

5-10-2017

A Study of Apocalyptic Themes in Japanese Popular Culture

Thomas M. Coar

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/senior_theses



Part of the [Japanese Studies Commons](#), and the [Sociology Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Coar, Thomas M., "A Study of Apocalyptic Themes in Japanese Popular Culture" (2017). *Senior Theses*. 141.
https://scholarcommons.sc.edu/senior_theses/141

This Thesis is brought to you by the Honors College at Scholar Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in Senior Theses by an authorized administrator of Scholar Commons. For more information, please contact dillarda@mailbox.sc.edu.

A Study of Apocalyptic Themes in Japanese Popular Culture

By

Thomas M. Coar

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for
Graduation with Honors from the
South Carolina Honors College

May 2017

Approved:

Junko Baba, Ph.D.
Director of Thesis

Anne Gulick, Ph.D.
Second Reader

Steve Lynn, Dean
For South Carolina Honors College

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
Thesis Summary	3
Abstract	5
Introduction	6
Main Body	
Learning Peace and Coexistence with Nature through Animation	9
Anime, <i>Manga</i> and Christianity	11
Anime's Apocalypse: <i>Neon Evangelion</i> as Millennialist Mecha	14
Hybrid Apocalypse: <i>Masse or Mappo</i>	17
The Deep Influence of the A-bomb on Anime and <i>Manga</i>	20
Out of Death, an Atomic Consecration to Life	22
The Reluctant Messiah	25
A History of <i>Manga</i> in the Context of Japanese Culture and Society	28
Panic Sites	30
Waiting for the End of the World	33
World War II as Trauma, Memory, and Fantasy in Japanese Animation	36
Nippon ex Machina	39
Discussion	42
Conclusion	52
Works Cited	55
Appendix	59

Thesis Summary

In this thesis, I set out to delve deeper into the apocalyptic themes presented in Japanese popular culture, specifically anime. This is important to the study of the Japanese culture as the country's media reflects the philosophies and beliefs of the people during the time of the media's creation.

The Japanese people draw from many different influences to form their viewpoints on the apocalypse and the end of the world. They have influences in shaman, Shinto, Buddhist, Confucian, Tao, and Christian doctrines and beliefs. On top of this, Japan faces many national threats including natural calamities, economic depressions, war, and nuclear disaster sites.

Some important, influential doctrines that are generally widespread throughout Japan are *masse*, *mappo*, and reincarnation. *Mappo* deals with the salvation of a dark age by the coming of a messiah-like figure while *masse* deals with the complete destruction of the world to make room for a brand new one. Reincarnation deals with the themes of death and rebirth that are common in the apocalyptic themed anime.

Additionally, the Japanese have an ambivalent view on technology, understanding that though it is helping humanity strive forward into the future, its misuse can lead to the destruction of mankind. Tezuka's *Astro Boy* shows this uneasiness with technology with the main character, Atom. As a nuclear-powered mega-weapon with the brain of a human boy, Atom contains the ability to cause ultimate destruction with a misstep but for the most part, he strives to do well by humanity and with effort, eventually becomes a super hero.

The themes of death and rebirth are also prevalent in Japan's apocalyptic themed anime series. One example of this is the *Phoenix* by Osamu Tezuka which is a beautiful representation of Japan. A pacifist creature, it dies in a surge of flames, and from its ashes, it is reborn, just as Japan was torn down by the war and bombings, they emerged strong and new, ready to face the world. This is why the Japanese people view the apocalypse in an open-minded manner, seeing not only the themes of chaos and destruction, but those of rebirth and renewal as well. The Japanese understand that things end for a reason but this end is only the beginning of a new era.

Another example is *Space Cruiser Yamato* when the ship, which is based off a real-life battleship lost in WWII, is rebuilt as a spaceship, used to save Earth. Just as a failed technology was rebuilt to be the salvation of Japan so too was Japan able to reinvent itself and become an economic powerhouse with the wisdom to learn from mankind's mistakes and avoid making them again

The Japanese believe in staying open-minded when it comes to the Ultimate Reality and to strive for one's own salvation or transformation. Their view of the end of times differs from the West as the West sees the apocalypse religiously as "the Second Coming of Christ and ultimate destruction of the world" (OED "Oxford English Dictionary") while the Japanese see it as clearing a path for a new era, a rebirth much like that of a phoenix. By learning, evolving and adapting, Japan, as a country, can push forward and continue to be successful in the modern age.

Abstract

While consuming Japanese popular culture, it is easy to notice the reoccurring themes of the apocalypse though they are often very different in their presentation to the audience. Through investigation, the study found that the Japanese people draw their understanding of the apocalypse from many different religions and ideologies, also known as religious pluralism. An influential aesthetic inspired by the Buddhist doctrine of impermanence in Japan is *mono no aware* which is the idea of seeing the beauty in the chaos and destruction, with sadness and compassion, including the apocalypse. Stemming from the ideologies of reincarnation and *masse*, the Japanese have a unique viewpoint of the end of times, seeing it as the beginning of a new era. This ideology, as well as themes of death and renewal, is represented in many artistic works such as Osamu Tezuka's *Phoenix* and Yoshinobu Nishizaki's *Space Cruiser Yamato*. Through exploration of articles and Japanese popular culture, the apocalyptic themes change over time to reflect the social and political views of the Japanese people during that period.

Key Terms: Apocalypse, Religious Pluralism, *Mono No Aware*, Death and Renewal

Introduction

A couple years ago, while at my home in New Jersey for a break, my brother and I watched a late-night *Neon Genesis Evangelion* movie marathon on Adult Swim. This was my introduction to a different side of anime, one more mature than the series I had watched as a child such as *Pokémon*. The themes in *Evangelion* surprised me, dealing with self-worth, fear, and loyalty, all within an apocalyptic situation. The story delved deep into the protagonist Shinji's human relationships with himself and others as well as his inner self conflict and a quest for identity; while providing a lack of information about the context of humanity's situation in this apocalyptic time in which Shinji was forced to fight the enemy as a pilot of a giant robot called Eva. This setting had a dearth of background knowledge while dealing with a complex physical, philosophical, and religious interpretation of the apocalypse.

I chose to enroll in the course, *Japanese Culture through Animation* because *Evangelion* had garnered a curiosity to explore the more mature side of anime as well as its ties to Japan as a country. Unlike the commonly shared misconception that anime and *manga* seems to be only targeted for children, many works have more developed themes cultural directed towards a mature audience and intended to spread a message.

As the course progressed, the apocalypse became a reoccurring theme within many anime series across decades. For my senior thesis, I wanted to research anime, specifically, the apocalyptic themes I had seen again and again. The western definition for the apocalypse is a religious one referring to the events in the biblical revelation, "the Second Coming of Christ and ultimate destruction of the world" (OED). The

Western view involves the ultimate destruction of the world while the Japanese seems to view it as the beginning of the new world. I was interested how this view of the apocalypse compared to how Japanese popular culture presented the theme to its audiences.

The following questions helped shape my research:

- What are the influential Japanese anime series and creators that present these apocalyptic themes?
- How do these apocalyptic themes contrast over Japan's contemporary history?
- What influences or events are these apocalyptic themes derived from?
- What supplementary themes emerge from these apocalyptic ones?
- How is religion incorporated into Japanese notions on the apocalypse?

This thesis is significant in this field of study by providing a more profound reflection into how apocalyptic beliefs evolved over time in Japan how these beliefs influenced prominent anime artists' works over the decades. The dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima is not Japan's only tie to apocalyptic settings, with war, natural disasters, and power plant meltdowns also being included. With these disasters, the Japanese people have built a unique perspective on the apocalypse, or end of the world, compared to the rest of the world and I will be further discussing this viewpoint in more detail in this thesis.

Concerning the organization, this thesis is a literature review project of apocalyptic themes in Japanese popular culture, especially anime. By using my research questions, I found and read relevant scholarly articles and made an annotated bibliography for each of my primary sources. The main body of my thesis consists of these articles in alphabetical order along with their summaries of main topics, followed by my critical comments. I used these literature reviews to form my analysis and conclusion to answer the research questions I had at the beginning of my inquiry. I will discuss and analyze the major findings of my study following the annotated bibliography for the conclusion of my research. In the appendix of this thesis, I have provided a glossary of key technical terms.

Akimoto, Daisuke. "Learning Peace and Coexistence with Nature through Animation." *Ritsumeikan Journal of Asia Pacific Studies* 33 (2014): 54-64. *Share Your World*. Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, 2014. Web. 16 Feb. 2017. <http://www.apu.ac.jp/rcaps/uploads/fckeditor/publications/journal/RJAPS33_6_Akimoto.pdf>.

Nausicaä deals with social and global problems such as nuclear weapons, nuclear war, and environmental destruction in a beautiful, artistic way. The fictionalized world includes poisonous gas released in the "Toxic Jungle," which was caused by the Seven Days of Fire. The Toxic Jungle is related to a 'nuclear winter' which is environmental devastation making it difficult for humans to survive, caused by nuclear war. The Seven Days of Fire in the film is a connection to a realistic nuclear war.

Minato Kawamura compared the wind which makes the air breathable in the Valley to the water "that is needed to cool a nuclear reactor in order to prevent a meltdown and an accident from happening." This points to director Miyazaki being anti-nuclear power as well as anti-nuclear weapons. After the events of Fukushima, this turned out to be correct as Miyazaki stated that he wanted his films to be created with electricity produced by non-nuclear sources.

Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind is recommended by the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) for its contribution in spreading the message for ecological peace. In the film, Nausicaä uses non-violent alternatives to problems to save her people and reconnect with nature and the toxic jungle. For example, at the end of the film, Nausicaä gets trampled helping a baby *Ohmu* which calms the stampeding horde. "*Nausicaä* can be regarded as a conflict mediator for conflict resolution through peaceful, non-violent and self-sacrifice methods" (Akimoto, 2014).

