

JAPN 313 Essay Presentation

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Research Question

How do diverse cultural identities and socio-religious contexts influence the creation of the manga and animated works in Japan?

Paper Breakdown

-Introduction

-Robot culture:

*Time of Eve/Astro
Boy

*Galaxy Express
999/Akira

-Yokai and Religion:

*Natsume's Book of
Friends

-Conclusion

Introduction

- "The ease with which the physical laws that apply to human existence can be violated in animation has resulted in violations of intuitive ontology being the rule, not the exception."

- "Violations of intuitive knowledge are clearly fascinating stuff. And this is one of the features most strikingly utilized in anime."

Robot Culture

“Astro Boy was a real robot. It wasn't just that his body was made of metal, or that he had super strength or that he could fly. His mind was also artificial, and so was his heart. That only made him more loveable.”



Time of Eve/Astro Boy

-Animism

- "In order to be contagious, gods must be just like humans, only with a tweak. They may walk like humans, but they can also walk on water; they may drink like humans, but also boast the enviable ability to turn water into wine."

- "Robots who look and act more or less like human beings, robots like Astro Boy, are rare in anime these days. And when they do occur, their humanity is a far more complex a matter than that of Astro Boy who simply loved and wanted to be loved."



Galaxy Express 999/Akira

- Mixing artificiality
- Loss of human qualities
- Immortality



Natsume's Book of Friends

- The uniqueness of yokai
- "A common element of Shinto belief is that everything has a spirit that can be placated or offended, and which must be befriended, tamed, or appeased rather than simply fought."
- Changes in how yokai viewed



Conclusion

- Unrealistic tendencies
- Robot \neq Humans?
- Yokai

Sources

- Manga: The Complete Guide*
- The bestseller recipe: a natural explanation of the global success of anime*
- Samurai From Outer Space: Understanding Japanese Animation*
- Anime: A History*