HWA CHONG INSTITUTION (HIGH SCHOOL SECTION)

HUMANITIES RESEARCH PAPER 2019

Topic: A Cyberpunk Reading of Katsuhiro Otomo's *Akira*

Slant: Literature

Total Word Count (excluding abstract, footnotes & references):

Student's (official) Name: Yap Bo Yu

Class: 4H1 (28)

Name of Teacher-Mentor: Ms Tay Yan Hoon

Table of Contents

Abstract

Chapter 1: Introductory Chapter

1.1 Background

One of the most notable dystopian narratives in anime history would be Katsuhiro Otomo's groundbreaking 1988 fantasy cyberpunk animation *Akira*. *Akira* was number one at the box office the year of its release in Japan, impressing both domestic and foreign audiences worldwide, and becoming both a critical and cult hit with much focus on its adult themes of dystopia and cyberpunk.

Akira revolves around juvenile biker thugs Kaneda and Tetsuo set in destitute futuristic Neo-Tokyo 2019, rife with explosions and societal chaos. In the film, Tetsuo acquires incredible telekinetic psychic powers after an accident involving an esper, unintentionally being entangled in a secret government project, and goes on a huge rampage and causes great destruction of the city in his attempts to awaken Akira, a highly powerful entity who obliterated Tokyo previously. *Akira's* plot has often been considered the quintessential film in its accurate portrayal of the cyberpunk genre, and has since influenced numerous works in animation, music and games, as well as significantly impacted pop culture worldwide. The film is characterized by its dystopian settings in the chaos and rebellion in the metropolis of Neo-Tokyo, and its body horror elements, as seen in the portrayal of Tetsuo's metamorphosis and the espers' appearances.

1.2 Rationale

The arrival of *Akira* in 1988 was a breakthrough in the adult animation industry with much focus being placed by viewers on its dystopian settings and utilization of body horror elements to create the cyberpunk narrative. *Akira* can also be credited with influencing and inspiring numerous works of film, music and games, hence this research would offer a better understanding of the huge popularity and influence that the plot, themes and settings created in *Akira* had on its audiences.

The way in which cyberpunk is presented in the film is also rather relatable and homogenous, since the present world we live in now is shaped largely by technology and science. Our sentiments and understanding towards this genre has been put across so rightly by Lukas Litzsinger who states that "the great thing about cyberpunk is that it is recognizably our world, only in the future", and cyberpunk "is a setting that is focused on the human experience, and how far we can push the limits of both technology and ourselves". (Lukas Litzsinger, n.d.) This research would hence reveal why this classic cyberpunk film stayed as a cult hit and retained its popularity instead of breaking into the mainstream and oppressive conformity, and provide enriching insight and interpretation on this particular genre.

Akira fits perfectly into the subset of the horror genre, "body horror", which involves bodily mutation through technological intervention, making it an excellent film choice of the cyberpunk genre. The body horror imagery that we witness in *Akira* is a prime example of cyberpunk, perpetuating the cyberpunk ethos on perhaps the largest scale to date - combining

the neon-lit, high-technology /low-living metropolis of *Blade Runner* and *Neuromancer* with body horror overtones (Player, 2011). For example, Tetsuo's acquisition of his extra sensory perception and his subsequent transformation perfectly fits Cronenberg's work of body horror, and its splanchnic spectacle of human destruction is not-unfamiliar to the cyberpunk genre. The body horror elements utilized in Otomo's *Akira* are principal in the film, exemplifying the cyberpunk genre, and detailing the saga of corruption, power struggle and manic violence in such an explicit and intricate way, with its viscerally exciting animated scenes.

These visible elements in the film are the main basis for this research, making it so fascinating and worthwhile to analyse how the film encapsulates the cyberpunk genre through exploring how the dystopia and body horror entities work in perfect tandem to create the cyberpunk narrative in the film. The inclusion of the historical context of Japan in the application of the New Historicism theory used in parallel to the analysis would also allow us to gain greater insight into the director's intent on creating this narrative as a reflection of the subversive change post-war Japan was experiencing during the 1980s, while condemning the shift Japan was inclining itself to in its social and economic recovery from World War II.

1.3 Research Questions

1. How does the dystopia created in *Akira* epitomize the typical cyberpunk genre and is a reflection of the post-war Japanese society during the 1980s?
2. How does the manifestation of body horror throughout the film work in perfect tandem with the cyberpunk elements?
3. How does the power struggle seen between the characters in the film elucidate our understanding of their relationship, as well as offer a lack of a clear moral stance in our interpretation of the film?

1.4 Thesis Statement

The inception of the dystopia and the utilization of the body horror elements in *Akira* allows the characters to be seen as symbols of change in the midst of the harsh reality created by the cyberpunk narrative. *Akira* can thus be seen as Otomo's critique of the moral failure of the authority in the film.

1.5 Scope of Research / Delimitation(s)

It is important to note that the *Akira* film is based on the manga of the same name, but this research and interpretation would only be referencing the film *Akira* (1988), and exploring the concept of dystopia and body horror and how it has been successfully utilized in the film in order to exemplify the cyberpunk genre. The conclusions made in this paper regarding the cyberpunk in Akira will also reference extensively the scholastic articles on the genre as well as its sub-genres, in order to analyse anime's unique ability to employ and incorporate these

elements to describe the "lowlife and high-tech" (Sterling, 1986) futuristic setting created in the film.

A dystopia is a fictional society that is the antithesis of utopia. It is usually characterized by an oppressive social control, such as an authoritarian or totalitarian government. In other words, a dystopia has the opposite of what one would expect in a utopian society. (Nithya. K, 2016). However, there is more than one definitive idea of a dystopia since it can encapsulate many different facets, hence this research would be focusing on these particular elements of the dystopia: the violence and dehumanization of individuals using science and technology as a result of power struggle, the political oppression/totalitarianism and tyrannical governments, as well as environmental disaster. These elements are more prominent in *Akira*, and can also be seen in relation to the cyberpunk genre. This thematic and stylistic approach to analysing the film would not compromise the overall arching idea of a dystopian society, but instead, would allow for a more holistic understanding of how the dystopia created in *Akira* epitomizes the typical cyberpunk genre in Otomo's creation of the narrative film.

Lastly, the analysis of body horror in the characters will only revolve around the main antagonist, Tetsuo, and the side characters, the trio of Espers (Kiyoko, Takashi and Masaru). These characters are chosen because they have elements of body horror that are worth analysing and provide ample material for detailed study. A thorough examination of these characters would therefore aid in the understanding of Otomo's purpose in his creation of this narrative film, which is to critique the rapid development of post-war Japan, from which the bosozoku culture and the moral failure of the authority emerged.

1.6 Significance of Research / Usefulness

This study would provide readers with a better understanding of the common themes present in cyberpunk films, namely the dystopia and body horror, and also gain greater insight into the social political setting of Japan during the 1980s. Since *Akira* has been dubbed as one of the pioneer animations and landmark films in the science-fiction and cyberpunk genre, significantly impacting the growth of anime and Japanese pop culture in the west, beyond contributing to existing research done in the field of study, this paper would hopefully generate deeper appreciation amongst audiences for cyberpunk films, as well as propel greater interest in future analyses of films with such genres and themes.

The cyberpunk genre and the different themes observed in the film are also only made meaningful and significant with the inclusion of the Japanese historical context since it allows us to fully understand the director's intent behind the creation of the film, such that we would be able to better appreciate it.