The film *Nausicaä* has a primary focus on choosing love and non-violence over hatred and revenge. During the *Ohmu*'s final stampede at the end of the film, their rush is fueled by anger and their eyes turn red as they search for their lost baby. The red of the eyes represent the violence and hatred. Once the *Ohmu* realize Nausicaä was helping their baby, not kidnapping or harming it, they calm down and their eyes turn blue as they raise the savior up with their golden tentacles. The blue of their eyes represents peace and love and level-headed thinking as compared the hatred and anger displayed by the red eyes.

Critical Comments:

Many modern Japanese audiences realized that a real-world incident, such as the Chernobyl and Fukushima nuclear disasters, has followed on the pattern seen in the "Toxic Jungle." Though Miyazaki never specifically made the connection to nuclear war and his film, the "Japanese people's reception of the film has shifted according to the change of the social context" (Akimoto, 2014). This is in parallel with how airplane crashes were viewed differently in the United States after the events of 9/11.

It can be argued that the film has connections to nuclear war and nuclear weapon with the *Seven Days of Fire* and the *Toxic Jungle*. Given Director Miyazaki's anti-war/nuclear stance, it is safe to say that these connections are purposeful and intentional. The film has strong implications for maintaining ecological peace and this peace is realized not through the use or creation of nuclear weapons, reactors, or facilities. If nuclear technology is misused or accidentally mishandled, it could be the beginning of an actual

apocalyptic situation and this message is what the film is trying to warn the audience about.

Though *Nausicaä* has themes that can be connected to nuclear bombings and radiation, director Miyazaki was specifically inspired by the “pollution with mercury of Minamata Bay” (Cavallaro, 2006: 45-57). The poisonous fish were directly represented by the poisonous plants presented in the series. Thus, this apocalyptic work also wants to convey a sense of warning to the audience in concern to environmentalism. Environmentalism is relevant within apocalyptic themes as mistreating the environment could be a harbinger or even expedite the process of the end of times.

As with many teachings of Christianity and Buddhism, the movie preaches that hatred is never overcome by hatred. *Nausicaä* uses non-violence and self-sacrifice as a peaceful method for conflict resolution and the film emphasizes the significance of love rather than hatred and revenge. As discussed in the previous annotated article, the Buddhist doctrine of *mappo* is involved here, which revolves around the notion of a fallen world saved by a religious figure. Again, *Nausicaä* is viewed as a messiah-like individual which is characterized by her compassion and non-violent means of solving problematic situations.

Barkman, Adam. "Anime, Manga, and Christianity: A Comprehensive Analysis." *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 9.27 (2010): 25-45. *Humanities Source*. Web. 02 Mar. 2017.

Beyond 150 years ago, the Japanese were not as eager as they are now to accept foreign concepts and beliefs. There is a strong base of Shintoism and Buddhism along with

Confucian beliefs in Japan but recently, other religions have become influential such as Christianity from the West. In *Neon Genesis*, Christianity themes are constantly present but the producer, Kazuya Tsurumaki said that Christianity was used due to it being foreign and therefore mysterious to Japanese audiences. Thus, the attacks on humanity from the angels in *EVA* can be interpreted as “an allegory of the alien, hostile religion, Christianity’s impact on Japan” (Barkman pg.32).

The biblical story of the flood appears in several anime series including *Spriggan* where the flood was caused by an alien spaceship, the ark, which crashed into Earth. This concept of complete, worldwide destruction was introduced to the Japanese through the Christian west. Thus, when the atomic bombs were dropped on Japan by the west, it is not surprising that many Japanese viewed these events “in apocalyptic terms” (Barkman pg.34). Anime artists are more concerned with symbols than syllogisms, thus they use Christianity which is a “jungle of symbols” rather than other foreign religions which delve less into symbolism (Barkman pg.37).

Shinto, Buddhism, and Taoism all claim that “gender and sex aren’t intrinsically stable concepts, but are as illusionary and changing as everything else” (Barkamn pg. 34). Thus, there is little surprise to find many presentations of gender and sex in anime, even in Christian forms such as nuns or priests. The Japanese people are more open to the idea of homosexuality or transgender than a conservative Catholic would be so it’s not to offend Christians that these themes are present in anime but rather it is just normal that these themes are present in the first place.

Barkman states that, “we can say that the modern Japanese are generally pluralistic in regard to religion,” thus religiously pluralistic (Barkman pg.27). The pluralist denies an Ultimate Reality as there is no certainty and instead draw from multiple doctrines to form their own ideas. Because of this denial, it is no surprise that anime artists encode “their religious anime, particularly their anime pertaining to Christianity, with general pluralistic understanding” (Barkman pg.27).

Critical Comments:

The first concept to discuss is the idea of Japanese pluralism “in regard to religion” (Barkman pg.27). Pluralism is relevant in Japan due to its multiple sources of religion, philosophy, and general understanding of the world. With ties to shamanism which Shinto originated from, the Japan people have connections to Shinto, Buddhism, Taoism, Confucianism, Protestantism and Catholicism. All these sources come together to assist the Japan people to form their notions about ideas such as the apocalypse. A common expression in Japan is, “Japanese are born Shinto, marry Christian, and die Buddhist.” This phrase originates from the Japanese ceremonial practices of celebrating the birth of a baby at a Shinto shrine, marrying in the Christian manner (though many still marry in Shinto or mixed styles), and having Buddhist-style funerals. This is an example of how the Japan adapted many customs and practices from different religions and cultures throughout Japanese history from foreign influences to make them unique to Japan.

A pluralist denies concrete truths or doctrines about the “Ultimate Reality” but rather, is more focused on “perceived personal salvation or transformation” (Barkman pg.27). In other words, instead of focusing on a definite outcome for the end of times,

they concentrate on personally improving, in whichever type of manner they personally believe is correct, in preparation for their own end. They view themselves as open-minded and see defenders of religious doctrines as intolerant.

This idea of reaching their own personal salvation or transformation is a very important concept with thinking about Japanese anime. More often than not, the protagonist of a series must have to change themselves in some way to overcome an overwhelming obstacle in their way. By not remaining stagnant and evolving themselves, they are able to overcome their situation and save the day in their own right. Just as the protagonist must evolve to overcome, so does Japan evolve and adapt to face whatever challenges that may face them.

There are also many connections to the realistic challenges Japan faces and the ones shown in anime and *manga*. For example, as previously discussed, the biblical telling of the flood has found its way into several popular anime series, including *Spriggan*. This can be connected to the threat from tsunamis and flooding in the coastal areas of Japan, as put simply, most of the country as it is a large island. These representations of classic stories in Japanese anime allows contemporary Japanese people to view them through a new perspective, one that speaks to them and is relevant to their lives.

Broderick, Michael. "Anime's Apocalypse: Neon Genesis Evangelion as Millennial Mecha." *Australian National University*. Murdoch University, Mar. 2002. Web. 26 Aug. 2016. <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue7/broderick_review.html>.

Broderick begins his article with stating that the interest of *Evangelion* is how the program successfully melded the sensibilities of postwar, modern Japan with the post-

apocalyptic science fiction future. It is important to remember the people of this world have already seen the near end of the world and the complete destruction of the original Tokyo. Shinji is a messianic hero who is reluctant about his role and is pulled between his “preordained destiny and withdrawn self-interest” (Broderick, 2002).

The series takes place between the penultimate and ultimate battles that decide humanity’s final outcome and embraces the ambivalent nature of apocalypse, that is, the themes of destruction and chaos compared to those of rebirth and renewal. The series depicts destruction and chaos while at its conclusion, you see another “beginning” and literal rebirth of an individual into a “world made new” (Broderick, 2002).

The series draws apocalyptic references directly from Persian, Jewish, Christian, and Gnostic sacred writings, and doesn’t try to hide these references. The secret organization behind the creation of NERV and the Evas is SEELE, from the German, “soul.” They base their actions from information obtained from the Dead Sea Scrolls. The first angel, is a crucified angel named Adam, also the first human in Christian thought. The crucified angel even is pierced by a spear just like Jesus was on the cross. The 7-eyed symbol of SEELE is taken from Jewish deity, Yahweh described in the Torah as having 7 eyes. The Angels see humanity as the offspring of Lilith, first wife of Adam, thus the offspring of demons. In summary, this is Anno’s new myth of origin, “complete with its own deluge, Armageddon, apocalypse, and transcendence” (Broderick, 2002).

Evangelion envisions the radical and evolutionary transformations of Japanese society over the past two generations since the end of the war. Eva sets a “vision of a

society radically transformed from one of chaotic and imminent demise towards the liberation from oppression of an elect into a new realm of perpetual peace and harmony.”

Critical Comments:

This article provides deeper insight into the complexity of *Neon Genesis Evangelion* and the apocalyptic themes that accompany it. The series draws upon the world's religions, not only Shinto and Buddhism, making the apocalypse a universal destruction for humanity, regardless if all we see is Tokyo-3 in Japan.

The article also points out that the universal apocalypse of the assault on Earth is not the only battle occurring. Shinji is fighting his own battle of his inner thoughts and doubts alongside the battles he fights against the Angels. The hero never wanted to be the boy to save the world, nor does he believe he can do it in the first place. His father abandoning him in his earlier years has caused him to doubt any reason for his existence, seeing himself as an unnecessary person.

Shinji is one of my favorite heroes because of this reason. He doubts himself more than the normal person but he moves forward. Maybe timidly at times, but he keeps moving, keeps fighting, and never gives up while inspiring those around him. This contrasts with Nausicaä who always seems sure of her beliefs and place in the world, understanding that there are greater forces at play in the environment. Shinji is not the typical hero that an audience would have come to expect. He is unsure of his place in the world and causes problems just for being who he is. This reflects the era that the work was created, after the economic bubble burst in Japan. Just as Shinji was unsure of

himself, so too was Japan unsure of their place in the world after their economy, over a decade of prosperity, suddenly reduced dramatically.

