Bernecker and Fred Dretske, *Knowledge: Readings in Contemporary Epistemology* (New York, NY: Oxford University Press, 2007), 67.

[136]W. Jay Woods, *Epistemology: Becoming Intellectually Virtuous* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Press, 1998), 83.

[137]"Knowledge" here is contextualized to the field of epistemology, where it is traditionally understood as justified true belief. For our purposes, and to alleviate the Gettier problem, we shall define knowledge with four necessary and jointly sufficient conditions: it is non-accidental/non-lucky justified true belief.

[138]Stanley Grenz and John R. Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism: Shaping Theology in a Postmodern Context* (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2001), 30-31.

[139]Ibid.

[140]Merold Westphal, "A Reader's Guide to 'Reformed Epistemology,'" *Perspectives* 7, no. 9 (1992): 11. Quoted in Grenz and Franke, *Beyond Foundationalism*, 38.

More likely, Turnau is articulating a weaker form of foundationalism. He, like Van Til,

rejects the idea of neutral, basic evidence. For them, it is in light of a person's presuppositions

that any proposition can count as relevant evidence for a claim. The significance of brute facts

for individuals and communities is filtered through the guiding form of initial presuppositions.

Because of this, both Van Til and Turnau appear to be utilizing a form of inverse

foundationalism. They begin with the conclusion of a particular "worldview" as the necessary

foundation for all knowledge. Rather than building up "towards" that conclusion from basic

belief independent of religious commitment, Turnau and Van Til envision a web of supported

beliefs emerging from one's ultimate presuppositions. Instead of a brick building reliant on its

concrete substructure, inverse foundationalism can be pictured as chains hanging from the

firmament (with each link operating as a supported belief). To avoid charges of relativism,

Turnau argues that presuppositions do not create evidence but can be in harmony or disharmony

with God's authoritative interpretation of creation. He stresses that presuppositions alter and

change perceptions of data that exist independently of oneself.

Flowing out of this presuppositional "firmament" is a story that people tell themselves

and each other about the nature of reality.[141] Also referred to as "metanarratives" or "grand

narratives," "these are overarching or all-encompassing accounts, philosophies, *theories*, or

stories that provide 'truths' and link our smaller stories together."[142] It is *the* story that claims to

interpret all other narratives in the world. Turnau argues that humans are essentially story-telling

creatures. They see reality as meaningful through the lens of narrative tellings, whereby

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[141]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 10.

[142]Zina O'Leary, *The Social Science Jargon-Buster: The Key Terms You Need to Know* (United Kingdom: SAGE Publications, 2007), np.

discussions of any subject are capitulated into this form (politics, work drama, relationships, etc.). For Turnau, this means crucially:

> that worldviews embed themselves in our minds as *narratives* rather than as sets of abstract, analytical propositions. People tend to believe stories and analyze life from stories they believe about the world. That is why popular culture is so influential: because more often than not, it gives us stories. It feeds our imagination *narratively* through its songs, shows, movies, magazine articles, games, books, and websites. And these stories end up shaping our world-story.

Pulling from Paul Ricoeur, the token postmodernist for evangelicals,[143] Turnau argues that humanity experiences its movement through time as a narrative (constituted as a dynamic, constructive process that understands itself in reference to past, present, and future).[144] Arising in such a temporal becoming are so-called questions of life, probing purpose, existence, identity, etc. The world-story generated within a worldview is designed (Turnau's wording) to answer each of these questions, even if they are not explicitly considered. Turnau likens this circumstance to that of a backstory – background information that must be known for the plot to make sense. Each person's world-story is assumed in their mind, subtly interpreting and organizing many facets of human life. For Turnau, it is only in moments of stress or encounters of an existential nature that one's worldview emerges to the peripheral.[145]

The last level of Turnau's "tree" is applied belief and lived behavior. In a metaphorical sense, it is both the branches and the fruits. A natural outworking from that world-story is a life philosophy. This is an articulated perspective on reality that typically answers three general questions: What exists (metaphysics)? How do we know it exists (epistemology)? And how

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[143]Also see Charles Taylor. This fact is not to either of their detriment.

[144]Paul Ricoeur, "Life in Quest of Narrative," *On Paul Ricoeur: Narrative and Interpretation*, ed. David Wood, 20-33 (New York, NY: Routledge, 1991), 32.

[145]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 11-12.

should we respond (axiology/ethics)? However, most life philosophies are not sufficiently manifested to answer these three questions explicitly.[146] Instead, Turnau argues most people possess informal "street philosophies" or generalized abstractions about reality. A salient example would be "time is money," a pithy phrase laden with metaphors concerning time management, production, and investment. While not philosophically rigorous, statements such as "live life to the fullest" or "honor, family, nation" still actively incorporate underlying world-stories into everyday existence.[147]

The next level extending from life philosophies is applied beliefs. These involve race, culture, media, politics, family, power, sex, church, reputation, etc. According to Turnau, one's life philosophy ("I'm going to live solely for myself") will undoubtedly affect their beliefs and how one lives in the world.[148] To sum everything up, Turnau argues:

> Worldviews are rooted in assumptions about reality (presuppositions); and from these presuppositions flows a story that tries to make sense of our lives and reality (world-story); and out of this world-story flows our applied beliefs about all sorts of things; and from these beliefs we live and act. Worldviews are organic, complex roots-to-fruits systems.[149]

Turnau's account of a worldview has come under fire for being overly reductionist and simplistic. For instance, many of the disparities and contradictions within worldviews cannot be neatly organized into a formula.[150] Sometimes what a person "believes" is incongruent with their "applied actions." Turnau responds by arguing that worldviews do not come fully formed. They are caught up in a dialogical process that tentatively constructs and fragments itself as it

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[146]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 13-14.

[147]Ibid., 14.

[148]Ibid.

[149]Ibid., 14-15.

[150]Romanowski, *Eyes Wide Open*, 60.

undergoes becoming in the world.[151] Experience shapes belief. "Worldview systems are always

incomplete, hesitant, and searching. They are perpetually 'in process.'"[152] Turnau argues that his

tree metaphor should be considered a general model, and even though worldviews are

inconsistent/self-contradicting, it still provides a modicum of value. People continually make

assumptions about reality and tend to make sense of life systematically. This is even the case

within complex popular culture worlds, which only contain a wisp of worldview structure. By

proposing this universal worldview structure, Turnau finds the possibility for pop culture

apologetics.

<div align="center">Popular Culture as Religion</div>

For Turnau, popular culture is a site of intense religious activity. Rather than subscribing

to a substantive view of religion (i.e. Mircea Eliade), Turnau instead holds that religion is

defined by its functions. [153] He believes that it meets specific human needs, such as the need for

ultimate meaning, emotional comfort, etc. Following the insights of Clifford Geertz and Victor

Turner, Turnau argues that definitions of religion should be expanded to include widespread

cultural phenomena. These have their own "sacred spaces, the way it creates its own web of

meaning, its own rituals, myths, and communities."[154] It is within these worlds that everyday

people dwell and operate. More accurately, and more specifically, "Christian":

> Culture is the human imaging of God's community, communication, and creativity by
> engaging and responding to the meanings inherent in God's creation (revelation) to create
> "worlds" of shared meanings that were intended to glorify God, demonstrate love to other
> humans, and care for other creatures. In a fallen world, however, these meaningful
> cultural "worlds" often serve idolatrous and sinful purposes rather than serving God and

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[151]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 15-16.

[152]Ibid., 16.

[153]Ted Turnau, "Popular Culture 'Worlds' as Alternative Religions," *Christian Scholars Review* 37, no. 3 (2008): 325.

[154]Ibid.

his purposes for his creatures. Nevertheless, God has not abandoned human culture, and often leaves his stamp on it in the form of common grace that points to the reality of God and the salvation he offers in Christ.[155]

While such a comment is contextualized to culture writ large, it also can be applied to popular culture. Appropriating Paul Ricoeur's theory of threefold narrative mimesis, Turnau argues that the text-worlds of popular culture can demonstrate functional religiosity. Within Ricoeur's thought, the lived structures that exist before a narrative (mimesis 1, material of everyday life that make narrative possible, i.e., semiotic rules for interpretation, experience of time, social and ethical norms, etc.) stimulate the formation of a narrative text-world (emplotment, mimesis 2) that is inhabited upon consumption. The results of this process extend beyond the confines of a narrative, decisively affecting readers' everyday identity and activity (mimesis 3).[156]

Turnau finds that this three-part pattern can aptly describe a religious trajectory rooted in everyday existence's structures, tensions, and marvels, which serve as a form of general revelation (mimesis 1). The things of general revelation trigger a religious response by human beings, leading to the creation of individual and communal text-worlds. Such "spheres of activity" are religiously supercharged, being built on a foundation inherent to human nature. These worlds are inhabited via an assortment of ritual behaviors, and "in turn this habitation impacts and alters the worldview, ethics, and identity of its inhabitants."[157]

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[155]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 72.

[156]Paul Ricoeur, "Mimesis and Representation," *A Ricoeur Reader: Reflection and Imagination*, ed. Mario Valdes, 137-159 (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1991) and Paul Ricoeur "Time and Narrative: Threefold Mimesis," *Time and Narrative*, vol. 1, trans, Kathleen McLaughlin and David Pellauer (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1984), cited and used in Turnau, "Popular Culture 'Worlds' as Alternative Religions," 328-338.

[157]Turnau, "Popular Culture 'Worlds' as Alternative Religions," 337-338.

Whenever this pattern is found, that of revelational provocation, world-creating response, and ritual habitation, Turnau contends that this indicates a functional religion. This is not simply due to the above distinctive features but because God should be at the focal point of this world-making/world-interpreting process (at least, according to the Christian view). When God is not placed at the "center" and therefore substituted, it becomes an act of idolatry (essentially, a religious act). According to Turnau, the threefold mimetic acts of Ricoeur, which naturally involve creative interpretation of reality, should be subjected to the interpretative authority of God. Any attempt to replace God with something else is a form of idolatrous quasi-worship.

This process is critical for Turnau's conception of worldview apologetics. Pop culture narratives interrelate with worldviews by integrating worldviews into the imaginative world of the narratives. Human beings reflect God's capacity to shape and form different worlds. The worldviews of popular culture are just that – interpretations of reality oriented by foundational presuppositions woven into the imaginative world of some popular culture phenomenon. Because the nature of such story-worlds attempts to project a vision of ultimate reality, they qualify as a form of quasi-worship. Such "idolatry" can hardly be regarded as entirely wrong. According to Turnau, popular culture is a mixture of "grace and idolatry, truth and truth-twisting."[158] Investigating popular culture is a careful, thoughtful endeavor. Rash judgments and knee-jerk reactions tend to obscure the complex dynamics ongoing in a story-world.[159] Based on these observations, Turnau proposes the project of worldview apologetics. In essence, it compares a generic or idealized Christian "worldview" (filtered through Turnau) to the opaque worldview found in a particular popular culture form.

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[158]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 76-77.

[159]Ibid.

Turnau's Method Concerning Popular Culture Phenomenon

To pit worldview against worldview, Turnau has developed a five-step diagnostic method for evaluating popular culture, comprised of two categories: "the reading" of a text and the "performance of apologetics" upon that exact text. Turnau intends this approach to be loose and general, flexible enough to apply to various media forms. It is designed to present a specific Christian perspective on popular culture. As such, it is not an excellent paradigm for engaging persons outside of believing circles. Beyond Turnau's transcendental argumentation in step four, most of his method is dedicated to assisting Christians to navigate popular culture. The five analytical questions are: (1) What's the story? (2) Where am I (the world of the text)? (3) What's good and true and beautiful about it? (4) What's false and ugly and perverse about it (and how do I subvert that)? and (5) How does the gospel apply here?[160] As mentioned in Chapter 2, an essential pre-condition for apologetical engagement is proper discernment of its communication/reception. Therefore, particular attention will be given to Turnau's first two steps, with short descriptions provided for the last three parts to help understand the trajectory of his thought.

What is the Story?

Being a former English major, Turnau places a high degree of value in the dynamics of story. For him, pop culture is always communicated in narratival form, whether the entity in question is a McDonald's sign or a Hollywood film. These latter words, "story" and "narrative," are often used interchangeably by Turnau. This is not the case for Paul Ricoeur, whose thought is the backbone for much of Turnau's work. Ricoeur makes a distinction between the story (a typically completed sequence of events/actions which are chronologically or causally linked) as

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[160]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 213-215.

the object of analysis and the narrative (the process by which a story is constructed through language, which necessarily involves the vantage point and interpretations of the narrator) as a mediation between some temporal sequence of events and their ultimate meaning.[161] Ricoeur, drawing from Aristotle, ties these ideas together with the concept of emplotment. This is the organizing and interpreting of events into a coherent narrative structure. It is an essential aspect of human understanding and is needed for grasping the world around us.[162] For example, let us say that Jerusalem was attacked and destroyed by the Assyrians.[163] This would be the plot, a temporal sequence of events chronologically linked. After conquering the Israelites, Assyrian scribes recount the "splendid taking of territory" that resulted from "victory granted by the gods." This latter sentence would be considered the narrative or the interpretation of the meaning of a story. While admittedly primitive and overly simple, this illustration demonstrates what Ricoeur aims to convey with his distinction.

When Turnau utilizes the term "story," he almost always refers to what Ricoeur demarcates as "narrative." Humans are essentially beings of stories (in that they think and process meaning in this manner), so it is no surprise to Turnau that popular culture is also rife with narrative forms. He surmises that this fundamental feature of humanity is why Scripture is communicated through a spectrum of stories. Therefore, to properly understand popular culture,

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[161]Ricoeur, "Time and Narrative," 32, 52. Content derived through an LLM.

[162]Ibid., 32, 52, 62, 88, 127. Content derived through an LLM.

[163]Of course, this example is itself a narrative in the Ricoeurian sense. While it is intended to portray a static entity or series independent of any particular telling, Ricoeur rightly notes that the narrative is not they story, but rather the discourse which produces the story. In this way, every "story" will be inevitably mediated through the vehicle of narrative.

a reader must first understand its narratives. For Turnau, the existence of stories demands their

interpretation, the bringing out of meaning.[164]

Proper hermeneutics entails breaking down a narrative into its constituent elements to be

independently analyzed. For our purposes, we will assume film or animated media is the subject

of study (since this is a thesis concerning anime). Turnau proposes beginning with a basic

summarization of the plot, where the reader should be able to retell the story in their own words.

Secondly, the reader must isolate the different elements constituting said narrative.[165] Turnau

provides a list of investigative questions to assist in this process:

> Who are the main characters? Who is the protagonist, or the hero (or heroine), of the
> story? Who is the antagonist…? What are the functions of the other characters?... What is
> the major conflict? Is it primarily an external conflict or an internal one, or both?... What
> are the significant "plot points" in the story, the major incidents that serve to turn the
> story in one direction or another?[166]

Thirdly, now that the story has been analytically "broken apart," the reader can begin

reconstituting the essential elements. This primarily comes in the form of examining the various

themes present within the work. For instance, Turnau argues that one needs to look for the

overall theme, the guiding "point" of the story. This is best done by finding the character arc, or

the protagonist's journey. Do they successfully or unsuccessfully achieve their goal? Or (more

likely), do they fail to learn something? It is through the development and circumstances of the

main character that often the "controlling/overarching" thematic element can be found.[167]

Finally, Turnau analyzes the structures or forms that the author has chosen to emplot their

story in:

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[164]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 216-217.

[165]Ibid., 217- 218.

[166]Ibid., 218.

[167]Ibid., 218-219.

How does the author handle time in the story? Is it a linear story that travels from beginning to end straight through, and why? Is he or she trying to build suspense? Are there flashbacks? If so, why? Perhaps suspense is not the point, but rather the storyteller is trying to explain the present through the past. Are all the events dischronologized… Many times, the *way* in which a story is told is as important as the story itself. Where is the story set, and what does that landscape… add to the story? What is the narrator's point of view? Who is telling the story? What is his or her perspective: limited, or omniscient? What sort of style or "spin" does the narrator employ? What voice has the author chosen…? What are some of the prominent symbols that the author uses?... What about repeated motifs?... What does the storyteller want you to take away from that refrain?[168]

It must be noted that much of the above are basic literary-derived techniques.[169] Turnau does not wish to overwhelm his audience with a prolixity of concepts they may find intimidating. By using such tools, he hopes that one can arrive at a solid interpretation (possessing such command of a story that it can be summed efficiently) of a text. Turnau stresses the importance of a faithful and thoughtful interpretation. Widespread cultural phenomena must be given space to speak their voice rather than being constrained by the colonizing force of the reader. This only results in mistaken assumptions and alienated audiences. He advocates for Kevin Vanhoozer's golden rule of interpretation: interpret unto others what you would have them interpret unto you.[170]

What happens when there is no straightforward plot, such as with a fast-food sign? Turnau suggests that one can decipher a quasi-narrative, a sort of mood or feel, behind such popular culture phenomena. This is likable to an emotional landscape that lies behind a poem,

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[168]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 219-220.

[169]As Turnau mentions in his footnotes, he has drawn inspiration from Robert McKee's *Story: Substance, Structure, Style and the Principles of Screenwriting* (New York, NY: HarperEntertainment, 1997).

[170]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 220. Also found in Kevin Vanhoozer, *Is There a Meaning in This Text? The Bible, the Reader, and the Morality of Literary Knowledge* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan Academic, 1998), 164: "Interpretation that aims to be true to the meaning of the text must be guided by the author's illocutionary intention and seek to fulfill it in a way that is appropriate to the literary form in which it is expressed."

informing and structuring its very movements.[171] Whatever the case, discerning and being able to describe a story accurately is the essential step in understanding a popular culture text for Turnau.

<div align="center">Where am I (the World of the Text)?</div>

As previously mentioned, popular-culture texts project worlds of meaning that entice unsuspecting individuals to immerse themselves within. These texts "proposition our imagination, displaying to the imagination different ways of being in the world, ways of seeing the world, ways of dealing with or ignoring God, ways of being ourselves."[172] As a result, these dynamics affect the everyday practices and embodied beliefs of the viewer. Therefore, Turnau argues that it is crucial to be cognizant of not only entertainment's content but also the contours of its world. These characteristics animate such a world, including its fundamental structures and conventions that enable its specific existence. This involves medium, genre, technologies, basic assumptions, venues, etc., all instruments which alter the shape of the "imaginative lens" through which a text asks its participants to view the world.[173]

Turnau's analysis starts with an examination of the medium - the technology and venue used to deliver a text. It is important to note that his ideas are often developed in antithesis to the thought of Marshall McLuhan. Famously, McLuhan argued that "the medium is the message." To combat an overemphasis within scholarship on the content aspect of a text, he claimed that "the 'message' of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it

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[171]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 221.

[172]Ibid., 222.

[173]Ibid.

<div align="center">60</div>

introduces in human affairs."[174] How information is transmitted influences how people perceive and interpret it. For example, the shift to computer technologies vastly impacted the human capacity to process, discern patterns, and direct thinking. Each media technology brings unique characteristics that perpetually assimilate and refashion everyday life to accommodate its pattern.[175] Turnau sees this as a form of media (or technological) determinism whereby the existence of media itself forcibly alters persons in predetermined manners, regardless of its function or embedded message.[176]

Turnau ultimately finds four problems with this statement by McLuhan. Firstly, he thinks such strong determinism oversimplifies the relationship between media form and content. He believes it's incorrect to conflate media's formal effects (how) with the substance (what) of media. Instead, the medium deeply contours the message. Its influence should be considered adverbial, where the delivery mechanism gives shape and texture to a unique imaginative world (textually, televised-ly, radiophonically, YouTubedly, etc.).[177] Secondly, McLuhan oversimplifies the causal relationship between media and audience. In other words, he hasn't accounted for the complexity of operations when a participant experiences, for example, television. The effects of a particular media differ and depend on their modes of employment. Media contexts are also never unilateral; they compete with many other contexts (social, etc.) for influence.[178]

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[174]Marshall McLuhan, *Understanding Media: The Extensions of Man* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002), 8.

[175]This is Turnau's interpretation of McLuhan.

[176]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 137.

[177]Ibid., 139-140.

[178]Ibid., 140-141.

Thirdly, strong media determinists like McLuhan understand technology as a primitive fact rather than a set of practices within a socially structured environment. Media is always utilized and constructed by institutions and historical conditioning. These social contexts can affect viewers and the message of a text to a greater degree than its form.[179] Fourthly, media determinism leads to fatalistic tendencies that portray texts as hegemonic entities that impose their will on impressionable masses. The TV defines the human. Turnau views such an idea as overly deflating and draining vitality from the potential goodness of human existence.[180]

However, as noted above, Turnau is not ready to discard the communicative aspects of media. Only the dizzying intensity to which they have been advocated. The contours of the message are always determined by its media form. While Turnau does not precisely describe what he means by "contours," he does attribute some shaping force to the word. Media form determines the ways imaginative worlds can be inhabited.[181] "The medium is like a language. Popular-cultural texts can be 'translated' into different mediums, and that translation shapes how we experience the text."[182]

To help flesh out this concept, Turnau uses the example of a novel (or manga) being adapted into a movie (or anime). The actual content is still the same, but each form generates vastly different experiences and worlds (similar to how a message can be translated into other languages but can still "feel" significantly disparate).[183] The cinema experience tends to be embracive, settling viewers into a dark room as they fixate on the screen's light. TV worlds are

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[179]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 141-142.

[180]Ibid., 142-143.

[181]Ibid., 223.

[182]Ibid.

