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Emancipation in postmodernity : political thought in Japanese science fiction animation

Nakamura, M.

Citation

Nakamura, M. (2017, March 14). *Emancipation in postmodernity : political thought in Japanese science fiction animation*. Retrieved from <https://hdl.handle.net/1887/46672>

Version: Not Applicable (or Unknown)

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Author: Nakamura, Mari

Title: Emancipation in postmodernity : political thought in Japanese science fiction animation

Issue Date: 2017-03-14

INTRODUCTION

Existing Sources of Political Theory

In 1989, Francis Fukuyama published an article in the American magazine *The National Interest* with the striking title of “The End of History?” The article announces the triumph of liberal democracy and liberal capitalism. His article and the subsequent book *The End of History and the Last Man* (1992) attracted a lot of attention from scholars in the field of political theory and sparked an academic debate that is still ongoing.¹ Scholars have been discussing what is essentially the same question for over twenty-five years: have we reached the end of history? Or more precisely, have we arrived at “the end point of mankind’s ideological evolution and universalization of Western liberal democracy as the final form of human government?” (Fukuyama 1989, 4).

This question arguably only seems important if the history of political thought is approached from the dominant European tradition. Others thinking about it from a different starting point might instead ask how anybody could regard Fukuyama’s “end of history” thesis as an explanation of how political ideas have evolved in an increasingly transient world? Simply put, Fukuyama argues for the universality and superiority of a particular ideology or form of political thought developed in a particular time and place – political liberalism in modern Europe and America. It is far from clear how he could know that no innovative political ideas are found in non-European intellectual traditions or will emerge in the future in other parts of the world, including fictional worlds.

Fukuyama mirrors a tendency of many other political theorists by going straight to the same destination – the classical European philosophical canons – to find answers for all of their questions. This particular form of knowledge is assumed to explain everything. The problem is that the account they give is not a history of ideas developed in a particular region such as Europe or the USA, but a history of ideas whose universality is taken for granted. In Fukuyama’s case, he uses Hegel’s history of philosophy via Alexandre Kojève’s interpretation of Hegel, and Kojève’s theory

¹ For example, Samuel Huntington (1993) argues that the end of the Cold War would not bring the victory of political liberalism but merely a change from ideological or economic struggles to clashes between civilizations. Critical theorists such as Anderson (1992), Derrida (1994), Wallerstein (1995), Jameson (1998a) and many others provide sophisticated critiques of Fukuyama’s thesis. For a comparative survey of modern political theory including Fukuyama’s work, see Elliott (2008).

of the end of history, to demonstrate “an unabashed victory of economic and political liberalism” (ibid., 3). The hegemony of this particular ideology is the culmination of universal history because “it is the ideal that will govern the material world *in the long run*,” including the material world in Russia, China, Japan and other parts of the world that have historically had an ambivalent relationship with so-called West and western ideas (Fukuyama 1989, 4, emphasis in the original). To his credit, Fukuyama acknowledges that Hegelian human consciousness has to be understood in a very broad sense. It includes political doctrines as well as “religion, culture and the complex of moral values underlying any society” (ibid., 5-6). However, when he asks whether there are “any fundamental ‘contradictions’ in human life that cannot be resolved in the context of modern liberalism, that would be resolvable by an alternative political-economic structure?” (ibid., 8), Fukuyama dismisses the possibility that non-European thought may have anything significant to resolving such problems now or in the future. He is very explicit about this: “For our purposes, it matters very little what strange thoughts occur to people in Albania or Burkina Faso, for we are interested in what one could in some sense call the common ideological heritage of mankind” (ibid., 9). One wonders how he knows that the worldviews, or political and religious ideas developed in non-European countries have nothing to do with “the common ideological heritage of mankind,” which he identifies with a narrow spectrum of thought developed in Western Europe.