After the “apocalyptic” atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Japan industrialized quickly alongside the growth of its “occupation-enforced democracy”. This produced *shin jin rui* (Japan’s Gen-X) and *otaku* cultures, both of which are represented by Evangelion. Shinji represents the nerdy, withdrawn *otaku* while the adults putting pressure on him are representative of *shin jin rui*.

In total, Evangelion is a complex apocalyptic story which includes religious revelations from across the globe, the destruction of modern Japan giving rise to something more, Japanese values such as never giving up, and representations of contemporary Japanese culture and generations.

Broderick, Michael. "Hybrid Apocalypse, *Masse* or *Mappo*." *Animation Studies Online Journal*. Animation Studies Online Journal, 12 July 2009. Web. 25 Feb. 2017. <<https://journal.animationstudies.org/michael-broderick-superflat-eschatology/>>.

Religious thought in post-war Japan remains a hybrid of Shintoism, Confucianism, and Buddhism with a small percentage of Christianity influencing the educated elite. Around 70-80 percent of Japanese do not consider themselves particularly religious yet many of their notions about the end of the world are influenced by Revelation.

Many observers of anime have noted the presence of the Buddhist doctrine of *mappo*, which involves “the coming of age of degeneration of the Buddha’s Law,” in Japanese anime (Broderick, 2009). However, modern thinking is not as straightforward as this doctrine and Japan’s notions of the apocalypse is much more extensive and complex.

Much of Japanese postwar new religions and beliefs “present the old dreams of Japan as the new visions of the coming social and political order” (Kitagawa 1990).

Another arcane institution, *masse*, which “describes the complete end of the world, and the beginning of an entirely new one” has an influence on Japanese anime (Shapiro 2002). Where the West sees the apocalypse as the continuation or salvation of a select few, the Japanese sees the closure of a narrative and the beginning of a new one. In addition to this, “*masse* complements the concept of *mono no aware*, in that it embodies a sense of sorrow for the loss and transience of all things” (Broderick, 2009).

Two anime productions, *Spriggan* and *Appleseed*, reject their “messianic intervention of deliver-heroes”, thus referencing *masse* and *mappo* while ultimately rejecting these doctrines (Broderick, 2009). Humanity is saved in these productions by rejecting false gods or accepting “advanced transhumanist ideals that complement and compensate for human flaws.” This salvation makes these productions unique for their use of traditional Japanese doctrines while blazing a path for new transcended thought in the modern era.

Critical Comments:

The Japanese people have a complex view of the apocalypse. Many Japanese are not particularly religious and their thoughts about the end of the world are influenced by Buddhist, Shinto, Confucius, and Christian philosophies. In many works, the influential Buddhist doctrine of *mappo* is a heavy influence while *masse* is another philosophy used in anime.

Mappo talks about the messianic salvation during a dark age during the end of days while *masse* involves the complete destruction of the world to clear a path for a new one. Broderick writes about two anime productions, *Spriggan* and *Appleseed*, that can masterfully go beyond these doctrines in their storytelling of the apocalypse.

Spriggan warns against *mappo* with the use of an anti-Christ figure that tempts the characters with a false path to salvation. The main villain wants to eradicate humans and replace them with his own creation, referencing *masse*. However, an unknowing messiah saves the day, preventing an ecological disaster. *Spriggan* has the threat of *masse* while warning against *mappo*, only to have the end of the world prevented by a *mappo* teaching scenario with a messianic figure.

Appleseed puts a twist on the aesthetic of *masse*. Humans create cyborgs called bioroids to protect themselves in the future. However, these bioroids gain consciousness, attaining “enlightenment” by reaching a higher realm of existence on par with humans. These bioroids continue as humanity is extinguished. This ties *masse* together with western ideas of the apocalypse of continuation. In *Appleseed*, the world is not demolished but humanity is, with consciousness living on through the bioroids. As Japanese artists continue to use the traditional Buddhist doctrine of *mappo and masse*, they also evolve these ideas and story plots in order to present a brand new, evolving message to their audiences.

Fuller Frank. "*The Deep Influence of the A-bomb on Anime and Manga.*" *The Conversation*. The Conversation US, Inc., 6 Aug. 2015. Web. 25 Feb. 2017. <<http://theconversation.com/the-deep-influence-of-the-a-bomb-on-anime-and-manga-45275>>.

The atomic bombing, as well as the firebombing of Tokyo, were harrowing for the Japanese people and has remained at "the forefront of their conscience" (Fuller, 2015). Osamu Tezuka witnessed the devastation of the bombings towards the end of World War II firsthand and this scene became a small obsession for him. Tezuka and his successors write about the use of technology and its balance between responsible use and misuse. *Astro Boy* is an example of this tension when Atom's maker rejects his creation when he realizes technology cannot replace his lost son.

Hayao Miyazaki also was present for American air raids when he was a child and his work often "refers to the abuse of technology, and contains pleas for human restraint." An example being humanity's misuse of nuclear technology in *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* which results in the Toxic Jungle and mutated insects.

After the war, Japan's economy boomed with technology in the forefront but the Japanese people still remembered how technology had hurt them in the past. As Fuller states, "technology's capacity for helping mankind is only equaled by its capacity to destroy it" (Fuller, 2015).

The themes of death and rebirth are a reoccurring in Tezuka's works and they symbolize Japan during and after the war. In the *Phoenix*, the mythical bird is immortal through death and birth from its ashes, just as Japan was reborn after the devastation of the bombing. Another example of this rebirth is from *Space Cruiser Yamato* when the ship

is rebuilt as a spaceship, used to save Earth. Japan was able to reinvent itself and become an economic powerhouse with the wisdom to learn from mankind's mistakes and avoid making them again as they moved forward into the future.

Critical Comments:

This article discusses the influence the atomic bombings along with the bombings of Tokyo had on the Japanese public and anime productions. Nearly seven decades after the war, the themes of this devastation continue in anime today. First hand witnesses of the bombings, Osamu Tezuka and Hayao Miyazaki are innovators in anime and include the devastation in their works as well as the rebuilding themes they witnessed during Japan's economic bounce back in the decades after the war.

Tezuka writes about humanity's misuse of technology, a connection to the use of atomic bomb during the war. Much of Japan's production and exports include technology but the Japanese public still understands the limit that technology brings with it. Of course, this technology helps humanity connect with one another and progress as a species but it also holds the potential to tear down the social fabric of our world or to a more extreme point, the complete annihilation of the world. Tezuka uses his works such as *Astro Boy* to represent this tension from the use of technology.

"Osamu Tezuka believed that the atomic bomb acted as the epitome of man's inherent capacity for destruction" (Fuller, 2015). He has seen firsthand how destructive humans can be but he still believes that humanity is inherently good. His work on *Phoenix* is an excellent example of his beliefs about death, rebirth, and Japan's renewal.

The phoenix itself represents Japan's ability to bounce back from any natural, economic, or wartime disaster. Though Japan itself is not immortal like the phoenix, it continues and humanity is preserved. The *Phoenix* also includes the idea "that mankind must learn from its mistakes and avoid repeating history" (Fuller, 2015). So even through human's misuse of technology, humanity can progress forward, both physically and emotionally, and learn from itself in order to not fall into a cycle of destruction.

Gibson, Alicia. " Out of Death, an Atomic Consecration to Life: *Astro Boy* and Hiroshima's Long Shadow." *Mechademia* 8 (2013): 313-20. *Art Full Text [H.W. Wilson]*. Web. 19 Feb. 2017.
<<http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=e30c5ba4-6fc0-41db-b54f-4b86397a7155%40sessionmgr4008&vid=1&hid=4208>>.

Astro Boy (Tetsuwan Atomu) was originally printed in 1951 but due to its tremendous popularity in Japan and the United States was broadcasted in to 60s, 80s, and again in 2003. The main character, Atom, is a robot boy powered by nuclear energy. "Atom, with his peaceful use of atomic power, embodies the latent utopian possibilities of the atomic age – nuclear power used to save rather than destroy" (Gibson, 2013). Atom has a darker side, with the potential to cause great destruction with his largely unknown powers.

Atom acts immature and like a human boy, stumbling upon his abilities rather than being previously known. He represents humanity here, learning to use his nuclear power for beneficial purposes rather than destruction. Atom has many comedic moments where his lack of knowledge about his own strengths leads to him breaking objects while not

under supervision. This comedy carries with it a message to humanity: “we must learn to control the atomic power we have awakened” (Gibson, 2013). This type of science fiction gives audiences enough of a distraction to comprehend historical events such as the atomic bomb without flinching.

The robot Atom is originally created by a grieving Dr. Tenma in an attempt to replicate his dead child whom he lost in a violent accident. However, Atom is a nuclear-powered robot without the ability to grow older or fully replace the lost child of Dr. Tenma. In its postwar historical context, the fantasy of bringing the dead to life enacted in *Astro Boy* exists in contradiction to the grief left behind by the atomic bombs in Hiroshima and Nagasaki: reanimation of the dead exists only in dreams.

Astro Boy encourages the displacement and repression of Japan’s atomic wartime experiences in utopian fantasy, nevertheless, it holds a watchful eye on the destruction that caused the repression to be needed in the first place. This is the relationship between the death of Dr. Tenma’s son and Atom’s saving powers and the destruction of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and the nuclear power plants built in Japan only a decade after the bombings.

Critical Comments:

Astro Boy deals with post-traumatic Japan after a devastating period of war and loss. Printed less than a decade after the end of World War II, during the period of U.S. occupation of Japan, *Tetsuwan Atomu* reminded Japanese audiences of a quasi-apocalyptic event “the day Hiroshima Disappeared,” stated by Dr. Shuntaro Hida. It

presented the idea of nuclear power in a way that was neither threatening or traumatic while still showcasing the immense power it contained.