[183]Ibid.

intimate – they take residence in our most personal spaces. In many ways, they can be likened to a friend. They grow alongside people, become some of their most trusted relations, and exhibit deeper worlds to indwell (the result of running for countless seasons).[184] A prominent example of this could be the anime *One Piece*, a work infamous for its enduring nature and familial characters.

But is there a method for observing how a specific medium can form its corresponding imaginative world? Turnau outlines several formal devices for viewers to pay attention to (specifically when it comes to film):

- The first and last shots of a movie are frequently significant. They bookend the work, providing the background to, and escape from, whatever world is inhabited.
- Lighting and camera angles are the cinematographer's voice, subtly highlighting what they wish to communicate. Take, for instance, a character portrayed darkly in the background shadows, moving closer to the foreground. Does this engender a sense of anticipation and intrigue?
- Editing mediates the filmic world that one inhabits. Events and activities can be spliced together on new trajectories based on how the editor juxtaposes scenes. For instance, quick, staccato cuts can heighten the sense of suspense within the film.
- Music significantly influences how an audience receives a work, providing an emotional framework that resonates with viewers. By guiding the experience of watching, it helps to establish the appropriate emotional atmosphere for each scene.
- Turnau argues that one must observe how the filmmaker develops the character arc. How do the central characters grow, devolve, transition, and learn? From here, the film's primary message can be discerned best.

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[184]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 223-224.

- He also argues that the viewer should consider how cinematographers build imaginative relationships with real-world entities. A prominent example of this would be retro items evoking a sensation of existing in the 1970s USA.
- Filmmakers often make use of cinematic "time" to alter the audience's experience of being in the world.
- Human relationships are approached differently in each world of film. Are they straightforward or chaotic, and how does this contribute to the overall message the author hopes to communicate?[185]
- Lastly, Turnau claims that the language is a vital media attribute that deserves consideration. Each film contains its patterns of dialogue, verbal motifs, and punchy wordplay that subtly convey a message to the viewer.[186] For instance, in Ushijima Shinichiro's magisterial *I Want to Eat Your Pancreas* (2018), the work's title is repeated jovially between two prospective lovers as an intimate "inside phrase." However, the once joking words take on a more haunting and somber meaning when the heroine dies of pancreatic cancer.

While the aspect of medium deals primarily with the *contours* of an imaginative world, genre investigates the conventions of world creation within that particular strand of media. Genre is a loose category grouping of works characterized by similar time-honored expectations, forms, styles, rules, and subject matters.[187] For instance, if one was to watch an anime belonging to the isekai genre, one should expect the protagonist to be reincarnated into a power fantasy world, where said protagonist quickly becomes overpowered and gradually develops a harem (of sorts). While genre is an externally applied organizational instrument, authors inevitably create works that follow previous conventions to some degree or another. This helps readers orient themselves to the work, providing helpful context for interpretation.[188]

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[185]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 225-227.

[186]Ibid., 227-228.

[187]Ibid., 228.

Turnau outlines several diagnostic questions for the examination of genre: "What counts as 'good' in this world? What counts as 'evil'? Is evil real or only apparent? What is beautiful in this world? What makes relationships work or fail here? Where is God? Or is this even an important question? What is worshipped in this world? What makes life worth living in this world?"[189] Beyond these basic inquiries, Turnau states that the reader should create their own questions for further study. After enough attempts and mental lists, one should be able to develop a "feel" for the text-world at hand. It is from this intuition that the viewer should be able to create an accurate description of both medium and genre.[190]

What is Good and True and Beautiful About It?

Turnau argues that an important assumption for his method is that there is "light" and "dark" content distributed in popular culture works. Some content will align or be oriented to God's authoritative interpretation of reality, and other material will be antithetical to varying degrees. Turnau does not present a precise manner to describe things of goodness/beauty in a particular phenomenon. Instead, he relies on the readers' intuition (perhaps based upon his previous comments on Christian worldview) to make any differentiation. Turnau is far more concerned with his audience's frame of mind and reactions than describing a rigorous method.[191]

Firstly, Turnau seeks to communicate that Christians should not be blind to the goodness within popular culture. For those of skeptical variety, he argues that there will be moments where truth and beauty shine in whatever work is experienced. For instance, the cathartic power of

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[188]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 228-229.

[189] Ibid., 229-230.

[190]Ibid.,

[191]Ibid., 232-233. Ricoeur, "Time and Narrative," 52.

forgiveness demonstrated in *A Silent Voice* is reminiscent of effects derivative of Christ's

redemption. These fragments and moments of grace are the footprints of God. While they may

not be "pure snow," to use an analogy of Turnau, popular culture works can reflect God's

common grace.[192] Therefore, according to Turnau, it is a necessity that Christians should

approach pop culture phenomena with an open and critical mind.

Secondly, Turnau finishes this section of his methodology by highlighting several broad,

practical tips for discovering noble content. He suggests making a mental list of moments where

truth, grace, beauty, and goodness are evident within a popular culture work. Here, he relies

primarily on his audience's clairsentience for procuring such virtues rather than a specific

technique. A reader should try to draw connections between the textual world of pop culture and

God's meta-story of His character and interactions with the world.[193] "How does this text-world

gesture beyond itself to something better, more alive, more true?[194] Through these diagnostic

questions and points, Turnau hopes to establish some meaningful positive analysis of popular

culture.

<div align="center">What is False and Ugly and Perverse About It?</div>

Turnau argues that this step is dedicated to discerning where an imaginative world

distorts reality and does so to exclude God. To perform this task, a believer must be well

equipped with a "worldview foundation." "If we want to detect idolatry and deception (as well as

grace), there really is no substitute for a good knowledge of Scripture that has been thought

through to an integrated Christian worldview."[195] From this, one develops the "instinct" to

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[192]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 232.

[193]Ibid., 232-233.

[194]Ibid., 233.

[195]Ibid., 234, 245.

differentiate truth from falsehood. As with the previous step, Turnau seems to be content leaving much up to a reader's intuition, allowing them to arbitrate as they see fit. Any wisp of a method comes in the form of suggested diagnostic questions. These are specifically theological queries designed to probe a popular culture text for antithetical material.[196] Examples of such include: What does salvation look like in this world? Is it about misogynistic appropriation of women? Acquiring respect? Attaining riches and status? What is the process of receiving or striving for this salvation? What leads to damnation, i.e., despair and lostness? Are there unpardonable sins? What is portrayed as good and noble, even though traditional Christian orthodoxy would consider it sinful?[197]

According to Turnau, popular culture "uses the good things that draw desire and strip them of their proper context – as gifts of a good and loving God – and instead ascribe to them an idol or idol complex."[198] He might point out that while community or fellowship is emphasized in *A Silent Voice*, one's identity is inextricably tied to other people. In effect, the individual images and is determined by the group, whereby the Other/s take ultimate significance in everyday life. This contradicts the definitive position that God rightly shares with His creation. In this manner, a good thing – human relationship – is subtly lifted to the position of idolatry.[199] Turnau advocates asking transcendental questions about a popular culture text to reveal its inner absurdities and idolatries (especially to those outside of believing circles).[200] Derived from

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[196]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 234-235.

[197]Ibid., 235.

[198]Ibid., 245-246.

[199]This exercise is more an attempt of imagining what Turnau would conclude from *A Silent Voice*, rather than suggesting it is a legitimate reading of the work.

[200] Turnau, *Popologetics*, 239.

Cornelius Van Til, a transcendental cultural argument assesses any cultural phenomena and inspects the preconditions that allow such intelligibility of human experience, reasoning, and knowledge.[201] To sum up: Turnau's fourth step concerns the identification of attractive falsehoods within pop culture phenomena and the corresponding effort to demonstrate its explanatory poverty via transcendental argumentation.[202]

<div align="center">How Does the Gospel Apply Here?</div>

If stopped at part four, Turnau fears that Christians will become antagonistic detractors of secular society instead of offering a vision that reconstructs what has been deconstructed. A complete Christian reading of popular culture is only performed by demonstrating the relevance of the gospel and the perspective that it alone reveals.[203] By "gospel," Turnau means the wholistic effort of God to reconcile man to himself.[204] This involves not only the forgiveness derived from Christ's death, burial, and resurrection but also implications of cosmic restoration, peace, harmony, justice, and new creation.[205] "When a piece of popular culture really 'works,' it works because it stirs human desires for good things, such as true love, reconciliation, contentment, security, and forgiveness. It does this by offering an idol as a resolution for those desires."[206]

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[201]Greg Bahnsen, *Van Til's Apologetic; Readings and Analysis* (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&R Publishing, 1998).

[202]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 246.

[203]Ibid., 241-42.

[204]More specifically, the gospel is the good news of God. It is the royal announcement that the crucified and risen Jesus, who died for our sins and rose again according to the Scriptures, has been enthroned as the true Lord of the world. When the gospel is preached, God calls people to salvation, out of sheer grace, leading them to repentance and faith in Jesus Christ as the risen Lord.

[205]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 241-242.

[206]Ibid.

According to Turnau, this diversity of desires is best fulfilled and answered by the gospel. This is not simply a gospel of dry theological propositions or personal justification but a doorway for making everything new. He seems to suggest that an eschatological longing for catharsis exists inside every human being. While the projected worlds of popular culture act as a poorly applied "band-aid," true satisfaction comes from appropriating the true gospel story. Since this gospel pertains to the Creator and Redeemer of the world, it will be relevant to all people and efficacious in their situations.[207] Turnau prefers pithy general guidelines over rigorous methodology, continuing a trend throughout his approach. This is sensible considering his intended audience, but it also contains tendencies towards vagueness and semantic saturation. While these points could be fleshed out further, it is important to be faithful to the level and manner Turnau communicates himself (at least in the initial description), lest his method is warped in an unintended direction.

Exegeting *One Piece*

To illustrate Turnau's method, it would be helpful to consider the popular anime series *One Piece*. Affectionately known as part of the "Big Three,"[208] this anime is one of the longest-running and most influential of the 21st century. As of 2022, over 500 million copies of the manga had sold worldwide and the show won multiple accolades, including the Guinness World Record for "the most copies published for the same comic book series by a single author."[209]

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[207]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 245-246.

[208]"Big Three" is a title applied to *Naruto*, *Bleach*, and *One Piece* due to their popularity and long-running success in the 2000s.While recent years has seen their ubiquity wane, this collection of shows expanded the frontiers of anime and influenced the industry greatly.

[209]Rafael Antonio Pineda, *One Piece Manga Sets Guinness World Record With Over 500 Million Published* (Tokyo: Anime News Network, 2022), https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/news/2022-08-04/one-piece-manga-sets-guinness-world-record-with-over-500-million-published/.188352, Crystalyn Hodgkins, *One Piece Manga Sets Guinness World Record for Copies Printed for Comic by Single Author* (Tokyo: Anime News

One Piece's author, Oda Eiichiro, began the project in 1997 with a planned five-year run. However, Oda had so much fun creating One Piece that he decided to continue the series indefinitely.[210] At present, the anime has exceeded one thousand total episodes and shows no signs of stopping soon (a recent interview with Oda estimates it may finish in approximately three years, although his previous track record with timeframes suggests a more realistic projection of six years).[211] Given the prolific nature of *One Piece*, and Turnau's avid fandom of the anime, it makes for an efficacious test subject of pop culture methodology.

<div align="center">What is the Story?</div>

With over a thousand episodes and chapters of content, the story of *One Piece* is almost impossible to summarize succinctly.[212] In many ways, an entire book could be dedicated to the subject! Based loosely on the Age of Exploration (15th to 18th century), a pirate named Monkey D. Luffy sets out on a journey to become "King of the Pirates." While still vague and undetermined in the series, this title carries significant prestige and desirability. In the past, a pirate named "Gold Roger" explored the entire world and owned its most fabulous riches. Upon the penultimate moment before his execution, Roger declares to the world that he has hidden a treasure, the legendary "ONE PIECE," which far surpasses any other imaginable fortune.[213] This

Network, 2015), https://www.animenewsnetwork.com/news/2015-06-14/one-piece-manga-sets-guinness-world-record-for-copies-printed-for-comic-by-single-author/.89275

[210]Eiichiro Oda, 2006, *One Piece*, vol. 42 (San Francisco, CA: VIZ Media). Cited in Turnau, *Popologetics*, 269.

[211]Game Rant, *Eiichiro Oda Confirms That One Piece Could End Within The Next Few Years* (Quebec: Game Rant, 2022), https://gamerant.com/eiichiro-oda-one-piece-ending-three-yearss/

[212]Unfortunately, the description of the story will be noticeably bare here, relying on earlier iterations of the anime. The author as of this point is not caught up with the series and does not wish to spoil himself.

[213]Konoyu Nakamura, "ONE PIECE: Diversity and Borderlessness," *The Spectre of the Other in Jungian Psychoanalysis*, ed. Marybeth Carter and Stephen Farah, 175-185 (New York, NY: Routledge, 2023), 177.

singular statement spawns a great era of piracy, where the World Government (via the Navy) is pitted against the criminals of the sea.[214]

Inspired at a young age by a former member of Roger's crew named Red-Haired Shanks, Luffy eventually sets out to sea and forms his pirate band, the "Straw Hat Pirates." This name originates from Luffy's iconic Straw Hat, an item of symbolic significance handed down to him by Shanks. In this fictional world, some characters possess various powers derivative of mysterious "devil fruits." When consumed, this fruit renders the eater its characteristic ability, yet also causes them to be impotent in water (quite a drawback, considering the *One Piece* world is constituted primarily by seas!).[215]

As a boy, Luffy ate the Gum-Gum fruit, which gave him the properties of rubber (elasticity and invulnerability to non-Haki-related impacts).[216] This is ironically appropriate for Luffy, as Turnau points out, who epitomizes tenacity (the ability to rebound or recoil from adverse circumstances).[217] Along his adventures, Luffy gathers various members for his crew, who are often skilled and possess emotionally salient backstories. Each individual is simultaneously brilliant and flawed: Roronoa Zoro (a user of the three-swords technique who lacks even the most basic sense of direction), Nami (a short-tempered master thief, navigator, and cartographer), Usopp (an incredible sniper and compulsive, fear-ridden, liar), Sanji (skilled in both cooking and kicking, neither of which help him in his lecherous love pursuits),[218] Tony

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[214]Akos Kopper, "Pirates, justice and global order in the anime 'One Piece'," *Global Affairs* 6, no. 4-5 (2020): 503.

[215]Turnau, *Poplogetics*, 270.

[216]Haki is a universally latent power that some characters have manifested, which allows them to sense and control spiritual energy. When used properly, it can cancel out the abilities of Devil-Fruit users.

[217]Turnau, *Poplogetics*, 270

[218]Ibid., 270

Tony Chopper (an excellent doctor who is exceedingly gullible and insecure), Nico Robin (formerly of organized crime, an able female archaeologist who struggles to love herself and trust others), Franky (a cyborg shipwright; also an occasional reckless show-off), and Brook (a gifted, yet perverted musician who occasionally lacks seriousness in critical moments).[219] This motley band of characters is led by their Captain, Luffy, who fits their same mold. He is loyal, fearless, clutch, strangely wise, and always knows what course of action should be followed. At the same time, he is stubborn, not very bright, and possesses a child-like idiocy. Luffy likely would not have made it past his first few towns without his crew.[220] Unlike most pirates in the *One Piece* universe, they neither attack nor steal from ordinary folk.[221] In some ways, the term "adventurer" better encapsulates the group than that of pirates.

This merry band of characters set out on the Grand Line,[222] sailing from place to place, getting involved in all manners of trouble, and always following their dreams. The story arcs tend to follow the same preset pattern (especially earlier on, although this diversifies later in the series with more character development). Typically, the Straw Hat crew finds themselves in unexpected circumstances where some problem or injustice is ongoing. After being separated, they scramble around chaotically, trying to understand the situation, usually leading to even further confusion. Eventually, they commit to fighting the enemy, culminating in a showdown between Luffy and some smug/cruel final boss. As Turnau observes, much of Oda's brilliance as a storyteller comes in his ability to generate tension in places where such would not normally be

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[219]Nakamura, "ONE PIECE: Diversity and Borderlessness," 177-178.

[220]Turnau, *Poplogetics*, 270.

[221] Nakamura, "ONE PIECE: Diversity and Borderlessness," 177-178.

[222]An infamous strip of Sea containing the epitome of adventure and the One Piece itself.

expected.[223] He has also developed a multi-layered and constantly evolving narrative that recalls the show's earliest moments. Over time, the Straw Hats face greater moral dilemmas and stronger enemies. Storylines become more complex and nuanced, creating moments that explode when every piece aligns.

A significant part of *One Piece* is its focus on characters. The Straw Hat gang learns and grows together, especially in mutual trust and dependency. In many ways, they are a family, and familial loyalty is a prominent theme throughout the show (even taking center stage during the Water 7 arc).[224] *One Piece* is an adventure designed to live alongside people. The anime is so long-running that the characters tend to develop as their viewers grow in real life. This creates a unique emotional intertwining that transcends traditional attachments, whereby the Straw Hat crew members become superimposed on the daily routines of everyday life. It is elements such as these that create an alluring invitation into the imaginative-world of *One Piece*, leading to its all-pervasive presence in the life of fans.

Where am I (the World of the Text)?

The imaginative world of *One Piece* is mediated through animation. In terms of aesthetics, the series is exceptionally well-drawn. While perhaps appearing cartoony or goofy to Western audiences, at least initially, the stylistic choices serve their intended purpose. Bright, clean lines amplify exaggerated expressions and dynamic action scenes. Sometimes scenes can be breathtaking, especially when closely reflecting Oda's initial drawings. In contrast to the monochromatic pages of the source manga, anime productions often infuse vibrancy and liveliness with color. Rather than damp or subdued patterns (like 2022's *Chainsaw Man* or

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[223]Turnau, *Poplogetics*, 270-271.

[224]Ibid., 271.

2019's *The Promised Neverland*), the creators of *One Piece* prefer bold, punchy coloration. This helps the show "leap" offscreen, fusing well with its energetic fight scenes.[225]

Voice acting also takes a prominent place in anime. This is not only because it is an excellent imparter of emotional depth but because the actors are celebrities within Japanese culture. *One Piece* has many veteran voice actors skilled at the expressiveness necessary for bringing their characters to life.[226] Turnau states, "I would have a hard time watching the show in a dubbed version. I would miss hearing the rhythms and rise and fall of each voice actor."[227]

Transitioning from more formal elements into the thematic, *One Piece* is infamous for its dichotomy between humor and moral seriousness. On the one hand, the series is filled with over-the-top, goofy humor with a relaxed element. Crewmates play child-like games between adventures, high-strung antics are met with exaggerated double takes, and often near slap-stick physical humor is employed. This watershed of jovialness is juxtaposed with more serious undertones, where moral dilemmas are examined and brought to the forefront. "The show's mood may turn on a dime, embracing silliness and gravitas in almost the same moment. The effect is truly bizarre. A character may be weeping bitter tears one moment and be bellowing in mock outrage as some joke the next. But such is the strange admixture of *One Piece*…"[228]

One of the most prominent themes in *One Piece* is that of *nakama*. This term translates to something like companion, friend, or even family. It is often used to refer to close allies or friends who share a sturdy bond of loyalty. In the *One Piece* universe, a chief virtue is an individual's unwavering devotion to their *nakama*. Neglecting or abandoning one's friends is

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[225]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 271.

[226]Ibid., 271.

[227]Ibid.

[228]Ibid., 272.

considered a heinous offense, particularly among the Straw Hat crew members. Despite their occasional disagreements and squabbles, Luffy and crew deeply care for each other as family (even to the point of challenging the entire World Government to rescue a single companion).[229]

A second central theme is the fulfillment of dreams. In *One Piece*, the telos of being human is to possess and actively dream for desired futures. An unarticulated assumption made throughout the series is that having a dream inevitably means striving to fulfill it. For instance, Luffy dreams of being "King of the Pirates," the freest person on the seas, so he perseveres through all odds to achieve it. Oda regularly employs people who have given up on their hopeful aspirations as plot devices to kickstart arcs. Inextricably connected to an individual's dream is personal fortitude or willpower. They should be willing to go to all lengths, even risking death, to achieve their dream.[230]

Other themes litter the landscape of *One Piece*. These can range from racism, slavery, geopolitics, nuclear weapons, justice, international relations, etc.[231] However, according to Turnau, all of these are subordinated to broader motifs of *nakama*, dreams, and willpower. "The story gains its primary motivation from this combination of loyalty to friends and relentlessly pursuing your dreams. This is the center of the moral/spiritual world of *One Piece*. These things make life worth living. At least for pirates."[232]

What is Good and True and Beautiful About It?

While the latter three portions of Turnau's methodology are important, we will only give brief attention to them since the primary focus of this thesis is on his first two steps.

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[229]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 271.

[230]Ibid.,

[231]Kopper, "Pirates, justice and global order in the anime 'One Piece,'" 1.

[232]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 271.

Turnau's third step concerns the ways a culture-text reflects the truth, beauty, and light of God. Surprisingly, he believes these concepts are upheld through *One Piece's* inherent silliness. Play and fun are part of God's plan for humanity, and the anime's humor reflects His joy and grace. "As silly as the show can be – and it can be very silly – serious issues are never far from view. In fact, without its characteristic humor, the show would feel very oppressive and bleak. Humor… make(s) it possible for the audience to consider the heavier matters that Oda wants to convey."[233] Rather than destructive, most of the jocularity in *One Piece* is self-effacing. The characters laugh at themselves and each other, making it (for the most part) a humanizing affair, void of the belittlement which is the foundation of much laughter. The crew members seldom take themselves so seriously that they cannot laugh. Such teasing and self-awareness are a form of humility analogous to God's intention for human relationships.[234]

One Piece is well noted for its scenes of emotional intensity. Often, these are accompanied by heart-rending tears streaming down a character's face. Laments for injustice. Laments for suffering. Laments for evil. Numerous themes grieved throughout *One Piece* are emblematic of the issues that deeply trouble God. The characters weep for the pain they encounter. Tears, however, are not just set apart for negative happenings. They are also for positive feelings of gratitude and indebtedness to friends. "If *One Piece* had a signature Bible verse, it might be John 15:13: 'Greater love has no one than this, that he lay down his life for his *nakama*.'"[235]

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[233]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 274. Parenthesis inserted.

