

Special Feature

Corona Erogoro: Oni Longing for a Face

Christophe Thouny

In volume 12 of the *Kimetsu no Yaiba* (*Demon Slayer*) manga series, Kibutsuji Muzan (fig. 1), vampiric dandy, arch-enemy of the demon slayer Kamado Tanjiro and father of an endless lineage of oni freaks makes a simple and clear political statement (real politics is always clear!): “What I hate is change.” For Muzan, change, of situation, of flesh, of emotions, any change only leads to deterioration. What Muzan desires is eternal life without change of any sort, the paradise on Earth, integrated capitalism, the end of the end, a neutral and stable face-mask. Quite the conservative statement at a moment in history where going back to our good old ways, going back to a safe and warm home has become an impossibility. In this article, I discuss the manga, TV animation and movie *Kimetsu no Yaiba* (henceforth *Kimetsu*) as a symptomatic answer to the present biopolitical planetary crisis, what I call “corona eroguro.”



Figure 1. Kibutsuji Muzan and his fake-family of humans in Taisho Tokyo¹

By “eroguro,” short for “erotic-grotesque-non-sense,” I refer to a series of artistic styles in literature and visual arts spanning from the post-1923 Great Kanto Earthquake urban culture to postwar Japan new media revivals of the genre and today’s corona planetary crisis. Each of these historical eroguro moments resonate with each other in the

search for an answer to the same question, how to live a time of change. In corona eroguro, this means learning how to live in a time without ground (but with passages), and how to live in a time without home (but with shelters). And more importantly, this means figuring out how much can the body take, and how much deformation for value-extraction is acceptable and desired.

Kimetsu was already a major commercial success when the corona crisis hit global human societies, triggering a cascading effect that today sees no end in sight. And at the same time, nothing has changed with corona; pre-established logics only intensified and accelerated as writer Tawada Yōko recently wrote.² With corona, countries that were going left further went left, those going right further went right, feminists went further feminist, machists further machist. In this respect, the corona crisis did not start in early 2019 or whenever patient 0 emerged. It reaches further back in time and stretches farther into the future in an ongoing movement of condensation and intensification. For while nothing changed, change intensified, in place, infrastructures running on free wheel, continuously ungrounding the very fabric of our everyday lives while establishing the state of exception as an everyday lived reality, our hearts and souls jumping around to the rhythms of numbers morphing into other numbers, and faces morphing into so many different masks of themselves.

In part, *Kimetsu* is nothing else but another media boom capitalizing on well-established marketing practices of the media-mix. The manga was serialized in the weekly magazine *Shōnen Jump* from 2016 to 2020, while a first TV series was aired from April to September 2019. The first *Kimetsu* movie *Mugen Train* (2020) opened in movie theaters on October 16th 2021 and is now the biggest domestic box-office hit, surpassing Miyazaki Hayao's 2001 film *Spirited Away*.³ *Mugen Train*, however, is not entirely representative of the series: the directors made the efficient marketing choice to focus on the safest i.e. the most conservative segment of the manga narrative (patriarchal, nationalist and flirting dangerously with homophobia) to draw masses to movie theatres, masses who needed a safe space to let out their tears of frustration and love run freely to the tone of the voice actors. And the now global success of the movie⁴ in the midst of an unprecedented pandemic has taken us all by surprise.

One reason for the success of *Mugen Train* and more generally *Kimetsu* is that it makes visible a world where nothing has really changed but for a small difference, a little difference that amounts to almost nothing,⁵ an intensification of local dynamics that cannot then be denied anymore, and ask us the perennial question: what can be done? For we are powerless, disoriented, and without home. The demon slayer Kamado Tanjiro has no home to go back to and it is no surprise that one of the most popular scenes of the movie is about dreaming of meeting his dead mother, brothers and sisters,

dead because killed by an oni, by the father figure, Muzan. The choice of Taisho and of a Shinsengumi-like group of vigilantes protecting innocent citizens-qua-victims is significant of this moment when there is no home and no family—only surrogate family-like gatherings, when the patriarchal structure has become infected by a parasitic life, and when symbiosis and parasitism cannot stabilize nor slow down their mad dance. The premise for this article is that if conservative in its oedipal narrative, *Kimetsu* is also insistently melancholic, as if dreaming that going back home was a possibility and yet knowing perfectly well this is not an option anymore. This is a melancholic state that I argue allows for a reparative narrative of sorts, navigating the polarities of parasitism and symbiosis, mourning and melancholia in an ongoing movement of deformation never captured into a stable face, a white wall/black holes mask. Starting from the thesis that *Kimetsu* is a conservative text symptomatic of our corona eroguro time of intensified change, I then discuss how *Kimetsu* also enacts a reparative movement from mourning to melancholia in terms of its monsterology, necropolitics, and speciesism.

