

El Eros platónico, lo Numinoso Ottoniano y la nostalgia espiritual de la Cultura Otaku
Platonic Eros, Ottonian Numinous and Spiritual Longing in Otaku Culture

Ph.D. Adam Brakman¹

Recibido el 10.01-09.
Aceptado el 25-08-09.

Resumen

Este artículo explora la idea de lo espiritual en la cultura otaku, en primer lugar, dilucida el eros de Platón y lo numinoso de Rudol Otto, y luego, en segundo lugar, mediante el examen de algunos ejemplos de anime y manga, dos de los objetos más sagrados de la cultura Otaku, vinculado desde una experiencia personal y el atractivo religioso descrito desde lo misterioso, irreductible y espiritual. Se resaltan algunos modelos religioso extraído de la familia animada Mi Vecino Totoro, el shonen anime Gundam, y el shojo manga Sailor Moon.

Palabras Claves: Eros, Numinoso, espiritual,

Abstract

Thus, in this paper I would like to explore the idea of spiritual longing in *otaku* culture, firstly, by elucidating Plato's *eros* and Otto's *numinous*, and then, secondly, by examining a few examples from anime and manga which have instilled in me, or others I know, a deep desire for something that can only be described as mysterious, irreducible and spiritual. Used examples are drawn from the family-orientated anime *My Neighbor Totoro*, the *shōnen* anime *Gundam*, and the *shōjo* manga *Sailor Moon*.

Keywords: Eros, Numinous, Spiritual

Less than a month ago I was in North Korea seeing the sights and engaging in some general research into the philosophical mood of its people. After exploring the desolate, zombie-like town of Kaesong, I happened upon a small shop selling such things as the North's own brand of Coca-Cola, stamps with Kim Jung Il's face on them, a myriad of different types of Chinese medicine and, of all things, a *manhwa* – the Korean name for manga – containing some of the most impressive art I had ever seen; indeed, to my utter surprise, the images in the North Korean *manhwa* filled me with a deep yearning for something quite inexplicable. Naturally, as a professor of philosophy, I felt obliged to investigate this phenomenon further.

And as I did so, I started to realize that certain manga and anime – arguably, the two most sacred objects of *otaku* culture – have been stirring in me these kinds of feelings ever since I could remember. As a result of this, I immediately came to see that it did not matter whether the culture producing the anime and manga was largely atheistic, like North Korea, Shinto-Buddhist, like Japan, or Christian, like the USA: *otaku* culture produced anywhere and by any type of believer or nonbeliever seemed to be capable of awakening in me what Plato calls *eros* and Rudolph Otto calls the *numinous*.

As I moved beyond my own personal reflections to see what scholars of *otaku* culture have already written on this subject, I found some precedent for my own ideas in the work of Teri Silvio, who has examined the relationship between religious icons and character toys in Taiwan,² Hiroshi Yamanaka, who has discussed “pop cultural spirituality” in the work of Hayao Miyazaki,³ and Susan Napier, who, influenced by Roger Aden's book *Popular Stories and Promised Land: Fan Cultures and Symbolic Pilgrimages*, has written about western *otaku* making “pilgrimages to Akihabara” and has wisely labelled certain anime and manga chatrooms “sacred spaces.”⁴ Nevertheless, while I agreed with the insights of all these scholars, I felt they did not go far enough in linking their observations to larger philosophical issues. Thus, in this paper I would like to explore the idea of spiritual longing in *otaku* culture, firstly, by elucidating Plato's *eros* and Otto's *numinous*, and then, secondly, by examining a few examples from anime and manga which have instilled in me, or others I know, a deep desire for something that can only be described as mysterious, irreducible and spiritual.