Alternative Approaches to Political Theory

Indeed, this kind of ethnocentricity and belief in the universality of the European intellectual tradition is widespread across the study of politics (i.e. political philosophy, political theory, and International Relations). For example, Goto-Jones (2005a; 2005b; 2008; 2009a; 2011) points out that the main problem with the history of political thought is its persistent conservatism and ethnocentricity. The canons of political thought taught in universities all over the world are almost exclusively concerned with “dead, white, ‘Western’ men” and pay no attention to non-European thinkers (Goto-Jones 2011). Gruffydd Jones (2006a) also suggests that research and teaching in International Relations (IR) remains Eurocentric today. The standard historical reference points of modern international politics and world history are “drawn almost exclusively from Europe’s ‘internal’ history”; the acknowledged canon and the majority of literature in the discipline are predominantly written by European and North American scholars (Gruffydd Jones 2006a, 2).

Although I acknowledge that political philosophy, political theory, and International Relations have been developed as distinctive academic disciplines in their own right, I treat IR theory in this thesis as part of a broader spectrum of the theory of politics and include the work of critical IR

theorists in the discussion when appropriate.² This is because there has been a continuing debate over the appropriateness of rigorous disciplinary boundaries in the study of politics: should the politics of government, states and interstate relations be the main object of analysis and delimit the scope of inquiry for IR theorists? Should political philosophers continue focusing on the study of public affairs within the state? Is this kind of intellectual division of labor helpful in understanding the complex and diverse nature, form, and content of modern political communities? Many leading political theorists, including Chris Brown (1992) and David Held (1991), question the validity of such a disciplinary separation and address its negative consequences. They call for a more inclusive view of political theory, re-integrating elements of these disciplines in order to understand the nature of the modern political world and its problems. As Held notes, “If political theory is concerned with ‘what is really going on’ in the political world and thereby, with ‘the nature and structure of political practices,’ then a theory of politics today must take account of the place of the polity within geopolitical and market processes, that is within the system of nation-states, international law and world political economy” (ibid., 10). Moreover, these theoretical fields of politics share at least two common features. Firstly, they are grounded firmly in European intellectual traditions (and are criticized as ethnocentric accordingly). Political philosophy, political theory and International Relations, and especially the various approaches critical of the realist and liberal mainstream of IR theory – normative theory (Beitz 1979; C. Brown 1992), English School (Linklater 1998; Linklater and Suganami 2006), critical security studies (Booth 2005; Wyn Jones 1999), to mention a few – have all developed from European political thought. Secondly, political philosophers and (international) political theorists are concerned with visions of the *good life* and this concern is closely connected to the normative issues such as order, justice, right, and security both within and among states. When it comes to studying normative ideas of emancipation, it would be appropriate to include the sophisticated debate on emancipation that has been conducted among IR theorists.

In spite of the conservative tendency in the study of politics, there has in recent years been an increasing amount of research into non-European philosophy and political thought and dialogue between different intellectual traditions. This includes research into less conventional forms of political expression such as storytelling, fiction and non-fiction, and textual and non-textual sources. Some of the most exciting work in the study of politics, particularly in the fields of political theory and IR theory, has extended across national and medial boundaries. Recent examples include

² I do acknowledge that the academic field of IR is neither monolithic nor homogeneous. It is a “discipline of theoretical disagreements” (Burchill and Linklater 2005, 4). For example, Feminism and Marxism are “very broad ‘churches’ which display great diversity” and their positions can widely differ and even conflict one another (ibid., 18).

insightful studies on the political and philosophical discourses of wartime Japanese philosophy, and the philosophy of the Kyoto School in particular, that illuminate the ways in which non-European thought could contribute to the traditional field of political thought and refuse to render them exotic to the orthodox European canon of political thought.³ Since 2009, the Routledge book series *Interventions* has offered a number of titles by feminist, postcolonial theorist, poststructuralist, and other critical thinkers operating beyond the traditional disciplinary realm of International Relations. The series also includes forms of writing rarely seen in the academic discipline of International Relations; authors such as Elizabeth Dauphinee (2013) and L.H.M. Ling (2014) explore the potential of the novel and the fairy tale as political media. Dauphinee's novel is among the narrative writings by Jenny Edkins (2013, 292), who suggests that novel writing has a practical political potential in its own right: it is capable of being "politically unsettling, disturbing, and transformative." In other words, by exploring unconventional source materials and approaches, those scholars intervene in an academic discipline frequently characterized by conservatism, ethnocentricity and masculinity, challenge received wisdom about the nature of international politics and the history of ideas, and search for new knowledge and new practices with which to explore pressing political philosophical questions.