1. Kimetsu Eroguro

The setting of *Kimetsu* is the Taisho era (1912-1926), an age of urban mass culture following the construction of the Meiji state. The historical references in both the manga and TV series are clear. Many have noticed the realistic depictions of Asakusa before the Great Kanto Earthquake (1923), in particular the movie theatre district (16-ku) and the Asakusa twelve-stories (Ryōankyoku) built in 1890 and housing the first electric elevator (fig. 2).⁶ From the late Meiji era Asakusa was the modern entertainment district *par excellence*, modern in its juxtaposition of early-modern and modern visual practices from peep-shows to film in a brutally unequal society. In his reading of 1928 short-story, “The traveler with the pasted rag picture” by the Japanese writer Edogawa Ranpo, one of the most

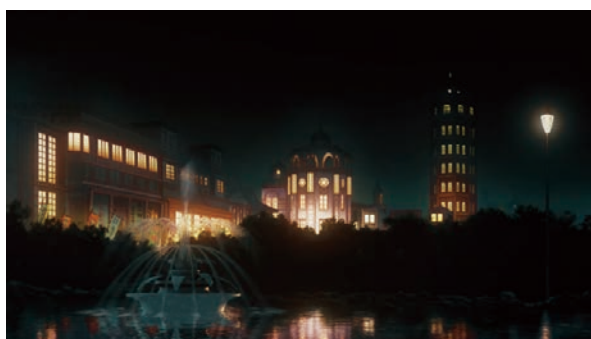


Figure 2. View of Asakusa Tower⁸

representative figures of the Taisho eroguro culture, Thomas Looser shows how Ranpo uses Asakusa to “construct his own image of time [...] a cinematic order of things,” “in part through the juxtaposition of different media from different eras”.⁷

The story revolves around a man who falls obsessively in love with a girl. This is love at first sight. The trouble is, he can only find her when he looks through binoculars from the top of the twelve-stories tower, never among the crowd in the street. Eventually, the man finds her in a peep-show booth: she is a pasted-rag picture. As he cannot let go of his love he finds a way to step into the frame of the pasted-rag picture by asking his brother to look at him through the binoculars, this time held in reverse position. The man then keeps aging near his beloved, eternally young.

In Edogawa’s story, two constructions, the train and the Asakusa tower, articulate these multiple media forms and identities in terms of a tension between 1. a desire for stable forms and identities composed by controlled processes of transformation allowed in particular by distance and depth and 2. desire’s own ongoing processes of deformation across multi-layered and de-hierarchized surfaces. As Looser explains, this hybrid space of images coming from all ages is thus articulated by a tension between a panoramic space and a montage space. The view from the train gradually brings into focus a panoramic landscape out of a series of fragments, as the view from the top of the tower gives access to the desired image of a whole female body. And at the same time the desired totalizing image of unity gradually coming into focus is always receding and remains inaccessible, out of time and space, falling into pieces as one attempts to grab her.

This attempt to articulate the hybrid and chaotic reality of Taisho media forms and images in a tension between a total and distanced panoramic image and a montage of fragmented images resonates with contemporary attempts by social critiques to understand these popular practices in the context of modern capitalist structures of value-extraction. As Myriam Silverberg explains:

[...] *erotic* connotes an energized, colorful vitality. *Grotesquerie* is culture resulting from such deprivation as that endured by the homeless and by beggars. Finally, *nonsense* makes a great deal of sense, as the filmmaker Itami Mansaku pointed out for us. The boisterousness of popular vaudeville can, and in modern Japan did, challenge relationships of domination of one class, culture, or nation-state by an other.⁹

