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Agnès

TTOTC - The Defence Strikes Back (round 1.1)

Tue Apr 29 05:45:55 2003

193.168.1.253

Dear Suzi,

Though I may not be able to answer your wonderful post as thoroughly as I would want to, I thought you might be interested in some "first impressions" which I jotted down while reading your analysis. As I intimated above, I agree with a lot of what you say, especially with your view of Minao/Eurydie.

However, your post provides me with a good way back into TTOTC, and today the Defense would like to focus on Actarus/Daisuke's "secret identity" in their argument in favour of Miss Vegalia/Rubina's love story.

(The court gasps ... what is this crazy defence attorney on about now? Well ... here goes! Fasten your seatbelts, and tell me whether you expected this ;-)))))

In addition to the possible reasons mentioned by Suzi for keeping Actarus/Daisuke's identity secret, we may need to consider the following factors: of course, part of it is "self-protection", as you indicate, but I think that there may be another dimension to this secret identity business: indeed, Actarus/Daisuke would be on a list of the "most wanted" people in the universe, in the sense that he is an opponent to the dominating regime of the Vega empire. As a "dissident", he is dangerous and killing or catching him would be of utmost important to the Vega regime. Hiding his identity may thus be a means of protecting not only himself but also THOSE WHO HAVE HELPED HIM AND GIVEN HIM A HOME.

His secret identity is also reminiscent of another cultural idiom very present in the mid 1970s, i.e. that of Luke and Leia Skywalker's secret identity. Episode IV- A New Hope rests on this idea that the last hope of "humanity" (for want of a better word) is somebody who on the one hand must be protected but who has, on the other hand, a kind of power, both mental and physical that transcends that of all his friends and opponents alike. Luke Skywalker has to be protected because he is still a child and has to be given a chance to grow and develop his power before he can enter the conflict as an efficient warrior. The comparison may seem far-fetched, but in fact, what we are dealing with here can be considered a trope of epic fiction. Indeed, think of all the heroes who first meet their enemies when they are still too young to fight them or to defend themselves, and whose journey "towards themselves" is centred around the epic fight and victory over this first foe (rather oedipal, I know! ;-)

This may not be untrue in the case of Actarus/Daisuke, and if we consider the anime as a 74 episode epic, it is certainly a factor that needs to be taken into consideration. (I will leave the classical considerations to Jerome, here, as that seems to be his favoured field).

If the manga version is to be believed, Actarus was still very young at the time of the attack on Flead, and I think (though my memory may not be quite accurate here) that his father tells him to take and hide Grendizer until he is old enough to use it (please correct me if I am wrong). No matter what the manga version suggests, one can assume from the anime that we are meant to infer that Actarus/Daisuke spent all his energy "defending" Flead to the best of his (then limited) abilities until there was nothing left to save. His failure to save his planet and people, as well as his lack of strength and expertise, can be read along these lines in the epic mode: Actarus/Daisuke encounters his enemy, they meet, first "peacefully" and later in conflict, and both times, Actarus/Daisuke is not yet strong enough to resist him or to defend himself. Indeed, independently on one's take on his relationship with Vegalia/Rubina, the "arranged/forced marriage" or the failure of the "love match" both leave him in a position of inferiority in relation to King Vega and his empire. In both interpretations, the failure of the intended marriage leads to the destruction of Flead, thus turning Actarus/Daisuke into a homeless prince/hero, who possesses all the traditional

attributes of such vagrant heroes: he has a growing strength and power (his own “maturing” in physical and mental force is accompanied by Grendizer’s increasing strength and capacities in battle throughout the series: Procyon/Umon’s “improvements” and the arrival of the “spazers”); he is fundamentally solitary, though not without friends, and indeed part of his “growing up” process revolves around his growing appreciation of his friends from mere people whom he likes at a distance and associates with because they were thrown on his path to true and valued companions in battle. He is also inherently fair, though not untortured, etc. (oh, AND he has a white horse!!! ;-)))

The idea that Actarus/Daisuke is both “protector” and in need of “protection” because he is “our last hope” is an idea that pervades the whole anime. It is always present and always a factor of his ambiguous character, and I think that it can explain a lot about his behaviour towards himself (and the need to fight), his friends, his exes and his enemies. In this particular sense, Actarus/Daisuke, though complex, is a type, and fits the mould of the tormented hero, and to my mind, this is also true of his attitude to women.