Platonic *Eros* and Ottonian *Numinous*

Platonic *Eros*

Although nowadays *eros* is usually discussed in terms of sexual love, it was not always so. In the writings of Plato, for instance, *eros* has a more technical meaning which can only be understood in the context of his entire worldview – a worldview which is best understood from a myth we find in the dialogue *Phaedrus*. The myth reads like this:

Once, long ago, the soul dwelt in the upper heavens with the gods and together they were enraptured in the beatific vision: the contemplation of true Beauty and Reality – i.e. the eternal Forms. But one day the soul looked away from the world of the Forms due to its rational faculty exercising imperfect control over its passionate faculty. Consequently, when the soul looked away, it plunged farther into the physical world, resulting in distorted knowledge and the loss of

true Happiness. Forgetfulness of its true Home set in when the soul was incarnate; however, it was not total amnesia. The soul had the ability to remember its true Home if it would only direct its attention to the knowledge innate within itself which would, in turn, point to its origin, the eternal Forms, the object the soul truly desired; or to put it another way, the soul needed to be possessed by a god, whose maddening love or *eros* for knowledge would propel the soul heavenward:

This then is the fourth type of madness, which befalls when a man, reminded by the sight of beauty on earth of the true beauty, grows his wings and endeavours to fly upward, but in vain, exposing himself to the reproach of insanity because like a bird he fixes his gaze on the heights to the neglect of things below; and the conclusion to which our whole discourse points is that in itself and in its origin that is the best of all forms of divine possession, both for the subject himself and for his associate, and it is when he is touched with this madness that the man whose love is aroused by beauty in others is called a lover. As I have said, every human soul by its very nature has beheld true being – otherwise it would not have entered into the creature we call man – but it is not every soul that finds it easy to use its present experience as a means of recollecting the world of reality.⁵

From this myth in *Phaedrus*, along with another myth in *Symposium*, we may draw the following conclusions. First, Platonic *eros* is the innate desire or appetite for Beauty (since love must always have an object⁶). Second, since Platonic *eros* is always for something it knows about but lacks, the soul has some knowledge of true Beauty but lacks complete knowledge of it; hence, Platonic *eros* is the son of Poverty (a mortal who is always wanting) and Contrivance (an immortal god who, in virtue of his immortality, lacks nothing, including knowledge).⁷ Third, since “wisdom is one of the most beautiful things, and Love is love of Beauty, it follows that Love must be a lover of wisdom;”⁸ that is, Platonic *eros* is a love of Truth because it loves the Beauty in Truth; indeed, it is from this that we get the concept of the philosopher, who is a lover of Truth. Fourth, since what is good is the same as what is beautiful, the soul, lacking the Good, also desires it.⁹ Fifth, because without the Good, the soul cannot be happy, the soul, by desiring Goodness (and Beauty and Truth), also desires perfect Happiness: ““And what will have been gained by the man who is in possession of the good?’ ‘I find that an easier question to answer; he will be happy.’”¹⁰ Sixth, since the soul’s true Home – its Goodness and Happiness – consists in the soul contemplating Beauty (and Truth), the soul, by desiring after Beauty, Truth, Goodness and Happiness, also desires after its true Home. And seventh, while all people desire after Beauty, Goodness, Happiness and their true Home, most fail to find these because they mistake images or copies of these Forms for the Forms themselves; indeed, instead of using the images or copies of the Forms in this world of flux as signposts that point beyond themselves to the Real World, most settle for loving the imperfect images. Only the true philosopher sees objects of beauty in the lower physical world as markers that help the soul remember true Beauty.

Ottonian Numinous

More than two thousand years after Plato discussed his theory of *eros*, German philosopher Rudolf Otto wrote his most influential book, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-Rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational* (which, incidentally,

has been effectively employed by Ishida Hoyu in his discussion of Japanese Buddhism¹¹). In *The Idea of the Holy*, Otto examines “the *Numen*” or “the Holy,” which is a technical word used to describe the sacred minus any moral or rational aspects.¹² From the word *Numen*, Otto derives the word “*numinous*,” with which he then speaks of a *numinous* category of value which is always present when an individual is in a *numinous* state of mind. “This mental state,” Otto writes, “is perfectly *sui generis* and irreducible to any other; and therefore, like every absolutely primary and elementary datum, while it admits of being discussed, it cannot be strictly defined.”¹³ Nevertheless, despite Otto’s initial insistence that the *numinous* is absolutely basic and unique, later on not only does he concede that the *numinous* is intimately related to Kant’s sublime, but also that it is, though he does not say so in so many words, broadly related to Platonic *eros*. However, before any of these connections can be made, it is important to be clear about the nature of the *numinous*.