Taisho eroguro is thus essentially modernist in its critical engagement with historical forms of social and artistic life, and in particular in its desire for a stable, total and organic image of the social and the identity that emerges from it. And film precisely allows for articulating this desire and the unresolvable tensions that result from it due to the

indexical nature of the cinematic image: there is always an organic point of origin, there was always a human in flesh and bone before the camera. Digital cinema however undermined this indexical nature of the cinematic image. Indexicality does not disappear as such though, like the figure of the father, remains as a desired cultural form that orders and hierarchizes the multi-layered digital image. As such, it is not surprising that *Kimetsu's* movie takes place in a train, where the queer perversion of bodies, memories, and social relations between humans is in the end prevented by the sacrifice of another father figure, the Flame Hashira (General) Kyojuro Rengoku. The queer movement of the narratable, queer because as Peter Brooks argues “deviance is the very condition for life in the ‘narratable,’”¹⁰ is safely contained in an oedipal narrative sealed by the sacrifice of the father-son hero and the killing of an unredeemable queer monster, the oni Enmu. This is why this narrative is conservative: pleasure comes from the re-establishment of safe boundaries and stable identities in the midst of chaos through the expulsion of queer monstrosities and here homosexual desire.

Not only the movie but *Kimetsu* as a whole is premised on a conservative social fantasy, and corona eroguro has in that respect nothing of the critical and political edge of Taisho eroguro. While Taisho eroguro articulated a generative and critical engagement with its historical present, corona eroguro in *Kimetsu* is a half-disguised celebration of consumerism, colonialism, and fascism. For example, the play with media forms in the manga—as in the use of deformed characters in both the drawing of the demon slayers and the oni—only aim at alleviating tensions and generating interest in the narrative. They never open a space of political play and critique. The critique of capitalist consumerism in turn is replaced by an easy empathy for the weak and the poor, forgetting that they emerge from relations of domination integral to the reproduction of the social as a whole. This is similar to the situation in 1906, when the translators of the *Communist Manifesto*, the anarchist Kōtoku Shusui and the socialist Sakai Toshihiko, still unable “to place within a social whole social relationships that are the same time economic,” made the choice to translate class as “clique,” thus ending up defining “the bourgeois by his clothing or house” and the proletariat by its poverty.¹¹ Indeed, there is no class in *Kimetsu*, only cliques that keep mirroring each other, starting with the humans and oni. This is not to say though that we are back in the 19th century, as value-extraction functions differently today, in particular as I explain in the next part, in its relation to the crisis of the family and the dialectic of deformation/transformation.

In *Kimetsu*, we are all victims, humans are victims of oni, themselves victims of both an unfair life and of Muzan who gave them his blood and turned them into vampires. Muzan himself was the victim of a disease and of the medical treatment of the Heian doctor who turned him into an immortal vampire to save him. The task of the demon slayers

is to save the nation and the family, defending islands of civilization surrounded by barbaric forests, as if modernity had turned again into a pre-modern village society. Yet despite the reference to the Bakumatsu vigilante group of the Shinsengumi, our heroes are not here fighting to build a new society. They only attempt to deal with the loss of their everyday, the family and the national home, of a sense of ground, meaning and value by resurrecting the desire for an Imperial state. Historical change is re-inscribed within the imperial temporality of Nengō, Taisho succeeding Meiji as realizes in shock the first oni encountered by Tanjiro, the Hand-oni (fig. 4). The screening of the 4th episode of the TV anime on April 27th of 2019 in which the Hand-oni yells “Ahhh the Imperial era [nengō], the Imperial era has changed!!!” was particularly timely as Japan was to enter the new Reiwa era on May 1st, officially translated as “beautiful harmony.” But the kanji “rei” is more commonly translated as “command or order,” an irony many noticed immediately. The new era name was obviously chosen to give a sense of juridical order (what Foucault calls “juridical regularities”)¹² in a time of biopolitical crisis by appealing to an environmental sense of cohesion as national harmony. *Kimetsu* is in this respect timely and perfectly expresses the social fantasy of its time, as well as the intensification of its logics and contradictions brought about by the pandemic, in particular, consumerism (save the economy and our lives!), colonialism (kill the oni, the virus! contain and conquer!), and the fascist desire for individual sacrifice, willed or not (anyone can become an oni, a terrorist, a super-spreader!).