While the arguments in this thesis are mostly of a general nature, I adopt the example of Japanese animation (*anime*) as a demonstration of an under-privileged yet potentially valuable source of difference and innovation in studying political thought. In other words, I would like to recommend anime to political theorists (and especially to those who have never seen anime before). To be clear, I do not claim that the canon entirely unimportant in the field of political theory. I merely want to propose that scholars should be aware of other forms of political expression, such as storytelling and anime, that are part of everyday life in Japan and elsewhere and have practical political effects. Indeed, more than thirty years ago, Fredric Jameson (1979, 130) called for attention to mass culture, such as popular TV programs and films, and its socio-political effects, because these artifacts "clearly speak a cultural language meaningful to far wider strata of the population than what is socially represented by intellectuals." Thirty years on, however, those working in mass culture industries and on its technological development are now much faster than the academy in responding to cultural and technological change and investigating its political implications. Observing the emergence of digital media and the technological transformation of the public sphere into a digital realm, Goto-Jones (2009b) proposes that intellectuals, and in particular political philosophers, engage critically with digital media in contemporary society. Extending the notion of the public sphere into digital media, he calls for serious scholarly investigation into

³ See for example, Goto-Jones (2005a, 2005b, 2008, 2009a).

emerging techno-media and proposes that modern Japanese anime, manga and videogames can be sources of theoretical insight into techno-advanced society and human experience of it.

This thesis aims to make a theoretical and empirical case for non-European and non-textual forms of political expression as a challenge to the existing mainstream methods of studying political thought, and to shed light on the political significance and expressive potentials of nonconventional sources for political theorists. The thesis explores the philosophical idea of emancipation in the light of a range of sources. While these include literature on the subject from the field of political theory, the thesis expands this traditional corpus by also drawing from a source that doesn't normally enter these philosophical debates – in this case, science fiction anime. Considering animation as an expressive medium, and science fiction as a locus of the thought experiment, the thesis explores how anime can develop and deploy various innovative ideas about the future of politics/political visions. In studying political thought through popular visual culture from Japan, I seek to broaden the field of political theory to include rarely explored forms of knowledge and practice.

Science fiction anime is an unconventional expression of political thought in two ways. The first is medial – anime is a visual medium and a major cultural force from Japan. Although philosophers have recently recognized the importance of visual media – films and TV dramas in particular – as an additional source for philosophical inquiry, the academic field of political thought remains predominantly textual. Moreover, serious research into the political significance of anime, another rich field of visual culture, is in its infancy. The second is geo-cultural. Political thought has long been grounded in strong European traditions, including utopian and science fiction literature as extended fields of political expression. However, alternative political thinking from non-European countries, and particularly the political visions in utopian and science fiction literature and visual media from Japan have been little explored.

Recognizing the scarcity of academic research on political expression in anime, this thesis sets itself two major goals. Firstly, by analyzing particular aspects of the concept of emancipation through some of the most popular science fiction anime titles over the last two decades, it shows how science fiction anime can in fact serve as an inspiration for philosophical exposition. My analysis will demonstrate that anime is a distinctive form of political expression in its own right. Secondly, the thesis proposes new ways of understanding the concept of emancipation. Emancipation is broadly defined as the liberation of human beings from external and internal constraints, or the realization of individual autonomy. The modern history of the idea of emancipation often refers to Karl Marx's work as the most important reference point (Laclau 1992; Kebede 2010). His theory and the responses to his work amount to the most sophisticated and fully developed site of politico-philosophical inquiry into emancipation. According to Marx, emancipation is the creation of a new social order called communism, in which those alienated in capitalist society, particularly the proletariat, recognize and organize economic, social and political