[234]Ibid.

[235]Ibid., 274-275.

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Many beautiful moments in the anime are derived from Luffy's unconditional acceptance of some character or crewmate. From Chopper, Robin, and Brook to some random person on a street, seemingly no character can escape Luffy once he has decided to befriend them. This is strangely reminiscent of Christ's relationship to humanity portrayed through the gospel: unconditional friendship and acceptance that engenders further intimacy between image-bearers.[236]

> In a way, Luffy's crew is a picture of what the church should be: a bunch of misfits who sometimes bicker, but accept one another as family; who journey together toward that One Piece of treasure (known in Christian circles as the "pearl of great price"). There is something ennobling about that kind of friendship and loyalty, about dreaming big, about digging deep to find the will to reach your goal… That is what we admire in our Lord, who endured the opposition of his society to realize his dream: the salvation of his people."[237]

What is False and Ugly and Perverse About It?

Turnau identifies three manners by which One Piece contradicts and corrupts the Christian gospel. First, this anime champions self-belief and inherency to overcome any problem. Simply believe in yourself/community and continue to strive through obstacles; for One Piece, this is the essence of everyday existence. This opposes a view of humanity as weak failures which need to be reconstructed presented by the gospel. Turnau argues that unlimited determination can be a good thing but often is an idol that leads to destruction. Such can eradicate patience, gentleness, and mercy amid its pursuit. Not time is carved out for weak people; instead, they are obstacles and burdens to one's goals.[238] Those who make unlimited determination a functional god often turn bitter and judgmental as they encounter the finitude

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[236]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 276.

[237]Ibid.

[238]Ibid., 277-278.

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that is instead a creaturely good.[239] The gospel instead engages those who are weak, engages those life is constituted by contingency. The Kingdom of God, according to Turnau, is made up of people who ultimately cannot strive for themselves. In this way, the ethic in *One Piece* of tireless effort contradicts a Christian worldview.

Second, *One Piece* deifies the dreams that humans possess. They are sacred and, therefore, worthy of being enacted out, at least in Turnau's view. However, the series never asks a pertinent question, what about dreams with negative connotations? Many people have dreamed of big enterprises: Stalin, Hitler, Mao? What about a father who abandons his family? Are these worth pursuing to the same degree as Luffy's aspirations? In *One Piece,* dreams simply exist, and it is the glory of a person to fulfill them. If ambitions contradict (for instance, see the Revolution Army and World Government), Turnau suggests that no moral value is attributed to either side; they must battle to pursue their path. For Turnau, the context in which dreams arise is critical. They are idolatrous and inevitably destructive if they do not cohere with God's reality.[240]

Third, unquestioned loyalty to one's *nakama* generates opportunities for detrimental outcomes. Poor choices in the people who constitute friendship or community can lead to a corrupted character (1 Cor. 15:33). The sinful nature of humanity guarantees that each person's heart is twisted in ways that ultimately deconstruct the people around them, even if rays of light shone through that darkness. Further, communal identities are often built upon the demarcation of an Other(s). These others are often seen as sub-human or less deserving of sensitivity/empathy. As a result, violence is continually committed between groups with a strong

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[239]Kelly Kapic, *You're Only Human: How Your Creaturely Limits Reflect God's Design and Why That's Good News* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos Press, 2022), 15.

[240]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 278.

communal pride, both overtly and subtly.[241] Finally, unquestioned loyalty to one's *nakama* can heighten collective values and conventions to the place of God, which is a clear form of idolatry. According to Turnau, these three themes, unlimited determination, dreams, and unquestioned loyalty, can provide both blessings and self-destruction, depending on what context they are placed in.[242]

How Does the Gospel Apply Here?

Turnau's final step involves how the gospel answers many of One Piece's grand desires. From a Christian worldview, *nakama* is not constituted by uncritical loyalty to one's friends or community. Every person is made in the image of God, deserving of relationship and love. Loyalty is first not to people but to Christ, humanity's savior. "He became our *nakama*, even to the point of death. He is now our greatest *nakama*, and our *sencho-san*, the Captain who leads us."[243] This salvation should not devolve into tribalism (i.e., fundamentalism) but rather an inclusive community that always looks outside its boundaries towards the Other. The Christian church exists for the benefit of its nonmembers.[244]

Dreams for the sake of dreams is a model with consequences, according to Turnau. They need to be placed in the proper context of God's creational telos rather than being the glory of man. Since Christ is the purest *nakama* in Excelsis, all human aspirations should be colored by His orientation.[245] As the church:

> we misfits have a myriad of goals and aspirations that all flow into the same dream, like different parts of a single body… We have been invited by our Captain to take part in his

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[241]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 278-279.

[242]Ibid., 179.

[243]Ibid., 279-280.

[244]Ibid., 280.

[245]Ibid.

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grand adventure, no matter how unfit we may feel for the voyage. For it is *his* power, and not our own determination, that will finally cause this dream to be realized… The gospel, when taken seriously, radically recasts even our dreams. Our dream is now to love others as Jesus has loved us, and to spread that love along the many paths of life to which he has called us, using the gifts he has given us.[246]

Conclusion

Turnau has developed a method for apologetically engaging popular culture that relies heavily on Christian foundations. For him, every work of culture can be seen as a text, a communicative human action that possesses meaning and the capacity to be interpreted. Each text projects an imaginative world, exhibiting all the same features of God's creation. Part of God-imaging is the integration of worldview, i.e., a lens from which to view and understand reality. For Turnau, all worldviews are structured top-down, starting with assumed foundational beliefs (presuppositions) and building a hierarchal ecosystem based on these. Popular culture apologetics aims to engage the Christian worldview with whatever worldview is present in a popular culture text. These works are mixtures of grace and corruption and should not be thought of as monolithically one or the other. Humans follow their Creator by creating, yet because they are ultimately sinful, make worlds that are centered around something other than God (i.e., functional idolatrous religions).

To engage popular culture texts apologetically, Turnau has developed a series of five diagnostic questions: What is the story (narratological analysis)? Where am I (what medial, technological, formal, thematic, and genre "textures" shape the world of the text)? What is good and true and beautiful about it (how does this popular culture phenomena reflect fragments of God's grace)? What is false and ugly and perverse about it (in what ways is the work antithetical to the Kingdom of God or destructive)? How does the gospel apply here (in what ways does the

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[246]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 280.

gospel answer the most profound desires echoing throughout popular culture)? The questions provide a helpful outline but are not rigorously nuanced, leaving many tasks to viewer discretion/intuition.

The anime *One Piece* is intensely popular and influential, making it a perfect subject for Turnau's method. *One Piece* has a complex, story-driven world rich with numerous themes. While its entire plot is impossible to summarize succinctly, the anime follows the pirating adventures of Monkey D. Luffy and co. as he pursues a fabled treasure known as the One Piece. Three prominent themes display themselves throughout the series: *nakama*, personal dreams, and the willpower to achieve them. The community, unconditional acceptance, and tears shed in *One Piece* are all beautiful fragments of grace that point to a greater reality. Unfortunately, when companions, aspirations, and unlimited determination are displayed without the context of Christianity, they quickly corrupt good intentions. Ultimately, the gospel best answers *One Piece*'s latent desires by providing the preeminent *nakama* who orients all dreams and striving, allowing for unmarred community and flourishing.

Chapter 4: CRITIQUING TURNAU THROUGH THOMAS LAMARRE'S "ANIMETIC"

Introduction

In Chapter 4, we shift our focus to Thomas Lamarre, a scholar with an impressive background and unconventional educational path. Lamarre was born in Montreal, Canada, and before entering the fields of East Asian and Media Studies, he obtained a doctorate of Oceanology from Aix-Marseille University. After spending nearly a decade as a research scientist, Lamarre pursued his interest in East Asian languages and civilization, earning a PhD. in the subject from the University of Chicago. His academic achievements led him to a faculty position a McGill University, where he served as Chair for the Department of East Asia Studies and Director of the Centre for East Asian Research.[247] Currently, Lamarre holds the Gordon J. Laing Distinguished Service professorship in the Department of Cinema and Media Studies at the University of Chicago, his alma mater.

More precisely, as a scholar of media, cinema/animation, art history, and material culture, Thomas Lamarre has put together an impressive repertoire of work. In addition to *The Anime Machine*, he has authored several books, including *Uncovering Heian Japan: An Archaeology of Sensation and Inscription* (2000), which examines communication networks in 9th century Japan, and *The Anime Ecology: A Genealogy of Television, Animation, and Game Media* (2018), which explores the ecology and infrastructure of television. Lamarre is also a robust translator, editor, and current researcher at the Moving Image Research Laboratory.[248] These impressive accomplishments have earned him a prominent position in Japanese media and culture studies.

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[247]Thomas Lamarre, *Curriculum Vitae* (Montreal: Lamarre-Mediaken, 2009), http://www.lamarre-mediaken.com/Site/Education_and_Pro.html.

[248]University of Chicago, *Thomas Lamarre* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago, 2020), https://ealc.uchicago.edu/people/thomas-lamarre.

In particular, Lamarre's *The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation* has been instrumental in developing the field of anime methodology. According to Susan Napier, Lamarre has created a "breathtakingly ambitious and intellectually exciting work, a densely developed and sustained theory of animation as a 'machine.'"[249] It "is a rare work of theoretical rigor and clarity that breathes new life into fundamental questions about studying Japan and raises new concerns about how media and technology can be understood in relation to their audience and the apparatus that produces (and is produced by) them."[250] The result has been the expansion of exploring anime as a media form (and the environments that produce it) rather than a conduit for exploring Japanese culture.[251] In many ways, Lamarre is the standard bearer of an anime philosophy that differentiates its aesthetics/qualities from other animation structures.[252] Rarely has a serious work concerning methodology been formulated without some reference to his book. For this reason, Lamarre has been chosen as the subject for our project: he has produced a largely uncontested approach that has dominated the field of anime studies. A concept that clarifies understanding *how* one "reads" anime is intensely valuable for popular culture apologetics. It teaches not only efficacious discernment of the media-form but also does so in such a manner as to make those derivations relevant to unbelieving communities. Therefore, we shall attempt to describe the contents of Lamarre's book, utilizing those ideas to critique the method of "anime discernment" set out by Turnau. This will allow us to hybridize each thinker's contribution and

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[249]Susan Napier, "The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation," *The Journal of Japanese Studies* 37, no. 1 (2011): 248.

[250]Daniel Johnson, "The Anime Machine: A Media Theory of Animation," *The Journal of Asian Studies* 69, no. 2 (May 2010): 604.

[251]Berndt, "Anime in Academia," np.

[252]Denison, "Christopher Bolton, Interpreting Anime Thomas Lamarre, The Anime Ecology: A Genealogy of Television, Animation and Game Media," 492-493.

take the first tentative steps toward developing an apologetic method uniquely situated for Japanese animation.

Summary of Lamarre's *The Anime Machine*

The Anime Machine is split into three successive sections: the multiplanar image, the exploded view, and the girl computerized. While Lamarre's overall argument is intricately developed throughout his book, each unit is modularized and can be separated for an independent analysis. In the case of this thesis, we will focus on the first eight chapters of *The Anime Machine*, which constitute insights into the "multiplanar image" and "animetic interval." These concepts are some of Lamarre's most essential tenets for other ideas introduced further in the book. There are several reasons for having such a narrow examination: (1) spatial and temporal restrictions surrounding the thesis's construction that prevent implementing Lamarre fully, (2) a smaller focus engenders better and deeper discussion, (3) "animetism" highlights anime's essential difference from Western animation conventions and is frequently utilized by scholars, and (4) operates as a practical first step for implementing Lamarre's theory into a revised Turnauian method.

One-Point Cartesianism, Cinematism, and Technological Determinism

If Lamarre were to have a thesis statement for his book, it would be:

> In this book, because I focus analysis on movement in animation and thus on the animetic machine, I adopt something of the attitude of experimental science and technology studies in my approach to animation. I tend to approach technologies and technical determinations from the perspective of their force rather than their capture or submission. I tend to look at divergent series of animation. I look at how different series configure or transfigure questions about technological value. Simply put, I try to stick to the facts of animation. Thus, even when I take on decidedly social or cultural issues such as gender and sexuality, I look at the spin that the animetic machine puts on them. I look at how the animation thinks such questions. Consequently, I give priority to technical determination over social, cultural, historical, and economic determination.[253]

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[253]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, xxix.

To understand Lamarre's arguments, one must first be familiar with his opposition to "one-point Cartesianism" and "cinematism." Cartesianism is a regime of visual tendencies that arose in the wake of philosopher Rene Descartes. Infamous for the phrase, *cogito ergo sum,* "I think, therefore I am," and its epistemological implications, Descartes also made many observations about spatial orientations; these include binary divisions between mind and body, interior and exterior, and various optical geometries.[254] Lamarre utilizes Cartesianism to describe a history of viewing in Western European art forms.[255] The emphasis is upon engendering a sense of depth that aligns with reality-inducing, scalar proportions. Simultaneously known as the one-point perspective, this paradigm represents the world as converging towards a singular vanishing point on the horizon, with image elements getting progressively smaller as they "dive inward."

Figure 2
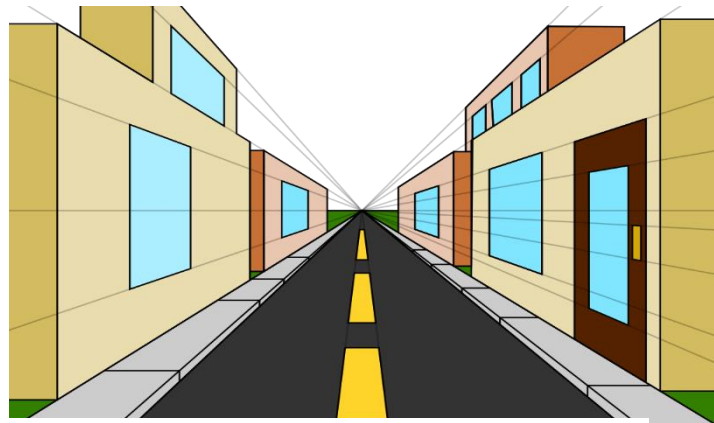
In his infamous account, Martin Jay describes one-point (or geometric) perspective as thus: "The three-dimensional, rationalized space of perspectival vision could be rendered on a

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[254]A. Pablo Iannone, "Cartesianism," *Dictionary of World Philosophy*, ed. A. Pablo Iannone. (New York, NY: Routledge, 2001), np.

[255]Jacob Waalk, "POCKET MONSTERS AND PIRATE TREASURE: FANTASY AND SOCIAL PLATFORMS IN THE 21ST CENTURY," Masters Thesis, University of Mississippi, 2016.

two-dimensional surface by following all of the transformational rules spelled out in Alberti's *De Pittura* and later treatises by Viator, Dürer, and others."[256] Implied with geometric perspective (especially when combined with Descartes's subjective rationalist philosophy) is the vision of an external observer and a monolithic (uniform) manner of viewing reality.[257] Accordingly, it became the hegemonic visual regime that sought to define the modern era.[258]

Naturally, such thought affected not only art but also cinematic studies. Jean Baudry describes a technological determinism inherent to the monocular lens of the camera, whereby it structures representations of space according to one-point perspective (thus retrenching Cartesian perspectivism).[259] Coined as "apparatus theory," this theory of the camera's significance was dominant in the past; however, it was abandoned due to several troubling implications. One of these was the aforementioned technological determinism, which suggests that a centralized technological device controls cinematic convention/reception trajectory. This, coupled with a growing understanding of ideological influences, led to a greater emphasis on various "modernity and postmodernity theses" of film.[260] While apparatus theory, and its association with the specificity of cinema,[261] has fallen to the wayside, Lamarre wishes to breathe new life

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[256]Martin Jay, "Scopic Regimes of Modernity," *Visions and Vitality*, ed. Hal Foster, 3-23 (Seattle, WA: Bay Press, 1988), 6.

[257]Waalk, "POCKET MONSTERS AND PIRATE TREASURE," 83.

[258]Jay, "Scopic Regimes of Modernity," 4.

[259]Jean-Louis Comolli, "Technique and Ideology: Camera, Perspective, Depth of Field," *Movies and Methods: An Anthology Volume II*, ed. Bill Nichols, 40-58 (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1985), 44.

[260]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, xxiii, 26.

[261]At the intimations of film theory and cinematic studies, scholars sought to distinguish their field from other art forms as a legitimate category of study. A readily available feature was the apparatus of the movie camera. Because apparatus theory tended to lead towards technological determinism, highlighting the specificity of cinema was replaced by situating the project within sociohistorical or sociotechnical conditions.

into the idea in a modified form. He desires to show how anime (and animation) are indeed specific in their materiality and manner to be perceived.

Cinematism, derived from Paul Virilio, assigns a ballistic sense of acceleration to geometric perspective. It emphasizes speed and movement into depth as if positioned on the tip of a racing bullet. Movement into depth relies on keeping entities within an image appropriately "scaled" as the viewing point changes. This is to create an accurate depiction of existence that ensures viewer immersion. Such a desire to rationalize reality with the mobile camera sustains Cartesian perspectivism. Because of the camera's capacity to move through the world, it gained the ability to order all existence in accordance with Cartesian coordinate geometry. "The essence of cinematism lies in the use of mobile apparatuses of perception, which serve (1) to give the viewer a sense of standing over and above the world, thus controlling it, and (2) to collapse the distance between viewer and target, in the manner of the ballistic logic of instant strike or instant hit."[262] A paradigmatic example of this is a train cutting through a country landscape.

Lamarre spends considerable time discussing trains in his book. They are emblematic of the modern condition and have a rich history of association with cinema. This is not only due to their presence within movies but also in scholarly discussion (as the windowed progression of motion was an excellent metaphor for film). Lamarre draws heavily from Wolfgang Schivelbusch, an academic who discusses technologized space and time via the heuristic of trains. He said the locomotive was a radical rupture of humanity's collective traveling experience. Previously, people journeyed on their own feet or by utilizing animals. Then, with the onset of trains, they could suddenly commute at much higher speeds. Initially, the velocity inherent to trains made perception impossible, as passengers were overloaded with incoming

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[262]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, 5, 27.

visual impressions. This had two significant results. The first was the development of panoramic perception. Because velocity blurred the foreground, passengers stared at the distant landscape as if it were a foreign land.[263] Panoramic "perception, in contrast to traditional perception, no longer belonged to the same space as the perceived objects: the traveler saw the objects, landscapes, etc. *through* the apparatus which moved him through the world."[264] Such separation created an interval, an uneasy rupture that became filled in by the imaginary worlds of books. Passengers desired to compensate for the distance between them and the outside, unattainable world. Retailers cropped up at train stations in response to meet this demand, ready to sell their wares to passing customers.[265]

Trains, at least for some pessimistic French thinkers (i.e., Paul Virilio), were the first step towards regimes of speed and domination, where instruments of optical logistics (movie camera, etc.) affiliate our eyes with WMDs (weapons of mass destruction). More moderately, the viewing position of the passenger aligns with, or identifies with, the locomotive as it cuts through the landscape. Their eyes remain intent on looking vertically, following the trajectory of motion. Here, the train is analogous to cinema and the mobile camera, where it is an apparatus of viewing that provides movement into depth.[266] One might be tempted to apply technological determinism to the optical dynamics of train travel. After all, the viewer's world is structured by the view given by the locomotive as it whisks them along.

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[263]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, xv.

[264]Wolfgang Schivelbusch, *Railway Journey: The Industrialization of Space and Time in the 19th Century* (Berkley, CA: University of California Press, 1986), 64.

[265]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, xv-xvi.

[266]Ibid., 5-6.

For Lamarre, who is concerned with the material aspects of anime, the train is a great

analogy. Unlike the thinkers above, he finds redemptive value in such a comparison. While the

locomotive is an example of movement *into* depth, it demonstrates lateral movement, where the

passengers focus on the sideways images mediated through the windows. This is a powerful

concept that Lamarre will eventually shape into a phenomenon called "animetism," to be visited

below. Like most film scholars, he also wishes to shy away from technological determinism,

which is implicated by the train.[267] However, again drawing from Schivelbusch, Lamarre sees

the train as part of a general technological condition of modernity. Locomotives are not the sole

determinant of social and cultural change but indicate a broader set of sociotechnical forces

shaping the world. For example, as mentioned above, printing presses, department stores,

commercial enterprises, motor vehicles, etc., emerged alongside and in response to the train. The

engine is not the primary driving factor behind social and cultural change. Instead, it is among

many elements in a complex and multifaceted context. In this way, for Schnivelbusch and

Lamarre, locomotives are critical for assessing a new sociohistorical formation (modernity). To

sum up, Lamarre believes that the train as an apparatus does not determine social and cultural

change but is an integral part of a complex milieu of factors shaping the modern condition.[268]

Felix Guattari and Machine Theory

Continuing his re-articulation of trains as a viewing apparatus away from technological

determinism, Lamarre argues that they have a greater affinity with Felix Guattari's concept of a

machine:

> Traveling at speed introduces a new kind of gap or interval into human perception of the
> world, and that specific interval, that manner of "spacing," does not serve to totalize the
> whole of perception or of experience related to train travel. Rather the new interval or

[267]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, xxii.