Figure 3. The Hand-oni¹³

2. Kimetsu Monsterology

At the same time, something else is happening. To start with, the kind of social critique found in Taisho eroguro is not possible anymore today. As has been argued for some time now, the desire for a total view of the social is today conservative, as shows the fashionable use of the term planetary, ending up in canceling its chaotic nature grounded in

movement and change. In too many discussions of the pandemic and climate change as manifesting a planetary crisis, the planet is identified with the finite and closed space of the Earth whose commons must be carefully managed for the reproduction of the human population. If however *Kimetsu* is really about the question of historical change and how to embrace a time of change in a planetary situation, then it is first a question of melancholia, of accepting that there is no going back to what used to be a normal society, that Tanjiro lost his family forever—although his sister will be cured and become human again. When this could end up in a call to forget and move on through the work of mourning, *Kimetsu* leaves open the other possibility of melancholic desire, that is the desire to keep living with the lost desired object, to inhabit and be inhabited by loss and find there another possibility of collective life and repair.

Melancholy and repair is both a question of narrative structure as of social technology and practice. For in difference with film, anime (Japanese limited animation in this case) is “part of a new economy, which itself both disperses identity (and community) and contains an uncertain image of a fixed point of origin,” while being “dispersed across media forms.”¹⁴ As Looser argues in the conclusion of his article, these multiple layers of identity if open are never entirely de-hierarchized. Or rather, they are, when open by loss to its outside, always bringing back a conservative desire for closure into a national community. *Kimetsu* is also a global success because it is a Japanese work of animation drawing on a whole paraphernalia of Japanese things, from samurai swords, hakama and military uniforms to Japanese monsters, masks and ramen stands. Fan communities, here *Kimetsu* fans, by opening themselves to desire’s ongoing movement of deformation across a changing world precisely work with and against their own desire for communal belonging, at home, together, in the family of men, when there is no home to go back to.

If the setting of *Kimetsu* appears to be conservative, this is then in part due to the nature of late capitalism today and in particular the biopolitical crisis of the home-family. As Michel Foucault argued, in modernity the home-family served as a relay between “the emergent formation of disciplinary power and the waning formation of sovereign power.” The home-family thus had two faces, the patriarchal household and “the fact of the household as relay between disciplinary closed sites.”¹⁵ This explains why the family is always in crisis and home always lost, crisis allowing the movement between different ecologies of power, here disciplinary sites.¹⁶ This is in short the historical situation of Taisho eroguro. Today, in a planetary situation, it is the home-refuge that articulates the movement between biopolitical crisis (biopower as necropolitics) and environmental power in an ongoing series of crisis without end, climate change, civil war, financial crisis and today’s corona. And as sovereign power does not disappear in modernity, it also remains functional in corona eroguro: in *Kimetsu*, the father remains a desired anchor of

stability and power while disciplinary power now circulates in a series of home-refuges across a deserted landscape. In *Kimetsu*, our heroes move from refuge to refuge where rest and recovery is always associated with a strict regimen of military training. Homes are temporary refuges in a never-ending state of crisis where the family is only a surrogate family for the lost national home, for the home-family has lost its function of domestic reproduction as value-extraction and relay between power formations.

Today, biopolitical crisis in the wake of an emerging environmental power takes the form of necropolitics. Politics become the management of crisis anywhere, anytime when there is no possibility to go back to normality. *Kimetsu* politics is thus necropolitics defined in particular by three choices:

1. The possibility to kill and let live an oni.
2. The possibility to thrive through death when everyday life is defined as survival.
3. The possibility to die, redefining death as change on a life continuum.