This presentation of nuclear power is a main reason for *Tetsuwan Atomu's* widespread popularity. Japanese audiences were able to process what had happened to their country by putting the situation in a different context. By seeing the duality of nuclear power, the Japanese people did not become crippled by a fear of nuclear power but were rather empowered by a curiosity of the energy. However, many Japanese understandably still remained wary of nuclear energy and were anti-nuclear power plants such as the *Fukushima* plant.

Astro Boy also deals with a common theme of death and renewal in its own unique method. The death of Dr. Tenma's original human child, Tobio, in a violent accident is a representation of the atomic bomb droppings and the negative aspect of nuclear power. While the creation of Atom in the father/creator's grief is a symbol of Japan's attempt to move forward and harness the beneficial portion of nuclear power. The robot Atom is a replication of Tobia but has incredible power with very little knowledge. This, along with the inability to grow older, is seen as a curse rather than a blessing. This is similar to the Buddhist belief of reincarnation but adds its own cursed twist in the birth of a robotic, nuclear mega-weapon, with the unprepared mental capacity of a male child.

Hairston, Marc. "The Reluctant Messiah: Miyazaki Hayao's *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*." Ed. Toni Johnson-Woods. *Manga: An Anthology of Global and Cultural Perspectives*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2014. 173-83. Print.

Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind debuted in February 1982 and ran until 1993.

The story is set in a post-apocalyptic world, a thousand years "after the 'Seven Days of Fire,' and event when giant manmade cyborgs called God-Warriors destroyed the technological world as punishment for humans polluting and destroying nature" (Hairston, 2014). In the aftermath, the ecosystem became a dense forest that produces highly toxic gasses and inhabited by giant mutated insects, called *Ohmu*. The remaining population of humans are forced to live on the edges of the forest where the air is still breathable, thanks to the sea winds.

Nausicaä, the princess of the valley, is an active explorer involved in her world and curious about the nature and purpose of the poisonous forest. She discovers that the trees absorb the poison from the soil and filters them, meaning the poisonous forest is not the enemy of humanity, but rather the ultimate salvation of the planet, as it slowly returns the Earth to its natural state. *Nausicaä* is recommended by the World Wildlife Foundation for its pro-environmental messages and is considered to have a large influence in audience's beliefs about the environment condition and need to preserve the Earth for later generations (Kano, 2006).

Nausicaä "gives a literal 'sermon on the mount' to the tens of thousands of refugees there" (Hairston, 2014). She urges them to choose love over hatred, peace over war. The Ohmu raise a stampede on Nausicaä's people in an attempt to retrieve a lost youngling. Nausicaä returns the baby Ohmu but is trampled in the Ohmu's rage.

Nevertheless, before they reach the remaining people, their rage calms and they lift Nausicaä up “on their golden tentacles and miraculously heal her injuries” (Hairston, 2014). Nausicaä is identified as a peacemaker and a savior, and starts the attempt to stop the war and reconcile humanity with nature. This establishes her role as a messiah figure similar to the doctrine of *mappo*.

Nausicaä is considered a reluctant messiah because this “role of messiah is not one of her own choosing, but one that events force upon her” (Hairston, 2014). Nausicaä did not actively seek out her savior role but rather, a series of problems and barriers were presented before her and every time, she managed to solve them non-violently. At the same time, she “converts... every major player in her world... to her understanding, ultimately redeeming most of them” (Hairston, 2014). As such, Nausicaä enters her messianic role unknowingly but with the grace of a princess and gains a following of “disciples.”

Critical Comments:

Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind is related to the apocalypse, humanity’s use of technology, and environmentalism. As with many Japanese anime, *Nausicaä* has themes of renewal and rebirth in its apocalypse. Japan has faced with many calamities in its history, including earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, typhoons, wars, and the atomic bombings. As such, the Japanese view the apocalypse not as the finality of humanity but rather the beginning of a new era.

During the ending of *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, Nausicaä is trampled during the Ohmu’s blind rage. She is held up on a golden field and magically healed of her

mortal injuries which suggests an upcoming era of peace. Nausicaä was able to save humanity and bridge the gap to connect with nature once again. With time and healing, the world would return to its previous, pre-apocalyptic state. Due to Japan's history of calamities, they understand that even when things are on the brink, through time and effort, things would return to a relative normal state. Nausicaä's renewal of the Ohmu marks her as a messiah figure, which has a connection to the Buddhist aesthetic of *mappo* which revolves around the notion of a fallen world saved by a religious figure. Nevertheless, her resurrection seems to be more influenced by the Christian faith, making a connection with the belief of Jesus as a Messiah risen from the dead. This is another example of religious pluralism in Japan as director, Miyazaki, drew from several religions for his interpretation of a messianic figure.

Another theme *Nausicaä* addresses is human's use of technology. Technology is a dual-facet in anime, often being the cause of society's downfall but also often being the foundation of humanity's salvation, such as within the mecha genre. In this work, technology is their downfall as its misuse caused the God-Warriors to turn on humanity. However, unlike the mecha genre, in *Nausicaä*, humanity's salvation is through spiritually instead of technology. This involves the Buddhist doctrine of *mappo*, which revolves around the notion of a fallen world saved by a religious figure. This aesthetic is widespread throughout Japan and speaks of how in a dark age, a new "messiah" will appear to lead the world back to the light.

Finally, the last theme I will discuss is environmentalism. *Nausicaä* goes to great lengths to describe that the apocalyptic future the story is set in is due to the choices of

humanity in the past. The harsh environment with man eating insects and poisonous gas is a result of misuse of technology in the past. This is a connector to the atomic bombs' devastating effects. The initial explosion and corresponding radiation annihilates the environment and provides a harsh setting for years to come.

Ito, Kinko. "A History of *Manga* in the Context of Japanese Culture and Society." *The Journal of Popular Culture*. 3rd ed. Vol. 38. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005. 456-75. Print.

Ito begins by stating that the Japanese have a stereotype for being over serious but she insists that they are a humorous and witty people once they bring down their formal façade. *Manga* has been used since ancient times, with its oldest comic art coming from the planks of a temple dating to 670 CE. As printing, infrastructure, and distribution improved in modern Japan, *manga* truly became a medium of the masses.

After World War II, the people were hungry, poor, dissatisfied with the government politics, and were fearful and uncertain of their future. *Manga* boomed during this time as the people were desperate for entertainment and humor. *Manga* was affordable and with the newly emerging civil society after unconditional surrender, and the seven year US occupation, there was no lack of topics for satire. Though the Allied Powers censored *manga* against General MacArthur, Japanese *manga*/political artists had more freedom than before.

In the late 1940s, early 1950s, *manga* targeting children started to become more popular. Osamu Tezuka began his rise to popularity during this period. In 1956, the Japanese government announced that the country was no longer in a postwar period and

Japan's economy and industry began to boom. "Star of the Giants" and "Jo of Tomorrow" were immensely popular (Ito, 2005). They taught the morals of always doing your utmost best and perseverance. These morals were accepted into a society that had strove to crawl out of their postwar depression.

Critical Comments:

This is a very useful article when it comes to understanding the background of Japanese society as *manga* is produced and consumed.

The article does show that *manga* has always mirrored the movement of Japanese culture and society, either glorifying it or making it into satire. Even in the middle ages, there are *manga* scrolls from the 1100s that parody the decadent lifestyle of the Japanese upper class of the period. With a medium that has always been based on the times of the day, it is no wonder that modern *manga* has so many apocalyptic themes. If an event like the women winning a gold medal in volleyball is enough to give the entire *manga* industry a stimulus, then a dramatizing event like atomic bombs destroying lives, cities, and morale would obviously be covered in the medium.

It's also interesting to note that the US occupation of Japan bolstered the *manga* industry instead of stifling it. The US forced democracy included freedom of speech and even though they censored *manga* that was against General MacArthur, who oversaw the seven-year occupation, *manga* writers and artists had a wider range of topics to write about. The Japanese military controlled the medium before and during the war. Comics that depicted Japanese workers improving their personal work and industry had a rise during this period. There was too much control on thought during this time so when the

US occupied the nation, the artists didn't mind them because it meant they had more artistic freedom.

Osamu Tezuka became popular during this postwar era. While he created *manga* which was targeted for children, he also created works with more mature, sophisticated themes such as the *Phoenix*. He attempted to create his legendary phoenix during the 1950s but it wasn't until 1967 that he was comfortable with publishing *Dawn*. This was because the series was his life work, continued until his death in 1989, and he desired perfection from it. A Phoenix is a beautiful representation of Japan. A pacifist creature, it dies in a surge of flames, and from its ashes, it is reborn, just as Japan was torn down by the war and bombings, they emerged strong and new, ready to face the world. This is why Japan follows a dualistic representation of apocalypse, "chaos and destruction verse rebirth and renewal" (Ito, 2005). The Japanese understand that things end for a reason but this end is only the beginning of a new era.

Napier, Susan J. "Panic Sites: The Japanese Imagination of Disaster from Godzilla to Akira". *Journal of Japanese Studies* 19.2 (1993): 327–351. Web.

Napier writes on how science fiction is a vehicle that successfully treats the complexity of Japan's story. Series like *Godzilla* and *Akira* all center around a "vision of disaster, of social, material, and sometimes spiritual collapse" (Napier, 1993). This is the "darker side of Japanese society" but is worth paying attention to.

Much of science fiction writes about a future where advanced technology and military success has only brought upon wars, famines, and plagues. After the War,

Japanese fiction continued this dystopian trend with apocalypse touches. A study of *Akira* compared to *Nippon Chinbotsu*, translated as “Japan Sinks,” or *Godzilla* can show a trend in the ideology of the work. There is a change in terms of how the disaster is presented and the attitudes within the films that deal with disaster. In earlier works, there is a negative portrayal of disaster while in *Akira*, it is a “virtual celebration” (Napier, 1993). On dealing with Japan’s history, Napier writes that *Godzilla* tries to rewrite it, *Nippon* tries to enshrine it, and *Akira* attempts to successfully erase it.