[268]Ibid., xx.

spacing folds humans into its operation and starts to rely on other machines such as printing presses, department stores, and carriages or cars. Schivelbusch shows how the spacing or interval associated with accelerated perception creates connections with other activities, gradually extending train experience into a general modern techno-economic condition. For him, seeing through the mobile apparatus becomes indicative of an entire modern condition in which new modes of perception ground new modes of distribution and consumption.[269]

Similarly, Lamarre views anime as mediated through the "animation stand." This apparatus sets layers of transparent celluloid with drawings to be photographed. Doing so allows for a multiplanar image (or frame) composed of several different planes, i.e., background, foreground, and middle ground. Animators can regulate and play with the relations between these layers, often known as compositing.[270] Lamarre proposes viewing the animation stand in terms of passive determination, or "underdetermination," rather than *determinism*. To do this, he draws on the thought of Felix Guattari and his concept of a "machine."

A machine involves the various human interactions, social/cultural contexts, and abstract conventions that guide its operations. Guattari seeks to liberate the concept of a "machine" from its traditional associations with a physical, mechanistic apparatus. Instead, it is at once an assemblage of material (physical/technical) and immaterial (abstract) elements. In other words, rather than isolating the physical operations of mechanical devices, Guattari prefers to highlight the networked and necessarily interrelated elements that compose the existence of said objects.[271]

Infamously, Guattari likened machines to that of a lock and key. In this example, there are two types of forms at work – the "materialized, contingent, concrete, and discrete forms" and the "formal" or "diagrammatic" forms. The latter is a machine's abstract and intangible aspects

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[269]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, xxvii.

[270]Ibid., xxiii, xxiv.

[271]Content derived from an LLM.

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that govern their organization, operations, and potential trajectories.[272] Guattari writes, "One

quickly notices that the machinic effect, the passage to the possible act, is entirely concerned

with the second type of form."[273] A machine allows for an ensemble of very different and often

incompatible materials. To put these into motion, an integration of differences must occur. This,

however, does not occur sheerly within the materials. Instead, it is the "abstract," "immaterial,"

or "diagrammatic machine."[274] This explains why a lock and key can appear in so many different

assemblages of concrete materials – prior to the physical essence is a constantly evolving,

immaterial process of heterogenous concepts (principles, conventions, structures, etc.) which

guide the machine. Rather than static and rigid, the fluid interaction of machines can lead to

divergent outcomes, such as the emergence of passwords and lock screens in the virtual world.

Therefore, technology is dependent on machines rather than the inverse.

By setting up layers of celluloid to be photographed, the animation stand gathers together

many devices and schema which do not naturally come/belong together. This includes

transparent celluloid, a rack for stacking images, sufficient lighting, abstract compositing

techniques, manual art techniques, and the camera. These interconnected elements form a

functional ensemble, a system of components, processes, and relationships that allow the

"multiplanar machine" to fulfill its purposes. As mentioned above, the multiplanar machine

(Lamarre uses this nomenclature interchangeably with "animetic machine," depending on

emphasis) is both material and concrete, at once immaterial and abstract. Several tangible,

physical components are mentioned above: the rack, camera, lights, film, etc. On the other hand,

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[272] Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, 33.

[273] Felix Guattari, *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*, trans. Paul Bains and Julian Pefanis (Indianapolis, IN: University of Indiana Press, 1995), 33.

[274] Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, 33.

immaterial aspects are the intangible elements that contribute to the function and operation of the machine. These include applying coloration, techniques of composting imagery according to different perspectives (orthogonal, linear, etc.), the knowledge and agency of the animators who work with the stand, and other expressive machines, such as artwork.[275]

This holistic concept recognizes the interconnectedness of material and immaterial elements in shaping the function of a machine. This necessary integration means that machines are part of a much broader ecosystem of human knowledge, culture, and agency. Lamarre prefers to use the term heterogenesis, whereby animetic machines defy neat hierarchies and divisions and instead are nodal points within vast transmedial networks. Because animation is the art of the moving image, the animetic machine is active when conveying the force of the moving image. It is not a static structure but rather in-folds various expressive machines and out-folds divergent series of animation.[276] That is, emergent properties not initially present or anticipated can arise through interacting with other virtual and actual machines. Combined with the creative input of human agency, a diverse array of anime series can be produced from the animetic machine.

To reference an animetic machine is to think in terms of a gap, interval, or spacing. In the case of the animation stand, this is known as the animetic interval, or the gap between planes of an image. This will be discussed further in the next section, but it brings an element of indetermination into the material apparatus. Similar to the "gap" or "interval" introduced into human perception by the train, the animetic interval folds into itself various functions/expressions and out-folds resulting productions.

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[275]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, xxvi-xxvii, xxix. Art in animation is often organized compositionally, tonally, and in accordance with body mechanics, making it a machine in itself.

[276]Ibid., xxx-xxxii.

The possibilities, though, are not infinite. That is, even though divergent series can be produced by the interaction of various machines related to animation, their trajectory is constrained by the material limits inherent to such machines. As such, it is as if a spectrum has been applied to the medium.[277] Here, Lamarre finds the primary difference between "determination" and "determinism." Technological determinism in the context of cinema argues that the camera governs the representation of space and structures every aspect related to its influence. "*Determination*, however, is not the same thing as *determinism*. Materiality is not teleology. Theories of determination acknowledge that a "machine" (in Guattari's sense) may produce an orientation in the world, a set of directional constraints (a field), and even a trajectory."[278]

The animetic machine "is a machine condensed and localized into a quasi-apparatus (the animation stand), which generates a field of material orientations by channeling the force of the moving image in specific ways."[279]In this sense, it is a machine that "thinks." As Lamarre states, this is not to say that it is a mechanistic entity with independent thought and feeling apart from humans. Instead, a "thinking machine" is a heteropoetic process. In systems theory, a heteropoietic system produces something different from itself. Applying this, Lamarre suggests that the animating process leads to a form of human thinking that is different from what it would be in the absence of animation. In other words, anime creates a unique flow of material forms and immaterial fields that change our thinking.[280]

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[277]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, xxxi.

[278]Ibid., 119.

[279]Ibid., 25.

[280]Content derived from an LLM.

In his book, Lamarre explains how anime "thinks" technology animetically. By this, he emphasizes the unique ways that animation, specifically anime, interprets and represents technology. "Animetic," as we will discover in the next section, refers to a unique visual perspective of anime. So, anime doesn't merely depict technology; it transforms our understanding by presenting it in new, uniquely animated contexts.

Animetism and the Animetic Interval

In animation, a distinction is made by Lamarre between "animating movement" and "animating images."[281] The former refers to the process of, as Norman McLaren calls it, "the art of movements that are drawn; what happens between each frame is much more important than what exists on each frame; animation is therefore the art of manipulating the invisible interstices between frames."[282] Meanwhile, Lamarre prefers to stress that anime is as much an art of compositing as it is of animating movement/bodies. For him, priority should be given to the invisible interstices between layers and within images (which become spread across frames).[283] This is the beginning of what Lamarre will call *animetism*.

Cinematism, as can be recalled above, idealized ballistic movement *into depth*. It attempts to present a uniform, rational world to the moving observer. Cinematism is hyper-instrumentalized, implying Cartesian optics' domination and affirmation, which demand a particular relationship to a technology-saturated world.[284] In other words, the use of the cinematic camera is maximized to an extreme degree, to where it dominates and directs the

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[281]Thomas Lamarre, "From Animation to Anime: Drawing Movements and Moving Drawings," 329.

[282]Maureen Furniss, *Art in Motion: Animation Aesthetics* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1988), 5.

[283]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, xxiv-xxv.

[284]Waalk, "POCKET MONSTERS AND PIRATE TREASURE," 86.

viewer's perspective. Cinematism presents a highly focused, linear, and mechanistic world, which shapes/constrains how audiences perceive reality. *Animetism*, on the other hand, seeks to investigate *lateral* motion in relation to the planes of an image. If one was to revisit the train analogy when looking out a window, trees/telephone poles seem to flick by in the foreground while the background passes at a different speed. This suggests multiple perceptions of motion and location, giving the impression of an external world separate from the viewer.[285]

> Rather than move into the landscape, you seem to move across it. This is one of the crucial differences between animetism and cinematism… While it is a modern art of the engine grounded in a speed-riddled instrumentalized perception of the world, animetism is not about movement *into depth* but movement *on and between surfaces*. This movement between planes of the image is what I call the *animetic interval*.[286]

For Lamarre, animetism implies a different way of being and perceiving in an accelerated world of technology. As "potentials of the moving image cinematism and animetism imply different tendencies and orientations, and by extension, different ways of imagining a technologically accelerated world, and different ways of inhabiting that world."[287] Anime offers a different set of possibilities and conventions through its use of movement and perception. In such a way, anime can mimic the effects of cinematism, whereby it creates its visual paradigm for interacting with various environments.

For the animetic effect to occur, one needs a foreground and background layer minimally to stimulate play between the two (although more than two layers can be involved). These are typically fixed together on the animation stand and photographed from above. The stand allows animators to adjust the distance between various layers, thus rendering specific effects on the

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[285]Waalk, "POCKET MONSTERS AND PIRATE TREASURE," 85.

[286]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, 6-7.

[287]Ibid., 10.

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image. One of these effects was the unintended portrayal of depth, whereby the space between layers/surfaces is manipulated to engender three-dimensionality. As Lamarre claims, opening a gap between the layers within the image brings a distinctive feel to how animation presents itself. This "gap," filled with invisible interstices, introduced by these layers allows for an "animatic interval" that becomes a site of rationalization, instrumentation, and technologization of the multiplanar image (meaning animators can harness the force of the moving image in various animetic manners).[288]
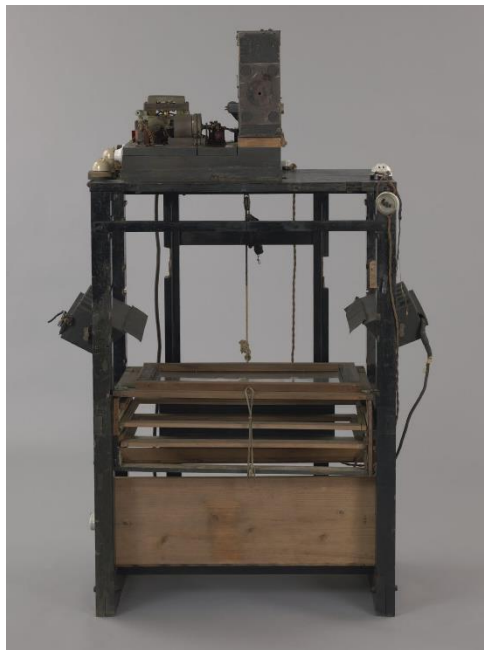
Figure 3 *(Example of an old animation stand from Noburo Ofuji Memorial Museum)*

The animetic interval is explicitly experienced under the conditions of movement (that is, the mechanical succession of images that compromise animation). It makes the depth rendered by the animation stand become palpable in motion. The animetic interval then comprises a multilayered frame that opens a space that channels the force[289] of the moving image. Because of

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[288]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, 6-8.

[289]"Force" is a term that Lamarre admittedly uses in a general sense, which can be best thought of as the impact and energy contained within the mechanical succession of images.

this, it is easy to engender a sense of movement of one layer across or over another.[290] For

instance, if one was to paint a figure on a transparent celluloid sheet and place it over a

background, one could easily portray that character moving across that panoramic landscape (by

either sliding the background sheet in relation to the character or sliding the character sheet over

the background).[291]

It is from the animation stand opening an interval or gap between the layers of an image

that we arrive at compositing. This technique ensures that the gaps between different elements

within the image are not noticeable to the audience. In other words, compositing plays with the

invisible interstices within each frame to produce a desired effect. For Lamarre, the question

associated with compositing is whether its conventions will align with cinematism or some other

alternative. The animetic interval can technically be harnessed to portray movement into depth

(therefore aligning with Cartesian perspectivalism). Even though possible, it isn't easy to employ

using the animation stand.[292] This is because each layer has to be drawn progressively bigger to

maintain a stable world, which takes time and resources. As Lamarre states:

> In other words, producing movement into depth within cel animation is not merely a
> matter of drawing images in accordance with one-point perspective. It is not a matter of
> composition but of compositing. Nor can you rely on moving the camera or changing its
> focus, for the world into which you wish to move is full of interstices. There are gaps
> between the layers or planes of the image. This is why I see the animation stand as so
> fundamental to cel animation. In cel animation, the animation stand promises different
> ways of rationalizing the relation between planes of the image and, by extension, of
> controlling the relation between the camera and orientation in space. Where cinema tends
> to shunt the force of the moving image through the lens and into camera movement in
> three dimensions, animation tends to shunt the force of the moving image through the
> animetic interval into compositing. The animation stand might thus be seen as the

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[290]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, 17-18.

[291]Ibid., 18-19.

[292]Ibid., 31-32.

apparatus of animation, but it does not for all that totally determine or structure the visual field.[293]

Because of this, animetism favors "open compositing," where layers of the image can move independently. Hayao Miyazaki's Castle in the Sky (1986) is an excellent example. The main characters, Sheeta and Pazu, begin to explore their surroundings after crashing on a floating island. As both children walk to the cliff's edge, the foreground and background layers slide apart to reveal the depths below. The view is panoramic and employs both compositing and lateral movement to produce the effect. Yet, the projected depth does not impart a sense of moving into the world. Instead, it is as if a separate reality opens to the viewer, a world with various layers inviting exploration and reverence. The viewing position is less instrumental; it does not encourage us to dive into the place – seizing, dominating, and investigating every corner. Instead, the world opens up even as it remains separate from us. To use Lamarre's words, we are witnesses rather than raiders.[294]

The innovation of anime is the distinct horizontal, sliding motion that characterizes its movement. It does not rely upon replicating Cartesian notions that transition the internal into the external but instead situate the camera as another image layer. Planes glide across the camera, shaking, making abrupt cuts through to different positions within the image and then to completely different images.[295] Central to animetism is the movement of different layers relative to each other, which entails a sense of depth and dynamism. This lateral motion brings the

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[293]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, 32.

[294]Ibid., 38-39. It is difficult to produce mental imagery here without optical reference to the actual scene in the movie.

[295]Waalk, "POCKET MONSTERS AND PIRATE TREASURE," 87.

invisible interstices between planes to life. It brings the viewer's attention to such a space, thus making the animatic interval palpable.[296]

To explicate further Lamarre's idea of the animetic interval, this phenomenon refers to how anime manipulates space and time within its visual structure. Each frame is drawn individually and therefore has the potential to be a unique space, independent of the frames that come before or after it. With cinema, the camera can capture only one continuous space-time, with a tendency towards Cartesian perspectivalism and cinematism. Every cut or change in camera angle represents a rupture of this space-time. But with anime, respective frames can describe a different space-time, and the transitions between frames can be abrupt, slow, or fast, depending on the needs of the creators. Such flexibility allows for portraying events, emotions, and concepts in manners that would be impossible for cinema. Anime can slow down time to stretch out a moment of dramatic tension or speed up time to convey a sense of urgency. The screen can be easily divided into multiple frames to describe different perspectives of the same event, or it can blend other spaces and times to engender a surreal effect. For instance, faster or slower movements between layers in the image can create a sense of accelerated time, emphasizing moments of tension.[297]

The animetic interval also develops a unique tension, where the viewer is simultaneously aware of the depth within the image and the flatness of each layer. This cognizance can create a disorientation that the viewer must reconcile. It is as if the anime is simultaneously inviting the viewer to immerse themselves in its world while reminding them that this world is an external construct. Crafty animators can utilize this destabilization to use the animetic interval.[298] As

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[296]Content derived from an LLM.

[297]Content derived from an LLM.

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mentioned above, Miyazaki takes advantage of this tension in *A Castle in the Sky* to generate a sense of awe at a new world opening up for the viewer, where the audience is at once invited and asked only to look.

A practical example would be best for showing how the animetic interval can be implemented in readings of anime. To do this, we will again pull from the rich background of Miyazaki Hayao's animations. His works utilize open compositing at crucial moments of technological interaction, which portray a different relation to this technology and the outside world. Like Virilio, Miyazaki typically associates ballistic movement into depth with a drive toward annihilation and eliminating humanity's environment. Yet, Miyazaki is not a pessimist, as he attempts to visualize a new relationship to technology via the moving image. For him, these promises can be fulfilled through the sliding, gliding planes of the moving image.[299]

Miyazaki envisions a different relation to technology in three manners: (1) By avoiding ballistic perception (the dominant mode of representation in classic cinema) and instead preferring the sliding sensations of animetism, Miyazaki has a new way of visually portraying the world. As mentioned above, cinematism highlights linear movement into depth, as if the viewer dominates or appropriates the world. The emphasis on speed, efficiency, and forward momentum epitomizes how modern technology engages us with the world. We "dive" through our computer and phone screens, rushing onward in an increasingly fast-paced and immersive (interfaced) world. On the other hand, Miyazaki's open compositing (allowing viewers to recognize the gaps, i.e., animetic interval, between layers of the image) creates a sense of openness, interconnection, and natural movement. The world is slowed down for the viewer as

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[298]Content derived from an LLM.

[299]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, 305.

they whisk along on a grand adventure. Like *A Castle in the Sky*, the world beyond the viewing

position moves; it is not inert and ready to conquer. The dynamic movement of the background

layers separates the world from the viewer, and they are reminded that it is vibrant and external

to them. This slow, open, beautifully changing environment offers viewers an alternative to the

normal speed of existence induced by modern technology, perhaps challenging them to approach

life differently. Combined with visual and narrative aesthetics that emphasize the wonderment of

nature, the effect is powerful.[300]

      (2) Miyazaki typically fills his films with whimsical flying machines that soar, glide, and

wheel throughout the world.[301] These simpler technologies create an experience of the sublime,

awe, and primordial wonderment. They harken back to an earlier era of flight, where the

emphasis was on the miracle of flight itself and a sense of respect for the natural world.[302]

Miyazaki's vehicles and flight technologies differ from the harmful machinery of uncontrollable

speed. They look implausible yet oddly coherent in their movement, offering a different vision of

what technology could be. In their simplicity and tendency for gliding soaring, they fit

harmoniously with the sliding planes of Miyazaki's animations.[303] This connotates a sense of

freeness that differs radically from ballistic technologies.[304] Again, this portrayal of more

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[300]Content derived from an LLM.

[301]A prime example of this is Nausicaa on her glider Mehve in *Nausicaa Valley of the Wind*, where Miyazaki continues his trend of harnessing the energies of youthful bodies. Interestingly, he also has younger animators animate in-between frames, claiming that their youthful exuberance brings a unique energy to his films. Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, 62.

[302]Content derived from an LLM.

[303]Selen Calik, "RE-VIEWING THOMAS LAMARRE'S THE ANIME MACHINE AFTER HAYAO MIYAZAKI'S THE WIND RISES: On the Critical Potential of Anime," *Kritika Kultura* 26, (2016): 261.

[304]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, 63.

straightforward, spontaneous, and nature-oriented technologies challenges how modern

technology asks us to interact with the world. Wind, for example, in Miyazaki's films offers an

ungraspable yet alternative energy source for simpler technologies – one that works with nature

rather than colonizing it:

> If we recall that the term animation derives from the Greek animus or wind, we come full circle. Animation is an art of wind, an art of opening spaces to channel the flow of the wind. Animation is an art of spacing, of producing intervals through which the wind may blow and turn the wheels, limbs, eyes, and ears of the animator's drawings. The wind of animation arises in gaps that appear between layers of image when you avoid closing the image world. The wind blows through the characters, in their tendency to become weightless and unmoored and in the dynamics of angling their weight through different planes. In Miyazaki's animation, the medium (animation) truly becomes the message (wind animation, the medium (animation) truly becomes the message (wind power). In sum, wind-powered animation is the paradigm for a new rootedness. Miyazaki's embrace of the animetic interval implies an openness to technology that at once releases us from its determinism, from the modern technological condition, and offers a paradigm for dwelling with a different relation to technology.[305]

(3) Miyazaki uses methods that angle the movement axis of characters to give them a

sense of dynamism. Open compositing naturally makes characters feel "weightless" or separate

from the world (since their background layers are in the planes below them). The genius of

Miyazaki's axis angling is how it positions characters in relation to the sky and earth. The

characters are naturally predisposed to "float" as the layers around them move.[306] Yet, because

they are always oriented to the ground or the world, the characters don't appear

disengaged/unresponsive to it. This creates a unique tension – in the world but not of it. The

constant dichotomy between modern technologies and earth in Miyazaki's films could influence

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[305]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, 84-85.

[306]"In fact, even if you use only two celluloid sheets, say, a background landscape and a foreground character, without an animation stand but simply placing one atop the other, you can easily generate a sense of a character not anchored in its world in accordance with cinematic conventions and natural laws. Move either layer up or down from shot to shot, and the character appears weightless. The character appears to defy gravity, to float, to glide, to fly, without even moving its limbs. This is part of the magic of animation, which derives from the multiplanar machine, from the shunting of the force of the moving image into the interval between planes of the image." Ibid., 72.

readers to abandon the concept of technology altogether. Miyazaki's characters, who simultaneously seem instantiated in technology but separated from it, prevent such a conclusion. Their "suspension" between two conclusions challenges audiences also to interrogate their place within the world.[307]

By utilizing the technics of animetism, Miyazaki is providing a *solution* to the technological condition that he finds troubling. Namely, he desires to free his viewers from their heavy technological dependence to find the awe and wonder in the natural world. They should no longer be controlled or dominated by it. Instead of full-out rejection, however, Miyazaki's animation desires to modify the viewer's relationship with machines. This can be seen by the prominence of simpler technologies and how his characters are oriented to the world. In other words, Miyazaki presents to his viewers a particular manner of inhabiting the world, informing them how they should act in it. This is achieved through the three registers mentioned above, plus many more small techniques.[308]

Distributive Field and the Informationalizing of Spatial Perspectives

Especially within the confines of limited animation (a technique that uses significantly fewer frames per second), anime informationalizes spatial perspectives. Unlike Miyazaki's films, which had the benefit of time and resources, television had strict economic and time constraints placed upon them. This led to innovations in methods and aesthetics that have had a lasting impact on the industry. One of these cost-cutting techniques was to make the anime image "flat," limiting the layers in the multiplanar ensemble to mostly a foreground and background. Yet, to

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[307]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, 76.