According to Otto, the *numinous* is the feeling that overcomes the mind when the individual “is submerged and overwhelmed by its own nothingness.”¹⁴ This feeling, in turn, is always accompanied by a sense of complete dependence on the divine.¹⁵ However, this feeling of dependence is not merely a natural feeling of dependence, such as insufficiency resulting from a difficult circumstance; rather, it is a mystical sense of dependence, like the dependence Abraham felt when he pled with God for the men of Sodom: “Behold now, I, who am but dust and ash, have taken upon me to speak unto the Lord.”¹⁶ Otto calls this kind of dependency the “creature-feeling;”¹⁷ nevertheless, while the *numinous* is broadly identified with “creature-feeling,” Otto claims that this can be divided into two key elements: (1) the feeling of *mysterium tremendum*, and (2) fascination. For the sake of systemization, I will begin with *mysterium tremendum*, and then move onto fascination.

When an individual experiences *mysterium tremendum*, he feels he is in the presence of something which is at once awful, august, majestic, overpowering, living, urgent, different, pulsating and uncanny.¹⁸ The feeling of *mysterium tremendum* may “burst in sudden eruption up from the depths of the soul with spasms and convulsions, or lead to the strangest excitements, to intoxicated frenzy, to transport, and to ecstasy;” in itself, this feeling may be either demonic or angelic, something wild and grisly or beautiful and pure.¹⁹ Yet in whatever mode this feeling takes, it always makes the mind shudder and the individual think of himself as less than nothing since he feels himself to be in the presence of something that is supernatural, wholly other and yet pulsating with an energy and life more real than his own.

The eeriness or uncanny nature of *mysterium tremendum* is a vital part of this concept since it points to the unlimited, supernatural nature of the *numinous*. Otto himself compares this element of the *numinous* to Kant’s sublime, for while neither are concerned with Beauty, both are concerned with the mysterious, the maddening, the daunting, and the boundless²⁰ (although, of course, Kant’s sublime has to do with aesthetics, whereas Otto’s *numinous* has to do with religion; hence, Otto claims that Kant’s sublime is “a pale reflexion of” the *numinous*²¹). Consequently, the *numinous* can be incited by things like romantic literature, fairy stories and myths; as Otto writes, “But the fairy-story proper only comes into being with the element of the ‘wonderful,’ with miracle and miraculous events and consequences, i.e. by means of an infusion of the *numinous*. And the same holds good in an increased degree of *myth*.”²²

The second and final element in the *numinous* is fascination. This sensation occurs in the individual as a result of his experiencing the mysterious and unknown. Awe, it is true, brings the individual to his knees, but desire to see and understand the mystery – indeed, fascination and “love” for the mystery²³ – causes him to raise his eyes. And what he sees when he raises his eyes

causes him to be overcome with a kind of madness, but it is the madness of the finite looking into the infinite,²⁴ and in this sense, it bears resemblance to Platonic *eros*, which speaks of the need for the soul to be possessed by divine *eros* in order to ascend into the heavens. Consequently, the individual who experiences the *numinous* feels at once terrified of, and attracted to, the haunting mystery.

Spiritual Longing

Now as we have seen, the *numinous* is not exactly synonymous with Platonic *eros* since it has little to do with Beauty, Truth, the Good, Happiness or Home.²⁵ However, Plato's *eros* and Otto's *numinous* may be united under the common banner of spiritual longing in at least two ways: first, in both cases, the individual is aware of his poor state in comparison to the divine – that is, the individual is aware of having some knowledge of the mysterious divine, but not complete knowledge of it – and second, the individual subsequently becomes fascinated with, and desirous of, the divine, often via some intermediary object. With these similarities in mind, I would now like to examine a few examples of *otaku* culture which, on my reading, demonstrate such spiritual longing.

Examples of Spiritual Longing in *Otaku* Culture

Freud says that religious longing is actually masked sexual longing, but Plato says that sexual longing is actually masked religious longing. On my account, Plato is closer to the mark. Thus, as I look for particular examples of spiritual longing in *otaku* culture, I will be looking both at, and upward through, the appearance – be it a tree or a relationship – to the mysterious, transcendent thing behind it. I have chosen broad examples from anime and manga in order to demonstrate how any genre can potentially be a source of Platonic *eros* or Ottonian *numinous*; my examples are drawn from the family-orientated anime *My Neighbor Totoro*, the *shōnen* anime *Gundam*, and the *shōjo* manga *Sailor Moon*.