Both *Godzilla* and *Akira* present the theme of the dangers of science, while *Godzilla* gives it a nationalistic twist; showing that American technology and atomic usage created *Godzilla*. This allows the Japanese people to reimagine their tragic wartime experiences.

Nippon Chinbotsu gained widespread domestic success but never caught hold in the West. There is little sense of excitement in the film but rather a tone of mourning for the loss of Japan which didn’t help garner Western viewership.

Akira opens in Neo Tokyo, decades after “WWIII”. Tetsuo, the man-boy with telekinesis powers, undergoes a metamorphosis which speaks to the rise of a new generation that is only beginning to exercise its power. Eventually, the generation will transform and be immensely powerful, just as Tetsuo transforms into what may be a new universe while destroying much of Neo Tokyo. Napier points that the motorcycle chases and “endless mutations” hint that the characters are trying to escape the past, or at the very least, transcend it.

Critical Comments:

All these apocalypse movies have different perspectives on the apocalypse. Starting in a chronological order, in *Godzilla*, Tokyo is damaged but can be repaired; *Nippon Chinbotsu* has Japan (and Tokyo with it) completely submerged into the ocean but gives a positive view of enshrining the memory of Japan; meanwhile, *Akira* has Tokyo as an empty crater, decades gone from war with no interest of getting it back.

These all reflect the times the series were created. In *Godzilla*, the apocalyptic tones are pretty relevant and there's no hiding the connection between the threat and nuclear weapons. Japan at this time was still dealing with the economic and social upheavals of postwar life and it was important to them to rebuild their damaged nation. As we move closer to the present, in *Akira*, the Japanese seem to want to move away from their damaged past but realize that they're basically in the same situation regardless (Tokyo being destroyed yet Neo Tokyo still be apocalyptic/dystopian).

Nippon Chinbotsu was written in a time where they remembered the struggle of the war and economic troubles following it. But they were out of those times, thus why *Nippon* "enshrines" the memory of Japan, wanting to never forget what happened to them and explain why they are what they are today. This adds beauty to this series apocalypse and is related to *mono no aware* (seeing positive in the destruction with sadness and compassion) which I have touched upon before my discussion of Napier's apocalypse chapter from *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle*.

So even though Japanese science fiction often draws upon the apocalypse genre, it's not always the same reason, nor for the same purpose. This is something that the article has really opened my eyes to. Not every apocalypse series in Japan is written about

the dropping of the atomic bombs but they may draw from the historical reference because it is so engrained into Japan's culture. Additionally, the morals each series is trying to communicate may be different and it could depend on the time it was written. *Godzilla* draws upon the atomic bombs because it was so recent in their history while *Nippon Chinbotsu* and *Akira* has decades of additional Japanese science fiction to use as a foundation to tell their own story.

Napier, Susan J. "Waiting for the End of the World: Apocalyptic Identity." *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation*. New York City: Algrave MacMillan, 2005. N. pag. Print.

The apocalyptic mode, often combined with the elegiac or the festival, is a both a major theme in anime and is deeply ingrained within the contemporary Japanese national identity. Europe and Americas both draw from the bible for the apocalypse. We see the final battle between good and evil before evil is vanquished and the good ascend to a "heaven." The Japanese, through Shintoism or Buddhism, do not have this traditional view so they have more leeway with how they envision the end.

Apocalypse is most commonly a reference to something on the order of global destruction but its original meaning is closer to, "revelation" or "uncovering" as of secrets or the fundamental nature of things. Much of the tension in apocalyptic anime is not from waiting for the end of the world but rather the revelation of how and why the world should end.

The Buddhist doctrine of *mappo* revolves around the notion of the end of days being saved by a religious figure, additionally suggesting a utopian aspect, not unlike the messianic, heavenly in European's Revelation.

In contemporary Japan, the most common and obvious catalyst of apocalyptic thought is the dropping of the atomic bombs. It's not surprising then that the "popular culture iconography of apocalypse is suffused with images of catastrophic explosions, world-threatening monstrosities, and social chaos" (Napier, 2005). Most works, such as *Akira* and *Nausicaä* will include elements of criticism of the societies they represent and present warnings as to why their societies should be encountering this fate. Examples of such being misuse of technology that sends Nausicaä's world into an environmental disaster.

In many ways, *Evangelion* has the harshest critique of modern Japanese society. "In this world, history is seen as a mysterious and uncontrollable outside force, as in the Second Impact, hinting at technological and postindustrial breakdown, or else in clearly personal terms as familial dysfunction" (Napier, 2005). The more you find out about this world, the more disappointed you may become, even sickened. Napier ends the chapter by saying that in the postwar world in which the dream of consumerism is able to conceal a corrosive emptiness less and less. Thus, the apocalyptic mode may be the only sure means of escape from this unhealthy thinking.

Critical Comments:

Susan Napier goes into depth about the history of the apocalypse in Japanese society. The very idea is intrinsically different than how Americans or Europeans see this

aspect. Americans generally see two sides; good versus evil and good always prevails. In Japan, these story lines are more complicated which adds to their story telling. Just because we are watching one side of a fight, it doesn't make them automatically the "good guys." In *Nausicaä*, humans' situation is a product of their own doing, causing the environment to become poisonous and deadly as it tries to dispel humans from itself. This goes along with what Napier was saying about apocalypse having two meanings. Americans see it as the end of something, usually the world. The Japanese view it more critically, asking what happened before to cause the situation they are watching.

Buddhism's *mappo* doesn't talk about a messiah but rather just a religious figure that brings light in the darkness of the "end of the law." This helps me understand some of the main characters in these apocalyptic settings. While *Nausicaä* is presented as a human with almost no fault, a pure form, others such as Akira or Shinji from *Eva* are less so. Shinji isn't perfect, he is scared, he is young, and he is weak. But he persists in the face of adversity and works hard, never giving up, an important aspect Japanese society tries to instill in its youth. Shinji won't save humanity from its fate and lead them to "heaven", but he will fight to his last breathe to protect those he cares about.

Briefly, another important aspect is that the Japanese draw upon the atomic bombs for their apocalyptic themes but they usually do not portray this so obviously in their other media. In *Evangelion*, the Second Impact, was an onslaught on Earth from the Angels that humanity barely survived. But the Second Impact draws from the second dropping of the atomic bomb, of which Japan wasn't sure it was going to survive. In *Nausicaä* and *Akira*, different misuses of technology lead them into their own apocalyptic

situations, but this misuse of technology can be a draw upon the misuse of atomic power against other humans.

Mono no aware is discussed briefly in the chapter and is the concept of seeing the beauty in the face of destruction, with feelings of sadness and compassion. For example, in *Japan Sinks*, after the sinking of the nation, the audience is treated to an elevated, elongated shot of the blue ocean. Sure, all of Japan was destroyed, but look at the beauty that replaced it. It's a way to calm the audience down from what has just transpired, and could be connected to postwar Japan. After the war, Japan experienced economic and cultural growth. So just as their destruction was followed by a time of peace and beauty, so too does the works of art they produce.

Napier, Susan J. "World War II as trauma, memory and fantasy in Japanese animation." *Japan Focus* (2005). Web.

This article discusses mainly discusses the *Space Battleship Yamato (Uchu Senkan Yamato)*, a film and television series from the 1970s and to a lesser point, *Silent Service* from the 90s. *Yamato* is a product of its time, meaning that Japan was one generation beyond the war where technology and economic success seemed to promise a bright future but at the cost of some basic Japanese traditions regarding community, sacrifice, and respect for the past. The series is "predicated on coming to terms with" the sinking of the *Yamato* during the battle of Okinawa (Napier, 2005). In the series, Earth is under attack and to combat this, the Japanese government raises the *Yamato* from its watery

grave. Additionally, the series shows a flashback of the Yamato setting sail in 1945, with the hope of deterring the American forces before being sunk.

Space Cruiser Yamato fights unassisted, a hail to when the real Yamato set sail with 10 ships and no air protection. In the series, the Yamato miraculously avoids destruction time and time again as its crew drives straight into the danger in inescapable situations. The Yamato and its crew does not shy away from danger but rather face it head on. The word, "Yamato" is an ancient name for Japan and warriors used to be encouraged to be Yamato-like.

The theme of love for all humankind is constantly evoked in the *Yamato* series. There is also a theme of universalization in which the Earth is now one nation in an effort to protect each other and even alien planets when possible. Another point to mention is that the Yamato is always reactive, not proactive. They respond to a threat on Earth and save it, unlike Star Trek, where the crew actively searches out new worlds and adventure.

Silent Service also has the captain put Yamato on the hull of his vessel but a few key differences are that there is no universalism even on Earth. Americans are made to look foolish, using little thought and the crew of the Yamato are running from the international community after commandeering the nuclear submarine. It shows a growing Japanese nationalism as well as international tension.

Critical Comments:

The atomic bomb can be seen as a symbol for powerless and victimhood for Japan, and in the same light, the sinking of the Yamato during Okinawa is "a more culturally specific vision of defeat and despair" (Napier, 2005). But the series tries to rework this

defeat. The Yamato is a symbol of Japan, literally being raised up from the depths of the ocean to the endlessness of the universe. The space battleship is a trope for renewal and hope, showing the Japanese people not to shy away from their past or fears but rather to plunge forward into the future with an almost reckless abandon. The Yamato constant plunges into danger is a “form of ‘working through’ the collective national trauma of defeat” (Napier, 2005). The series shows the Japanese audience the Yamato (Japan) coming within inches of complete annihilation and then its successful escape. In this, “the films can be seen as a form of cultural therapy in which loss is revisited in a fundamentally reassuring manner” (Napier, 2005). This shows the determination of the Japanese people to move forward regardless of what tragedies on them. It also shows their capacity for compassion by being able to accept America after World War II.

The series also preaches a “universal love,” as previously mentioned. The films do not insist on holding a grudge on your enemies, alien or foreign (the blue-skinned aliens of the show or Americans) but preaches a coming together. The Earth fights together as one with the front runner, Yamato, against the invasion of their home (sacred soil).