[308]Ibid., 305. This is a highly dense argument put forth by Lamarre which is difficult to summarize without losing the fuller meaning.

describe this process as "flat" does not do justice to the intricate operations that deliver its unique effect. Limited animation tends to go beyond "flatness" to produce a "superflat" image.[309]

For superflatness to emerge, the animator begins with the layers that introduce the possibility of depth and crushes them. By doing this, all the complex planes now appear equally on the surface of the image and are, therefore, all equally important visually. Rather than fading away from the viewer's eye, the background and intermediate layers are pushed to the forefront. Even effects that generally operate in an image's " subconscious " is made noticeable, such as speed lines or singularly colored backgrounds. In this way, they are just as important to the audience as the figure they are designed to highlight. The result of "superflatness" is a visual field without hierarchy among its constituent elements. No element is more "important" than another. They all visually bubble at the surface. Lamarre terms this a distributive field since the various components are organized in a distributive manner instead of a top-down structure.[310]

One could argue that this emphasis on equality fails since audiences will inevitably choose some aspects of the image as more important than others. "But this is precisely the effect that superflat strives for. When everything comes equally to the surface, you still make connections, you will still orientate yourself, but those connections and orientations will not be guided by depth cues. There is greater potential for disorientation, since elements are not only distributed but also densely packed."[311] The viewer is now orienting themselves within a unique space. They are suddenly "hit" with an image that is surface-saturated with many variances of information. As audiences then work to connect elements within the distributive field, a pattern

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[309]Thomas Lamarre, "The Multiplanar Image," *Mechademia* 1, (2006): 132.

[310]Ibid., 136.

[311]Ibid.

emerges that was not given explicitly within the image. This is a set of shifting connections, "hovering" above said image, through which viewers read and orient themselves (hence the "super" in "superflat").[312] As Lamarre states,

> Movement functions to generate emergent depths, potential depth. The result is very close to a logistics of information retrieval, and not only because viewers are asked to skim and scan fields, and to discern degrees of separation or connection in the manner of a network. It is also like information retrieval in that elements of the image do not function as inert, discrete data but as fields, that is, as potential depths that, if pursued, promise to generate links and connections.[313]

The distributive field is not unilaterally flat, retained only to a single frame. Movement creates the illusion of depth within the image, not only in physical representations but in the superplanar connections that viewers are actively making. Because all aspects of the image are blown up to the surface, the viewer must learn to "skim and scan" the moving planes. The process is analogous to information retrieval within a database, with audiences identifying different elements and discerning their relationships with each other. This information does not have to be homogenous, as often, there are degrees of separation and connection between the various elements. It should be noted that "information" here does not mean a kind of cognitive data but something that can be perceived, interpreted, or even understood.

The necessity of developing connections and discerning orientations has a specific effect on the audiences. Anno Hideaki's Kare Kano (1998) is a pertinent example of this. As the female lead frantically leaps out a door, she plants her foot firmly on the belly of the primary male character. The anime slows time to a series of manga-like stills, and the scene briefly transforms into another color scheme or graphic style. There are various affective layers carefully integrated

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[312]Lamarre, "The Multiplanar Image," 136-137.

[313]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, 136.

by Anno. As the scene flicks through various image-types to create a sense of wild emotions, it simultaneously portrays overlaid words, symbols, and icons.[314]

FIGURE 11. Sequence from *His and Her Circumstances*.

Figure 5 (Taken from Lamarre's "The Multiplanar Image")[315]

Superflat (or superplanar) animation like *Kare Kano* implies a certain kind of audience comfortable with scanning for information and stacked windows of data. They would have to be attentive to the various fluctuations and alterations within the image. These viewers are accustomed to giving attention at multiple levels amid an active milieu of informatic connections.[316] This information retrieval process, as has been hinted above, is a superplanar activity. Various abstract patterns emerge from above or "beyond" the anime screen. It is as if

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[314]Lamarre, "The Multiplanar Image," 138.

[315]Ibid., 140.

[316]Ibid., 138-139.

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the connections have a life of their own, existing on a different plane for audiences. The viewer constantly processes information and is asked to construct and construct their relationship to the screen with every passing frame.

The constant need to make connections and discern patterns engenders a process of continual superplanar networking, where the discerned information can no longer be contained in a particular anime. Audiences draw from lines of thought that extend through past anime when engaging in this superplanar pattern-making activity. It is as if the history of anime has a genealogical database, which it can pull from when developing multiple visuals. For instance, exaggerated expressions, such as sweat droplets to indicate unsurety, have precedence behind their usage. The viewer is ultimately a multiprocessing viewer, scanning various fields of information that suggest deeper networks of connection rather than being pulled into photorealistic depth (like cinema).[317]

Many initial anime consumers have stated confusion at how the media-form assaults them with seemingly disjointed and strange information. An explanation of this is the unique way that anime expresses information (flattening multiplanarity) and how it engenders viewers to engage with that information (superplanar connections). Within his book, Lamarre further ties this function with the process of deterritorialization and emergent media-mixes, but that is beyond the scope of this thesis. For our purposes, we are concerned with the unique manners in which fans "read anime" and how this "reading" extends beyond anime into other functions of life.[318]

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[317]Waalk, "POCKET MONSTERS AND PIRATE TREASURE," 5.

[318]Several things should be noted as of this point. While animetism favors "open compositing," superflat planarity does not do away with the animetic interval. Instead, it "flattens" the gaps, bringing them to the surface of the image. Any play between planes then takes place "above" and "on" the surface of the image.

The central claim of this thesis is that the material and technology of anime have processes that affect how viewers inhabit and orient themselves in the world, which in turn influences their formative practices and habits. Human perceptions are significantly grounded in medium, and visual regimes have social implications, especially in the current technology-saturated world. [319] Thought and technology are typically intertwined. [320] An easy analogy can be made with computers – their introduction changed how humans live their lives, how they think, the patterns their minds follow, how fast we process, and the speed at which we live our existence. Lamarre specifically investigates how orientation and motion in visual media effects such things.[321] For him, the animetic machine "is a machine condensed and localized into a quasi-apparatus (the animation stand), which generates a field of material orientations by channeling the force of the moving image in specific ways." This machine is ultimately a heteropoietic process; that is, it leads to a form of human thinking that is different from what it would be in the absence of animation. As Lamarre argues above, heterpoiesis is exemplified through the animetic interval and the networked information appropriated by viewers in the distributed field. The Miyazaki example is one instance of this. By harnessing the animetic interval, his visual perspective offers a way of being in a world increasingly dominated by modern technologies (freedom). Both Miyazaki and Lamarre seek to depart from the tendency of cinematism, which highlights motion into depth, made stable by Cartesian perspectivism. This

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[319]Waalk, "POCKET MONSTERS AND PIRATE TREASURE," 64.

[320]For instance, Jacob Waalk applies Lamarre's thought to the perspectives of fan bases, discovering that anime engenders their open-minded reception of various phenomena, Waalk, "POCKET MONSTERS AND PIRATE TREASURE," 88.

[321]It should be noted that Lamarre does not deny that other factors exist besides material and technology for animations. At many points in his book, he references ethnography, narrative, formal effects, etc. He gives priority to the material and technology of anime because he finds these issues integral to any other discussion concerning anime.

has the effect of situating an external observer and a monolithic (uniform) manner of viewing

reality. Accordingly, acceleration

> Acceleration promises to abolish our sense of material limitations and to erase the tedious labor of rationalizing the space of the image, both of which are integral to the production of exhilarating movement into depth. Acceleration affords a glimpse of liberation from material conditions, but only as the viewing position literally abolishes the human body in speed, in a technologically driven elimination of the human. This is what truly worries Virilio: the rational "gridding" or striation of the world proves thrilling when perceived at speed, yet it is a suicidal trajectory for individuals and for the species.[322]

> Besides the effect that anime has on audiences, he also argues that considerations of the

animetic interval are internal to the narrative. "I am convinced that if analysis begins with

narrative… it will never arrive at an understanding of what anime is or how it thinks. We will

merely be reading anime as textual object. Hence I will continue to stress the animated moving

image, looking at how relations of movement intersect with structures of depth."[323] These ideas

presented by Lamarre are challenging to grasp. Therefore, we shall devote the next section of

Chapter 4 to providing an example, which also will be used to critique Ted Turnau's method of

popular culture apologetics. Ultimately, anime is a sphere of religious activity, which orients its

viewers to the world and produces certain practices in them. Turnau's omission of this dynamic

means that his method cannot account for particular layers of *liturgy* which teach audiences what

is ultimate.[324]

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[322]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, 304-305.

[323]Ibid., 134.

[324]A note should be made about CGI and digital animation, the current methods of animation, which no longer use the apparatus of the animation stand. Because anime is a machine, its conventions of compositing, difficulties, etc., are transposed onto computer production. In other words, the visual logic and grammar of cel animation still fundamentally influence digital modes of animation. For example, Shinkai Mokoto's *Your Name* (name) features animetism's lateral, sliding motions in its scene transitions. Thomas, "Manga, Anime, and Religion in Contemporary Japan, 6. Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, 33, 36.

Critiquing Turnau Through Lamarre

Anime As a Sphere of Religious Activity

One of the best ways to demonstrate animetism is to observe how the effects of medium shape viewers to inhabit the world *religiously* and that to describe anime as a sphere of religious activity is inseparable from considerations of medium. To do this, we shall gradually introduce two categories: *generalized* religion and *particularized* religion.

The Inevitability of Religion

Defining or emphasizing religion by function enables one to think of anime as a potential site of religious activity. Originally conceived as a way of accounting for the behaviors of indigenous folk that fell outside of substantive definitions, functionalism stresses what religion does (i.e., how it meets particular human needs).[325] Emile Durkheim pioneered this idea, arguing that religion is a force of social cohesion. It is a system of beliefs and practices relative to sacred things which unite individuals into a moral community.[326] In this way, religiosity can be applied to categories beyond the usual confines of belief and institution.

While many cultural works do not explicitly cite or base themselves on denominational material, they are functionally religious. This idea makes sense if we think of no site as religiously neutral. Instead, they are formative, containing their own imaginaries, rituals, and language. Building off the theories of James K.A. Smith, a space is religiously charged precisely because it is a *liturgical* space.[327] For him, humans are embodied agents of love, manifesting in an orientation of desire or longing. Unlike modernity-derived notions of personhood, which

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[325]Turnau, "Popular Culture 'Worlds' as Alternative Religions," 325.

[326]Emile Durkheim, *The Elementary Forms of Religious Life* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1965), 463-476.

[327]James K.A. Smith, *Desiring the* Kingdom, 23.

overemphasize humankind's cognitive aspects, this model emphasizes the non-cognitive ways of being in the world, our "hearts" and "guts." To be a human is to intentionally *love*; what we love constitutes our identities.[328] A core idea for Smith is that "liturgies – whether 'sacred' or 'secular' – shape and constitute our identities by forming our most fundamental desires and our most basic attunement to the world."[329] Because people's "hearts" are oriented primarily by desire, and because these are, in turn, molded by habit-shaping practices (liturgies), it is the rituals/practices of life that "shape our imaginations and how we orient ourselves to the world. Embedded in them is a common set of assumptions about the shape of human flourishing, which becomes an implicit *telos*, or goal, or our desires and actions."[330] These formative rituals/practices are inextricably connected to the human body and are unconsciously/consciously absorbed in communal environments.[331] Such a domain can be termed as a "social imaginary," which is a noncognitive, affective understanding of the world. It is a shared understanding that makes possible common practices and carries a widely shared sense of legitimacy. The things of imagination burgeon the social imaginary: stories, myths, narratives, and icons. These various kinds of "visions" orient our hearts/imaginations by contouring them with frameworks of meaning that make sense of the world and humanity's purpose.[332] As Charles Taylor states, it is

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[328]Brad Strawn, "Desiring a Kingdom: The Clinical Implications of James K. A. Smith's Theological Anthropology," *Journal of Psychology and Theology* 50, no. 1 (2022): 76.

[329]Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 25.

[330]Ibid. Smith does not dismiss cognitive activity, after all, he has written a book that contains propositions and logic, narrative and structure, things that are "of the head." Instead, he wishes to situate cognitive processes as emerging from various precognitive or prerational material.

[331]Strawn, "Desiring a Kingdom," 76-77.

[332]Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 90-91.

how "ordinary people 'image' their social surroundings,"[333] the set of institutions, values, and symbols that constitute the collective unconscious.

Personal and communal identities are shaped by what is loved as ultimate or ultimately loved. This gives humans a sense of meaning, purpose, design, orientation, and understanding of their being in the world. What people ultimately desire or love is, in many ways, a vision for what they hope for, the telos of their existence. It is a picture of the good life or what is subjectively perceived as the good life. Conceptions of the ultimate shape many actions, behaviors, and patterns that we undertake, i.e., those embodied habits that constitute quotidian existence. This element of ultimacy is, at its core, religious. Not religious in the sense of specified doctrines and systems of belief, but as ways of life in the world. The practices that inculcate ultimate desire/love constitute this way of life and lead to many concrete habits and activities that can be empirically observed.[334] In other words, every space contains liturgies that orient their constituents toward a vision of the good life, generating various practices and rituals. In this sense, every environment is fundamentally religious and cannot be thought of as excluding a trajectory toward ultimacy. Anime is no exception to this. The media form contains unique transcendent meanings, fidelities, practices, grammar, communities, iconography, and evangelism. The artificial divider between religiosity and neutrality can thus be deconstructed as an impossible dream.

However, it would be rash to do away with any classification and assign everything as monolithically religious. Instead, that heuristic binary can be reinstituted as distinguishing

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[333]Charles Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2004), 23.

[334]Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 26-27.

between various forms of religious content.[335] There is *particularized* religious content - which tends to be specified, recognizable, communicable, volitional, ultimate, intentionally aimed, communally deemed veridical, and socially engaged. This includes the things of formal religions (dogmas, rituals, public statements of belief, doctrines, scriptures, etc.), various modes of spirituality, and playful appropriations of religious content/attitudes (personal, constructive mixes of religion, loosely developed fervencies and attitudes, employment of religious content for entertaining simulation, etc.).[336] On the other hand, *generalized* religion refers to the mundane processes of everyday spaces that are harnessed by religious telos. This constitutes all liturgies or quasi-liturgies that fall outside of the *particularized* category.

Of course, viewing anime is a habit derived from what Smith terms "practices." A "practice" for Smith is more than a mere action; it is deeply formative, shaping our identities and orienting our desires. A practice is a ritual of ultimate concern – routines charged with significance because they mold our affections towards a specific end or vision of the good life. As mentioned in the previous section, anime offers a visual perspective that orients people within space and time. The animetic interval teaches a critical pedagogy: inhabiting and indwelling the world. When Lamarre speaks of "inhabiting," he means active participation and interaction in the structures, institutions, and systems around us.

Rather than presenting a fixed, single viewpoint moving into depth, animetism typically involves multiple, shifting positions and a sense of dynamic, relative movement. By offering a multi-layered world constantly in flux, animetism encourages viewers to appreciate the

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[335]Humorously, religion may be defined as such: a cult is when a man starts a movement revolving around himself, claiming a kind of transcendence and instituting various practices/beliefs. He knows it to be false but keeps up the illusion of veridicality to his followers. Religion, on the other hand, is when that man is dead.

[336]Thomas, *Drawing on Tradition*, 11-13, 27.

complexity and dynamism of the world, both in animation and in reality. With multiple shifting

planes of movement, no one viewing position is privileged as unilaterally authoritative. This

assists viewers in realizing their perspective as one of many, fostering a humble and open

approach to engaging with the world.

One example would be how animetism opens up an external world that invites viewers to

explore its unconquerable depths, like *Castle in the Sky*. Instead of moving linearly through a

static world, individual frames allow mobile, contingent positions of reference relative to the

same world. Jacob Waalk argues that this creates a more open-minded viewer who is used to the

conventions and flows of the anime scene.[337] Recent psychological studies have confirmed this

tendency within the anime fanbase.[338]

Miyazaki is another excellent example of this, whereby his gliding, energetic planes help

one to envision a more accessible relationship to the earth and the technology within it.

Animetism provides more than just a way of seeing the world – it provides a way of being in it.

It shapes viewers' understanding of their relationship with the world and their role within it. It

also influences their emotions, desires, and actions – in other words, their orientation toward the

world. Someone deeply moved by Miyazaki's respect for nature and harmonious view of

technology might be inspired to adopt more environmentally-friendly practices or to use

technology in more mindful, responsible ways. They might also better appreciate the world's

complexity and dynamism, influencing their practices in various areas, from work to

relationships to leisure activities.[339] In this way, consuming anime is a formative practice that

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[337]Waalk, "POCKET MONSTERS AND PIRATE TREASURE," 87-88.

[338]Reyson et al., *Transported to Another World*, 313-328.

[339]Content derived from an LLM.

operates in a heteropoietic manner. Not only this but how it asks viewers to inhabit the world engenders other practices with ultimate aiming telos. The moving image is communicable; like a dance, its ebbs and flows have signification and impact on audiences. This is how anime is a *generalized* religion or an inherently sacred space with a diverse constellation of liturgies. Next, we shall discuss the *particularized* religious content that can emerge from anime.

<div align="center">

Salient Demonstrations of Anime's Religiosity

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Earlier in the thesis, it was stated that anime is home to a substratum of cosmetic and didactic religious elements. This might have surprised some, as other information in a previous section suggested that the anime fandom in America (and Japan!) is not overly religious. This, of course, relies on how one defines "religious." If by religious one means a traditional or structured religion, then one may indeed find such a quality lacking in the American fanbase. But in a world post-Freud, Marx, and "secularization," religiosity is increasingly becoming a personal affair, taking on new forms to connect symbolically with some spiritual dimension.[340] As Matt Hills has stated, there "a privatized and individualized space remains open to the voluntaristic adoption of sacred themes and ideas."[341] However, the development of such private spirituality does not occur in a vacuum. Instead, it is affected by consuming entities such as literature, popular culture, and New Age beliefs.[342]

As we just stated, one of humanity's primary drives (derivative of liturgies) is to seek, discover, and construct meaning. Typically, this comes in transcendental, ultimate meanings and

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[340]Katharine Buljan, "Spirituality-struck: Anime and religio-spiritual devotional practices," *Fiction, Invention, and Hyper-reality: From Popular Culture to Religion*, ed. Carole Cusack and Pavol Kosnáč, 101-119 (New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), 101-103.

[341]Matt Hills, "Media Fandom, Neoreligiosity, and Cult(ural) Studies," *The Velvet Light Trap* 46, (2000): 76.

[342]Buljan, *Spirituality-struck*, 101-102.

purposes. Scholars of religion, such as Mircea Eliade, have grounded this search in need for the "presence of" or "to contact" the spiritual/supernatural/divine (orthodox Christianity would argue that each person possesses a *sensus divinitatis*, a sense, and orientation to God, which people can more or less act upon[343]). Historically, organized religions have been the mediators and providers of these values, but in contemporary times, popular culture (like anime) is increasingly filling that role. The latter contains an impressive capacity to evoke religious experiences/attitudes in personal spiritual lives and engender the transcendence that communities desperately crave.[344]

Salient demonstrations of this effect are observed with anime cosplay, pilgrimage, and the development of fiction-based religions. These three items can be seen as expressions of the need to connect with the supernatural dimension, per Katharine Buljan.[345] Cosplay is a process by which anime fans dress up as their favorite anime characters and perform actions that typify those said characters. They transform themselves into something else to briefly transcend normal embodied circumstances. This is how cosplay reflects ritual activity on the part of anime aficionados. Religious rituals are commonly defined as prescribed series of actions according to a convention. But ritual is also a conduit for the reenactment of myths. As Katharine Buljan states, "cosplay… starting as play, by symbolical re-enactment of (supernatural) myth (by means of identification and projection) it becomes a ritual, and as such expresses a need to connect with the supernatural (sacred) dimension by rising above the profane dimension."[346] In other words, cosplayers typically emulate a supernatural being or a human character with magical abilities in

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[343]Alvin Plantinga, *Knowledge and Christian Belief* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2015), 37.

[344]Buljan, *Spirituality-struck*, 103.

[345]Ibid., 116.

[346]Ibid., 104-108.