In many ways, he has a “prince charming attitude” to women, and when you say that “his perception of women was that they were beautiful delicate sensitive creatures that ought to be protected and cared for rather than be exploited and subjugated to such atrocities”, I would agree with you, Suzi, even though it makes me want to scream. (hmm ... don’t know whether I should be going there). You suggest that it is here that we should look for his opposition to Venusia/Hikaru’s wish of joining in the war effort, and again, I agree with you, though I would like to take this idea a little further. You see, in his past, Actarus/Daisuke has failed – miserably, I am tempted to add – in his function as man/prince/protector of women/his people as a whole. He was not able to “protect” anybody, men and women, and this is an essential factor in his attitude to the people he meets on Earth, including Alcor/Koji and more specifically Hikaru/Venusia.

Yet, and this is significant, his need to protect her seems to be even stronger than his need to protect Alcor/Koji. In her case, his perception of gender and traditional gender roles (protector/protected) heightens his reticence to accept her as a fellow in battle at first. Later, he continues to “protect” her in battle (the King Gori episode) but since they are facing the same dangers, they have also become equals in this respect (cf. the episode where both of them are caught under a pile of rocks at the bottom of the ocean). Actarus/Daisuke never loses his protective impulse though, one may add, nor does Venusia/Hikaru. I think that we can assume similar reasons for his reaction to “Minao being a woman”, as you suggest in your post, and I will avoid the issue of Maria/Phenicia here (I think that this is another problem altogether; Maria/Phenicia belongs to a “protector species”, like him, and his attitude towards her rather harsh, demanding and somehow “patriarchal” when it comes to her duties as a “princess”).

Why is this obsession with “protecting women”, preventing them from being exposed to war and battle so strong? Why is it so much more of an issue? Is it really possible to protect anybody from war? What is so threatening about the idea of a woman defending her family, those she loves, the planet she loves? [traditional cliffhanger ;-)]

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Tue Apr 29 06:02:05 2003

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In many ways “protecting somebody”, notwithstanding considerations of gender, is often revealed as illusory. In Grendizer, the question as to whether “protection” is ultimately possible is a central, if not an ideological issue. (cf. all the guest stars attempting to “protect” their planets, friends, family, and their ultimate failure to do so). It is also one of the questions around which Actarus/Daisuke’s guilt is centred and negotiated, and this guilt acquires its full symbolic significance in his relation to many of the female characters he encounters. The point is, that despite all his efforts, Actarus/Daisuke or any man will never be able to protect “women”, the delicate and sensitive and beautiful prizes of a patriarchal world (“woman as prize” – sorry, I HAVE to say that) from war and from the effects of war.

This is evident in those episodes in which Venusia/Hikaru knows about his secret identity, and is not yet allowed to take an active part in the war. She worries and waits (the lot of many women throughout times and history) in agony, and is anything but “protected”. Indeed, though she may be “protected” from physical evil, she remains essentially unprotected, as war affects not only those who fight but also those who wait, albeit in different ways. Sometimes she is even exposed to physical danger through the men’s absence, which is finally the factor that prompts Actarus/Daisuke to accept her in his team; I think that this is the moment he realises that his personal goal of protecting everybody will remain unachieved, and that he will not be able to fulfil the expectations he has of himself – hence his readjustment of his vision of women/Hikaru.

This readjustment of his vision of Venusia/Hikaru is essential here, in more than one way, as it signals the point in time in which he starts to come to terms with his past and his failure to protect his people. His readjustment of his perception of Venusia/Hikaru goes “hand in hand” with a readjustment of his perception of his own self, his role and his guilt.

If we consider what we said about Actarus/Daisuke’s “epic” character, his status as last hope, both protector and in need of protection in his evolution, the connection between his role as (failed) protector and his guilt imposes itself. Yet his journey “towards himself”, his redemption, in other words, also involves a deconstruction of the two major binary constellations discussed in this argument: protector/protected and (the related) failed protector/guilt.

Indeed, we may wonder at this stage whether it is not a necessary illusion to consider that the fighter “protects” and “saves” his wife/children/girlfriend and home and that they will wait for him when he comes home victorious (the woman/home as prize, again, and here the possibility of his coming home in any other state is too unspeakable to be considered, which may also explain Actarus/Daisuke’s taciturn disposition especially in relation to his past – and provide yet another meaning for his “secret identity”). From this point of view, woman, hearth and home acquire the status of “haven” (another reason why the idea of women/Hikaru fighting in a war is perceived as “unspeakable”), thus inverting the patriarchal perception of the protector/protected binary. Women provide a secure place to go back to, a haven in which the soul can heal from the atrocities it has witnessed.