This allows us to now better understand the nature of monsters in *Kimetsu*, starting with Kibutsuji Muzan. Oni here are not Yanagita Kunio's failed deities; they are vampires, parasites, and human parasites. Muzan is an aristocratic vampire, both dandy father and monstrous parasite, and in the end caught in past social structures that it cannot let go. Muzan hates change, because change can only lead to the deterioration of the social structures he feeds on. And at the same time the monstrous body of Muzan can take any shape from the dandy father to the poison woman and the deformed homunculus (fig. 5). Muzan is literally an abnormal as defined by Michel Foucault, a human monster, an incorrigible, and an onanist. "What makes a human monster a monster is not just its exceptionality relative to the species form; it is the disturbance it brings to juridical regularities."¹⁷ This is why tragedy in *Kimetsu* comes from individual passions and not from systemic exploitation as such: oni endanger the family-home because it is symptomatic of a new regime of power as necropolitics. For this reason, oni cannot be reformed nor disciplined, they can only be killed to remember the human past, or left to live their parasitic life and finish bringing down the juridical order of the national family. The only significant exception is Tanjiro's sister, Nezuko, which raises important questions about speciesism in terms of parasitism and symbiosis. Lastly, oni are onanists because they manifest a crisis of reproduction, of the family and the species. In short value-extraction does not work anymore on the basis of the functional reproduction of isolated family-units, nor does the home-family function anymore as a relay between power formations through the management of crisis. Rather viral dissemination in an ongoing process of deformation has become the new norm, and in this respect we should understand the pandemic



Figure 4. Muzan punishes one of his subordinates¹⁸

as a social form that capitalizes on the capture of chaotic forces of deformation into stable processes of transformation.

As such we could say that oni manifest the emergence of new possibilities of social life, and that necropolitics is not necessarily conservative but can allow, as Rosi Braidotti claims,¹⁹ for a more generative understanding of death than simply the end, by understanding life, and death, as ontologically impersonal. And at the same time the demon slayer/oni machinic assemblage articulate a new mode of value extraction capitalizing on the capture of forces of deformation into juridical forms of transformation that do not rely on a desired totalizing image as in Taisho eroguro. I refer here to Gilles Deleuze's contrasting definition of deformation and transformation. Deformation is not a transformation of form in an ongoing series regulated by juridical norms and their associated disciplinary places. Transformation subordinates forces to movement for value-abstraction while deformation subordinates movement to force: it is the application of force in place. As such, deformation "is always bodily, and it is static, it happens at one place."²⁰ Deformation is destiny and is closely associated with the face as figure.

3. Conclusion: Kimetsu Speciesism - For a Symbiotic Life/Death

In conclusion, I would like to go back to the question we started with and that I argue *Kimetsu* attempts to answer, "How to live in a time of change?", and add another one: "How to live together in such a time of change?" As Rosi Braidotti argues, this entails a different understanding of death, one that does not define a subject of right, a citizen, "solely by a position of victims, loss and injury and the forms of reparation that come with it."²¹ In posthuman necropolitical times, what I understand as the dominant form of politics in our present planetary situation, we need to move from the fetishism of my-traumas-as-my-enjoyment and of death as individual death that grounds the entrepreneurial subject

in *Kimetsu*. And as I proposed in the introduction, despite *Kimetsu's* conservative setting, the queer narrative movement it opens across images, words and characters can allow for a re-articulation of melancholic desire into a narrative of repair.

The discourse of repair however emerges precisely from a neoliberal therapeutic culture. As Rey Chow argues in her recent collection of essays, *A Face Drawn in the Sand: Humanistic Inquiry and Foucault in the Present*,²² therapeutic culture is precisely hostile to the kind of symptomatic reading I am attempting here to promote, what in Chow's words is "a non-utilitarian, non-consensual approach to humanistic enquiry" against "the moralistic-entrepreneurial norming of knowledge production."²³ In the last twenty years, this kind of symptomatic reading that reopens the text to its socio-historical outside and conditions of possibility through the mobilization of theoretical tools has been criticized as a paranoid mode of reading, paranoid here meaning unproductive, stultifying and ultimately egocentric. I refer here of course here to Eve Sedgwick's celebrated "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're so Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You," but also to Bruno Latour's "Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern" and Rita Felski's "Context Stinks!"²⁴ As Rey Chow convincingly argues, the emphasis on repair, sharing and surface reading are all in league with an entrepreneurial selfhood that is best defined by the "coupling of a purported oppression [...] and the garrulous presentation of it as *grievance cum satisfaction*." In other words, the entrepreneurial self as unfinished project is constantly auto-illuminating itself as a spectacle of victimhood and suffering, one that cannot be examined critically, only empathized with. This therapeutic self pervades today's humanities, in particular the fetishism of little traumas, be it literary studies or media studies and, in this case, anime studies, and explains why today we mostly find studies concerned with analyzing the supposedly safer zones of production and consumption of texts at the expense of a critical, symptomatic, discussion of the text itself. Japanese popular culture in particular legitimizes this approach given the integral role of consumers in the production of manga and anime. Yet this is forgetting two things, first that the fandom mobilized for the production of manga and anime is only one type of fandom, and second that stories remain central to the consumption of these texts by anyone. In other words, narrative analysis and symptomatic reading cannot be avoided if we want to reopen cultural texts to their invisible outside, that is, to their historical mode of distribution.