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their performance. The narratives to which these characters belong are modeled on mythical precedents, mostly savior figures and divine beings. Cosplay demonstrates an attempt to transcend mundane existence and escape symbolically, if not momentarily, into the world of myth and legend, fictive worlds that go beyond their own. In this sense, cosplay is a ritual activity by which a "transformed" individual participates in mythic worlds beyond their own, engaging in divinely oriented religious experiences.[347]

Anime pilgrimage refers to the visitation of real-life sites that coincide with geographies in anime. For instance, Shinkai Makoto's *Your Name* (2016) is based on various locations in Japan, like the National Art Centre, many of which can be visited in person. The "normal meaning" of pilgrimage is a religious affair whereby a journey is taken to demonstrate devotion. Similarly, anime pilgrims express devotion to their favorite anime, characters, and story by visiting a "sacralized" location. Symbolically, everyday life is "merged" with or in "contact" with this "other" world, the fictive dimension of anime. Often such sites are given mythical connotations in anime and are superimposed with supernatural events and narratives, protagonists, and mystic characteristics when visited by pilgrims. It is a passage from one mode of being (empirical reality) to another, transcendent circumstance (the inbreaking of a supernatural anime world). The desire to be in such circumstances expresses the need for the divine, as the human condition is briefly transcended to a different state of affairs. In many senses, anime pilgrims visit the "holy" places of anime to be closer to their gods and engage in divinely oriented religious experiences.[348]

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[347]Buljan, *Spirituality-struck*, 104-116.

[348]Ibid., 108-111.

The last and most apparent demonstration is invented religions derived from anime. These can include Haruhiism (from the show, *The Melancholy of Haruhi Suzumiya [MOHA]*, 2006), Yukiism (based on a side character from *MOHA*), and the Church of Madoka (based on *Puella Magi Madoka Magica*, 2011). Haruhiism, in particular, is based on Haruhi Suzumiya, a fiction-based divine being. The sole goal is to entertain the goddess and prevent her from becoming upset so she does not re-establish the universe. The movement draws from a conglomeration of Christian, Islamic, and Shinto sources in constructing its doctrine.[349] The appearance of such anime-rooted religions can be understood as an outworked desire to connect with the divine, even if they are symbolic. While the motivations (parody, mockery, etc.) for involving oneself with such religions can be questioned for some, it still establishes some fascination with and recognition of anime's religious concepts (and perhaps even the mockers enjoy flirting subtly with the divine).[350]

Religiosity of Anime and Medium

One might wonder how this relates to the thesis of this section, namely, that the effects of medium shape how viewers inhabit the world religiously and that describing anime as a sphere of religious activity is inseparable from considerations of medium. Or, conversely, *how* does anime engender salient habits of *particularized* religiosity like cosplay, pilgrimage, and fictive-religion development? This can be answered in a multitude of ways. Ultimately, the animetic interval facilitates the engagement of individual/communal imagination, creating a site for the contestation of disbelief. The social imaginary, being the environment in which liturgical

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[349]Buljan, *Spirituality-struck*, 111-112. An excerpt from a Haruhiist prayer reads, "Our Lady, who art in North High School. We pray that you are happy with your creation. We pray that you are happy with yourself. We pray that like you we will strive to save the world by overloading [it] with fun in your name. May you be guided in your infinite eccentricity by your friends. We pray to the aliens. May the Data Overmind protect you with its infinite knowledge" pg. 112.

[350]Ibid., 111.

practices are inculcated, is therefore harnessed through the animetic machine, integrating with its operative processes of in-folding and ex-folding.

Animation has always carried connotations of "bringing something to life." In Buddhist temples, specific images are brought to "life" through rituals like eye-opening ceremonies. The process by which inert images become imaginatively vivified can be accurately described as "animation." It can also denote the mechanical succession of static images that create an illusion of movement, another form of "bringing something to life."[351] This may be why anime is concerned with the minimal conditions for and representations of life since their animators continually wrestle with the question of generating life from movements.[352]

In the first sense of the word, without belief, an image (such as a statue or painting) is merely an inert object.[353] When imagination is exercised in the attitude of a belief, the image in question ceases to become representative, instead becoming the "deity" itself in the minds of

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[351]Thomas, *Drawing on Tradition*, 23.

[352]Lamarre, "From Animation to Anime," 340.

[353]Thomas, *Drawing on Tradition*, 23. "Belief" here is a tricky concept, and one that we will be employing throughout the rest of the section. Smith, whose goal is to critique typical Christian conceptions of worldview, tends to associate belief with cognitivism or "things of the head." As will be explicated later, for him, belief and/or knowledge should be deemphasized for a Heideggerian "understanding." For our purposes, we shall make a distinguishment between *cognitive* belief and *affective* belief. Pulling from Ian Reader and George Watanabe, *cognitive* belief entails some kind of content that is cognitive in nature and therefore can be discussed/analyzed in theology or philosophy. It is an act of cognition. *Affective belief*, on the other hand, is better associated with terms like faith, trust, or reliance, words that affirm the world without necessarily relying on cognition. This belief "can be described and even cognized at a primitive level but not rationally explained since it is mostly of a mythic and magical world of pure lands, gods, and demons." To pull from Thomas Cahill, it is "apprehended as simple and immediate, framed by myth and magic. A man no longer subordinated one thought to another with mathematical precision; instead, he apprehended similarities and balances, types and paradigms, parallels and symbols… It was a world not of thoughts, but of images." Thomas Cahill, *How the Irish Saved Civilization* (New York, NY: Doubleday, 1995), 204; Ian Reader and George Watanabe, *Practically Religious: Worldly Benefits and the Common Religion of Japan* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawai'i Press, 1998), 129-131. In other worlds, *affective* belief is a noncognitive, know-how understanding of the world, often wrought through habits and rituals. It is more an affirmatory imagination of the world rather than a set of propositions, formed in the crucible of narrative, myth, and symbols. Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 87. Cognitive belief then can be pictured as the tip of an iceberg, with *affective* belief constituting the hidden body. Both rely upon and have their imaginary dimensions.

adherents (i.e., the eye-opening ceremony mentioned above). In this way, images can have a real vitality of their own, an existence acknowledged and assumed by the worshipper. This, of course, is not merely relegated to formal religious contexts. Audiences can animate renditions of fictional characters in popular culture, the same way religious icons are animated. Fictional characters may be perceived as "real" by their viewers, treading the liminal "line" between existence and non-existence.[354]

The reception of religion, fiction, and film is similar. All are characterized by a suspension of disbelief, or an act of noncognitive acceptance, a suppression of the gap between imagination and empirical reality. The same process that enables audiences to view synchronic frames as part of a diachronic whole simultaneously allows them to understand specific features of anime as religiously significant. The technical process of anime facilitates such activity by inviting and demanding the suppression of awareness for the interstices between fictive and actual worlds.[355]

As mentioned above, compositing ensures that the gaps between different elements within the image are not noticeable. It obscures the multiple layers of signification happening in each frame. When contextualized to anime, compositing regulates the play between the different planes of the multiplanar image. Their movements relative to each other make palpable a sense of depth within the image. The unique lateral motion gives rise to the animetic interval, which allows animators to manipulate the audience's awareness of multiple layers. It also serves to suppress the quick transitions between frames.

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[354]Thomas, *Drawing on Tradition*, 23-24.

[355]Ibid., 27.

These "technics" of anime are particular manners of viewing that serve to "compress multiplanar images into composite ones that interpret the juxtaposition of such composite images as a reasonable approximation of empirical reality… compositing are therefore inherently imaginative, demanding that audiences suppress their awareness of the interstices between frames and layers within frames."[356] The animetic interval draws audiences into its story, allowing them to frame content as religiously significant by playing with their awareness between actual and fictive worlds. There is also a metaphorical sense to compositing, as creators can "open" or "close" their works to being interpreted toward religious ends.[357]

Just as an audience member can recognize the different layers in a composite image, they can also discern the layers of fiction and reality in anime. However, their understanding of such doesn't prevent them from immersing themselves in such a fictional world. The audience willingly accepts the elements of the anime and interprets these layers as collectively forming a meaningful world. They can observe the distinctions between fictional and quotidian worlds but choose to engage with the story as a cohesive, sensible world.[358]

This engagement by audiences blurs the artificial line (set up for heuristic purposes) between imagination and the actual world. Such a boundary becomes less clear and significant. The focus is not on what is real, but the frame through which viewers understand and interpret the world, which can include elements of both reality and imagination.[359] "Audience members exhibit religious frames of mind when they interact with the characters and cosmologies of… anime in ways that reflect an imaginative mode of compositing in which illustrated worlds are

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[356]Thomas, *Drawing on Tradition*, 28-29.

[357]Ibid., 29-30.

[358]Ibid., 30. Derived from an LLM.

[359]Ibid., 30. Derived from an LLM.

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superimposed on empirical reality."[360] In other words, the technologies and techniques used in anime are not just artistic conventions but tools that can shape the viewer's perception. Using these things, animators guide the viewer's interaction with their work, shaping how they experience the story. Just as transparent planes are superimposed over each other to garner a sense of verisimilitude, audiences superimpose the worlds of anime on everyday reality.[361] In this way, the artificial line between imagination and the actual world is blurred, creating a composite realm where the framework established by anime technologies shapes the viewer's perception.[362] Characters and settings are imaginatively animated by their audiences, giving them a certain vitality outside their cinematic technologies. This compositing of real and fictive worlds renders it possible for Jesus and Buddha to become neighboring office workers or capricious *kami* to reside in slumbering Yokohama shrines.[363] Not only this, but audiences are, in turn, "animated" by these stories, propelling them to ethical, liturgical, and ritual action.[364] This isn't

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[360]Thomas, *Drawing on Tradition*, 31.

[361]Jolyon Baraka Thomas, "Spirit/Medium: Critically Examining the Relationship Between Animism and Animation" *Spirits and Animism in Contemporary Japan*, ed. Fabio Rambelli, 157-171 (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2019), np. Thomas, "Manga, Anime, and Religion in Contemporary Japan," 6.

[362]Derived from an LLM.

[363]Young spiritual seekers have shown themselves to be especially spiritually formed by anime. They actively search for religious meanings, often drawing from diverse resources. Younger generations have demonstrated a distaste for organized religion yet have not abandoned all senses of spirituality. Instead, as mentioned above, it is being sought in a much more subjective and reflexive manner. In this environment, media and popular culture have a much more significant impact on the development of religious identity and practice. The prevalence of anime, with its integration of many different religious elements, has been shown in various studies to highly influence spiritual seekers. Several reasons have been suggested for why this is the case: (1) the rich and integrated fashion of anime's religious content, owing no allegiance to any particular institution (2) some believe that American youth have become disenfranchised with their own pop culture, and therefore are seeking out other forms (3) the "otherness" of anime makes a novel and attractive entity. Whatever the explanation, youth are the most susceptible to being formed by the religious liturgies present in anime. Jin Park, "'Creating my own cultural and spiritual bubble': case of cultural consumption by spiritual seeker anime fans," 409-410; Zielinski, "OF BROKEN WINGS AND OTAKU EMPATHY: REPAIRING FRACTURED RELATIONSHIPS USING ANIME TO RECONNECT DISENFRANCHISED YOUTH WITH THE GOSPEL," np. Sauramaa, "The Use of Religion in Anime and Manga and the Effects it has on the Viewer," np.

[364]Thomas, *Drawing on Tradition*, 155.

to say that *particularized* religious identities and practices are determined or always derived from anime. Suppression isn't necessarily uniform, as the skill of producing anime and personal predilections/volitions can vary audience absorption. Any of these reasons may prevent viewers from participating in the above process.

Much of the thought here is drawn from the work of Jolyon Baraka Thomas, although he has been critiqued for under-theorizing how the forms of anime operate.[365] Several proposals will be outlined to fill that "gap" and fully integrate the above idea with Lamarre. These proposals are: sequential imaginative connections made within the abstract animetic machine, creating personalized worlds from lines of sight within the distributive field, and imaginative closure within limited animation.

Firstly, the animetic interval, as proposed by Lamarre, is a site of contestation for disbelief. By its nature, the animetic machine gathers into itself an ensemble of devices and schema that do not naturally come together. These include material things (such as the rack and transparent sheets of celluloid) and immaterial/abstract qualities. In other words, the machine of animation allows for the assemblage of very different and often incompatible materials. To make these materials come together, an apparatus (the animation stand) must integrate across their differences. As discussed above, that integration occurs via an abstract and immaterial diagram.

One of the advantages of discussing anime in terms of a machine is the stress given to the interrelations between the various elements. Despite the focus of this thesis on the animetic interval, the machine is not unilaterally confined to this central feature. It folds into itself dialogical contributions from audiences, out-folding divergent series of animation. Viewers synergize the immaterial of imagination into this machine; it is part of what they "bring to the

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[365]Brian Ruh, "Jolyon Baraka Thomas, Drawing on Tradition: Manga, Anime, and Religion in Contemporary Japan," *Animation: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 9, no. 1 (2014): 105.

table" to make an integrated whole. Layering planes to create a sense of verisimilitude (emergent under the condition of motion) engages this aspect of the machine. Without the imaginative effort of audiences, there would be no signification between the layers, and the succession of images would fall apart. It would simply be the mechanistic operation of inanimate objects.

Viewers must consistently imagine connections between various constituting elements to orient themselves within an image. They imaginatively "fill in" the gaps between planes to create a coherent perception of its world. In this way, audiences intuitively suppress their awareness of anime's operations, habitually immersing themselves in a reality beyond their own. Unlike classical cinema, where viewers are pulled into photorealistic depth to engender a sense of stability, the animetic interval presents an external environment to its viewers. Like with the *Castle in the Sky*, a world opens up to the viewer even as it remains separate from them. Audiences are invited to explore its depths with their imagination freely, no longer toured through space by the camera's movement. Even when the tension between depth and flatness threatens to burst immersion, there is an elasticity to this disorientation as audiences "dive back in" to recover and reconcile what has been lost.

The animetic interval is an imaginative ecosystem with many methods of suppression that allow audiences to composite the gap between planes. "Imagination" has many operative senses in this environment: filling in, projection, connection, and suppression. As viewers engage with the animetic interval, the continual process of necessary imaginative "filling," "connection," or "suppression" spills over into other areas. Compositing spreads throughout the anime, no longer confined simply to the gaps between physical layers. Religious content/symbols become another abstract layer in the multiplanar machine, where the gap between it and other layers of signification requires "suppression" or "connecting." The animetic machine, therefore, does not

contain just material compositing but abstract compositing that can be applied elsewhere. In this way, the interstices between various elements in the machine are blurred, leading to the superimposition of religious elements into everyday reality.

Limited animation offers another manner of playing with the animetic interval. It compresses all depth-producing layers into a single surface, causing all elements to appear equally in the image. Rather than fading away from the viewer's eye, the background is pushed to the forefront. Lamarre terms this the distributive field since all elements within the image are distributed on its surface. Naturally, these "flattened" images are saturated with diverse information. The viewer navigates through these elements in a manner similar to data retrieval. This is not a passive process. Instead, audiences are actively involved in scanning the image, identifying different features, and discerning their relationships with each other, similar to how one navigates information in a network or interconnected web of data.

These elements are not just inert, discrete data, to borrow terms from Lamarre, but fields of potential depth. They are a line of sight that can be further explored. If pursued more intensely, the elements promise to reveal additional connections and associations, like how delving deeper into a topic or point in a database might disclose more complex and interconnected information.[366] The distributive field produces "the sense of a "personalizable" world: each line of sight can develop into a personal way of connecting the dots."[367] Lamarre expands the definition of information here to include material elements, narrative, and other content. When he discusses every line of sight developing into a personal way of connecting the dot, Lamarre refers to each viewer's unique individual and communal perspective amid

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[366]Content derived from an LLM.

[367]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, 147.

interpretation. They will focus on different aspects of the scene, draw other connections, and thus create their own personal understanding of the narrative and its world. This is facilitated by the information retrieval-like process he mentioned earlier, where viewers actively scan the scene and interpret its elements.[368]

Regarding anime's religiosity, a semiotic ensemble of religious content is interwoven with the material elements that get appropriated into the superplanar connection-making process. In this way, the development of "personalized worlds" includes various apparent and subvert strata of religious representation with varying degrees of intensity. The active engagement facilitated by the medium encourages viewers to "play" with religious content and imagery to the point where the boundary between imaginative and real is breached. As audiences "retrieve information" from the scenes, viewers might delve into these depths, exploring and interpreting the religious content according to their personal beliefs and experiences. In this sense, it is easy to see how religious representations in anime can get caught "up" in viewers' lives as they develop worlds for their inhabitation. As such, the technological ensemble of anime facilitates the appropriation of *particularized* religious content.

Lastly, in his book, Lamarre intends to rectify many overemphasizes that have taken place in animation studies. He does this by giving priority to compositing (the invisible interstices between layers of the image) over animating bodies (the invisible space between frames). That being said, between each frame in the succession of images are invisible interstices contributing to anime's medial effects. To accurately mimic the workings of a cinematic camera, the animation must capture twenty-four frames per second. Twenty-four drawings must be created and photographed for each passing second. This process is known as "full animation." As

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[368]Content derived from and LLM.

opposed to this, anime often employs "limited animation." This drastically reduces the capture rate to only eight frames per second. Initially used to cut costs, limited animation has developed its own grammar and conventions. Spaces tend to move and warp around objects. Moments freeze and stretch as strategic camera panning conveys movement. Characters will sometimes hang suspended in mid-air, or extended attention will be given to a still image in dialogue (such as a face).[369]

Yet, it is the invisible interstices between each frame that will capture our attention. Audiences imaginatively fill in these gaps between images, fleshing out the movement that is only partial. They must do the hard work of contextualizing the intervening space between the two images, otherwise described as closure. This is similar to how manga operates, where the space (known as the gutter) is filled between two juxtaposed panels by the reader's imagination.[370]

Because limited animation employs so few frames, it forces viewers to fill in the gaps it intentionally leaves out. This is best shown through an overly simplistic example. Usually, twenty-four frames are employed to animate a leg kicking a ball over a second. These are scattered out over the trajectory of movement. You might draw a frame with the character's leg drawn back, then animate all the intervening frames leading up to the kick. But with limited animation, you might only draw the frames for the character's leg cocked back, her leg in the middle of motion, and at the point of the kick. The viewer is asked to fill the space between each frame imaginatively to engender a fluid sense of motion. This example is only heuristic; it only vaguely represents how limited animation would go about animating a kick. However, the

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[369]Thomas, "Manga, Anime, and Religion in Contemporary Japan," 6.

[370]Thomas, *Drawing on Tradition*, 27-28.

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overall point is the imaginative effort that is demanded of the audience. Limited animation has techniques for disguising some of the jerkiness that can come with this effect. For instance, fight scenes might emphasize impact and power over interactive choreography. But even focusing on the impact of motion asks the viewer to imagine how that impact came around in the first place.

While the example was simple, its core idea can be extended to all the activities and portrayals of limited animation. In this way, when religious content and/or attitudes are represented in anime, audiences are imaginatively filling in the gaps for these sequences. For instance, a character might experience a fervent event or initiate a spiritual journey. Viewers follow along, subconsciously contextualizing any intervening space that crops up in the animation of these affairs. Because of this, religious content and attitudes are situated in the imagined projections of viewers. This material is not passively received but instead worked with, as viewers have already actively utilized it in some capacity. The interstices between frames operate as a site for the intensification of imagination. Audiences are "imaginatively" prepped, per se, to absorb and appropriate this content for themselves. This does not mean audiences are determined to become "religious" or exhibit particularized religiosity after consuming anime. Viewers have an active choice to accept or reject specific invitations that are made to them. However, they may be subtly shaped by the practices they encounter in a series, even to the point where their latent imaginative "fillings" or "projections" suddenly reveal registers of religious significance. The line between the actual world and imagination would then be blurred.

Social Imaginaries and the Animetic Machine

The above shows how the imagination relates to the animetic interval, which operates as a space that facilitates the imaginative projection or connection between layers. Imagination "rushes" into the world presented to the viewer. This activity works to suppress awareness of

said interstices, meaning that the gap between reality and fiction increasingly becomes a theoretical artifice. Within Charles Taylor's social imaginary, the imagination plays a vital role in developing liturgical practices that shape a community's love. As mentioned above, the "social imaginary" is an affective, noncognitive understanding of the world. It is the subconscious background through which people image the world.

As one could intuit, the term "imaginary" shifts attention from the cognitive realm of ideas to the affective region. As Smith and Taylor theorize, imagination itself emanates from the human body. In this way, it is more of a non-cognitive understanding than a set of propositional beliefs. Taylor, employing a distinction made by Heidegger, differentiates "knowledge" (objective and propositional) and "understanding."[371] The latter is an "inarticulate understanding of our whole situation," which constitutes the background of knowledge.[372] One here might distinguish between know-how (intuitive grasp of one's neighborhood) and propositions. Imagination signals "that our most basic way of intending and constituting the world is visceral and tactile— it runs off the fuel of "images" provided by the senses."[373]

This emphasis on imagination as an affective faculty allows it to constitute the world for us on a bodily level. This isn't to say that there is not such a thing as *cognitive* imagination, but rather that imagination can exist beyond this mode in a manner that is more primitive and intuitive. This differentiation between *affective* and *cognitive* imagination should be thought of as heuristic, as both are intertwined with each other. To use the example of an iceberg, *cognitive* imagination should be pictured as the tip, while *affective* imagination makes up the hidden,

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[371]Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 86-87.

[372]Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 25

[373]Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 87.

undergirding body. Imagination is "aiming" or "intending" the world meaningfully, giving it

significance non-propositionally. It is a kind of intuition that can never be rationalized, as it

exists in a way that defies attempts of full and precise articulation. There is an element of

indefinability to this kind of imagination. To again draw from Taylor, the social imaginary

cannot be expressed in theories or explicit doctrines.[374] "A social imaginary is not how we think

of the world, but how we imagine the world before we ever think about it; hence the social

imaginary is made up of the stuff that funds the imagination— stories, myths, pictures,

narratives."[375] Because of this, a social imaginary functions on the order of imagination. This

shift to the affective helps us understand the relationship between imagination and bodily

practice. "If the understanding makes the practice possible, it is also true that it is the practice

that largely carries the understanding."[376] Practice and understanding are mutually influencing -

the understanding enables the practice, and the practice carries and reinforces the understanding.