In this particular sense, women have to be protected or THEY WOULD CEASE TO PROTECT, and, in his own mind, Actarus/Daisuke, at the beginning of the series has forfeited his right to protection through his failure to protect. In his evolution Actarus/Daisuke learns to transcend this paradox (cf. argument above about Venusia/Hikaru’s troubled admission to the team) and also, to some extent, and in an essential sense his “guilt”. The moment Venusia/Hikaru enters the team is also the moment Actarus/Daisuke ceases to beat himself up about his past.

This, you see, your honour, honourable members of the jury, is one of the major reasons, why I have trouble with our dear prosecutor’s perception of his grief over Vegalia/Rubina’s death as “guilt” over his failure to protect his people, through marriage and by other means.

You see, it is possible to argue, as we ventured to hint at above, that the moment Venusia/Hikaru joins the team is also the moment that Actarus/Daisuke lets her join the team, the moment he understands that nothing that he could have done could have changed the course of history. He remains secret about his past, as some wounds do not heal easily, but from now on, the narrative, though still dealing with the issue of protecting one's loved ones (cf. Horos/Zuril father and son for instance), no longer associates this issue with Actarus/Daisuke in the same, intimate way.

Therefore, the defence would like to argue that there are alternative unifying models that can be used to explain the relationship between guilt and the failure to protect in Grendizer and in Actarus/Daisuke in particular. We hope that the judge and the jury will admit these considerations as evidence of the existence of an alternative unifying theory about the guilt, protection and the failure to protect in Grendizer, and that in this particular constellation, the role of female characters transcends the personal to enter the symbolic. If Duke Fleed's personal "redemption" is triggered by his readjustment of his vision of Venusia/Hikaru within the first half of the anime (this interpretation should appeal to the Prosecutor General, no?), then it is difficult to attribute his reaction, and those of both Venusia/Hikaru and his sister to this particular issue. Indeed, they do not share his guilt, and yet their reaction is so strong that it becomes physical. If this "theory" is accepted as an alternative to that emitted by the prosecution, then we must also accept that Actarus/Daisuke feels something stronger than guilt in ep.72.

I hope that some of this at least makes sense. This poor attorney does have to be quite creative in her arguments now that she is facing not only a formidable Prosecutor General, but also a President of the Jury who is far from stupid ;-))))

I hope you enjoyed this, and I am waiting for you to demolish my argument, which should be rather easy, as my brain is quite muddled and unfocused, right now. The DA humbly apologises, etc. etc.
@+

Agnes (exhausted Defence Attorney)

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TTOTC - (round 1.2) Addendum/1

Tue Apr 29 23:51:35 2003

80.90.43.68

Addendum

First of all the Defence would like to thank the Prosecutor General for her reply and her kind comments. The Defence would also like to thank the Prosecution for drawing their attention to a slight misunderstanding due to the over-tired brain of this poor defence attorney at the time of writing.

Re: the role of women in the guilt/protector/protected constellation

I hope the court will allow the following comments to be taken into consideration.

*round 1.1 aims to establish Actarus/Daisuke/Duke Flead as a particular TYPE of character. Of course, his personality is complex, but it also fits the pattern of a certain type of hero, whose life and evolution is centred around a conflict with a near-invincible arch enemy. As far as I understand, the Prosecution agreed with this argumentation.

*round 1.2 deals with another recurrent (psychological) aspect associated with this type of hero. Please note that my comments about the role of women in this guilt/protector/protected constellation is not limited to Grendizer, but draws on a common feature of those types of narratives.

The epic hero's personal evolution is usually centred around the fate, often the death or kidnapping, or the rape, of an important woman in their lives (mother, sister, lover, etc.). This event usually acts as the trigger of the epic tale and as its ethical justification. What I mean is this: in the logic of the epic tale, the character's reaction to the disappearance of the loved woman determines his destiny. In the character's sense of his own self and his own history, the loss of the woman he loved (again, mother, sister, lover, aunt, etc.) stands for more than just that: it marks the moment his life fell apart, the moment his "lost paradise" closed its doors on him. The woman is no longer seen as just a woman, a person in her own right, but she comes to represent everything that he has lost. Her disappearance is irreversibly connected to the disintegration of his "perfect world" or as suggested above, the loss of "his paradise". This is the moment his childhood/youth stops, is irrevocably taken away from him before he is mature and strong enough to be "a man". It is also the moment he becomes aware of his powers and it is the moment in which his destiny is decided, or to be more precise, in which his actions and reaction determines his destiny. Please note as an aside, that in the Bible, Adam loses paradise because he does not want to lose Eve who has already eaten from the forbidden fruit. In Christian thought, then, the loss of paradise, and Man's fate is irrevocably linked to his refusal to "lose" the woman of his life, and thus woman becomes the locus in which both desire and guilt meet.