1.7 Limitation(s)

Firstly, the manga has a different plot structure and character development from the film. Hence, the exclusion of the manga from this research would eliminate any elements that

could potentially influence the insight drawn from the film and provide more consistent analysis and interpretation in this research.

Secondly, since only specific features of the dystopian society created within the cyberpunk genre would be used, the analysis done is not conclusive of what dystopias may entail, and could be somewhat speculative, but can be supplemented by constant reference to established scholastic articles and journals on the genre throughout this study of anime.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Cyberpunk

In his attempt to define the content and ethos of the cyberpunk literary movement, Lawrence Person mentioned that "Classic cyberpunk characters were marginalized, alienated loners who lived on the edge of society in generally dystopic futures where daily life was impacted by rapid technological change, an ubiquitous datasphere of computerized information, and invasive modification of the human body." His quote here perfectly summarizes and corresponds to the unique narrative of *Akira*, which was borne during its timely arrival in this science fiction movement.

Cyberpunk is a subgenre of science fiction in a futuristic setting that tends to focus on the "lowlife and high-tech" (Sterling, 1986), where an oppressive society is characterized by the transformative effects brought about by the excessive use of advanced science and technology. It is usually located in that part of the "futuristic city where the degenerates, the low-lives, the 'punks', inhabit, thrive and conduct their more often than not, illegal business" (Montecalvo, 2010), providing us with the typical dystopian image and setting that is commonly associated with the genre. It is often juxtaposed with a degree of breakdown or radical change in the social order (Hassler, 2008), meaning that cyberpunk plots would generally include what the society looked like before and after the drastic transformation in order to further highlight the effects brought about by the cyberpunk movement.

The term was coined in 1980 by Bruce Bethke in his short story "Cyberpunk", before being solidified as a genre with William Gibson's influential debut novel *Neuromancer* released in 1984. While the specific literary movement ended in the 1990s, the defining characteristics of cyberpunk have since become commonplace in popular narratives about the future.

In *Akira*, Otomo uses conventions of the cyberpunk genre to detail a saga of political turmoil, social isolation, corruption, power. Cyberpunk films are also generally characterized by its perceived troubled future, the antithesis of utopian visions of the future, with its background and atmosphere being "dark and heavy, set in a bustling urban area with high-rise apartments and buildings" (Montecalvo, 2010), as can be seen from the intricately detailed scenes of post-apocalyptic Neo Tokyo as a metropolis with its sprawling skyscrapers and neon city lights.

An extremely appropriate aphorism to describe cyberpunk would be a quote from William Gibson's "*Burning Chrome*" published in 1981, which mentions "... the street finds its own uses for things…" (Gibson, 1981), essentially describing the sometimes unexpected uses and repurposes to which individuals have for technologies, without any regard for the intentions of the original designer.

Cyberpunk, as noted in the name itself, deals with both "cyber" and "punk". The former refers to the genre's interest in techno-scientific developments, as well as what Sterling refers to as "visceral" technology in the preface of *Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology*, mentioning that "[T]he theme of body invasion: prosthetic limbs, implanted circuitry, cosmetic surgery, genetic alteration. The even more powerful theme of mind invasion:

brain-computer interfaces, artificial intelligence, neurochemistry - techniques radically redefining the nature of humanity, the nature of the self." (Sterling, 1986) These themes mentioned here are evidently principal in Otomo's *Akira*, exemplifying the cyberpunk genre, and detailing the saga of corruption, power struggle and manic violence in such an explicit and intricate way, with its viscerally exciting animated scenes.

The second element of the term, "punk" could refer to a troublemaker, an antisocial rebel or someone who was considered a criminal or hoodlum. In terms of social movements, "punk" refers to a 'counterculture', a subculture which repels notions of authority and embraces discord and mutiny. (Smayel, 2014) It can be described as an anarchic violence and rebellious stance against both science fiction's literary condition specifically and the late capitalist world of the 1980s in general. (Schmeink, n.d.) Consequently, the protagonists in cyberpunk narratives are typically low-lifes, criminals, outlaws and anarchists who are likely to rebel against the established order, and have also been disparaged by society. This can be seen in *Akira*, where Kaneda and Tetsuo who are both former orphan asylum inmates part of an outlaw group of young bikers, rejected by society from childhood on with their only experience of collective bonding being the gang loyalties of the motorcycle group, (J. Napier, 1993) become involved with the resistance movement, the government as well as the espers.

As Pam Rosenthal notes, "the future in the cyberpunk world, no matter how astonishing its technological detailing, is always shockingly recognizable—it is our world, gotten worse, gotten more uncomfortable, inhospitable, dangerous, and thrilling." (Rosenthal, 1991) Cyberpunk worlds are not set in some far distant but in a near future world, and portrayed in such a kindred and similar way to our own society, hence making it so fascinating and worthwhile for analysis.

2.2 The Dystopia In Cyberpunk

The dystopia is a prominent element in *Akira*, providing the plot with its settings and structure and can be said to be essential to the scenario created by Otomo. Although the focus of this section would be on the dystopia in cyberpunk, the concept of the dystopia cannot be fully examined without considering the concept of the utopia as well, since both defines each other due to their various conceptual intersections that would be brought up in this paper.

A Glossary of Literary Terms (2015) states that the term 'utopia' designates the class of fictional writings that represent an ideal but non existent political and social way of life while the term 'dystopia' ("bad place") has recently come to be applied to works of fiction, that represent a very unpleasant imaginary world in which ominous tendencies of our present social, political, and technological order are projected into a disastrous future culmination. (Abrams & Harpham, 2015) Hence, the dystopian plot created would always be hinged on elements of present contemporary society and would function as a potent vehicle for criticizing existing social conditions and political systems, while serving as a warning against a modern trend, which is often the social and political threat of oppressive regimes. Dystopias typically reflect contemporary sociopolitical realities and extrapolate worst-case scenarios as warnings for necessary social change or caution. (McFadden, 2015) Hence, although dystopian literature and plots created are usually fictional, by presenting grim and oppressive societies, they serve a moralistic goal of preventing the horrors that they have illustrated. Moreover, the fact that such scenarios are fictitious is not exactly comforting since these dystopias are equally possible. In her introduction to Brave New World, Egyptian professor Angele Samaan also calls dystopia as "a prophetic warning", regarding it as "a product and symptom of the ceaseless restlessness and uncertainty of the present and the quest for a better future typical of a speedily changing world". (Samaan, 1970) Her statement here can be interpreted as the structure and plot of the dystopia being inspired by the continuous unease and chaos that exist in present society, and the longing for positive changes and improvements to the current situation that the population is experiencing.

A dystopia is supposed to be the antithesis of utopia, the inverted adverse version which is usually characterized by an oppressive social control, such as an authoritarian or totalitarian government. Essentially, a dystopia has the opposite of what one would expect in a utopian society. (Nithya. K, 2016) Hence, if 'utopia' is being depicted as a kind of idealised society which possesses highly desirable or perfect qualities for its citizens, 'dystopia' would hence imply its negation, as a society regarded as inferior by its author. As posited by Ashraf Abdelbaky, dystopia is "defined in many science fiction novels as a society that is nightmarish or inhuman in character as a result of political oppression and technological overload and ecological collapse". (Abdelbaky, 2016) It can thus be said that the effects of these elements on a society are fundamental in creating the dystopian narrative. These effects can be seen in Akira and are principal in order to create the structure of the plot within the cyberpunk genre.