This embodied, unconscious understanding is the kind of imagination facilitated by the

animetic interval. The imaginative connections needed for immersion are often not thoughtful or

even cognitively intentional on the part of viewers. It is almost as if they undertake a form of

subconscious navigation, a natural inhabitation where the world is viscerally "felt" through.

While *cognitive* imagination is a faculty for creating new ideas or images (beginning in the

conscious, rational mind), the gaps between the layers invite an *affective* imagination. This

process is more interactive than creative. *Affective* imagination is a bodily, sensory, and

precognitive phenomenon. It arises from a more profound, visceral level and is influenced by

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[374]Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 87.

[375]Ibid., 88.

[376]Taylor, *Modern Social Imaginaries*, 25.

sensory experiences, including images, sounds, narratives, and other content siphoned from quotidian contexts. The animetic interval, which emerges under movement conditions, makes the depth of the multiplanar image palpable. What is essential is not just the physical movement of planes but how viewers derive personal connections, emotional responses, and interpret narratives from the moving images.[377]

For example, envision an anime scene where a character traverses a densely-packed, rich landscape. The shifting perspectives, sense of movement, and the characters' interaction with the environment engage one's senses. This involves not just the images provided by sight, but the intuitive sense of space, motion, and depth. The *affective* imagination does not simply receive inert pieces of data. Instead, it actively creates a sense of presence, a spatial understanding, and an emotional connection while traversing the animetic interval (i.e., viewing on-screen events). This imagination is visceral because it involves emotional reactions and senses beyond and with sight. It is tactile because one can virtually "feel" the space, movement, and actions on-screen.[378]

While imagination fuels this experience, it is also guided by the background processes of the social imaginary. One's understanding and interpretation of elements within the image are shaped by background, past experiences, and the shared "traditions" of their community. It contributes to creating "personalized" worlds developed from the lines of sight of distributive fields. This process is part of the "social imaginary" shaping how one understands the world. In this case, it is the world created by the anime machine.

Visceral/tactile imagination contributes to the "social imaginary" by providing the noncognitive, embodied experiences that constitute Heideggerian "understanding."[379] These

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[377]Content derived from an LLM.

[378]Content derived from an LLM.

understandings are consequently formed into practices arising from the habit of watching anime.

The application of the social imaginary to anime thus can have two primary interactions: the

input of *affective imagination,* which develops understanding, and the reception of the audience.

The animetic interval immerses viewers into the religious milieu of its world, leading to the

compositing of religious content/practices into everyday life and understanding, as described

above.[380]

Summary

In sum: This was a long and winding section (to say the least) that sought to establish

how animetism can be contextualized to religiosity. Namely, how the effects of medium shape

the way viewers inhabit the world religiously, and that to describe anime as a sphere of religious

activity is inseparable from considerations of medium. It was here that a heuristic distinction was

made between *particularized* religious content and *generalized* religious content. The latter

refers to liturgical practices which shape the desire/love of a population towards ultimacy.

Whenever anime implies (through the mediation of the animetic interval) a way of indwelling or

orienting oneself in the world, it makes a fundamentally religious claim. This is because it

presents a "vision of the good" life that becomes the telos of worldly existence. A salient

example is Miyazaki's solution to the technological condition presented by Virilio, as mentioned

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[379]Content derived from an LLM.

[380]It is here where we can best distinguish between *generalized* and *particularized* religion. The latter is what we have been discussing thus far: namely, how the animetic interval facilitates *affective* imagination, working to suppress awareness of the gaps between layers of the image. The resulting immersion of the audience implicates a simultaneous "blurring" of fictive and actual worlds, influencing audiences to superimpose particularized religious content/symbols over empirical reality. This leads to a continuum of religious practices and/or beliefs to be appropriated into viewers' lives, with variegated degrees and intensities. *Generalized* religion refers to liturgical practices that shape the desire/love of a population toward ultimacy, i.e., indwelling a vision of the good life. Whenever anime, specifically through the animetic interval, inevitably imply different ways of inhabiting the world, they present visions of the "good life," which are fundamentally religious.

above. Miyazaki employs visual perspective to envision a way of being in the world that is simpler and less reliant upon technologies of destruction.

On the other hand, particularized religion deals with recognizably religious content (formal doctrines, practices, symbols, playful re-creations, and appropriations, etc.). Here, the animetic interval facilitates the engagement of individual/communal *affective* imagination, creating a site for the contestation of disbelief. The latter part of this sentence speaks to how the animetic interval invites a certain kind of imaginative trust or affirmation, which the viewer can reject. In this case, *affective* imagination (as opposed to *cognitive* imagination) refers to the visceral/tactile imaginative connections (and/or projections) between spaces within the multiplanar image, working to suppress awareness of said gaps to create an immersive world. The resulting verisimilitude blurs the artificial dividing line between fictive and actual worlds, leading fans to superimpose religious content within anime onto reality. This is performed in three manners: sequential imaginative connections made within the abstract animetic machine, the creation of personalized worlds from lines of sight within the distributive field, and imaginative closure within limited animation. The resulting practices include ritual cosplaying, anime pilgrimages, and the formation of anime-based religions, among others (i.e., the appropriation of Buddhist prayers or playful recreation of characters as emulative role models).

The social imaginary, being that environment in which liturgical practices are inculcated, is therefore harnessed through the animetic machine, integrating with its operative processes of in-folding and ex-folding. The machine in-folds various goods from the social imaginary: *affective* imagination, desire for ultimacy, personal/communal backgrounds, etc., and out-folds divergent practices, desires, and beliefs simultaneously reintegrated into local and nonlocal social imaginaries. These variegated realms of social imagination are constantly being reaffirmed

and reshaped through viewers' interactions with the world and each other. The animetic

machine, then, is simply a nodal point in this networked process.

These two aspects of *generalized* and *particularized* religion show that it is not enough to

analyze anime narratives. Viewers are affected by the mediums they engage with in subtle and

surprising ways. Because thematic content is mediated through material and technology, these

things must be considered, especially in the hyper-instrumentalized, interconnected, and

technology-dense world that constitutes everyday life. It is the technics of anime that facilitate

religious activity on the part of viewers, allowing the media-form to penetrate beneath beliefs

and propositions to influence desire and love. Indeed, anime is a religious ecosystem containing

its tactics of evangelism and liturgy. Yet, as has been emphasized, this consideration is

inseparable from animation's material/technological characteristics and the subsequent meanings

generated by these effects. If anime is teaching audiences how to worship, and popular culture

apologetics addresses only propositional structures of some kind (beliefs, narrative, etc.), then it

needs to understand how these media forms are shaping people and their orientations. Because

anime's material/technological characteristics always operate on the level of liturgy and practice,

any attempted "reading" needs to account for these features. As we will see below, a

shortcoming of Turnau's popular culture apologetics is the lack of attention or emphasis he gives

in this regard.

<div align="center">

Critiquing Turnau's Method Concerning Anime

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Turnau's method can be critiqued in many areas, but we shall highlight a few of the most

pertinent concerns in this section. To briefly recap, Turnau has developed a five-step diagnostic

approach for evaluating anime (as a work of popular culture), which is comprised of two

categories: "the reading" of a text and the "performance of apologetics" upon that exact text. The

first question deals with issues of story and world formation, while the latter three investigate the positive and negative aspects of anime in relation to the "gospel." Most, if not all, criticism will be leveled at the second step, which is "Where am I (the World of the Text)?" For Turnau, popular-culture texts project worlds of meaning that entice unsuspecting individuals into immersion. These texts "proposition our imagination, displaying to the imagination different ways of being in the world, ways of seeing the world, ways of dealing with or ignoring God, ways of being ourselves."[381] As a result, these dynamics affect the everyday practices and beliefs of the viewer. Therefore, it is crucial for Turnau that one pays attention not only to content but also to the contours of its world. Contextualizing this thought to medium shows how delivery mechanisms give shape and texture to a unique imaginary world (textually, televised-ly, radiophonically, YouTubedly, etc.). This determines how a specific world can be inhabited. For example, cinematic worlds tend to be embracive, and the first/shots of a movie are significant and tend to frame content.

Much of this sounds congruent with the material presented thus far in this chapter. However, there are some critical flaws that Turnau commits in his analysis. The first is how overwhelmingly vague he is. While words such as "inhabit" and "imagination" appear upon initial inspection to align with how the animetic interval engenders religious activity, both terms have a wide range of specified meanings. They could indicate anything, including the specified effects of anime's visual perspective, or nothing related to this. Turnau's explanations in his book often seem to suggest that "inhabitation" is relegated and similar to "watching a painted landscape." This vagueness creates tension between what Turnau claims and the actual application of his method. His analysis of the anime *One Piece* gives little attention to media

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[381]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 222.

technologies apart from a salutary nod, where Turnau's observations are confined to only one section.

For instance, referring back to his assessment of *One Piece*, Turnau highlights the art style, voice actors, and perhaps (at best) the physical representations of goofy humor in Step Two.[382] Yet, these observations of formal features play no role in Steps Three through Five, which cover the performance of apologetics. Instead, thematic analysis is central, as Turnau explicates various concepts (such as *nakama*) and meta-textual questions. These are the most impactful sections of his method, and considerations of medium are absent. Turnau also only catalogs a list of formal features, mentioning nowhere how the medium of anime orients people to the world and forms their practices.

The fear is that Turnau lets too much of his worldview-thinking feed into his analysis. In a manner reminiscent of inverse foundationalism, Turnau assumes that a whole constellation of beliefs governs and conditions our perception of reality. Human persons are defined by the trusts and commitments that orient their being in the world.[383] Turnau articulates worldview in this way because he wants to contest a rationalist model that describes humans as fundamentally thinking machines. For him, human beings are not neutral.[384] Yet, his model transfers many of the same properties of ideas onto beliefs and presuppositions. These beliefs/propositions look like and behave like the propositions of the rationalist model. But now they have just been given the status of origin, the roots that undergird all ideas. This is why Turnau shapes his conception

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[382]Turnau more discusses the theme of silliness in *One Piece*, pointing out that it uses slap stick physical humor. While the emphasis is more on theme than visual representation, there is an implication that something happens "on screen."

[383]Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 57-58.

[384]Turnau, *Popologetics*, 9.

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of worldview like foundationalist epistemology – his beliefs/presuppositions can be formulated on a logical register that is not qualitatively different from propositions.[385]

The stress placed on propositional content means that when he examines the worldview of other popular cultural worlds, he naturally "propositionalizes" and "structures" them a certain way. This means that he subconsciously gives priority to the propositions of narrative when priority should be given to medial considerations and subsequent practices they generate. To examine narrative features, one naturally communicates them in such a way that can be propositionalized. Despite this, Turnau still has a very "heady" idea of narrative that seems to stem from his conceptions of worldview. That is, narrative is a string of propositions that can be broken down and examined. Even if this is not the case, and Turnau has a more nuanced conception of narrative (since he pulls from Ricoeur, this could be the case, although he appears to actualize his concepts differently), he still gives undue priority to narrative and thematic concerns. This has the effect of turning his analysis into a functional book or movie review. Turnau's use of the nomenclature "text" also belies this effect. While technically meaning "something that can be interpreted," he functionally situates its use within narrative considerations. As a former undergraduate literature major, his emphasis on theme and narrative is understandable.

This explains why Turnau only ever truly examines narrative and theme in his application of method to *One Piece*. The analysis never penetrates deeper, into how the media-form of anime interacts with different levels of being human: worship, liturgy, and imagination, things that impact our hearts and desires.[386] The materiality and technologies of anime facilitate this activity

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[385]Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 59.

[386]It should be note here that narrative can certainly inculcate the practices that Smith describes as formative. The primary difference between the stories which help construct a social imaginary and Turnau's

in rich and diverse ways, contributing to the "social imaginary" of humanity. His lack of emphasis on medium makes his method oblivious to how anime's visual perspectives are particular pedagogies that inculcate all sorts of cultural practices, which direct audiences' orientations in the world. Our examination of Miyazaki Hayao's animetism above is a perfect example. Miyazaki is teaching his audience of the good life in the form of a solution to destructive technological ballistics. Yet, this is not primarily narratively mediated (although it can be inferred) or made in propositional argumentation. This orientation to the world is delivered via the visual perspectives of anime, speaking to something noncognitive, like our affective faculties or imagination. Turnau's method would be incapable of picking up on this crucial aspect of Miyazaki's film.

It should be noted that Turnau advocates only examining the formal features of mediums. His method catalogs various aspects of anime's form, i.e., lighting, sound, color, shots, takes, and editing. Looking at the form of anime still gives undue priority to narrative content since the emphasis is on how these factors "carry" the story. Lamarre argues that while formal analysis can be helpful, heavy focus loses sight of the underlying foundational elements that make the moving image possible in the first place (i.e., it's material and technical aspects). He tends to look at anime in terms of how they work and how they work on the world. Lamarre argues that priority should be given to function and value over form.[387] Turnau does not consider the functional aspects of media-forms in any part of his analysis and therefore misses particular effects and experiences that anime provides for its audience. The animetic interval is an excellent

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narrative is the overly propositional nature asserted to them – Turnau tends to articulate narrative in such a way that appeals to the cognitive, like premises in an argument. This tends to minimize the habit-forming manners of narrative.

[387]Lamarre, *The Anime Machine*, x-xi.

example of this. It is not just a component of the form (the aesthetic and visible characteristics of animation) but a functional device that shapes audience experience and interpretation. Via the animetic interval, the gaps between planes of the image are manipulated, which results in various religious activities on the part of viewers. This is what anime *does*, how it *works* on the world.

With this last observation, we can return to our quibble surrounding Turnau's vague usage of "inhabitation" and "imagination." The way Turnau and Lamarre approach medium creates a critical difference between them – Tunau investigates how audiences inhabit a text world. Lamarre investigates how audiences inhabit the actual world. Take this quote from Turnau, "Each of these techniques add meaning and texture to the imaginative landscape projected by the film, a world that the filmmaker constructs for our habitation."[388] Resonating with Paul Ricoeur's mimesis 3, Turnau believes that we inhabit the various worlds set before us in popular culture.[389] Meanwhile, the animetic interval facilitates affective imagination, working to suppress awareness of the gaps between layers of the image. The resulting immersion of the audience implicates a simultaneous "blurring" of fictive and actual worlds, influencing audiences to superimpose particularized religious content/symbols over actual reality. In his own right, Lamarre specifically emphasizes function to explore how audiences dwell and inhabit the everyday structures around them.

Of course, this is another area we could criticize Turnau in - audience reception. His method is targeted almost entirely at the Christian masses. Apart from a transcendental argument made in step four of his approach, Turnau spends most of his time highlighting the mix of grace/ugliness in popular culture. While one could no doubt repurpose parts of his method to

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[388]Turnau, *Popolgetics*, 228.

[389]Turnau argues that our inhabitation within this world affects our practices, but this is not something that his method explores or applies, even if it is a second order implication (not focus) or his theory.

target unbelieving audiences, his stated goal differs from the method's natural flow. It is designed to provide believers with skills to navigate popular culture worlds. While this fulfills the *defense* aspect of apologetics, it fails in the *contend* aspect. The interest of this thesis is in how audiences (both secular and Christian) are affected by the material and technological aspects of anime's media form.

Partially because of this aim, Turnau attempts a unified or cohesive understanding of the world presented in a particular text. The goal is a singular interpretative lens through which to view and understand everything. This can overlook the complexities and potential interpretative trajectories from media-forms like anime, which rely heavily on the play between stasis and motion. As was mentioned previously, the animetic interval implies fluidity, change, and multiplicity of interpretation. The gaps between planes are not just a space for movement but also for interpretative possibility. Multiple concurrent interpretations can exist in these gaps, allowing for a more complex and nuanced understanding of the text.[390] There are fields of depth emergent within the image that promise further connections if pursued. Audiences can use these to create "personalizable" worlds.

Turnau's fixation with singularity emerges from a Christian hermeneutic that seeks to apply the universality of Scriptural truths (based on the concept of dual authorship). But why should we assume that the works of popular culture behave in the same way as God-breathed Scripture, as they are of a different register (lacking dual authorship, inspiration, traditioned manners and practices of interpretation rooted in creedal contours, etc.)? Jolyon Baraka Thomas puts it well, "It is now common sense that authorial intent does not always match audience reception. However, the study of manga and anime has hitherto given undue preference to

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[390]Content derived from an LLM.

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authors and auteur theory, emphasizing the creative genius of a particular individual while downplaying the proactive roles that audiences play in the reception and interpretation of content."[391] Fans actively participate in the viewing process, appropriating material for their purposes. Further, with the sheer number of contributors associated with each anime, it is hard to pinpoint one person's intention as controlling the scope of the project. Little variances conglomerate until they form a bricolage often termed anime. People imaginatively interpret series through their social imaginary and the communally held practices associated with viewing. The animetic machine involves a vast, constantly shifting heterogenesis of networked machines, all of which come to bear upon any reading of a text.

Now, Lamarre doesn't suggest a hermeneutic free-for-all (he employs a form of auteur theory to analyze the works of Miyazaki Hayao, who was infamously involved at all levels of animation) but instead notes that there are material limits to divergent trajectories emerging from the animetic machine and that there exists a dialogical process between creator and viewer. This is all to say (1) Turnau's approach to reading anime should be less fixed to account for the multiple frames of reference and different complexities involved in interpretation, and (2) Contention-oriented popular culture apologetics should unabashedly be ethnographic, centering on how a target population interprets a particular anime. The point is not to colonize that population into understanding a text a certain way but to engage their understanding in ways that contend for the gospel. Therefore, effort should be aimed at the audience's reception of a work, even if that reception differs from a "purer" interpretation.

The central claim of this thesis is that the material and technology of anime have processes that affect how viewers inhabit and orient themselves in the world, which in turn

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[391]Thomas, *Drawing on Tradition*, 19.

influences their formative practices and habits. These, as Smith would say, "shape and constitute our identities by forming our most fundamental desires and our most basic attunement to the world."[392] The unique visual perspective the moving image presents is a critical element of this process. As shown earlier in the thesis, the animetic interval facilitates affective imagination in such a way that religious content and practices begin to emerge in viewers' lives. Ways of being in the world are influenced not just by cognitive faculties but also by the material, physical, and social networks we interact with in everyday life (i.e., our social imaginary). The anime machine is a localized site within this broader machinic milieu, contributing to this imaginary's continual evolution. Because media technologies specifically influence practice, it is not enough to or primarily recount the narrative. Yet Turnau seems to do just this. He operates at a level beyond practice, in a place that is closer to ideas than liturgy. His lack of focus on the medium of anime means he misses a crucial part of how orientations are formed in the world. Specifically for apologetics, this implies that citing functional book reviews to the audience will not effectively induce change in their life. That is because an interplay between liturgy and ultimate love is being communicated to them by the material and technologies of anime. Unless these features are specifically addressed, they will continue to quietly influence the course of viewers' lives.

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[392]Smith, *Desiring the Kingdom*, 25.

CONCLUSION

It does not take a sophisticated study to notice how much time people spend plugged into the media-world of technology. Surrounded by screens, with the onset of artificial intelligence and increasing dependence on virtual communication, consumption of technology is made all the easier by proliferation of access. Naturally, such dependence has also led to the screen becoming a primary source of entertainment. While this state of affairs might be rued by certain conservatives and nature supremacists alike, it also presents new horizons for creativity and interconnection.

As humanity progressively marches away from the clutches of modernity/postmodernity toward cultural postmillennialism, popular culture is seeing a greater impact on the lives of people, especially when compared to institutional religions (like Christianity). Within this milieu, anime has become an absolute staple. No longer relegated to a sub-cultural phenomenon, the market and fanbase for anime is outstanding, even to the point where it challenges more "traditional" forms of visual entertainment. As was noted in the introduction, popular culture operates as a subtle framework which forms the values, orientations, and lives of its participants. This notion extends to anime, whose materials and technologies generate fields of divergent liturgies and inhabitants. These spaces are embedded with concepts of "the good life," which become implanted in people through active engagement with their rhythms and practices. In such a way, anime presents a different way of being in the world that can be antithetical to the goals of the kingdom of God. While this media form shouldn't be "Otherized" or demonized, it certainly can draw people/believers away from Christianity.

Anime fans are also largely "non-religious" in the sense of organized religion. They are hardly secluded and demonstrate significant inter and extra-communal engagement. Further, they

show remarkable amounts of openness to ideas beyond themselves. All of the above suggests a rich and nuanced environment for the performance of winsome apologetics.

Yet, to this date, there has been very little if any interaction of evangelical Christianity with anime (both at academic and popular levels). This is especially true in regard to apologetics, or more specifically, cultural apologetics. As a subset of the latter, *popular culture apologetics* is an extremely minor field, containing only one work, that being Ted Turnau's *Popologetics*. This book is commendable for many reasons and offers a sufficient approach to anime at a general level. However, because of this, there are many nuances that Turnau misses when it comes to methodology.

Acknowledging a hole in the apologetical literature, this thesis sought to critique the five-step diagnostic approach put forward by Turnau. It does this along the lines of a central claim of the thesis: that the material and technology of anime have processes that affect how viewers inhabit and orient themselves in the world, which in turn influences their formative practices and habits.