power to live in their unique species-being as beings producing in freedom from physical need. For philosopher Jürgen Habermas, emancipation is the establishment of a universal communicative autonomy based on reason, a practice that will eliminate all forms of inequality (i.e. class, patriarchy, and ethnicity). For poststructuralists such as Michel Foucault, by contrast, there is no liberation or emancipation; “there is no transcendence, there is only an alternation of discourse: another truth, another power” (Nederveen Pieterse 1992, 14). My analyses will show how the selected science fiction anime works become philosophical exercises in considering some aspects of power and emancipation in two ways: *illustration* and *innovation*. That is, anime illustrates existing ideas or/and creating original philosophical arguments through thought experiments. My analyses exemplify the relevance of anime as a mode of thought and show how selected anime illuminate existing philosophical ideas or have arrived at alternative conceptualizations of emancipation. In doing so, the thesis suggests the ways in which anime can contribute to the field of political theory by casting these ideas in a new light.

Structure of the Work

The thesis is organized as follows. The first three chapters establish a theoretical and methodological basis for the argument about anime’s contribution to political thought. Chapter 1 and Chapter 2 highlight emancipation as the subject of the thesis as a whole in two ways. Chapter 1 maps out the landscape of emancipation as a field of knowledge in the existing academic field of political theory, with a particular focus on the work of Karl Marx, responses to Marx in the Marxist tradition, and Michel Foucault. Even though my thesis is ostensibly about emancipation in Japanese science fiction anime, this chapter is almost exclusively about modern European (textual) thought in the orbit of Marx because I want to present the modern history of the idea of emancipation in the field of political theory and address its shortcomings. This history is predominantly European and textual. I do not discuss Japanese Marxists in this chapter, not because I want to devalue their importance and contributions, but because this is exactly how leading scholars in the field have treated non-European thinkers until very recently. Given the limitations of existing studies on the modern history of the idea of emancipation, I call for urgent attention to the fact that there is a clear absence of non-European and non-textual forms of political thought. I argue that this is a problem for me, for readers, and for the field. How can we pretend we are talking about emancipation in general if we are being so narrowly specific, referring exclusively to the work of European thinkers in our discourse about emancipation? Could and should we be more open to media other than the philosophical treatise? This is the major concern underpinning the thesis. It is thinking about these questions that lead me to a project exploring anime – a non-European and non-textual form of

political expressions – as an alternative source of knowledge and practice in contemporary political theory.

Chapter 2 is a response to some of the questions posed in Chapter 1. It makes a theoretical case for popular culture including anime as a respectable site of inquiry into the politics of emancipation. Discussing the role of intellectuals, the concept of everydayness, and the nexus between theory and practice in the work of Antonio Gramsci and Tosaka Jun, critical theorists and Marxists in early twentieth century Europe and Japan, this chapter carves out an intellectual space for my subsequent treatments of anime.

Criticizing existing modes of knowledge production and traditional intellectuals, Gramsci and Tosaka redefined the idea of the intellectual in modern capitalist society. Both thinkers extended the scope of the intellectual from traditional elites and philosophers to the broad spectrum of specialists who are more actively involved in society in terms of economy, politics and culture, and saw them as important actors in organizing and leading moral and intellectual reformations. For Gramsci and Tosaka, a new vocation for modern intellectuals is to critically reflect on existing philosophy, common sense, and morality, and to engage with the creation of new worldviews, new common sense, and new morals in the politics of emancipation. The philosophers' vocation is accordingly to link philosophy and everyday practice. Philosophy in practice involves criticism of received common sense, current affairs, and social and cultural practices (including customs, literature, mass media and popular culture), together with the creation of new common sense and new morals. For Gramsci and Tosaka, everyday life is an important site for political and philosophical inquiries. Philosophers should not only look at classic philosophical texts but also extend the scope of their studies to everyday social and cultural practices. Moreover, everyday life has a political significance in the present through opening up the possibility for criticism and social change. Everyday life is a sphere of social, political, and cultural struggles for hegemony, ideology, and resistance.