Gregory Claey's article "News from Somewhere: Enhanced Sociability and the Composite Definition of Utopia and Dystopia" states that totalitarianism or state terrorism is a key

feature seen in dystopias, with the most relevant factors being "social backwardness, political neccessity and revolutionary movements by terrorist doctrines", with the aim of creating a psychological transformation over individuals in the revolutionary struggle process. (Claeys, 2013) The government or external organizations ruling the country with an iron fist often intend to control their citizens strictly and indoctrinate them with a specific ideology, usually in favor of the government.

Claey also mentioned that science and technology is also being used as a tool for applying this political oppression, showing that technological developments have a key position in the transitional stage from utopian thought to dystopian thought. (Claeys, 2013) The development of science and technology has indeed allowed the government and political parties to be able to exert their power on the citizens much more easily. The growth of the science and technology industry has also caused individuals in society to be much more selfish and individualistic, which as a result also cause them to be more isolated and lonely.

The setting of *Akira* is that of a typical dystopia: the violence and brutality that the citizens experiences as a result of the oppression of the ruling government and people in authority such as Colonel Shikishima and Scientist Onishi, and the devastating side effects that were brought about by the atomic destruction of Old Tokyo.

2.3 Body Horror In Cyberpunk

Linda Williams argues in *Hard Core: Power, Pleasure and the "Frenzy of the Visible"* that horror films, along with melodramas, musicals, comedies and pornography, places particular emphasis on "body movement" and "body spectacle" to warrant their inclusion into a specific generic categorization: the body genre. She states that these genres exhibit visceral emotional states on screen which produces similar involuntary reflexes in the viewer including "musical rhythm, terror, [laughter and] sorrow", and that the success of these body genres "is often measured by the degree to which the audience sensation mimics what is seen on the screen". (Williams, 1990). Indeed, horror films are named so for its provocation of fear, anxiety, screams, physical jumps and shudders that the spectator experiences. Although these visceral responses are undoubtedly incurred by other genres as well, such as the excitation of suspense and anxiety which are central emotional responses to the crime and thriller genres (Chabot, 2013), horror is especially unique for its great emphasis on the destruction and corruption of the human body, as can be seen in its subgenre, body horror.

Body horror or biological horror intentionally showcases graphic or psychologically disturbing violations of the human body (Cruz, 2012) and specifically focuses on the limits and transformative capabilities of the human body as such (Cardin, 2017), which is especially apparent in Akira and more so in cyberpunk films. It is largely characterized by the manipulation and warping of the normal state of bodily form and function, and its violations can be manifested through mutations, diseases, unjustified violence, mutilations or unnatural movements of the body. It is usually shown through unnerving designs of the human physique especially with components of terrifying bodily distortion, decomposition, bodily dismemberment, illnesses that plagues the body in such cases that make it appear scientifically unsuitable (Admin, 2015). The specific mode of animation then comes into the picture as a potential medium that provides room for exploration of the subgenre and is capable of portraying the body horror genre accurately. The employment of the body horror elements in animation creates a narrative visual space where the body and horror can both be incorporated to create a new perspective. It is also somewhat a "main ingredient" that is crucial to fuel the portrayal and evolution of the characters in the film, as can be seen through the trio of psychic-powered Espers and the transformation and metamorphosis of Tetsuo.

The term "body horror" was originally coined by Phillip Brophy and utilized in his 1986 article *Horrality: The Textuality of the Contemporary Horror Film* (Brophy, 1986) to describe a specific subgenre of the scariest horror stories for adults that emerged in the 1950s during a short golden age for contemporary horror. The subgenre has roots in early Gothic literature during the 19th Century, which combined gothic horror and science fiction as a literary form to produce body horror as a literary genre (Halberstam, 2000), with Mary Shelly's *Frankenstein* (1818) being an example within fictional writing.

Cronenberg's *The Fly* (1986) is perhaps the most quintessential body horror film where the protagonist Seth Bundle inadvertently combines his DNA with that of a common housefly, which results in the gradual disintegration and mutation of Seth's body. The graphical depiction of Seth's corporeal transition in the film has been largely used to define the work of

Cronenberg, who has been variously referred to as the 'father of body horror' and the 'baron of blood' (Chabot, 2013). It is, however, important to acknowledge that body horror was not invented by Cronenberg despite his frequent associations with the subgenre, but rather body horror tropes had already existed within film and fiction prior to official recognition of the subgenre.

As defined by Kelly Hurley, body horror then is "a hybrid genre that recombines the narrative and cinematic conventions of the science fiction, horror, and suspense film in order to stage a spectacle of the human body defamiliarized, rendered other. Body horror seeks to inspire revulsion — and in its own way pleasure — through representations of quasi-human figures whose effect/affect is produced by their abjection, their ambiguation, their impossible embodiment of multiple, incompatible forms." (Hurley, 2004) I agree wholeheartedly with Hurley's statement, in that body horror indeed is a fusion of both horror and science fiction while taking advantage of animation's limitless boundaries in order to create a new fictitious plot. The human body *defamiliarized, rendered other* would mean that the metamorphosis and the change that the individual's body experiences is to such an extent that it is even unknown and foreign to oneself, let alone to others, and would hence be viewed by society or the general population as intrinsically different and alien. This can be seen in the film, when Tetsuo's mutations continue and begin to take over his entire body and he transforms from an adolescent punk into a gigantic grotesque monster with oozing pink flesh and veinlike tentacles. Towards the end of the film, the diminishment of authority allows Tetsuo's power to grow, but subsequently, he himself is unable to control that newfound power. The corporeal mutation of Tetsuo also conforms perfectly well to Hurley's general description of what happens to the human subject in body horror, where "the narrative told by body horror again and again is of a human subject dismantled and demolished; a human body whose integrity is violated, a human identity whose boundaries are breached from all sides." (Hurley, 2004) From the above, it can be deduced that the utilization of the body horror in the film is extremely apt in exemplifying the cyberpunk genre, making it significant for this research.

2.4 New Historicism

In 1980 the American critic and professor at the University of California, Berkeley, Stephen Greenblatt (1943-) published a book entitled *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, introducing a new approach to the relationship between literary texts and their historical contexts. Rather than seeing history as the context or background for the study of literature, Greenblatt reads both literary and non-fiction texts alongside each other. Greenblatt not only uses non-fictional sources to explain the fictional, but he also uses the fictional text to question some of the arguments made in the historical texts. The 'new' approach is what we call new historicism. (Upstone, 2017) In essence, this framework examines literature in a wider historical context, studying how the writer's times affected his work, and how the work has reflected the writer's times. (Greenblatt, 1980). If we study the text we would be able to reveal more about the history, and if we study the history we would also be able to learn more about the text. The application of the framework would allow for the understanding of how "the social and political upheavals of the time are reflected" (Shmoop Editorial Team, 2008), and in the case of 1980s Japan, an example would be the Lockheed bribery scandals of 1976, where former Japanese Prime Minister Kakuei Tanaka was arrested for allegedly receiving bribes from officials of U.S. aerospace company Lockheed. From the historical context provided we can then determine the intention of the director in the making of the film.

The use of the framework would highlight how a work of literature reflects its cultural and societal needs or trends during that period of time, allowing us to gain greater insight into how the literary work comments on and relates to its context, as well as how the author's work was shaped by major events during that period of time. However, it should be noted that new historicism declares that "all history is subjective, written by people whose personal biases affect their interpretation of the past" (Basuki, 2003), meaning that a work would be directly or indirectly influenced by its author's times and circumstances, and that the critic using the theory is also influenced by his environment, beliefs and prejudices. The theory acknowledges and embraces the fact that our understanding of different works would differ as times change and that one's cultural baggage would consciously or unconsciously pervade our thought process, playing a significant part in the derivation of meaning both from history as well as the given piece of work. Hence, the focus of the research would be on revealing the historically specific cultural construct reflected in a given piece of work, rather than the 'supposed' truth.