Yet even as I have chosen my examples, three things should be noted. First, I have by no means come close to exhausting all instances of Platonic *eros* and Ottonian *numinous* in *otaku* culture: I could have looked at other examples, such as *Macross Plus*, in which Naoki and Hiroko Chiba have, without realizing, stumbled across an excellent example of “yearning,” which occurs when as single word, “Eden,” is uttered.²⁶ Second, since the divine is far-off and imperfectly felt, people may reasonably disagree about what moves them; for instance, while Patrick Drazen seems to think that the majestic “mythos” found in *The Vision of Escaflowne* would not be appreciated by most Americans,²⁷ I think otherwise. Third, since Ottonian *numinous*, at least, is unrelated to morality, I could have selected amoral or immoral images which excite spiritual longing, such as the image of the *shishigami* in *Princess Mononoke* or the post-apocalyptic world of *Akira*; however, since Platonic *eros* is directed toward Beauty, which, in turn, ultimately touches objective moral Goodness, I have left these examples aside, referring them to others for further exploration.

My Neighbor Totoro

An author is not always the best judge of the mythical and *numinous*-inspiring aspects of his own work. Hence, when Hayao Miyazaki says that he does not think *My Neighbor Totoro* is a nostalgic work,²⁸ he is surely mistaken. Nonetheless, he may not be wrong insofar as he was speaking about nostalgia for a real past. In fact, I would argue that the nostalgia some people feel when they watch *Totoro* is a sort of remembrance – innate or acquired – of some timeless home which they miss yet have never seen, some archetype that feels familiar and yet strange at the same time.

That is, although I did not grow up in the Japanese countryside, I do not think I am alone in feeling Platonic *eros* or Ottonian *numinous* when, in *Totoro*, I am presented with images of rice fields in the country, the two girls watching a leaf floating down a stream, a *torii* in the forest, the country house surrounded by overgrown grass and butterflies, the humming of the cicadas, and, most especially, the mysterious old camphor tree – a *kami* or god who has existed from the days of yore, “back when trees and humans used to be friends.”²⁹ All of these images – but especially the archetypal tree – resonate the divine, not because they remind me of my youth, but because they embody and reflect something spiritual. But, some may ask, is this not simply Shinto spirituality, in which “the material never exists without *some* relation to the spiritual”?³⁰ While I question the philosophical soundness of Shintoism, its insistence that “the world is *kami*-filled” is a perfect metaphor to express how all things can potentially arouse spiritual longing – how, on my account, most things have the dust of the divine and yet are not themselves the divine.³¹



FIGURE 1. The giant camphor tree in *My Neighbor Totoro*.

Gundam

Renowned cultural critic Hiroki Azuma once rhetorically asked, “[In this postmodern age] is there no longer any need for narrative or fiction in the manner of *Gundam* or *Evangelion*?”³² His

answer, I take it, is “no”: grand narratives, epics and stories that are larger than self-creating individuals networking with each other are obsolete.³³

Yet risking the *ad populum* fallacy, I think the majority of evidence is against Azuma. The top grossing Hollywood movies of all time are epics which, while demonstrating complex character growth and perplexing moral dilemmas, also point to a cause or universe which is greater than



any single individual or even a network of individuals. Furthermore, when I was in Japan a few weeks ago, *Gundam 00*, a grand narrative if ever there was one, was the most popular anime on TV. Why this attraction to grand narratives? Simply put, *Gundam*, like many other grand narratives, is steeped in mythos, majesty and all the aspects of the *mysterium tremendum*. Consider, for instance, how the lead Gundam in any of the *Gundam* series after 1995 is often portrayed *angelically*. This is no accident. *Gundam* writers almost certainly felt the mythical gravitas of their subject matter, which in turn became a source of Platonic *eros* or Ottonian *numinous* in viewers.