Gramsci and Tosaka's respective theories offer a theoretical basis to see anime – everyday cultural practice in Japan and elsewhere – as an important site of philosophical inquiry, and as an additional intellectual source of political thought alongside the textual philosophical canon. Their theories also allow us to see the participants in the anime industry – the directors, animators, scriptwriters, and critics and many other professionals – as intellectuals who engage in intellectual activities. I argue that political theorists should not dismiss popular culture such as anime as having nothing to do with their political philosophical inquiries; they should instead critically reflect on such work because the political thought of our time is mediated and shaped by everyday cultural practices.

Chapter 3 considers the methods and approaches appropriate to analyzing anime as a mode of political thought. It begins by reviewing the common methods and sources in the field of political theory, and addresses their shortcomings: they are predominantly European and textual. I then look

at alternative approaches taken by scholars in the field of utopian and science fiction studies, as well as more recent scholarship on visual media, film in particular, and its philosophical aspects. I highlight how there are various ways to interrogate political ideas through looking at a less conventional corpus of sources, including utopian and science fiction literature, as well as film.

Literary theorist Darko Suvin (1979, 4) famously defines science fiction as “the literature of cognitive estrangement.” For Suvin, and his advocates such as Fredric Jameson, the most important function of estrangement in utopian and science fiction narratives is to estrange or distance readers from their society with its associated beliefs, norms, and values, and thereby to allow them to see their familiar reality critically. Estrangement is moreover always political, as it prompts readers to reveal that what has been taken to be eternal, natural, or universal is merely historical, and therefore changeable (Jameson 1998). In other words, science fiction literature could and should be an alternative form of political theory.

A similar point on the relation between estrangement and criticism is made by philosopher Stanley Cavell, who explores the philosophical significance of film as a medium of thought. Film is “a moving image of skepticism, a manifestation of our capacity to doubt the existence of the world” (Cavell 1979, 188) in which “the possibility of skepticism is internal to the conditions of human knowledge” (Rothman and Keane 2000, 68). That is, the objects and persons projected on the screen are real, but they do not exist in the spectator’s world right now. By projecting the everyday on the screen, film can disclose the unfamiliarity of the familiar to the spectator. This unfamiliarity, or the spectator’s feeling of estrangement from their living world is a form of skepticism. Film can invite us to philosophical questions of our sense of reality, the meaning of being human, the possibility of an alternative society and so forth. Although the question of to what extent the film (including anime) functions philosophically is still under debate among philosophers,⁴ Thomas Wartenberg (2007) provides two functions of film as philosophical practices: to illustrate existing philosophical ideas and to make original arguments through thought experiments. Using the work of Wartenberg, the later analytical chapters examine how anime do both: *illustrate* and *innovate*.

The research on alternative forms of political and philosophical expression initiated by some literary theorists and philosophers has made welcome and important contributions to understanding the intersection between popular culture and political thinking. Yet I would also like to call attention to the issue of sources again: most of the materials analyzed in existing studies – science fiction literature, film and TV drama – come from the USA and Europe, and are mainly live-action. Serious research into the political significance of anime – another rich field of visual culture from Japan – is still in its infancy. Calling attention to the scarcity of existing research on anime and politics, I propose its importance as a form of political intervention. This chapter then looks at

⁴ I look at some of these debates further in Chapter 3.

various existing methods for studying the (animated) moving image in the field of film, media and animation studies to create a toolbox for analyzing anime as a mode of political thought. Acknowledging anime as visual narrative, I take a trans-medial approach combining both narrative and visual analysis.