As what Judith Newton said in *History as Usual?: Feminism and the "New Historicism"*, all our representations of the world and of the past are informed by our own historical position (Newton, 1988), hence the study of films against its social and historical circumstances and situations would enable us to judge the film properly and gain relevant insight. The use of this framework would also eventually allow us to interpret and determine Otomo's intentions behind the creation of *Akira*.

2.5 Historical Context of Japan

With the application of the New Historicism literary theory, it is then important to provide the relevant historical context of Japan in relation to the time period of the film, in order for the framework to be much more applicable, allowing to understand Otomo's intent behind his creation of the film.

Two nuclear bombs were released by the United States over Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan on August 6 and 9, 1945, respectively. The bombs immediately served its purpose, killing between 90,000 and 146,000 people in Hiroshima and 39,000 and 80,000 people in Nagasaki. (Hiroshima Day Committee, n.d.) A great number of people continued to die for months afterwards from the effects of burns, radiation sickness and other injuries, compounded by illnesses and malnutrition, showing the far reaching effects the bombings had on the citizens, including the unnecessary huge losses of lives. The bombing also started intense fires that spread rapidly through timber and paper homes, burning everything in a radius of 2 kilometers (Hiroshima, 2017), highlighting the extent of the devastating destruction to which the bombings wrecked on the cities. The irreplaceable losses and effects that the citizens had to experience as a result of the August 1945 bombings have become catalysts for apocalyptic thought, since Japan remains the sole country in the world to have suffered the harrowing occurrence of the bombings. Even till this day, nearly seven decades after the events, these apocalyptic notions still pervade Japanese pop culture, and animation and art are common mediums often used to convey these emotions and sentiments to the bombings. During the 1950s, Japan was still subjected to the aftereffects of the bombings and was still in its beginning stages of its economic and social recovery of the nation, financially supported by the Americans.

The symbolic mode of the 'death of the father' (Napier, 2001) is an important element that has dominated much of Japanese post-war culture since the Meiji period and is typically experienced by the protagonists in the film. Freida Freiberg argues that "Japanese culture now exists in a demasculinized state, … haunted by images of a dead, absent, or inadequate father and a problematic masculinity." (Freiberg, 1996) The reason for this occurrence can be derived from the historical realities of the postwar period where not only did many Japanese citizens actually lose their fathers due to their enlistments in military service or the allied bombings of August 1945, but the country also lost the cult of the emperor, who was previously represented in pre-war propaganda as the symbolic head of the Japanese nation-as-family. (Ees, 2018) Hence, the absence of the father figure has become a theme in post-war Japanese literature, underlining the sudden postwar collapse of paternal authority experienced by the nation.

However, during the 1980s, the vigorous remaking of the country allowed post-war Japan to firmly establish itself as one of the strongest and most powerful economic super power in the world, with enormous surges in its economic growth enabling Japan to outperform the United States and Europe. Tokyo, at the heart of the country, welcomed much industrialization and westernized influences into its society and culture, and was the paradigm of the cyberpunk concrete jungle, with towering skyscrapers and magnificent buildings covering every inch of

the landscape. The city also invited foreign investments from all over the word, accumulating capital and monetary gain for its citizens.

Unfortunately, amidst the desirable economic gain during that period of time emerged the Japanese asset price economic bubble in Japan where real estate and stock market prices were greatly inflated (Watkins, T). The bubble was characterized by a rapid rise in asset prices, the overheating of economic activity, and the expansion of money supply and credit (Okina, Shirakawa & Shiratsuka, 2001), which could be attributed to excessive confidence and unsupported speculations and assumptions surrounding asset and stock prices, leading to excessive monetary spending and unprecedented investments. Lax regulations and the promotion of this consumerist culture by the government was also the main factor for this occurrence. During the late 1980s, the bursting of the asset price bubble led to the declination and collapse of stock prices, which resulted in the stagnation of Japan's economic growth for 10 years known as the Lost Decade (C. Prescott & Hayashi, 2001). The entire economic crisis also badly affected consumption and any sort of foreign or local investment within Japan. Citizens experienced reduced incomes and reduced purchasing power as a result.

Another important appearance in Japanese history would be the bosozoku culture. With the occupation of Japan by the American forces as well as the rapid expansion of the Japanese automobile industry during the later parts of the 1940s and 1950s, many prominent elements of America's motorcycle and greaser subculture leaked into Japanese society, including the customization of motorbike vehicles and the fashion style. Japanese bosozoku then came into the picture as a gang of youths engaging in dangerous or reckless driving for the pure pleasure of it, typically obsessed with breaking away the conformity that Japanese society prided itself on. The majority of these young bosozoku members also had lower socioeconomic statuses and saw these motorcycle gang activities as an avenue to express their animosity and dissatisfaction towards Japanese mainstream society. These groups gained even more attention during the 1980s, where participation in these activities peaked due to the postwar bubble economy where the modification of these motorcycles became cheap and easily obtainable. (Callahan, 2014)

The inclusion of the historical context of Japan as a subsection in the literature review would allow the various events and scenes in the film to be seen in parallel to the history of Japan, allowing us to gain greater insight into the different influences and inspirations that Otomo was affected by when he was creating Akira.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This paper would be analysing the interactions observed between the dystopia and the body horror elements utilized as part of the cyberpunk genre, and would be applying the New Historicism literary theory framework in order to provide insight on the socio political setting of Japan during the 1980s, which greatly influenced and inspired Otomo in his creation of the narrative of Akira.

A total of 11 scenes from the film selected and analysed using the research framework. These scenes are chosen because they are the most representative of the cyberpunk genre, and would enable us to determine Otomo's intent behind the creation of the film.

Chapter 4: Discussion and Interpretation

include some intro to the analysis here
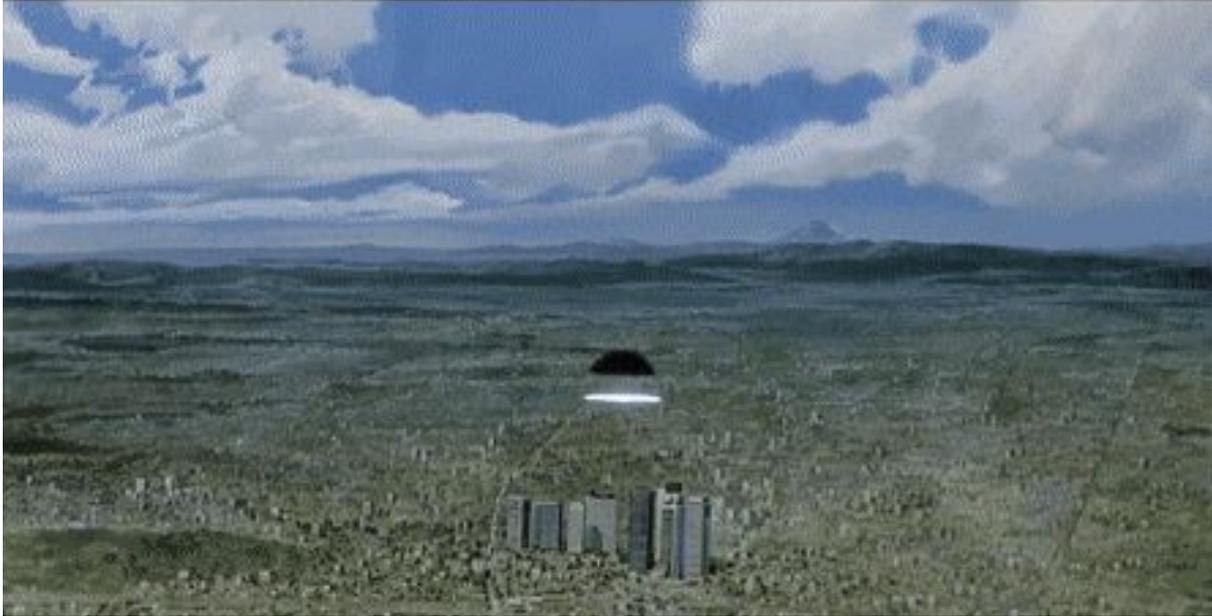
Figure 1. Akira's opening scene of the destruction of Old Tokyo into a vast bombed-out crater, an image often associated with the dystopia in Japanese pop culture, influenced by the August 1945 Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings.