The series plays on other postwar Japanese anxieties as well such as a fear that the postwar economic success wasn’t sustainable. The show has a four dimension where a “nightmarish version” of Earth is visited but the Yamato was able to break away and return to our dimension and their “reality” (Napier, 2005). This is the show’s way of saying that if Japan was going to sink, it would have already and you would be able to see it. On that point, it promotes Japan’s strength and fortitude to grow itself despite defeat and despair.

Pellitteri, Marco. "Nippon ex Machina: Japanese Postwar Identity in Robot Anime and the Case of UFO Robo Grendizer." *Mechademia* 4.1 (2009): 275-288.

This article discusses *UFO Robo Grendizer* produced in the 1970s; it was directed by Nagai Go and focuses on Japan's place in Asia. Earth is the only place advanced enough, with operations centralized in Japan, to wage war against the invading, alien Vegans, led by King Vega. The king is cruel to his subjects and besides their fear of their king, do not show much emotion besides being "evil". The Vegans fled their home planet after misusing atomic energy, polluting their environment with radioactivity. They then invaded a pacifist planet called *Reign of Fleed* before moving on to Earth. The prince, Duke Fleed and his sister Marie Grace escaped and Duke brought with him the Grendizer, improved with Fleedian technology. Along with the Grendizer, Japan builds "Double Spacer", "Marine Spacer", and "Drill Spacer" which can connect with Grendizer to fight in space, on land, under the sea, and underground. After defeating the Vegans, Duke and Marie return to their recovering planet where other exiled Fleedians are returning to their planet and rebuilding (Pellitteri, 2009).

In the show, the Vegans have a salute that is reflective of the ancient, conquering Romans and the high black boots of the Nazi Germans. This is to make the evil of the enemy beyond the possibility of Japanese indications and to morally simplify the enemy, a common practice in war propaganda.

Significance lies in the metaphorical figure of the invader who attacks Japanese soil with mysterious weapons, but in this case, Japan has the technology to fight back. Duke Fleed with his powerful, robot Grendizer represents US militarism and spreading of

democracy. Here, this is not viewed with heavy criticism as Duke is “swooping in” to save the day. Marco writes that during the time of Robo Grendizer, political unrest was common around all of Asia (Mao’s control and death in 1976, the Vietnam War ending around 1975, the rise of Pol Pot in Cambodia).

The Japanese, at the time, saw pacifism to be an important national value. This national value was only sustainable through the protection of the US military so the United States weren’t view negatively in this aspect but rather alien (Duke Fleed) protectors (Grendizer) of their way of life (Pellitteri, 2009).

Critical Comments:

The first interesting note is that Grendizer and Duke Fleed, the saviors of Japan, are representative of the US in this 1970’s film rather than the invaders from space with mysterious weapons. Though there are parallels between the two, the film symbolizes a cooperation of Japan and the US as they had in the post-industrial 1970s. The Fleedians and Japan (the United States and Japan) must fight for their home (or adopted home) and resist the invaders of their sacred soil (not holy to the invaders though).

The first two movies of the *Mazinsaga* focus on Japan’s struggle against the West and western forces; in the second movie, Japan undergoes “an identity crisis partially formed by the growing distance from America” but in *UFO Robo Grendizer*, this crisis between the two nations are resolved to the point of cooperation (Pellitteri, 2009).

Post-war Japan was occupied by America and democratized before the US just left in 1952, leaving a Japan to find its identity while surrounded by totalitarian communist countries such as Mao’s China, North Korea, and Vietnam. After this, Japan considered

itself to be the shining civilization in eastern Asia, closer to the West in thinking rather than physical distance. Additionally, Japan became increasingly pacifist after the war because the population saw first-hand what war could do. Some might say that the Japanese enjoy the apocalyptic theme so much because their apocalypse (the atomic bombs) led to the postwar economic reconstruction and growth, led by pacifist ideas. So regardless of their pacifist nature, the Japanese do not mind learning morals and lessons from these types of “violent” forms of media.

Following Japan’s occupation in the late 1940s, early 1950s, an “American fixation” became prevalent in the Asian country which is aided by the strong economic alliance it has with the US. Showing that the Japanese people were willing to accept the country that caused so much devastation to them on their sacred soil, knowing that the danger had passed, though only through great sacrifice.

Discussion

The concept of religious pluralism plays an important role in the foundation of many Japanese convictions. The pluralism draws upon the teachings of many religious backgrounds and doctrines in order to formulate their views of the apocalypse and the end of times. Earlier, we discussed the Japanese phrase: “Japanese are born Shinto, marry Christian, and die Buddhist” as an example of how the Japanese draw influence from several religions and cultures in their own practices. Instead of focusing on doctrines that preach an absolute truth about these themes, the pluralist focuses on perceived “personal salvation or transformation” (Barkman pg.27). They seek self-improvement in a manner that they feel is most appropriate based on their beliefs influenced by multiple religions and doctrines. This line of thinking supports popular themes in apocalyptic anime such as death and renewal along with overcoming a personal battle as well as the battle to prevent the end of current times.

The Japanese people have been affected by calamities for an immense duration of time. Natural disasters plague the island country as well as wartime grief and nuclear disasters, not only from the atomic bombs but from a nuclear meltdown as well. This has made the Japanese people resilient and able to adapt in order to survive and push forward.

The symbolic *Phoenix* by Osamu Tezuka is a wonderful representation of Japan as a whole. A pacifist creature, it dies in a surge of flames, and from its ashes, it is reborn, just as Japan was torn down by the war and bombings, they emerged strong and

new, ready to face the world (Ito, 2005). This concept of death and rebirth seems to have a strong connection to the Buddhist teaching of reincarnation.

As discussed in further detail in the previous section, the Japanese ties and understanding to the apocalypse have changed over time. They have moved from fearing the apocalypse to wanting to move forward, remember the past in a positive light, and not carry such a heavy burden on their shoulders.

For example, *Godzilla* was written and released during a period directly after World War II. The film has obvious connections between the use of nuclear weapons and the creation of the monster, *Godzilla*, capable of destroying cities such as the atomic bomb had done to Hiroshima and Nagasaki. It has Tokyo destroyed but able to be rebuilt as postwar Japan strove to rebuild their country (Napier, 1993).

Shortly thereafter, in 1963, *Astro Boy* was released to a Japan that still felt the post-war effects on their country. The Japanese were uneasy with technology, especially nuclear power, during this period of transition. *Astro Boy* shows this uneasiness with technology with the main character, Atom. As a nuclear-powered mega-weapon with the brain of a human boy, Atom contains the ability to cause ultimate destruction with a misstep but also holds the potential to help humanity immensely. This showed the dualistic nature of nuclear power to Japanese audiences, the power to destroy and the power to help build.

In 1967, Tezuka released his first installment of the *Phoenix* a couple decades after the war. Tezuka used the pacifist Phoenix as a inspirational representation of Japan. The mythical creature dies in a surge of flames and from its ashes, it is reborn.

This is just as Japan was torn down by the war and bombings, and how they began to emerge strong and new, ready to face the world. Therefore, Japan follows a dualistic representation of apocalypse, “chaos and destruction verse rebirth and renewal” (Ito, 2005). The Japanese understand that things end for a reason but this end is only the beginning of a new era.

Another film, *Nippon Chinbotsu*, or “Japan Sinks”, was written almost three decades after the world war, in 1973. The Japanese people still remembered the struggle of the war along with the economic troubles that followed but they were removed enough to “enshrine” the memory of Japan (Napier, 1993). This helps the audience remember what happened to their country and explain how they got to where they were today. This seeing beauty in destruction with feelings of sadness and compassion is from the aforementioned Japanese aesthetics of *mono no aware*.

Akira was released in 1988, four decades after the destruction of the war. This artistic work presents destruction positively and rather than dwelling on it, would rather press forward and start anew. Destruction is a method for continuation and progress of society. At this time, Japan was in the height of an economic bubble, 1986 to 1991, and as its wealth grew, the country was eager for a new identity representing their new status in the world rather than being tied down by the events of the past.

Neon Genesis Evangelion was released in 1995, a few years after Japan’s economic bubble burst in 1991. The series involves apocalyptic themes with little background knowledge yet focuses on the metaphysical themes and internal psychological drama of the protagonists. Just as the show does not need information

about the past to progress the story and fight for survival, so do does modern Japan not rely on the past. They are no longer weighed down by the war or atomic bombings. Rather they are who they are and press forward, striving to improve in the modern age even during the economic depression, just as Shinji kept fighting despite his own personal flaws or the situation he found himself in.

Within these apocalyptic works in Japanese popular culture, there are also subthemes, a couple of which will be discussed here. The first subtheme is humanity's use of technology while the second is environmentalism. How we use technology could benefit humanity such as the energy produced by nuclear power while it could also hasten an actual apocalyptic situation such as the use of the atomic bombs. Additionally, these decisions for technology use have implications for the environment where the use of a nuclear weapon or power plant meltdown for ruin the land around it for decades to come.

The misuse of technology is a common theme in apocalyptic anime. Without proper care, the use of technology can unleash terrible destruction. An example of such would be Atom in *Astro Boy*. Because he has the mental capacity of a human child, his mistakes lead to minor destruction, an obvious tie to how just a little bit of misuse can lead to calamity. Nevertheless, the proper use of technology can be humanity's salvation as Atom often does.

In *Astro Boy*, Atom is a representation of both sides of nuclear power. His name is directly tied to the atomic bombs that were set upon Japan and with his extreme powers, refers to the dangers nuclear weapons present. However, Atom also refers to

the positive effect nuclear power could have on humanity. Just as Atom used his powers to help people, so too could nuclear power be used for the benefit of the human race. Nevertheless, the events at Fukushima, when a Japanese nuclear power plant experienced a meltdown, proved that nuclear power could not be fully contained, something that director Tezuka noted in his works such as *Astro Boy* and in the works of his successor, Miyazaki, contained anti-nuclear themes such as in *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*.