Narrative movement, which is not about literary analysis per se, is essential to the distributive experience of texts like *Kimetsu* and precisely allows for their production and consumption; in short, distribution comes first, and it is concerned with the queer movement of the narratable. By narrative movement I mean the movement from image to image, word to word, image, sound and affect, any kind of movement that orients a force of

deformation by making it pass through temporarily stabilized forms of transformation. The face is here the exemplary surface onto which this tension between deformation and transformation is at its highest level of intensification. The affect-image in Deleuze's theory of film is the close-up of the face where "juridical regularities" ordering the white wall/black hole face are disturbed by the chaotic movement of affects. This is not anymore the poverty of depoliticized empathy for entrepreneurs-as-victims, but on the contrary affect as a chaotic movement of deformation in an ongoing movement of facial deformation, masks and eyes multiplying at the surface of the body turned face-mask. And in turn, the capture of this movement into a series of forms of transformation is what allows for valuation in the media-mix, in *Kimetsu* the parade of monstrous faces.

There is essentially nothing new here except for the planetary situation addressed by *Kimetsu*, how narrative movement is articulated in terms of a tension between deformation and transformation, and how this formal tension is thematized, and I would even say socialized, as one between parasitism and symbiosis. This is why *Kimetsu* is not about the victimized helpless entrepreneurial subject, or not only. One could say that humans and oni cannot live together because ultimately, they are not different species; different but not quite different enough, they can only be parasites of each other. Symbiotic life however is only possible between different species. What really starts the narrative of *Kimetsu* is not the brutal murder of Tanjiro's family by an oni, but the irregularity of his sister, Nezuko, who despite being an oni has not forgotten her humanity and is able to control her urges to eat humans: she is a truly different and queer species. Nezuko is the exception that could allow for oni to become symbiots rather than parasitic life-forms. The melancholic assemblage of Tanjiro-Nezuko-Box composes a unique symbiotic life form, a mobile incestuous home-refuge—incestuous because against sexual reproduction, opening the possibility of a third necropolitical choice, the possibility to let die, and live an impersonal life/death. This possibility of symbiotic life/death is however ignored



Figure 5. Tanjiro, Nezuko, the Box²⁵

in the end because Nezuko becomes human again, yet it remains in the memory of the queer narrative movement that led us to the end of the story.