Akira takes place 31 years after World War III, with the outset of the film being the destruction of Old Tokyo into a vast bombed out crater by Akira's incredible force. The image of the crater in this scene can be linked back to the atomic bombings of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945, which are obvious triggers to apocalyptic thoughts and ideas. Even till today, Japan is still the only country in the world to have suffered the traumatic experience of the devastation of atomic destruction, hence nearly seven decades after the events of August 1945, these apocalyptic thoughts and ideas still permeate Japan's popular culture, be it in animated films, books or art.

In animation, calamitous explosions, grotesque abnormalities, as well as societal chaos as a result, are ideas and images often associated with the dystopia in Japanese pop culture. However, there is also an unsaid taboo among the citizens on overtly discussing the bomb and the events of August 1945, as a sort of mediation between repression and remembrance, especially for the people who lost their loved ones or suffered irreparable damage as a result of the war. The memory of the nuclear attack on their nation is a tragedy too vivid for many to face directly, hence pop culture comes into the picture here as a medium for conveying one's sentiments and feelings towards the events. Otomo utilizes Akira as an allegory to present a nuclear holocaust, which may also be unfamiliar with the younger generation of the Japanese, who have no personal memory of the Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings, but had to experience the after effects of the explosion, including debilitating health effects, increased cancer rates and birth defects and deformities. Otomo's creation of Akira was a much needed

window into post-war Japanese culture imbued with the past, not just for the native Japanese, but also for the entire world to see. Hence, it is hence safe to say that while Akira may purely be a work of fantasy and imagination, it is definitely a product built on the unfortunate realities of what Japan has experienced in the past.
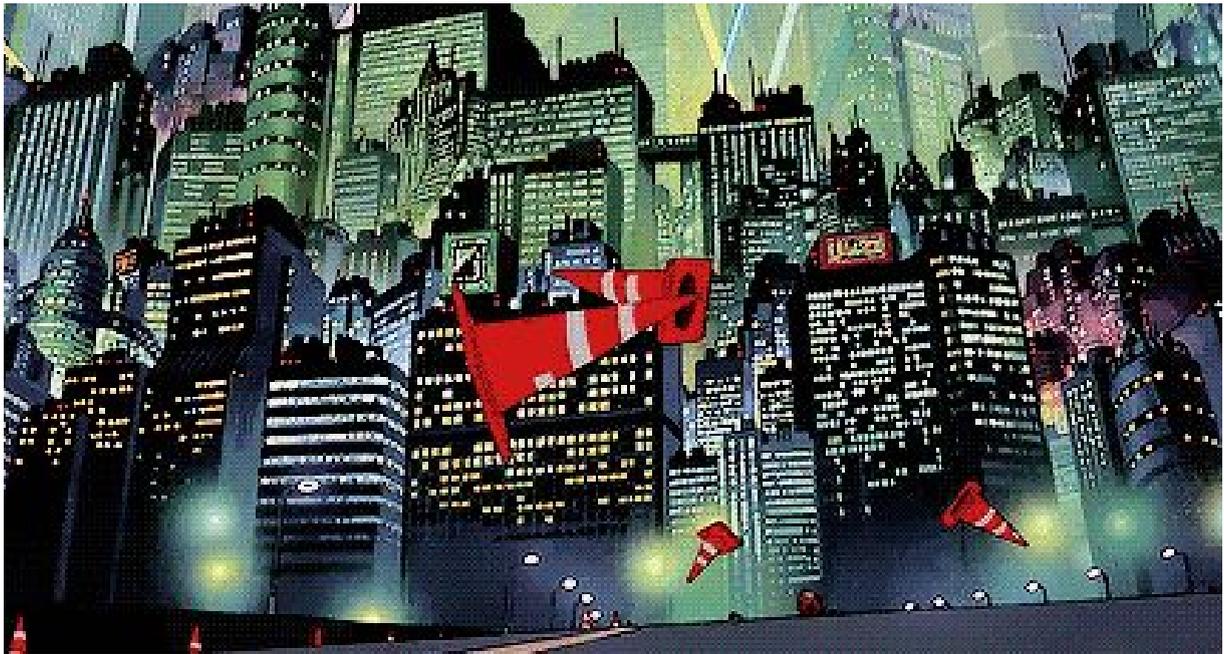
Figure 2. The Capsules, a teenage bosozoku motorcycle gang speeding dangerously through the highway in the city, with the background being the neon lit, sprawling skyscrapers of Neo Tokyo.

Figure 3. While speeding and engaging in road battles with rival gangs, the bosozoku biker members cause great destruction and chaos throughout the city.

Otomo's animated creation of "Neo-Tokyo" in the film is unquestionably a visceral one, with the sheer quality and vigour of the cutting edge animation used allowing viewers to have a breathtaking view of the city. It combines a predicted vision of present day Shinjuku's futuristic urban skyline of towering skyscrapers with the vast scale of the typical noisy, neon lit high rise metropolis typically associated with the cyberpunk genre. The city suffers from

serious problems where political unrest has led to public demonstrations threatening to start an uprising for revolutionary change, and thuggish youth biker gangs run rampant on the streets, engaging in deadly road battles on the highway.

During the 1950s, Japan was still suffering from the aftereffects of the bombings on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, and was only beginning to recover economically and socially from the immense trauma of the defeat and great destruction of life and property, aided financially by the Americans. Films created during this period were hence imbued with a sorrowful mood and were generally humanistic in nature. (Freiberg, 1996)

However, by the early 1980s, the vibrant reconstruction it underwent previously allowed overpopulated and westernized post-war Japan to experience rampant economic growth, outperforming the United States and Europe, and Tokyo, during that period of time, was the archetype of the cyberpunk metropolis, the magnificent consumer capital of the world exuding great opulence, bent on capital accumulation and industrial expansionism. The portrayal of Neo-Tokyo in this narrative was intentionally based on the 1980s, providing viewers with a glimpse of the happenings during that period of time, at the same time critiquing the rapid development of post-war Japan and the era's reshaping of the city and culture, from which the bosozoku emerged.