Another point is how environmentalism fits into these apocalyptic themes since mistreatment of the environment harms both humanity and the planet. In *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, though humanity believes nature is trying to snuff out the last of their existence giant, mutant insects and poisonous gas, it was humanity's fault that the Toxic Jungle existed in the first place. Nature was restoring the Earth from its damaged state, stating the necessity of the forests for humanity to continue to survive. *Nausicaä* attempts to relay the message that misuse of technology can lead to humanity's destruction in more than one way, meaning not only one violent eruption of destruction but also through long-term poisoning of the environment.

Though *Nausicaä* has themes that can be connected to nuclear bombings and radiation, director Miyazaki was specifically inspired by the "pollution with mercury of Minamata Bay;" thus, this apocalyptic work also wants to convey a sense of warning to the audience in concern to environmentalism. The atomic bombings and the mercury pollution of Minamata Bay are similar due to their long lasting environmental effects. The Minamata Bay incident had mercury poisoning the environment while locations of

nuclear activity are polluted by deadly radiation. An example of this is the environmental destruction around the area of the Fukushima plant meltdown where the land will be unsafe to walk upon for decades to come.

Another facet to be investigated in *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* involves the Buddhist doctrine of *mappo*, which entails the termination of a dark age with the coming a messiah-like (Buddha-to-be) figure. This messiah theme is also reflective of the Christian religion as a symbolic second coming of Christ. Nausicaä preaches peace, “dies” for the “sins” (mistakes) of others, and is reborn to spread peace throughout the decaying land. Humanity’s symbolic mistake is the pursuit of technology without fully considering the consequences. Though the series conveys the importance of environmentalism and avoiding apocalyptic situations, its religious ties are both prominent and influential. Again, drawing from religious pluralism, director Miyazaki uses the Christian and Buddhist faiths for his messianic figure. Other series such as *Spriggan* warn about blindly following these figures in a dark age as they could lead you astray if their intentions are not pure.

Now, I would like to revisit the research questions I presented in the introduction of the thesis and attempt to answer them based on the information I found during the study of these literatures.

1. What are the influential Japanese anime series and creators that present these apocalyptic themes?

The following works and directors are the major influential projects and artists involved in presenting apocalyptic themes in chronological order. All these works

present destruction on varying levels from personal, national, or worldwide devastation. They all include humanity's struggle to find the right solution to their impending problem and all present messages for their audiences to interpret.

Year of Release	Japanese Works	Director
1954	Godzilla (Film)	Ishiro Honda
1963	Astro Boy	Osamu Tezuka
1967	Phoenix	Osamu Tezuka
1973	<i>Nippon Chinbotsu</i> (Film)	Shiro Moritani
1974	Space Cruiser <i>Yamato</i>	Yoshinobu Nishizaki
1975	UFO Robo Grendizer	Go Nagai
1984	Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind	Hayao Miyazaki
1988	Akira	Katsuhiro Otomo
1988	Spriggan	Hiroshi Takashige
1995	Neon Genesis Evangelion	Hideaki Anno

These works all present apocalyptic themes and I will explain different interpretations of apocalyptic themes in the above works over contemporary Japanese history in the following section.

2. How do these apocalyptic themes contrast over Japan's contemporary history?

Beginning in a chronological order, during the mid-1950s in *Godzilla*, Tokyo is damaged but can be repaired. Moving forward a couple decades to the 1970s *Nippon Chinbotsu* has Japan (and Tokyo with it) completely submerged into the ocean but gives a positive view of enshrining the memory of Japan. Meanwhile, when released in 1988, *Akira* has Tokyo as an empty crater, decades gone from war with no interest of getting it back (Napier, 1993). Japan is seeking a new identity, not weighed down by the events of the past.

These all reflect the times the series were created. In *Godzilla*, the apocalyptic tones are relevant and there's no hiding the connection between the threat and nuclear

weapons. Japan during the postwar period in the 1950s was still dealing with the economic and social upheavals of postwar life and it was important to them to rebuild their damaged nation.

Nippon Chinbotsu was written in the 1970s, where they remembered the struggle of the war and economic troubles following it in the 1940s and 50s. But they were out of those times, thus why *Nippon* “enshrines” the memory of Japan, wanting to never forget what happened to them and explain why they are what they are today. As we move closer to the present, in *Akira*, the Japanese people strive to move on from their damaged past. In earlier works, there is a negative portrayal of disaster while in *Akira*, it is a “virtual celebration” (Napier, 1993). *Akira* was released in 1988, during Japan’s economic bubble and as the nation’s wealth grew, the country was eager for a new identity representing their new status in the world rather than being tied down by the events of the past.

Released in 1995, *Neon Genesis Evangelion (Eva)* was written in a time far removed from the war, yet, during the recession after the economic bubble burst in 1991. *Eva* includes many modern popular culture themes such *otaku* culture, giant robots known as mechas, and fighting beauties. It also began the category known as *sekai kei* which involves apocalyptic themes with little background knowledge of how the apocalyptic setting began while focusing on the metaphysical themes and internal psychological drama of the protagonists. Just as the show does not need information about the past to progress the story and fight for survival, so does modern Japan not rely on the past. They are no longer weighed down by the war or atomic bombings.

Rather they are who they are and press forward, striving to improve in the modern age even during an economic depression, just as Shinji kept fighting despite his own personal flaws or the situation he found himself in.

3. What influences or events are these apocalyptic themes derived from?

Japan faces many natural threats such as earthquakes, tsunamis, floods, volcanic activity, and tropical storms. These natural calamities have prepared the Japanese people over time to rebound from tragic events, even before the disastrous events of WWII. Over the centuries, the commonly held aesthetics of *mono no aware* developed within Japan due to the Japanese people recovering from these devastations. This aesthetics involves seeing the beauty in chaos and destruction while feeling sad and compassionate for the subject of the destruction.

Osamu Tezuka witnessed the devastation of the bombings towards the end of World War II while his successor, Hayao Miyazaki, was also present for American air raids when he was a child (Fuller, 2015). They would go on to make some of the most innovative anime series of their time with *Astro Boy*, *Phoenix*, *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*, along with many more.

In addition to the nuclear bombs, nuclear power plant meltdowns in areas such as Fukushima, Chernobyl, and Three Mile Island are another example of nuclear destruction in the modern age that artists, such as Osamu Tezuka and Hayao Miyazaki, draw inspiration from.

4. What supplementary themes emerge from these apocalyptic ones?

Two subthemes can be derived from the apocalyptic ones. The first one is mankind's use of technology and how its use or misuse can either save or forsake us as a species. Another theme is how the environment plays a critical role in the end of the world or apocalyptic settings.

5. How is religion incorporated into Japanese notions on the apocalypse?

The Japanese derive their understanding of the apocalypse from many different religions, philosophies, and religious doctrines. These religions include shamanism, Shinto, Buddhist, Taoism, Confucian, and Christianity (Barkman, 2010). Some philosophies and aesthetics derived from Buddhist doctrines that play a role in Japanese thought on the apocalypse include *mappo*, *masse*, *mono no aware*, and reincarnation.

Conclusion

Religious pluralism is a significant aspect of Japanese society that needs to be studied to fully understand the Japanese people's view on topics such as the apocalypse. The Japanese view themselves as open-minded and accepting while viewing defenders of religious doctrines as intolerant and rigid in their ways (Barkman pg.27). This religious pluralism is reflected in Japanese popular culture with series such as *Neon Genesis Evangelion* and *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*. In *Eva*, influences from Shintoism, Buddhist, Christian, and Jewish religions are present. This affects the apocalyptic view by molding views from many religions into a perspective that is uniquely Japanese. Similarly, this religious pluralism also affects *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* as director, Miyazaki, draws from both Buddhist and Christian beliefs to create his own interpretation of a messianic figure.

One of the most influential anime projects dealing with the apocalyptic themes is Tezuka's *Phoenix*. While the United States views the apocalypse as a termination of the world, Japan follows an ambivalent representation of apocalypse, "chaos and destruction verse rebirth and renewal." The Japanese understand that things end for a reason but this end is only the beginning of a new era (Ito, 2005). This rebirth pertains to Buddhist doctrine of reincarnation but anime often takes this rebirth a step further in philosophy by adding some sort of curse to this rebirth, a cost to be paid for this blessing of rebirth.

In the *Phoenix*, the eternal life the Phoenix can grant is perceived as a curse. Additionally, in *Astro Boy*, Atom is a replication of Tobia, the deceased child of a genius

scientist, but he cannot fully replace the child, grow older, while dealing with his nuclear-powered weapon of a body with the mind of a human boy (Gibson, 2013). This cursed life is also a connection to how technology can be used for both the benefit and advancement of humankind while it also has the potential to destroy all of it. He is beneficial due to the use of his nuclear power to save people in need as a hero.

Another example of this rebirth is from *Space Cruiser Yamato* when the ship is rebuilt as a spaceship, used to save Earth (Fuller, 2015). The Yamato was a real battleship tragically lost to the Japanese during WWII. The use of the real battleship was a connection to how Japan was able to reinvent itself after the war and become an economic powerhouse with the wisdom to learn from mankind's mistakes and avoid making them again as they moved forward into the future.

Mappo is an influential Buddhist doctrine in Japan revolving around the idea of a messiah-like figure during the dark days of the apocalypse to return light to the world. *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* is an example of this aesthetic with Nausicaä being identified as a messiah who unknowingly saves humanity (Hairston, 2014). Another doctrine, *masse*, is influential in Japanese media and involves the complete destruction of this world to make room for the beginning of brand new one (Broderick, 2009). This falls in tune with the themes of death and rebirth.