Moreover, because grand narratives emanate and resonate with irreducible, spiritual elements, any attempt to dissect these mythical phenomena is bound, in the words of William Wordsworth, to murder any feelings of *numinous* we may otherwise have felt. Thus, for instance, despite finding Lois Gresh and Robert Weinberg’s book *The Science of Anime* an interesting read,³⁴ I found its explanation of the mechanics of Gundams to be something I would rather not have known. As far as I am concerned, Gresh and Weinberg failed to surrender to the mythical images being presented in *Gundam* and hence were deprived (and in turn, deprived their readers) of the spiritual longing that *Gundam* excites. Total abandonment before images of the angelic Gundams sweeping in and bringing hope where hope was lost is a necessity for the highest enjoyment, for these images are not mere clichés or conventions, but something *more*.

FIGURE 2. An angelic Gundam.

Sailor Moon

Like any art form, manga and anime can be used in positive or negative ways. Thus, while I agree with Shōkō Asahara, the leader of the Japanese cult Aum Shinrikyō, that manga and anime like *Space Battleship Yamato* and *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* resonate with the spiritual, what he ultimately did with this spiritual inspiration – sarin gassing hundreds of people in a Tokyo subway – is despicable.³⁵ In other words, although Richard Gardner and Frederik Schodt are right when they say that manga and anime cannot be held responsible for crimes committed by

creatures with free will,³⁶ we must not avoid the fact that only powerful emotional stimuli are capable of inspiring people – for good or for ill.

And this is a lesson that should be kept in mind while discussing spiritual longing in *Sailor Moon*. That is, while I agree with feminist cultural critics, such as Susan Napier, that it is wrong for western *otaku* to objectify Japanese females – an act that ultimately lowers the status of women³⁷ – I disagree with feminist cultural critics, such as Annalee Newitz, who seems to think that the reason why so many *men* are attracted to manga and anime like *Sailor Moon* is because they can find in it “nostalgia for the kind of social situations made possible by traditional gender roles.”³⁸ Setting aside the fact that *Sailor Moon* has been a positive force in championing certain forms of feminism, it is precisely the presentation of traditional – or on my reading, archetypal – gender roles that makes *Sailor Moon* a source of spiritual longing. Let me explain as best I can.



FIGURE 4. Sailor Moon and Tuxedo Mask

It is the easiest thing in the world to reduce gender to a personal or social construction: both men and women have minds and bodies and both seem capable of doing most of the same things. While this makes good sense in the public square – when voting, when hiring and so on – I think gender is another case of “murdering to dissect.” If gender is not treated as something irreducible, essential and given, we destroy the mythical resonance that is unique to each gender and perfected when they come together in romance. Leaving aside the issue of same-sex love, when a “traditional” man and woman come together in love, they become more than the sum of their parts: they, as archetypes of their gender, birth a love that has a genuine spiritual aura.

Moreover, it is telling that such a love – for instance, the love that exists between Sailor Moon and Tuxedo Mask – always promises to be together *forever* . . . and what does “forever” mean in this case but enduring as is in a higher, eternal realm that is not quite understood, but felt and longed for? Of course, the Japanese – and Buddhists in general – are famous for finding beauty in impermanence, hence, the *sakura*, which flowers magnificent blooms for a few short weeks and then withers away. However, while all great loves seem to almost require some heartbreak in order to be complete, no one really longs for a love that is, and then is no more. A man who loves a woman certainly wants to be with her forever, and forever requires a forever-realm which is only partially seen and understood, hence, the bridging between romantic and spiritual longing.

“To Discover Aspects of Home at a Different Location”

In this essay, I have taken the advice of Mark MacWilliams, who stresses the need to explore the “dream worlds found within manga and anime,”³⁹ and Patrick Drazen, who thinks, “No pop culture medium should be taken lightly, since it contains the capacity to guide viewers along the path of socially acceptable thought and action.”⁴⁰ Additionally, while some feminists may take

issue with my essentialist approach to gender, I have also taken the advice of Susan Napier, who believes “the fundamental emotions that prompt these [anime and manga romantic] fantasies are worth taking seriously.”⁴¹

Yet despite all this advice, this essay is really about me – a fallible man –philosophizing about the profound spiritual feelings that I, and others like me, have experienced in reading certain manga and watching certain anime. Throughout I have avoided any discussion of religious traditions or doctrines, not because they are unimportant or because I am ignorant of them, but because I wanted to find something basic and universal which in some small measure may account for the popularity of certain aspects of *otaku* culture both in Japan and elsewhere. Expanding on Ulf Hamerz’s comment that many western youth find home a bit of a prison, Susan Napier thinks, “Anime allows its fans to ‘leave home’ for a little while to discover aspects of home at a different location.”⁴² I agree with her, but I think the aspects of home such people discover are not merely of their physical home, but also of a home seen through a glass darkly.