With the occupation of Japan by the American forces as well as the rapid expansion of the Japanese automobile industry during the later parts of the 1940s and 1950s, many prominent elements of America's motorcycle and greaser subculture leaked into Japanese society, including the customization of motorbike vehicles and the fashion style. Japanese bosozoku then came into the picture as a gang of youths engaging in dangerous or reckless driving for the pure pleasure of it, typically obsessed with breaking away the conformity that Japanese society prided itself on. The majority of these young bosozoku members also had lower socioeconomic statuses and saw these motorcycle gang activities as an avenue to express their animosity and dissatisfaction towards Japanese mainstream society. These groups gained even more attention during the 1980s, especially during the postwar bubble economy where the modification of these motorcycles became cheap and easily obtainable.

The prevalence of this bosozoku culture during that era influenced Otomo so much that in the creation of his vision of a dystopian future for Neo-Tokyo, he chose to extrapolate it and include it as one of the most iconic imagery of the film. This is seen through the teenage bosozoku gang, the Capsules whose members include Tetsuo and Kaneda as well their rival biker gang, the Clowns. Kaneda is the epitome of bosozoku culture in Japan, intentionally defying the police and participating in anti-government riots, making the streets their playground with their dangerous highway speeding and fights as can be seen in figures 2 and 3. These scenes can then be seen as Otomo's critique of the accelerated modernization and evolution of Japan during the 1980s, which triggered the restlessness of the youths and ultimately resulted in much societal chaos and destruction to the city.
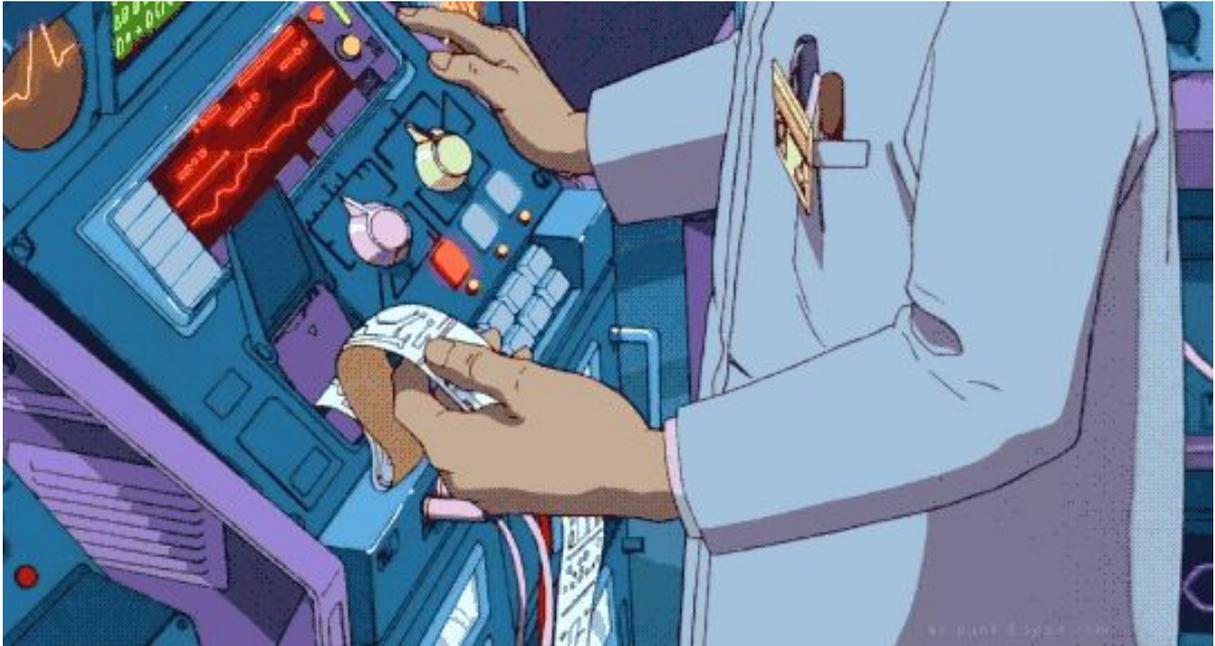
Figure 4. *Dr. Onishi, the head scientist of the secret psychic research project involving the Espers and Tetsuo. He is one of the main figures contributing to the previous destruction and outbreak of World War III, as a result of Akira's power, and holds great responsibility for the development of Tetsuo's psychic powers.*

Figure 5. *The colonel is one of the main military figures in Neo Tokyo who, despite his intimidating appearance, actually possesses much care and concern for the city and the Espers. This particular scene here displays his shock at seeing the explosion of the Olympic stadium as a result of Tetsuo's powers getting out of control, and his despair at being unable to wield complete control over the city.*

However, despite Tetsuo's threatening appearance as a result of his metamorphosis, there are

also similar figures who possess the same threat and authority in the film, who take advantage of their position of power to exercise political oppression on the citizens. From the corrupt politicians and the overbearing colonel, to the thuggish and violent teachers at the school that the bosozoku bikers occasionally attend, and the scientist whose thirst for knowledge clearly outweighs the threat of history repeating itself, the film is notable for the brutality of its authority figures, whose cruelty and viciousness are implied in their willingness to subjugate the poor citizens and experiment on children in order to fulfill their research aims.

Colonel Shikishima, the prime authority figure in the film displays this cruelty in his disposition to hunt down Tetsuo on a violent rampage and kill him, on learning that Tetsuo possessed similar psychic powers to Akira, to prevent the possible destruction of the city. However, while he exudes an air of importance and seems to be a tyrannical figure, it is seen that he does deeply care about Neo Tokyo, and always considers the risks and potential outcomes in his decisions and choices, for the betterment and development of the city. He is also placed in high regard by the Espers who respect and are fond of him, since he treats them with loving care and concern, acting as a father figure to them. This display of fatherly concern will be discussed in the next section.

Dr. Onishi's fervent curiosity and deep seated desire to fulfill his research aims ultimately resulted in his negligence and overlooking of the well-being of others, including Tetsuo and the Espers. His selfish and self-centered inclination to continue conducting the research on Tetsuo and the Espers despite Akira already wrecking so much destruction on the city during World War III, shows that he obviously has not learned from his lesson of experimentation on others, and continues to exploit his position of power and uses science and technology as a tool to apply this political oppression and achieve his desired research outcomes.

The lack of sympathetic characters who are more humanistic in nature in the film is also something that is typically seen in dystopian films, which leads to the repression of thoughts and emotions in individuals. Social control in the film is also usually achieved through military-political-scientific state means and methods carried out by these oppressive tyrants. Despite the tensions existing between the citizens and the authorities, the oppressive male adult authority made up of the government, military and the scientific establishment seem to wield all control at the start of the film, exerting their political regime on the people. However, towards the end of the film, where the complete transformation and metamorphosis of Tetsuo takes place, we witness the total diminishment of authority as the representatives of the various establishments finally admit that they are no longer able to control whatever is happening around them. Otomo's decision to portray the diminution of the authority and power of the various political figures in the film can be seen as his critique of the moral failure of the authority in the film, who eventually are unable to establish control over the people and situations which developed as a result of their totalitarianism and oppression.

Figure 6. *Colonel Shikishima, the most accurate representation of the father figure in the film, through his deep care and concern for the Espers (depicted in figure 7)*

Figure 7. *The Espers, a trio of psychic children frozen in childhood who possess psychic powers, developed by the government through the routine feeding of drugs, for militaristic and political reasons. (From left to right, Masaru, Kiyoko and Takashi)*

A major notable absence in the film is family, and in particular, the father figure. The two main protagonists of the film, Kaneda and Tetsuo are both orphans, growing up together in the same orphanage, suggesting the lack of family or parental guidance typically essential in the growing up process of adolescents and the development of maturity in them. This

consequently resulted in them developing a sort of rebelliousness and the desire for revenge against adult authority since they are not restricted in any way by family or societal pressure.