Mono no Aware is the aesthetics of seeing the beauty in the devastation, often with feelings of compassion and a sense of sadness. In *Nippon Chinbotsu*, also known as Japan Sinks, the destruction of the island is shown to peaceful music and a gorgeous background of the setting sun over the ocean. This spreads the message of looking for

the silver lining, for even with complete destruction, comes a new beginning as told in *masse*.

Taken together, the Japanese face many foreign threats as a nation, spanning from unfortunate weather, economic depressions, natural disasters, negative nuclear impacts of the initial explosions and radiation, as well as threats from other nations as tensions with countries like North Korea increase.

Nevertheless, the people are resilient and have learned to evolve and adapt to overcome these challenges. This views are reflected by anime series such as *Space Cruiser Yamato* where the defeated warship is rebuilt as a spaceship to defend the entirety humanity. By remaining open-minded and accepting foreign concepts and philosophies, the Japanese have succeeded in the modern age of technology and constantly changing viewpoints of the world. They find the good of a situation and nurture it until it grows, casting a shadow over the darkness and doubt they faced before.

In this thesis, I have discussed how apocalyptic themes in some anime series and works have been influenced by the social and political beliefs of the Japanese people at the time of their release. A limitation of this study was the literature I reviewed were all literary criticisms of Japanese anime and film while devoid of empirical data of how the Japanese perceives apocalyptic themes through anime. In the future, I would like to further develop the study by investigating how the release of different influential popular culture works directly, or indirectly, affected the ideology and outlooks of the Japanese public

Works Cited

Primary Sources

1. Akimoto, Daisuke. "Learning Peace and Coexistence with Nature through Animation." *Ritsumeikan Journal of Asia Pacific Studies* 33 (2014): 54-64. *Share Your World*. Ritsumeikan Asia Pacific University, 2014. Web. 16 Feb. 2017. <http://www.apu.ac.jp/rcaps/uploads/fckeditor/publications/journal/RJAPS33_6_Akimoto.pdf>.
2. Barkman, Adam. "Anime, Manga, and Christianity: A Comprehensive Analysis." *Journal for the Study of Religions and Ideologies* 9.27 (2010): 25-45. *Humanities Source*. Web. 02 Mar. 2017.
3. Broderick, Michael. "Anime's Apocalypse: Neon Genesis Evangelion as Millenarian Mecha." *Australian National University*. Murdoch University, Mar. 2002. Web. 26 Aug. 2016. <http://intersections.anu.edu.au/issue7/broderick_review.html>.
4. Broderick, Michael. "Hybrid Apocalypse, Masse or Mappo." *Animation Studies Online Journal*. Animation Studies Online Journal, 12 July 2009. Web. 25 Feb. 2017. <<https://journal.animationstudies.org/michael-broderick-superflat-eschatology/>>.
5. Fuller Frank. "The Deep Influence of the A-bomb on Anime and Manga." *The Conversation*. The Conversation US, Inc., 6 Aug. 2015. Web. 25 Feb. 2017.

<<http://theconversation.com/the-deep-influence-of-the-a-bomb-on-anime-and-manga-45275>>.

6. Gibson, Alicia. " Out of Death, an Atomic Consecration to Life: *Astro Boy* and Hiroshima's Long Shadow." *Mechademia* 8 (2013): 313-20. *Art Full Text [H.W. Wilson]*. Web. 19 Feb. 2017.

<<http://eds.a.ebscohost.com/pallas2.tcl.sc.edu/eds/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?sid=e30c5ba4-6fc0-41db-b54f-4b86397a7155%40sessionmgr4008&vid=1&hid=4208>>.
7. Hairston, Marc. "The Reluctant Messiah: Miyazaki Hayao's *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind*." Ed. Toni Johnson-Woods. *Manga: An Anthology of Global and Cultural Perspectives*. New York: Bloomsbury, 2014. 173-83. Print.
8. Ito, Kinko. "A History of *Manga* in the Context of Japanese Culture and Society." *The Journal of Popular Culture*. 3rd ed. Vol. 38. Malden, MA: Blackwell, 2005. 456-75. Print.
9. Napier, Susan J. "Panic Sites: The Japanese Imagination of Disaster from *Godzilla* to *Akira*". *Journal of Japanese Studies* 19.2 (1993): 327-351. Web.
10. Napier, Susan J. "Waiting for the End of the World: Apocalyptic Identity." *Anime from Akira to Howl's Moving Castle: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation*. New Your City: Algrave MacMillan, 2005. N. pag. Print.
11. Napier, Susan J. "World War II as trauma, memory and fantasy in Japanese animation." *Japan Focus* (2005). Web.
12. Pellitteri, Marco. "Nippon ex Machina: Japanese Postwar Identity in Robot Anime and the Case of UFO Robo Grendizer." *Mechademia* 4.1 (2009): 275-288.

Secondary Sources

1. Cavallaro, Dani (2006). *The Anime Art of Hayao Miyazaki*. McFarland. pp. 47–57, 194.
2. *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 26 Nov. 2003. Web. Mar. 2017. <<https://www.britannica.com>>.
3. "Ise Grand Shrine." *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation, 24 Mar. 2017. Web. 02 Apr. 2017. <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ise_Grand_Shrine>.
4. "Ise Jingu ~ the Grand Shrine of Ise." *JINJA HONCHO*. Association of Shinto Shrines, 2011. Web. 02 Apr. 2017. <<http://www.jinjahoncho.or.jp/en/ise/index.html>>.
5. Kano, Seiji. 2006. *Miyazaki Hayao Zensho (The Complete Miyazaki Hayao)*. Tokyo: Film Art-sha.
6. Kinema Research Institute (2011). *Nichijyo kei anime hit no hosoku*. Tokyo, Kinema jyunposha. pp106-109.
7. Kitagawa, Joseph M. 1990, *Religion in Japanese History*, Columbia University Press, New York.
8. Miner, Earl. *The Princeton Companion to Classical Japanese Literature*. N.J.: Princeton University Press.
9. Napier, Susan J. "Four Faces of the Young Female" In D.P. Martinez (Ed). *The Worlds of Japanese Popular Culture*. Cambridge University Press. 1998.
10. *Oxford English Dictionary*. Oxford University Press, n.d. Web. <<https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/>>.

11. Parkes, Graham. "Japanese Aesthetics." *Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*.

Stanford University, 12 Dec. 2005. Web. 25 Mar. 2017.

<<https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/japanese-aesthetics/#2>>.

12. Shapiro, Jerome F 2002, *Atomic Bomb Cinema: The Apocalyptic Imagination on*

Film, Routledge, New York.

Appendix: Glossary for Key Technical Terms

Mono no Aware

The meaning of the phrase *mono no aware* is complex and has changed over time, but it basically refers to a “pathos” (*aware*) of “things” (*mono*), deriving from their transience. The most frequently cited example of *mono no aware* in contemporary Japan is the traditional love of cherry blossoms, as manifested by the huge crowds of people that go out every year to view (and picnic under) the cherry trees. The blossoms of the Japanese cherry trees are intrinsically no more beautiful than those of, say, the pear or the apple tree: they are more highly valued because of their transience, since they usually begin to fall within a week of their first appearing. It is precisely the evanescence of their beauty that evokes the wistful feeling of *mono no aware* in the viewer. (Parkes, 2005)

In early classical terms “*aware*” might be an exclamation of joy or other intense feelings, but later came to designate sadder and even tragic feelings. (Miner, 1995). In simpler terms, seeing the beauty in destruction.

Mappo

A Japanese Buddhist doctrine pertaining to the degeneration of the Buddha’s law. During this decline of order, or in a dark age, a new period will begin in which the true faith will again flower, ushered in some time in the future by the bodhisattva (“buddha-to-be” or “messiah-like figure”) (Britannica).

Masse

Masse is another arcane doctrine which “describes the complete end of the world, and the beginning of an entirely new one” has an influence on Japanese anime (Shapiro, 2002). Where the West sees the apocalypse as the continuation or salvation of a select few, the Japanese sees the closure of a narrative and the beginning of a new one. In addition to this, “*masse* complements the concept of *mono no aware*, in that it embodies a sense of sorrow for the loss and transience of all things” (Broderick, 2009).

Otaku

Refers to both the syndrome and to the person with the syndrome. In most cases, these are young, Japanese males in their teens or twenties who have developed a psychological fear of social interaction. A young person who is obsessed with computers or particular aspects of popular culture to the detriment of their social skills (OED).

Phoenix

In classical mythology, a unique bird that lived for five or six centuries in the Arabian desert, after this time burning itself on a funeral pyre and rising from the ashes with renewed youth to live through another cycle (OED).

Reincarnation

Renewed incarnation; the rebirth of a soul in a new body or form; an instance of this. A fresh embodiment *of* a person; a person or animal in whom a particular soul is believed to have been reborn. In extended use: the action or result of returning in

another form or guise; a revival, rebirth, or reinvention (OED). Used in Buddhist and Hindu religions.

Sekai Kei

It refers to a list of anime works that, under the influence of EVA, depict the self-consciousness of young protagonists. One of the characteristics of such works is the lack of setting of the world context in which the story is taking place. Consequently, it focuses on the development of the personal relationship between the hero and heroine of the story without referring to the specifics of what is happening in the world (Kinema Research Institute).

Shintoism

A Japanese religion dating from the early 8th century and incorporating the worship of ancestors and nature spirits and a belief in sacred power (*kami*) in both animate and inanimate things. It was the state religion of Japan until 1945 (OED). It should be noted that the philosophy of “death and renewal” may be also attributed to Shinto belief. Ise Grand shrine is the largest and oldest shrine in Japan that is dedicated to Amaterasu, the sun goddess. It has a ceremony called *Sengu*, which has been performed every 20 years since 1300. During *Sengu*, “each shrine building is meticulously disassembled and rebuilt,” so that the “Japanese people renew their mind and faith in the deities and ensure the continuity of rejuvenation for the divine spirits” (Association of Shinto Shrines). It is performed “as a part of the Shinto belief of the death and renewal of nature and the impermanence of all things” (Ise Grand Shrine).