Chapter 4, 5, 6 and 7 are in-depth analyses of selected science fiction anime. The titles I look at are *Time of Eve* (Yoshiura 2010), *Psycho-Pass* (Motohiro and Shiotani [2012-2013] 2014), *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (Anno [1995-1996] 2006) and *Appleseed* ([2004] 2005). In selecting these anime I used the following three criteria.

Firstly, and the most importantly, the titles I focus on have to clearly address some aspects of emancipation and the related philosophical ideas of power, domination, or resistance in the narrative. Obviously there are a number of other anime that depict emancipation in terms of class, gender, race, and species, yet I have not set out in the thesis to provide a comprehensive picture of emancipation in Japanese animation. I do not claim that the selected anime titles represent the emancipatory politics of a particular group of people in Japanese society. Rather, I intend to look at these titles as a philosophical exercise, and examine how anime philosophize.

Secondly, I limit my selection to anime that has been produced in Japan, and released both in Japan and abroad since 1995. There are two concerns here: on the one hand, this allows me to locate anime's thought in the post-Cold War context, in which many political theorists have increasingly searched for alternative visions to liberal political order (Goto-Jones 2009b); on the other hand, I can also explore new political expressions that have emerged out of anime in both local and global cultural contexts. Although Japanese animation has been exported abroad since 1960s, many commentators suggest that Japanese animation became visible as *anime* around the world since the late 1980s and 1990s (Yamaguchi 2004; Napier 2005; Lamarre 2009; Tsugata 2011a; Clements 2013). The worldwide success of anime – Ōtomo Katsuhiro's *Akira* (1988), Oshii Mamoru's *Ghost in the Shell* (1995), the *Pokémon* franchise, the Academy Award winning *Spirited Away* (Miyazaki 2001), just to mention a few – signal the significance of anime within global media. Anime now appeals to a much wider audience than in previous decades.⁵ It should therefore be less controversial to look at anime since mid-1990s as an important part of interwoven global popular culture.

Thirdly, I have sought to expand my selection beyond a much-analyzed handful of established creators and genres in Japanese animation. The potential and significance of anime goes beyond the

⁵ Japanese anime industries gain international distribution channels with corporation with oversea partners since the 1990s, and this is a key to anime's international success in the American-dominated global popular culture (Iwabuchi 2002, 38). Iwabuchi addresses Disney's partnership with Studio Ghibli for global distributions of the Ghibli films as one of the prominent examples.

work of Tezuka Osamu, Miyazaki Hayao, Ōtomo Katsuhiro or Oshii Mamoru. I acknowledge the significance of their work to anime's popularity and multiplicity today, but there are already numerous scholarly and popular publications on their work available in both Japanese and English, and there are many philosophically interesting anime being produced by other creators. I have also sought to go beyond the *mecha* genre – the most established subgenre of science fiction anime, exemplified in the *Gundam* and *Macross* franchises. *Neon Genesis Evangelion* and *Appleseed* are of course also *mecha*, but I have included these titles for the analysis as they explore complex philosophical issues through the visual narrative as well as having the typical *mecha* elements (i.e. visually spectacular robots, weaponry, and battle scenes). The other two titles, *Time of Eve* and *Psycho-Pass*, deal with some of the pressing social issues set in the future societies. I have included both animated TV series and feature films as together these formats constitute the majority of anime. A typical animated TV series aired in one season contains around twenty episodes. The original *Evangelion* series has twenty-six episodes and the *Psycho-Pass* series has twenty-two, and each episode is about twenty-two minutes. The duration of a series is more than eight hours and the animated TV series can develop more complex narratives than animated feature films.