The symbolic mode of the 'death of the father' (Napier, 2001) is an important element that has dominated much of Japanese post-war culture since the Meiji period and is typically experienced by the protagonists in the film. The reason for this occurrence can be derived from the historical realities of the postwar period where many Japanese citizens did actually lose their fathers due to their enlistments in military service or the allied bombings of August 1945. Hence, the absence of the father figure has become an important and prevalent theme in post-war Japanese literature, highlighting the unforeseen collapse of paternal authority experienced by post-war Japan.

However, the father figure in Akira may be most accurately represented through Colonel Shikishima, who, though disillusioned and worn down by the state of Neo-Tokyo, is also determined to protect it out of an obligation and duty as a soldier of the nation. The paradoxical positions that Shikishima holds then situates him perfectly as the father figure of Akira, as well as the tyrannical authority figure mentioned in the previous scene. His father figure is most evidently elucidated in his position as the head of the secret government project, which devoted much resources into the research of psychic powers for political and military reasons. His primary role then is to be the caretaker of the Espers, most of which are children, while his position of authority is sustained through his efforts in keeping the corrupt government in check and preventing another potential catastrophic psychic apocalypse, like the one triggered by Akira at the start of the film.

Figure 8. *The youths in the film participate in various gang activities, and is the typical epitome of the bosozoku culture that was seen in 1980s Japan.*

Figure 9. *Tetsuo's power spins out of control and he wrecks great destruction on the city as a result.*

The youths in the film are presented as counterculture rebels fighting against the system or engaged in criminal gangs, either way against authority in every form, a culture that is typically seen in protagonists of the cyberpunk genre.

Towards the end of the film, the growth of Tetsuo's aggression results in great destruction of himself and others around him. Tetsuo's experience in the film including his complete

transformation and drastic metamorphosis can be read as an allegory of Japanese youths during the 1980s, experiencing futile and ineffective rage at the social straitjacket imposed on their lives, forcing them to conform to the social norms and standards of the society during that period of time. This could also have emerged from the general restlessness of the youths and their rebellious attitude which led to their desire to revolt and break free of the rigid structures and shift away from traditional morals and ideology. If the characters in the film are said to reflect the conditions and circumstances that post-war Japan was experiencing, then it can be said that the progression and evolution of the characters throughout the course of the film may demonstrate a longing from Japan to move forward and reconstitute itself, especially since that period of time was when Japan was making its economic and social recovery from the August 1945 Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings.

Such desires can also be easily attributed to the physical and emotional changes and hardships that are usually undergone during adolescence, which are probably familiar with youths and adults alike who have gone through this universal experience, having went through the typical struggles, uncertainty and fear often associated with this experience. Furthermore, these emotions that the Japanese youths of the 1980s had to suffer from were presumably accelerated by increasing frustration and annoyance towards the government that was unable to exercise its authority appropriately, leading to the rebelliousness of these youths and their decision to take matters into their own hands themselves.

These emotions were then translated by Otomo into the film as bosozoku youths, who decided to take matters into their own hands after persistently questioning of of their own identity and the establishment of their own selfhood and character, and witnessing the inefficiency and inability of the government, military and scientific establishments to solve the social issues existing within society even after decades of Akira's destruction of the city. Though through questionable methods and means, the characters in the film can be seen as symbols of change in the midst of the harsh reality created by the cyberpunk narrative. It is then difficult to determine if the end justifies the means for these youths, hence the actions taken by the youths in response to the moral failure of the authority does not allow us to judge the righteousness of the youths or leave us with a definite moral stance.

Figure 10. *The telekinetic construction of Tetsuo's phallic tentacular arm consisting of veinlike tentacles after his powers completely spin beyond his control.*

Figure 11. *Tetsuo's powers eventually get manifested onto his body, into an enormous mass of flesh, blood and tentacles, leaving Kaneda in total shock at the dehumanizing and destructive nature of science and technology on humans.*

Otomo utilizes the stylistic theme of body horror in the film most evidently in Tetsuo, and it is also manifested in the Espers. Tetsuo's powers grow beyond his control and results in his particularly gruesome form of transformation, manifested directly upon his body, which transforms into a massive humanoid mass of flesh, veins and arteries that consume him up entirely and end up ensnaring and inflicting harm on Kaneda, his best friend, and Kaori, his girlfriend. His transformation is both a literal and symbolic one, where he mutates from an

ordinary teenage human boy, into a monstrous creature threatening the safety of the entire nation, and from impotence and powerlessness to his increasingly uncontrollable power. Telekinetically, he constructs a new arm, a hideous appendage consisting mainly of veinlike tentacles that grows increasingly longer and longer. The phallic tentacular arm that expands and contracts disgustingly in the animated film ultimately seems to lose itself into an oozing pinkness. His transgression across all the normal human boundaries into his mutated form becomes an object of both horror and fascination. The imagery of bodily mutations through technological intervention highlights the destructive and dehumanizing nature of technology and the horrors it can bring about to one's own physical body after the pushing of the boundaries of science too far, and this metamorphosis is also evocative of the cyberpunk notion of technology corrupting the human form.

This rampant manifestation of uncontrolled power and the devastating consequences of breaching of barriers into science and technology by Tetsuo could potentially represent the failure of Japan to learn from its mistakes during World War II. During the 1980s, Japanese citizens were possibly plagued with the fear that they would not be able to learn from the repeated self-inflicted disasters, and this mindset and outlook towards the devastation and destruction of the world inspired Otomo greatly, influencing him to create Akira. In the film, the people in positions of power or authority choose to cast their morals aside and easily give into their temptations for power through science and technology again. Akira as an animated film is then an appropriate platform and medium to highlight the societal problems of 1980s Japan, and it is Otomo's way of calling on Japan and the international community to learn from their past and mistakes from World War II, and be wary of pursuing power through science and technology unless they wanted similar man-made disasters to recur.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The dystopia in Akira epitomizes the typical cyberpunk genre through the most representative scene of the destruction of Old Tokyo into a vast bombed out crater, influenced by the 1945 Hiroshima and Nagasaki bombings. The various scenes in the film can also be said to be a reflection of post-war Japanese society during the 1980s, where the rampant economic recovery allowed Japan to become an economic superpower and also resulted in the emergence of the bosozoku culture.

The general restlessness of the youths and their desire to revolt against the rigid structures and shift away from traditional morals and ideology further triggered the bosozoku culture, promoting a rebellious attitude that swept across Japan during the 1980s, influencing youths to participate in the various activities, in a bid to express their discontentment and dissatisfaction towards Japanese mainstream society. They saw these activities as a way to empower themselves and take actions into their own hands, after the failure of the government to exercise proper control over economic activity and the inflation of stock and market prices, which ultimately led to the bursting of the economic bubble and the stagnation of economic growth.

Though through questionable methods and means, the characters in the film can be seen as symbols of change in the midst of the harsh reality. It is then difficult to determine if the end justifies the means for these youths, hence the actions taken by the youths in response to the moral failure of the authority does not allow us to judge the righteousness of the youths or leave us with a definite moral stance.

The sociopolitical realities of postwar Japan during 1980s influenced Otomo greatly and he translated it thereafter in his creation of the film, using the film as a medium to critique the rapid development of post-war Japan and the era's reshaping of the city and culture. His decision to portray the diminution of the authority and power of the various political figures in the film can be seen as his critique of the moral failure of the authority in the film, who eventually are unable to establish control over the people and situations which developed as a result of their totalitarianism and oppression.