Bibliografía

Terri Silvio, "Pop Culture Icons: Religious Inflections of the Character Toy in Taiwan," in *Mechademia 3: Limits of the Human*, edited by Frenchy Lunning, 200-220 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).

Hiroshi Yamanaka, "The Utopian 'Power to Live': The Significance of the Miyazaki Phenomenon," in *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime*, edited by Mark MacWilliams, 237-255 (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharp, 2008), 237.

Susan Napier, *From Impressionism to Anime: Japan as Fantasy and Fan Cult in the Mind of the West* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 151. Also see Roger Aden, *Popular Stories and Promised Lands: Fan Cultures and Symbolic Pilgrimages* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999).

See Ishida Hoyu, "Otto's Theory of Religious Experience as Encounter with the Numinous and Its Application to Buddhism," *Japanese Religions* 15, no. 3 (January 1989): 19-33.

Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, trans. John W. Harvey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 6.

Edmund Burke, *On the Sublime and Beautiful* (New York, P. F. Collier & Son, 1937), 101 [3.27].

See Naoki Chiba and Hiroko Chiba, "Words of Alienation, Words of Flight: Loanwords in Science Fiction Anime," in *Robot Ghosts and Wired Dreams: Japanese Science Fiction from Origins to Anime*, edited by Christopher Bolton, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., and Takayuki Tatsumi, 148-171 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 160.

Patrick Drazen, *Anime Explosion! The What? Why? & Wow! Of Japanese Animation* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 2003), 15.

Hayao Miyazaki, *Shuppatsu Ten 1979-1996* (Tokyo: Sutajio Jiburi, 1996), 490.

Thomas Kasulis, *Shinto: The Way Home* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 16.

Hiroki Azuma, "The Animalization of Otaku Culture," in *Mechademia 2: Networks of Desire*, edited by Frenchy Lunning, 175-188 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 183.

Hiroki Azuma, "SF as Hamlet: Science Fiction and Philosophy," in *Robot Ghosts and Wired Dreams: Japanese Science Fiction from Origins to Anime*, edited by Christopher Bolton, Istvan

Csicsery-Ronay Jr., and Takayuki Tatsumi, 75-82 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 77.

Lois Gresh and Robert Weinberg, *The Science of Anime: Mecha-Noids and Ai-Super-Bots* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2005).

Richard Gardner, "Aum Shinrikyō and a Panic about Manga and Anime," in *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime*, edited by Mark MacWilliams, 200-218 (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2008), 202.

Frederik Schodt, *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 1996), 48.

Annalee Newitz, "Magical Girls and Atomic Bomb Sperm: Japanese Animation in America," *Film Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (Fall 1995): 5.

Mark MacWilliams, introduction to *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime*, edited by Mark MacWilliams, 3-25 (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2008), 5.