The first two case studies show how anime provides a lively illustration of existing philosophical ideas; the second two cases show how anime provides original philosophical arguments through thought experiments and hence contributes to existing philosophical debate. Each chapter considers a particular aspect of emancipation and related concepts through a trans-medial approach. I begin the chapters by setting out the textual field, before demonstrating how each science fiction anime can contribute to our understanding of emancipation through its visual narrative. In other words, the four selected anime titles become stepping-stones for confirming or problematizing ideas and arguments in relation to the concept of emancipation. These titles illustrate some familiar aspects of emancipation and related concepts discussed by political theorists and philosophers; they also invite us to perform various types of thought experiment: as a counterexample to a philosophical thesis, as confirming a theory, or as demonstrating the possibility of an alternative world.

Chapter 4 examines how the feature film *Time of Eve* (2010) illustrates the possibility of an alternative world or *utopian enclave*, to use Fredric Jameson's (2005) term, in which alternative imaginations of society and new political visions are thinkable. According to Jameson, this enclave is a kind of alien space that emerges from the process of spatial and social differentiation within society. However, it is not a closed space distanced from the rest of society as such, but a space that mediates radical political thinking within real society through a process of differentiation. In other words, the creation of utopian space is a distinctive socio-political process and practice in its own right. Borrowing Jameson's concept of the utopian enclave, my analysis explores the process of differentiation and its political implications through the visual narrative of *Time of Eve*. I argue that

the unique café Time of Eve functions as a utopian enclave allowing people within the enclave to reflect critically on the prevailing discourses and develop alternative political thinking. Through his unique experience in the café, the protagonist Rikuo, his android Sammy, and the other main characters begin to think critically about how their everyday practices – conversations, mass media, laws, social norms and common sense – are shaped on the basis of hierarchical relationships between humans and androids and by a prevailing anti-android discourse. Critical reflection leads Rikuo and others in the café to imagine a new human-android relationship. Here, the café Time of Eve becomes an important locus of resistance against the prevailing discourses and various forms of domination and power, while at the same time providing a space for generating alternative political visions. The anime presents the hope for a new human-android relationship envisaged by Rikuo and café regulars in the utopian enclave. Resistance begins with the characters questioning their subjectivity, a process that initiates a ceaseless struggle, rather than the achievement of a static state of emancipation. I discuss how the anime illustrates some aspects of power, domination and resistance as Foucault argues. *Time of Eve* does not present any concrete form of emancipation as an end-point or a goal, but it rather depicts the struggle, and the hope for an alternative form of society, emerging in the utopian enclave.

Chapter 5 examines how the concepts of security, emancipation and domination are interrelated in the TV series *Psycho-Pass* (2012-2013). I discuss the dialectical relation between emancipation and domination in the technologically enhanced surveillance society in *Psycho-Pass*. In the field of political theory, there are two conflicting views on security and power: the first is security as emancipation; and the second is security as domination. Ken Booth (1991) suggests that the emancipation of human individuals is a way to true security, while Michel Foucault (2007) argues that security has developed in modern society as a form of domination called *governmentality* – a new way to manage populations through the application of various knowledge and technologies and to secure people's health and productivity. *Psycho-Pass* is an interesting case through which to examine these issues since it articulates the ambivalent attitude of the guardians towards their powerful control system, as well as their struggles and rebellion, rather than portraying simple dichotomies. The analysis shows that *Psycho-Pass* vividly illustrates the ways in which the Foucauldian notion of power (i.e. disciplinary power, knowledge and biopower) operates to secure people's wellbeing in the future technopolis. The surveillance system and scientific knowledge about people's psychology are applied to human individuals through everyday practices, and people internalize these standards to maintain healthy bodies and minds. Along with the philosophical illustration, *Psycho-Pass* also performs a thought experiment that suggests we should side with Foucault's notion of security as governmentality and challenge Booth's argument on emancipation as security. The chapter suggests that the relation between domination and emancipation is dialectical. An ideal society without threats and fears – a vision of human

emancipation – is achieved through the control of the population and mass surveillance – exercises of power. Attention to this dialectic can therefore result in a more robust understanding of the concepts of domination and emancipation in technologically advanced societies.