The body horror that we witness in the film is simply a stylistic theme that is evocative of the cyberpunk notion of technology corrupting the human form, and serves to highlight the destructive and dehumanising nature of technology. Akira as an animated film is then an appropriate platform and medium to highlight the societal problems of 1980s Japan, and it is Otomo's way of calling on Japan and the international community to learn from their past and mistakes from World War II, and be wary of pursuing power through science and technology unless they wanted similar man-made disasters to recur.

Bibliography

Abdelbaky, A. (2016) A Perfect World or an Oppressive World: A Critical Study of Utopia and Dystopia as Subgenres of Science Fiction. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/33313454/A_Perfect_World_or_an_Oppressive_World_A_Critical_Study_of_Utopia_and_Dystopia_as_Subgenres_of_Science_Fiction

Abrams, M. H., & Harpham, G. G. (2015). *A glossary of literary terms*. Stamford, CT: Cengage Learning.

Admin. (2015, July 29). Body Horror. Retrieved from http://filmtheory.org/body-horror/

Basuki, R. (2003). A Journey Across the Atlantic: The History of Melodrama in Western Landscape. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/606479/A_Journey_Across_the_Atlantic_the_History_of_Melodrama_in_Western_Landscape

Bethke, B. (1980). *"Cyberpunk"*. New York: Warner Books.

Brophy, P. (1986). Horrality— The Textuality of Contemporary Horror Films. *Screen,27*(1), 2-13. doi:10.1093/screen/27.1.2

C. Prescott, E. & Hayashi, F. (2001) The 1990s in Japan: A Lost Decade. Retrieved from http://fhayashi.fc2web.com/Prescott1/Postscript_2003/hayashi-prescott.pdf

Callahan, K. (2014) The Bosozoku Are Japan's Disappearing Rebels Without A Cause. Retrieved from https://jalopnik.com/the-bosozoku-are-japans-disappearing-rebels-without-a-c-1642416129

Cardin, M. (2017). *Horror literature through history: An encyclopedia of the stories that speak to our deepest fears*. Santa Barbara, Cal.: Greenwood, an imprint of ABC-CLIO, LLC.

Chabot, K. (2013). Bodies without borders : Body Horror as Political Resistance in Classical Hollywood Cinema. doi:10.22215/etd/2013-06566

Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Claeys, G. (2013). News from Somewhere: Enhanced Sociability and the Composite Definition of Utopia and Dystopia. *History, 98*(330), 145-173. doi:10.1111/1468-229x.12005

Cruz, R. A. (2012). Mutations and Metamorphoses: Body Horror is Biological Horror. *Journal of Popular Film and Television,40*(4), 160-168. doi:10.1080/01956051.2012.654521

Dystopian Literature. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://www.questia.com/library/literature/literary-themes-and-topics/dystopian-literature

Ees. (2018). Akira: An Analysis of the A-Bomb and Japanese Animation. Retrieved from
https://the-artifice.com/akira-analysis/

Gibson, W. (1981) *Burning Chrome*. London: Gollancz.

Gibson, W. (1984). *Neuromancer*. New York: Ace.

Greenblatt, S. (1980). *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*.

Halberstam, J. (2000). *Skin shows: Gothic horror and the technology of monsters*. Durham,
NC: Duke University Press.

Hassler, D. M. (2008). *New Boundaries in Political Science Fiction*. Columbia (South
Carolina): University of South Carolina Press.

Hiroshima, H. (2017). *Eyewitness testimonies: Appeals from the A-bomb survivors*.
Hiroshima, Japan: Hiroshima Peace Culture Foundation.

Hiroshima Day Committee. (n.d.). Hiroshima & Nagasaki Bombing. Retrieved from
http://www.hiroshimacommittee.org/Facts_NagasakiAndHiroshimaBombing.htm

Hurley, K. (2004). *The Gothic body: Sexuality, Materialism, and Degeneration at the Fin De
Siècle*. Cambridge: Cambridge U.P.

Huxley, A. & Samaan, A. B. (1970). "Introduction" *Brave New World*. Cairo: Anglo
Egyptian Bookshop.

Lawrence, P. (1999) Notes Towards a Postcyberpunk Manifesto. Slashdot. Retrieved from
https://slashdot.org/story/99/10/08/2123255/notes-toward-a-postcyberpunk-manifesto

Litzsinger, L. (n.d.). What is cyberpunk? Retrieved from
https://www.polygon.com/features/2018/8/30/17796680/cyberpunk-2077-history-blade-runner-neuromancer

McFadden, S. (2015). Dystopian stories used to reflect our anxieties. Now they reflect our
reality. Retrieved from
https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2015/oct/26/dystopian-stories-margaret-atwood-walking-dead-zombies

Montecalvo, R (2010). The Cyberpunk Genre in Japanese Anime and Manga. Retrieved from
https://www.academia.edu/636469/The_Cyberpunk_Genre_in_Japanese_Anime_and_Manga_by_Rufus_Montecalvo

Napier, S. J. (1993). Panic Sites: The Japanese Imagination of Disaster from Godzilla to
Akira. *Journal of Japanese Studies,19*(2), 327. doi:10.2307/132643

Newton, J. (1988). History as Usual?: Feminism and the "New Historicism". *Cultural Critique,*(9), 87. doi:10.2307/1354235

Nithya, K. (2016) Science Fiction And Dystopia. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/34303321/Science_Fiction_And_Dystopia

Nithya K. (2016). Science Fiction And Dystopia. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/34303321/Science_Fiction_And_Dystopia

Okina, K., Shirakawa, M. and Shiratsuka, S. (2001). The Asset Price Bubble and Monetary Policy: Japan's Experience in the Late 1980s and the Lessons. Retrieved from https://www.imes.boj.or.jp/research/papers/english/me19-s1-14.pdf

Player, M. (2011). Post-Human Nightmares – The World of Japanese Cyberpunk Cinema. Retrieved from http://www.midnighteye.com/features/post-human-nightmares-the-world-of-japanese-cyberpunk-cinema/

Rosenthal, P (1991) Jacked in: Fordism, Cyberpunk, Marxism. Retrieved from https://theworkerproject.files.wordpress.com/2014/04/post-fordism.pdf

Schmeink, L. (n.d.). Cyberpunk and Dystopia: William Gibson, Neuromancer (1984). Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/30380095/Cyberpunk_and_Dystopia_William_Gibson_Neuromancer_1984_

Shmoop Editorial Team. (2008). New Historicism. Retrieved from https://www.shmoop.com/new-historicism/

Smayel, H. (2014). Cyberpunk: A Discussion of Defining Themes in Contrasting Views Between the Early and Latter Works. Retrieved from https://www.academia.edu/6160095/Cyberpunk_a_discussion_of_defining_themes_in_contrasting_views_between_the_early_and_latter_works

Sterling, B. (1986). *Mirrorshades: The Cyberpunk Anthology*. London: HarperCollins.

Sterling, B. (1986). Preface. *Burning Chrome*. London: Gollancz.

Upstone, S. (2017). *Literary Theory: A Complete Introduction*. London: Teach Yourself.

Watkins, T (n.d.). The Bubble Economy of Japan. Retrieved from http://www.sjsu.edu/faculty/watkins/bubble.htm

Williams, L. (1989). *Hard Core Power, Pleasure, and the "Frenzy of the Visible"*. London: Pandora Pr.