Endnotes

- 1 *Demon Slayer*, Episode 8, Netflix, directed by Sotozaki Haruo (Tokyo: Aniplex/Ufotable, 2019).
- 2 Christophe Thouny, "When Carps Can't Breathe in Water: On Tawada Yōko's Planetary Musings in Corona Times," *Critical Asia Archives Covid 19 Issue Society Must Go On! Thinking at the Threshold of Biological Modernity, Stupidity, and (Post-) Pandemic Temporality*, December 2020. <https://caarchives.org/when-carps-cant-breathe-in-water/>
Yōko Tawada, "Der Weltbürgersteig" (World sidewalks), *Spradtsprachen*, Vol 14, 2020. <https://stadtsprachen.de/en/text/der-weltbuergersteig/>
- 3 Tracy Brown, "Why the Demon Slayer movie is such a unique anime success story," *Los Angeles Time*, April 2021. <https://www.latimes.com/entertainment-arts/movies/story/2021-04-23/demon-slayer-kimetsu-no-yaiba-movie-mugen-train-anime-success-story>
- 4 Mugen Train is not only the biggest domestic box-office hit, it is also the highest-grossing Japanese film ever globally. <https://www.hollywoodreporter.com/movies/movie-news/demon-slayer-overtakes-spirited-away-to-become-japans-biggest-box-office-hit-ever-4109739/>
- 5 Vladimir Jankélévitch, *Le je-ne-sais-quoi et le Presque-rien I. La manière et l'occasion* (The I-don't-know-what and the almost-nothing I. manner and occasion), Paris: Seuil, 1980.
- 6 See also <https://www.alamy.com/stock-photo-asakusa-park-twelve-story-pagotda-ryouunkaku-tokyo-japan-taisho-period-104371532.html>.
- 7 Thomas Looser, "From Edogawa to Miyazaki: cinematic time and anime-ic architecture of early and late twentieth-century Japan," *Japan Forum*, Vol. 14, Issue 2, 2002, 300-301.
- 8 *Demon Slayer*, Episode 7, Netflix, directed by Sotozaki Haruo (Tokyo: Aniplex/Ufotable, 2019).
- 9 Myriam Silverberg, *Erotique-grotesque-nonsense: The Mass Culture of Japanese Modern Times*, Berkeley: University of California Press, 2006, xv.
- 10 Peter Brooks, *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*, Cambridge & London: Harvard University Press, 1992, 139.
- 11 Myriam Sylverberg, *Changing Songs: The Marxist Manifestos of Nakano Shigeharu*, Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1990, 46-47.
- 12 Michel Foucault, Graham Burchell trans., *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-75*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, 324.
- 13 *Demon Slayer*, Episode 7, Netflix, directed by Sotozaki Haruo (Tokyo: Aniplex/Ufotable, 2019).
- 14 Thomas Looser, "From Edogawa to Miyazaki: cinematic time and anime-ic architecture of early and late twentieth-century Japan," *Japan Forum*, Vol. 14, Issue 2, 2002, 311.
- 15 Thomas Lamarre, *The Anime Ecology: A Genealogy of Television, Animation, and Game Media*, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2018, 176-177. Lamarre refers to Michel Foucault's lecture on psychiatric power at the Collège de France on December 5th, 1973. I give below the full text for reference.

"What I have wanted to show you is that, however much the family continued to conform to a

model of sovereignty in the nineteenth century, it may be that, from the middle of the nineteenth century perhaps, there was a sort of internal disciplinarization of the family, that is to say, a kind of transfer of disciplinary forms and schemas, of those techniques of power given by the disciplines, into the very heart of the game of sovereignty.

Just as the family model is transferred into disciplinary systems, disciplinary techniques are transplanted into the family. And at that point the family, while retaining the specific heterogeneity of sovereign power, begins to function like a little school: the strange category of student parents appears, home duties begin to appear, the control of school discipline by the family; the family becomes a micro-clinic which controls the normality or abnormality of the body, of the soul; it becomes a small scale barracks, and maybe it becomes, we will come back to this, the place where sexuality circulates.”

Michel Foucault, Graham Burchell trans., *Psychiatric Power: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1973-74*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2006, 115.

- 16 The definition of the family by an ongoing state of crisis is the groundbreaking thesis exposed by Jacques Donzelot in Jacques Donzelot, *La police des familles*, Paris: Minuit, 1977.
- 17 Michel Foucault, Graham Burchell trans., *Abnormal: Lectures at the Collège de France, 1974-75*, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003, 324.
- 18 *Demon Slayer*, Episode 26, Netflix, directed by Sotozaki Haruo (Tokyo: Aniplex/Ufotable, 2019).
- 19 Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013, 128-129.
- 20 Gilles Deleuze, 2003, Daniel W. Smith trans. *Francis Bacon: The Logic of Sensation*, London & New York: Continuum, 59.
- 21 Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman*, Cambridge: Polity Press, 2013, 129.
- 22 Rey Chow, *A Face Drawn in the Sand: Humanistic Inquiry and Foucault in the Present*, New York: Columbia University Press, 2021.
- 23 *Ibid*, 31.
- 24 Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, “Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You’re so Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You,” in *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*, Durham: Duke University Press, 1997, 123-151. Bruno Latour’s “Why Has Critique Run Out of Steam? From Matters of Fact to Matters of Concern”, *Critical Enquiry*, Vol. 30, Winter 2004, 225-248. Rita Felski, “Context Stinks!”, *New Literary History*, Vol. 42, Issue 4, Autumn 2011, 573-591.
- 25 *Demon Slayer*, Episode 7, Netflix, directed by Sotozaki Haruo (Tokyo: Aniplex/Ufotable, 2019).