Notes

- ¹ Académico de la Universidad Yonsei University. Seoul, Corea del Sur.
- ² Terri Silvio, "Pop Culture Icons: Religious Inflections of the Character Toy in Taiwan," in *Mechademia 3: Limits of the Human*, edited by Frenchy Lunning, 200-220 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).
- ³ Hiroshi Yamanaka, "The Utopian 'Power to Live': The Significance of the Miyazaki Phenomenon," in *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime*, edited by Mark MacWilliams, 237-255 (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2008), 237.
- ⁴ Susan Napier, *From Impressionism to Anime: Japan as Fantasy and Fan Cult in the Mind of the West* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 151. Also see Roger Aden, *Popular Stories and Promised Lands: Fan Cultures and Symbolic Pilgrimages* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1999).
- ⁵ Plato *Phaedrus* 249-50.
- ⁶ Plato *Symposium* 199e.
- ⁷ *Ibid.*, 202a, 203b.
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, 204d.
- ⁹ *Ibid.*, 200e.
- ¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 204d.
- ¹¹ See Ishida Hoyu, "Otto's Theory of Religious Experience as Encounter with the Numinous and Its Application to Buddhism," *Japanese Religions* 15, no. 3 (January 1989): 19-33.
- ¹² Rudolf Otto, *The Idea of the Holy: An Inquiry into the Non-rational Factor in the Idea of the Divine and its Relation to the Rational*, trans. John W. Harvey (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1958), 6.
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, 7.
- ¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 10.
- ¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 25.
- ¹⁶ Genesis 28:27.
- ¹⁷ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 8.
- ¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 13-30.
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 12-13.
- ²⁰ For Kant, emotion is irrelevant to beauty, but not to the sublime. Moreover, while beauty has to do with quality, the formed, the finite and the natural, the sublime has to do with quantity, the unformed, the infinite and the non-rational. Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Judgement*, trans. J. H. Bernard (New York: Hafner, 1961) [2.23]. It should be noted that the division between the sublime and the beautiful did not originate with Kant, for Kant himself derived this idea from Edmund Burke's *On the Sublime and Beautiful* (not Longinus' *On the Sublime*). However, since Otto dealt with Kant and not Burke, I have restricted my comments to Kant. Cf. Edmund Burke, *On the Sublime and Beautiful* (New York, P. F. Collier & Son, 1937), 101 [3.27].
- ²¹ Otto, *The Idea of the Holy*, 40.
- ²² *Ibid.*, 122.
- ²³ *Ibid.*, 41.
- ²⁴ *Ibid.*, 29.
- ²⁵ Otto said that *Numen* or "the Holy" is analogous to, but not synonymous with, Beauty and the Good. *Ibid.*, 51.
- ²⁶ See Naoki Chiba and Hiroko Chiba, "Words of Alienation, Words of Flight: Loanwords in Science Fiction Anime," in *Robot Ghosts and Wired Dreams: Japanese Science Fiction from Origins to Anime*, edited by Christopher Bolton, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., and Takayuki Tatsumi, 148-171 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 160.
- ²⁷ Patrick Drazen, *Anime Explosion! The What? Why? & Wow! Of Japanese Animation* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 2003), 15.
- ²⁸ Hayao Miyazaki, *Shuppatsu Ten 1979-1996* (Tokyo: Sutajio Jiburi, 1996), 490.
- ²⁹ *Tonari no Totoro*, directed by Hayao Miyazaki (1988); translated as *My Neighbor Totoro*, subtitled DVD (Disney, 2006).
- ³⁰ Thomas Kasulis, *Shinto: The Way Home* (Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press, 2004), 16.
- ³¹ *Ibid.*, 17.
- ³² Hiroki Azuma, "The Animalization of Otaku Culture," in *Mechademia 2: Networks of Desire*, edited by Frenchy Lunning, 175-188 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 183.
- ³³ Hiroki Azuma, "SF as Hamlet: Science Fiction and Philosophy," in *Robot Ghosts and Wired Dreams: Japanese Science Fiction from Origins to Anime*, edited by Christopher Bolton, Istvan Csicsery-Ronay Jr., and Takayuki Tatsumi, 75-82 (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2007), 77.
- ³⁴ Lois Gresh and Robert Weinberg, *The Science of Anime: Mecha-Noids and Ai-Super-Bots* (New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 2005).
- ³⁵ Richard Gardner, "Aum Shinrikyō and a Panic about Manga and Anime," in *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime*, edited by Mark MacWilliams, 200-218 (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2008), 202.
- ³⁶ Frederik Schodt, *Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga* (Berkeley: Stone Bridge Press, 1996), 48.
- ³⁷ Napier, *From Impressionism to Anime*, 103-123.

³⁸ Annalee Newitz, "Magical Girls and Atomic Bomb Sperm: Japanese Animation in America," *Film Quarterly* 49, no. 1 (Fall 1995): 5.

³⁹ Mark MacWilliams, introduction to *Japanese Visual Culture: Explorations in the World of Manga and Anime*, edited by Mark MacWilliams, 3-25 (Armonk, NY: M. E. Sharpe, 2008), 5.

⁴⁰ Drazen, *Anime Explosion!* viii.

⁴¹ Napier, *From Impressionism to Anime*, 123.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 190.