For Turnau, reminiscent of Paul Ricoeur's threefold mimesis, popular culture creates certain (religious) worlds which audiences are asked to inhabit. Built into these spheres of activity are opaque worldviews, which are bottom up (or in Turnau's case, top down) constellations of beliefs and presuppositions/assumptions. Turnau's vision for popular culture apologetics is ultimately to be "worldview apologetics," where the Christian "perspective" is engaged with the grace/sinfulness inherent within popular culture. To do this, he develops a method which consists of the following steps: What is the story (narratological analysis)? Where am I (what medial, technological, formal, thematic, and genre "textures" shape the world of the text)? What is good and true and beautiful about it (how does this popular culture phenomena

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reflect fragments of God's grace)? What is false and ugly and perverse about it (in what ways is the work antithetical to the Kingdom of God or destructive)? How does the gospel apply here (in what ways does the gospel answer the most profound desires echoing throughout popular culture)? Turnau's approach was then applied to the anime *One Piece*, in order to give a practical example of its implementation.

Having stated the method used by Turnau, Chapter 4 of the thesis sought to critique it. This was done through the thought of Thomas Lamarre, a prominent scholar in the field of anime studies. Using cinematism as a point of departure, he seeks to develop the concept of an "anime machine." This is a material/abstract integrated-whole, which is localized to an apparatus (animation stand) that generates a field of orientations by channeling the force of the moving image. Encapsulated within this machine is the animetic interval, which presents a visual perspective and networked information that impacts human thought. In this way, Lamarre is examining how anime "thinks" technology (or some other feature).

In order to critique Turnau, this thesis was interested in how to apply the animetic interval to religion. In a sense, all anime is *generalized* religion, in that it teaches viewers how to inhabit the world around them, which gives rise to ultimate oriented practices. In another sense, anime engenders salient demonstrations of religiosity (i.e., ritual cosplay, pilgrimages, etc.) that can be termed *particularized* religion. That is, the animetic interval facilitates *affective* imagination, working to suppress awareness of the gaps between layers of the image. The resulting immersion of the audience implicates a simultaneous "blurring" of fictive and actual worlds, influencing audiences to superimpose particularized religious content/symbols over empirical reality. This leads to a continuum of religious practices and/or beliefs to be appropriated into viewers' lives, with variegated degrees and intensities.

Chapter 4 finished with an explicit critique of Turnau. This criticism was made along three fronts: (1) Turnau tends to ignore considerations of medium in favor of narrative. While analysis of theme and story are helpful, an overemphasis on such ignores the way that the material and technology of anime generate formative practices. This is especially true when narrative is treated in a "propositional" or "heady" manner. (2) When Turnau does consider medium, he only catalogs various formal features. This ignores the ways which anime works with and on the world. (3) Finally, Turnau's method contains little consideration for unbelievers. Popular culture should be unabashedly audience focused, since the point isn't to propagate readings of a certain text, but rather engage the understandings of those who watch anime.

There are many further research avenues that could emerge from this thesis. First, the intersection between theology and anime can be explored further in general. This is an underdeveloped field which has potential for growth. Whether its thematic resonance with Christianity, methodology, or other contributions, the proliferation of anime necessitates some form of positive engagement.

Second, further research could include alterations to Turnau's method to consider the functions of medium, especially when it concerns anime. As Jacqueline Berndt notes (and this author can attest), Lamarre's concept of an anime machine is difficult to apply to readings of anime. Just who is the audience that will read works with the same scrutiny that Lamarre demands?[393] Developing a generalized and reproducible understanding of the anime machine could be desirable, especially since most anime scholars seem content to simply repeat

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[393]Jaqueline Berndt, "Shohyō [review] of Thomas Lamarre *The Anime Machine: Global media toshite no nihon animation*, Japanese translation by Ōsaki Harumi and Fujiki Hideaki, Nagoya University Press, 2013," *Animation Kenkyū, The Japanese Journal of Animation Studies* 15.1A, (2013): 57–59.

Lamarre's words (or engage in abstract meta-methodological analysis), rather than implement his thought. Turnau's method is highly modulated, making it easy to slot in another Step.

Medial considerations should take a greater priority in Turnau's method. In general, modifications should be made to account for the variety of practices and habits that shape people's love. This is an apparent weakness of Turnau's methodology that can be overcome. To consider how anime implies different manners of inhabiting the world, perhaps future research can stress ethnographic analysis. Doing so allows one to examine target populations and how they make their way through the world. Rather than theorizing how certain practices arise from the moving image (which is immensely helpful), ethnography starts with the habits that have already developed within viewers. In this way, the implications of Lamarre's anime machine can be made more accessible to a general audience.

Careful readers of this thesis noticed that it spent less time discussing the animetic interval in the context of "limited animation" as opposed to "full animation," despite the former constituting most television anime. Future projects could unpack Lamarre's ideas in relation to limited animation, applying them to apologetics.

This thesis contributed to scholarship in multiple ways: (1) The critique serves to sharpen Turnau's method, allowing it to be better employed, (2) it create headway into how popular culture apologetics should appropriate tools from other fields, (3) specifically investigated *how* one can read anime apologetic, (4)) remove stigmatizations surrounding anime while breaking new ground and operating as a foundation/gateway for future work in the field, (5) the thesis showed how the material and technological essence of anime operate on the level of practice, thus teaching viewers how to inhabit the world religiously, (6) it began the conversation at the intersection of theology/apologetics and anime, where there was none previously, and (7) if

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nothing else, anyone who chooses to do further work in this field will have a very good

bibliography.

All figures are taken from 2020 Morning Consult National Tracking Pole.[394]

[Figure A]

Table CFF2_17: *Do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of the following types of movies?*
Anime

Demographic	Very favorable	Somewhat favorable	Somewhat unfavorable	Very unfavorable	Heard of, no opinion	Never heard of	Total N
Adults	11% (240)	20% (434)	17% (378)	23% (500)	18% (406)	11% (242)	2200
Gender: Male	13% (135)	22% (232)	19% (199)	22% (234)	17% (178)	8% (83)	1062
Gender: Female	9% (105)	18% (202)	16% (179)	23% (266)	20% (228)	14% (159)	1138
Age: 18-29	27% (114)	17% (74)	15% (62)	30% (126)	7% (30)	4% (18)	425
Age: 30-44	13% (78)	28% (163)	15% (88)	25% (144)	15% (87)	5% (28)	588
Age: 45-54	7% (22)	18% (59)	17% (54)	24% (77)	27% (88)	8% (25)	325
Age: 55-64	4% (17)	17% (72)	22% (95)	21% (88)	23% (97)	13% (57)	426
Age: 65+	2% (9)	15% (65)	18% (78)	15% (65)	24% (104)	26% (115)	436
Generation Z: 18-22	35% (52)	17% (25)	16% (24)	22% (34)	8% (12)	1% (2)	149
Millennial: Age 23-38	18% (115)	23% (153)	15% (96)	29% (191)	10% (63)	5% (36)	653
Generation X: Age 39-54	9% (46)	22% (118)	16% (85)	23% (123)	24% (130)	6% (33)	535
Boomers: Age 55-73	3% (22)	17% (125)	20% (153)	18% (136)	24% (178)	18% (135)	750
PID: Dem (no lean)	12% (96)	22% (174)	17% (134)	20% (158)	18% (145)	10% (79)	786
PID: Ind (no lean)	13% (97)	18% (131)	18% (130)	23% (168)	18% (133)	9% (66)	724
PID: Rep (no lean)	7% (47)	19% (129)	16% (114)	25% (175)	19% (128)	14% (97)	691
PID/Gender: Dem Men	15% (52)	24% (83)	19% (65)	18% (64)	17% (59)	7% (25)	348
PID/Gender: Dem Women	10% (44)	21% (91)	16% (69)	21% (94)	20% (86)	12% (54)	438
PID/Gender: Ind Men	16% (58)	18% (65)	21% (75)	20% (71)	17% (62)	8% (30)	361
PID/Gender: Ind Women	11% (38)	18% (66)	15% (55)	27% (97)	20% (71)	10% (36)	363
PID/Gender: Rep Men	7% (25)	24% (84)	17% (59)	28% (99)	16% (57)	8% (28)	353
PID/Gender: Rep Women	7% (22)	13% (45)	16% (54)	22% (75)	21% (71)	20% (69)	338
Ideo: Liberal (1-3)	15% (98)	22% (141)	19% (121)	22% (138)	14% (92)	7% (48)	639
Ideo: Moderate (4)	12% (72)	21% (128)	16% (98)	21% (126)	19% (117)	11% (66)	606
Ideo: Conservative (5-7)	6% (42)	17% (129)	17% (127)	26% (193)	21% (156)	14% (109)	754
Educ: < College	12% (187)	20% (297)	15% (224)	22% (339)	19% (282)	12% (184)	1512
Educ: Bachelors degree	9% (38)	18% (81)	23% (103)	22% (98)	19% (83)	9% (41)	444
Educ: Post-grad	6% (15)	23% (56)	21% (51)	26% (63)	17% (41)	7% (18)	244
Income: Under 50k	13% (155)	20% (238)	14% (171)	20% (244)	21% (247)	12% (147)	1201
Income: 50k-100k	9% (66)	21% (147)	20% (139)	25% (175)	15% (108)	10% (70)	704
Income: 100k+	6% (19)	17% (49)	23% (69)	28% (81)	17% (52)	8% (25)	295
Ethnicity: White	9% (155)	19% (322)	19% (322)	24% (408)	19% (331)	11% (184)	1722

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[394]Morning Consult, *National Tracking Poll #200158 January 23-24*, 78-80.

[Figure B]

Table CFF2_17: *Do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of the following types of movies?*
Anime

Demographic	Very favorable		Somewhat favorable		Somewhat unfavorable		Very unfavorable		Heard of, no opinion		Never heard of		Total N
Adults	11%	(240)	20%	(434)	17%	(378)	23%	(500)	18%	(406)	11%	(242)	2200
Ethnicity: Hispanic	16%	(56)	24%	(84)	12%	(43)	22%	(78)	17%	(59)	8%	(28)	349
Ethnicity: Afr. Am.	15%	(41)	23%	(62)	13%	(34)	20%	(56)	16%	(43)	14%	(39)	274
Ethnicity: Other	22%	(45)	24%	(50)	11%	(22)	18%	(36)	16%	(32)	10%	(20)	204
All Christian	7%	(72)	18%	(183)	19%	(190)	22%	(228)	21%	(214)	13%	(135)	1023
All Non-Christian	11%	(10)	20%	(18)	23%	(21)	18%	(17)	16%	(15)	12%	(11)	92
Atheist	28%	(25)	19%	(18)	14%	(12)	25%	(23)	13%	(12)	2%	(2)	91
Agnostic/Nothing in particular	13%	(133)	22%	(215)	16%	(155)	23%	(232)	17%	(165)	9%	(94)	994
Religious Non-Protestant/Catholic	10%	(12)	15%	(18)	24%	(29)	20%	(24)	18%	(22)	12%	(15)	121
Evangelical	8%	(45)	21%	(125)	14%	(84)	22%	(133)	20%	(120)	14%	(85)	592
Non-Evangelical	10%	(76)	19%	(149)	18%	(142)	22%	(175)	20%	(159)	12%	(96)	796
Community: Urban	16%	(91)	23%	(127)	15%	(85)	19%	(103)	19%	(105)	8%	(44)	556
Community: Suburban	10%	(98)	19%	(198)	19%	(192)	23%	(232)	18%	(179)	11%	(116)	1015
Community: Rural	8%	(51)	17%	(109)	16%	(101)	26%	(165)	19%	(122)	13%	(82)	629
Employ: Private Sector	11%	(78)	22%	(158)	20%	(140)	24%	(171)	17%	(120)	7%	(51)	719
Employ: Government	8%	(11)	24%	(37)	19%	(29)	27%	(40)	13%	(19)	9%	(13)	150
Employ: Self-Employed	10%	(18)	27%	(49)	12%	(22)	26%	(47)	20%	(37)	6%	(11)	184
Employ: Homemaker	9%	(16)	15%	(26)	18%	(32)	29%	(51)	18%	(31)	10%	(18)	174
Employ: Retired	2%	(10)	14%	(68)	21%	(100)	15%	(71)	24%	(117)	24%	(119)	485
Employ: Unemployed	20%	(48)	19%	(45)	11%	(27)	22%	(53)	20%	(49)	8%	(20)	242
Employ: Other	19%	(27)	23%	(34)	13%	(18)	24%	(35)	16%	(23)	5%	(8)	145
Military HH: Yes	8%	(27)	16%	(54)	20%	(68)	22%	(73)	19%	(64)	15%	(50)	337
Military HH: No	11%	(213)	20%	(380)	17%	(310)	23%	(427)	18%	(342)	10%	(192)	1863
RD/WT: Right Direction	10%	(86)	17%	(145)	17%	(142)	25%	(210)	17%	(146)	13%	(109)	837
RD/WT: Wrong Track	11%	(154)	21%	(288)	17%	(236)	21%	(291)	19%	(260)	10%	(133)	1363
Trump Job Approve	9%	(79)	17%	(159)	17%	(154)	26%	(236)	18%	(168)	13%	(118)	914
Trump Job Disapprove	13%	(151)	22%	(264)	18%	(212)	21%	(250)	18%	(213)	10%	(116)	1206
Trump Job Strongly Approve	8%	(39)	18%	(91)	14%	(69)	26%	(132)	18%	(93)	16%	(82)	508
Trump Job Somewhat Approve	10%	(40)	17%	(68)	21%	(85)	26%	(104)	18%	(75)	9%	(35)	407
Trump Job Somewhat Disapprove	10%	(24)	22%	(52)	22%	(54)	19%	(46)	21%	(50)	6%	(14)	241
Trump Job Strongly Disapprove	13%	(126)	22%	(211)	16%	(158)	21%	(204)	17%	(163)	11%	(102)	965

Continued on next page

[Figure C]

Table CFF2_17: *Do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of the following types of movies?*
Anime

Demographic	Very favorable		Somewhat favorable		Somewhat unfavorable		Very unfavorable		Heard of, no opinion		Never heard of		Total N
Adults	11%	(240)	20%	(434)	17%	(378)	23%	(500)	18%	(406)	11%	(242)	2200
Favorable of Trump	8%	(72)	18%	(154)	18%	(158)	25%	(224)	19%	(164)	12%	(106)	878
Unfavorable of Trump	13%	(151)	22%	(265)	17%	(201)	22%	(261)	18%	(211)	10%	(118)	1206
Very Favorable of Trump	9%	(46)	19%	(98)	15%	(78)	25%	(133)	18%	(96)	15%	(79)	531
Somewhat Favorable of Trump	8%	(26)	16%	(56)	23%	(79)	26%	(91)	20%	(68)	8%	(27)	347
Somewhat Unfavorable of Trump	13%	(25)	27%	(53)	14%	(27)	20%	(39)	19%	(38)	8%	(16)	198
Very Unfavorable of Trump	13%	(126)	21%	(212)	17%	(174)	22%	(222)	17%	(173)	10%	(101)	1007
#1 Issue: Economy	12%	(67)	20%	(118)	15%	(85)	27%	(157)	18%	(104)	8%	(48)	579
#1 Issue: Security	10%	(47)	16%	(75)	15%	(69)	25%	(112)	20%	(90)	13%	(60)	453
#1 Issue: Health Care	10%	(41)	23%	(91)	22%	(88)	21%	(84)	16%	(64)	8%	(30)	398
#1 Issue: Medicare / Social Security	4%	(11)	14%	(43)	19%	(57)	15%	(44)	26%	(78)	22%	(65)	297
#1 Issue: Women's Issues	16%	(18)	24%	(27)	21%	(23)	25%	(28)	11%	(12)	4%	(4)	114
#1 Issue: Education	16%	(20)	24%	(31)	14%	(19)	20%	(26)	15%	(19)	11%	(14)	129
#1 Issue: Energy	25%	(27)	23%	(24)	14%	(15)	16%	(18)	18%	(19)	4%	(5)	107
#1 Issue: Other	6%	(8)	20%	(25)	18%	(22)	26%	(32)	16%	(20)	14%	(17)	124
2018 House Vote: Democrat	11%	(87)	21%	(164)	21%	(161)	20%	(151)	18%	(136)	9%	(72)	771
2018 House Vote: Republican	7%	(45)	18%	(119)	17%	(110)	23%	(154)	20%	(131)	16%	(105)	664
2018 House Vote: Someone else	9%	(6)	14%	(10)	14%	(10)	34%	(24)	21%	(15)	8%	(5)	70
2016 Vote: Hillary Clinton	11%	(81)	22%	(158)	18%	(130)	20%	(141)	18%	(129)	10%	(72)	712
2016 Vote: Donald Trump	6%	(39)	18%	(124)	19%	(128)	23%	(157)	19%	(133)	15%	(106)	687
2016 Vote: Other	9%	(17)	14%	(25)	17%	(31)	28%	(49)	23%	(41)	8%	(14)	177
2016 Vote: Didn't Vote	17%	(104)	20%	(127)	14%	(89)	24%	(152)	17%	(103)	8%	(49)	625
Voted in 2014: Yes	7%	(100)	19%	(255)	19%	(260)	21%	(287)	20%	(276)	13%	(180)	1357
Voted in 2014: No	17%	(140)	21%	(179)	14%	(118)	25%	(213)	15%	(130)	7%	(63)	843
2012 Vote: Barack Obama	9%	(73)	22%	(183)	20%	(170)	20%	(168)	18%	(153)	12%	(100)	847
2012 Vote: Mitt Romney	4%	(22)	17%	(92)	19%	(103)	23%	(122)	21%	(115)	16%	(84)	538
2012 Vote: Other	6%	(5)	13%	(11)	13%	(11)	36%	(30)	21%	(17)	11%	(9)	82
2012 Vote: Didn't Vote	19%	(140)	20%	(148)	13%	(94)	25%	(180)	17%	(121)	7%	(48)	732

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[Figure D]

Table CFF2_17: *Do you have a favorable or unfavorable impression of the following types of movies?*
Anime

Demographic	Very favorable		Somewhat favorable		Somewhat unfavorable		Very unfavorable		Heard of, no opinion		Never heard of		Total N
Adults	11%	(240)	20%	(434)	17%	(378)	23%	(500)	18%	(406)	11%	(242)	2200
4-Region: Northeast	8%	(32)	16%	(63)	18%	(69)	24%	(93)	21%	(83)	14%	(54)	394
4-Region: Midwest	11%	(49)	21%	(98)	15%	(70)	24%	(109)	19%	(86)	11%	(50)	462
4-Region: South	10%	(83)	21%	(169)	18%	(149)	24%	(195)	18%	(150)	10%	(79)	824
4-Region: West	15%	(77)	20%	(104)	17%	(90)	20%	(103)	17%	(87)	11%	(59)	520
Traveled internationally: Yes	10%	(97)	21%	(212)	19%	(193)	23%	(234)	17%	(169)	10%	(101)	1006
Traveled internationally: No	12%	(143)	19%	(222)	16%	(185)	22%	(266)	20%	(237)	12%	(141)	1194
Traveled within the United States: Yes	11%	(210)	19%	(385)	18%	(348)	23%	(461)	18%	(365)	10%	(206)	1975
Traveled within the United States: No	13%	(30)	22%	(48)	13%	(30)	17%	(39)	18%	(41)	16%	(36)	225
Lived abroad: Yes	13%	(39)	25%	(76)	15%	(45)	22%	(65)	16%	(47)	9%	(28)	301
Lived abroad: No	11%	(201)	19%	(358)	18%	(333)	23%	(435)	19%	(359)	11%	(214)	1899
Learned to speak another language: Yes	15%	(127)	22%	(181)	18%	(149)	23%	(186)	15%	(124)	7%	(58)	824
Learned to speak another language: No	8%	(113)	18%	(253)	17%	(229)	23%	(314)	21%	(282)	13%	(184)	1376
Cable Television: Current subscriber	11%	(98)	19%	(175)	19%	(177)	21%	(196)	20%	(184)	11%	(100)	930
Cable Television: Subscribed in the past	10%	(85)	23%	(199)	16%	(136)	25%	(216)	17%	(146)	8%	(68)	849
Cable Television: Never subscribed	13%	(56)	14%	(60)	16%	(65)	21%	(89)	18%	(76)	18%	(75)	420
Satellite Television: Current subscriber	14%	(64)	17%	(80)	14%	(68)	22%	(105)	19%	(91)	13%	(64)	472
Satellite Television: Subscribed in the past	11%	(68)	22%	(140)	20%	(124)	28%	(172)	14%	(86)	5%	(33)	623
Satellite Television: Never subscribed	10%	(108)	19%	(213)	17%	(185)	20%	(224)	21%	(229)	13%	(145)	1105
Streaming service(s): Current subscriber	13%	(174)	21%	(284)	18%	(243)	27%	(369)	15%	(204)	7%	(94)	1368
Streaming service(s): Subscribed in the past	7%	(14)	23%	(42)	20%	(36)	21%	(39)	20%	(37)	9%	(16)	184
Streaming service(s): Never subscribed	8%	(52)	17%	(108)	15%	(99)	14%	(92)	25%	(165)	20%	(132)	648
Film: An avid fan	17%	(132)	23%	(172)	17%	(130)	22%	(165)	15%	(110)	6%	(46)	755
Film: A casual fan	7%	(92)	19%	(236)	19%	(234)	23%	(288)	20%	(254)	12%	(150)	1255
Film: Not a fan	8%	(16)	13%	(25)	8%	(15)	25%	(47)	22%	(42)	24%	(46)	190
Television: An avid fan	13%	(134)	20%	(217)	18%	(192)	19%	(200)	17%	(181)	13%	(136)	1061
Television: A casual fan	9%	(90)	20%	(198)	17%	(173)	27%	(275)	19%	(194)	8%	(83)	1013
Television: Not a fan	13%	(16)	14%	(18)	10%	(13)	20%	(25)	24%	(30)	18%	(23)	126

Note: Row proportions may total to larger than one-hundred percent due to rounding. For more information visit MorningConsultIntelligence.com.

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