Chapter 6 analyzes the idea of alienation and emancipation in the animated TV series *Neon Genesis Evangelion* (1995-1996). It first reviews some of authoritative interpretations of the concept of alienation in the fields of political and social theory, sociology, and science fiction literature. It then analyzes how *Evangelion* illustrates some familiar aspects of alienation, in particular the five aspects of alienation proposed by Melvin Seeman (1959). Seeman identifies five meanings of alienation: *powerlessness*, *meaninglessness*, *normlessness*, *isolation*, and *self-estrangement*. The analysis suggests that *Evangelion* illustrates Seeman's conception, yet at the same time also represents the limitations of Seeman's understandings by exploring paradoxical aspects of alienation through the visual narrative.

The protagonist Shinji attempts to ease his sense of alienation by conforming to the accepted social norms through participating in the fight against the alien enemy Angels, but far from being successful, his attempts to relieve his alienated feelings end up deepening them. The more he devotes himself to the battle against the Angels, the more he finds contradictions in treating the Angels as the enemy. The transformation of the Angels in the later episodes challenges the binary distinction of the Self and the Other or the friend and the enemy that is the basis of the prevailing norms and values in the fictional world. The transformation thus intensifies the fear and psychological struggles of Shinji and the other main characters. *Evangelion* effectively depicts the protagonist's alienated feelings and his inner struggle through the innovative use of limited animation techniques, including the articulation of still images, montage, voiceover narration and dialogue, effective camera angles and movement, as well as the experimental use of written texts, abstract visuals, color motifs, and combining different textures in images such as photos, pen drawing and watercolor.

The later section of the analysis also suggests that *Evangelion* presents an innovative aspect of the concept of alienation through a counter-factual thought experiment. I discuss the potentials and obstacles to the de-alienation and emancipation of Shinji, and suggest that Shinji is freed from his sense of alienation in the final episode through his imagination of an alternative universe. In other words, imagination is emancipation. The uneasy visual effects used extensively in earlier episodes to portray Shinji's psychological struggle disappear in this imaginary world.

Chapter 7 shows how the feature film *Appleseed* (2004) performs a thought experiment that challenges the philosophical argument put forward in philosopher Nicholas Ager's book *Humanity's End: Why We Should Reject Radical Enhancement* (2010). Ager sets out a theoretical basis for *species-relativism* on the premise that human beings as a biological species share certain experiences and ways of existing, which may be different from another species, such as posthumans.

Accordingly, Ager argues against what he calls *radical enhancement*, or the augmentation and transformation of the intellectual and physical capacities of human beings well beyond those we presently have, because it alienates us from what makes us human beings. *Appleseed* depicts a future utopian society wherein genetic engineering technologies become widespread. Half of its population consists of human clones whose reproductive functions are controlled in order to prioritize normal humans. Tensions between the pro- and anti-clone camps escalate, until eventually their clashes plunge their society into terror. *Appleseed* presents an intriguing case with which to reflect on Ager's species-relativism and essentialistic understanding of human beings because it deals with issues such as differences between species in a future utopian society, the possibility of shared experiences and values among citizens, and posthuman subjectivity. Moreover, in its depiction of the problem of essentialist ideas of human beings and anthropocentric visions of utopia, I suggest that *Appleseed* offers an alternative political vision of emancipation – the hybridity of humans and posthumans – with which we might go beyond human essentialism.

In conclusion, the analyses show how science fiction anime, despite not normally being considered a valid source of philosophy, can in fact serve as an inspiration for philosophical exposition. The science fiction anime selected illustrate existing philosophical ideas and also perform various thought experiments and illuminate aspects of emancipation in new ways. In other words, anime is a form of political expression and a new mode of political thought in its own right; it can contribute to ongoing philosophical discussions on the idea of emancipation. The thesis therefore provides a fresh take on the overarching philosophical issue of emancipation. Through exploring political expressions in anime, the thesis demonstrates the political dimensions of this important medium and the need attend to them. This attention will not devalue conventional text-based political thought, but provide a valuable supplement to it for a more inclusive field of political theory.