To give a few examples, one may mention Conan the Barbarian, whose quest is triggered by his witnessing the brutal killing of his own mother (and the corresponding destruction of his home/hearth) or Braveheart, whose own quest for freedom is again triggered and justified by the killing of his wife. This is the moment he becomes "homeless" in the sense that there is nowhere to go back to. It is also the moment he becomes an epic hero since the disappearance of his home (place + woman) frees him from the moral and human obligation of going back – he no longer needs to protect her nor himself, and is thus free to take all the risks his quest requires.

At the beginning of the narrative, this is also the case of Actarus/Daisuke. He can be reckless, as he has "nothing to go back to". Indeed, the first episodes deal with this particular matter, but at this stage of the narrative it is not centred around a female character. When we first meet him, Actarus/Daisuke has not really decided to live yet. Indeed, I would argue that his survival was "accidental". He only survived because he happened to be sitting in the most powerful weapon as yet invented. "Surviving" had not yet become a choice, nor had he chosen to die, but I suspect that at this stage he did not mind very much either way.

His first step to “conscious survival”, his first step away from recklessness is achieved through the realisation that there is a person who cares for him, namely Prof. Umon/Procyon (ep. 5). This too, is a recurring pattern in epic tales: after he has lost everything, the epic hero has to learn to live again, and he is taught to live again through his encounter, and often his confrontation, with a male character, often a mentor (Procyon, Obi Wan Kenobi for Luke, etc.) or like-minded people (fellow “victims”, in Braveheart.). His subsequent evolution often depends on the ability of this mentor to show him that there are still things worth living for.

In Grendizer, Actarus/Daisuke reaches this stage at the end of ep.5. This is the moment where he realises that the world would stop turning for at least one person (not to mention all of those who rely on him to save their planet ...) if he did not come back.

This realisation is essential in his evolution as an epic hero: it rekindles the hero's wish to live, and reconnects him to the values he thought had been irretrievably lost with the loss of his paradise/home/woman. He establishes a new connection, a kind of surrogate connection with a surrogate “home”, which is not at this stage, centred around a woman, but around his new found mentor. In this new surrogate home/hearth, he will learn again, little by little, to be a human being. He will learn to accept the friendship of other people. This, too, like the acceptance of a new home, is resisted at first – because friends are liable to be lost, just like the woman who meant everything, the place that was all his life. Actarus/Daisuke has reached this stage by the time he meets Eurydie/Minao – indeed he tries to convince her, and later Aphelie/Naida, that it is possible to live and be happy again, that the lost world can never be replaced, but that it is possible to live, consciously live, without it, or perhaps we should say DESPITE it, the memory of it, the memory of its loss and its actual loss itself.

[end of Addendum part 1]

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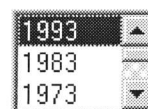
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TTOTC - (round 1.2) Addendum/2

Tue Apr 29 23:53:07 2003

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So far, Actarus still fits the mould of the "epic hero". He has encountered all the different factors (mentor, surrogate home, new friends) that allowed him to rekindle his wish to live and to reconnect with the values he believed were lost. This is what allows him to become the REAL protector of earth and of all the people in it, in the sense that it has now also become a place to go back to, a place he has an obligation to protect and for which he has an obligation to survive. His survival now matters, even to himself, and even if it is not yet connected with one particular woman, Venusia/Hikaru plays an increasing role in his life. The fact that his survival now matters is further heightened by the added threat his wound symbolizes in his life (ep.30). Actarus/Daisuke now WANTS to survive, and again, his survival is irrevocably connected with a new home/hearth.

The next "step" in his evolution is to allow a woman, in the case of Grendizer, we have Venusia/Hikaru, to enter his life again. This, of course, is the most difficult step, because the lost woman represented everything, home, paradise, life, and the initial stages of this recovery are usually characterised by a rejection of any woman who is brave or crazy enough to attempt an approach. Luckily for the epic hero, these women are also very persistent, most of the time, and they swallow rejection after rejection without wavering in their affection, which is what makes her essential in the hero's evolution: it is a characteristic shared by the lost woman and the "surrogate" woman, and it is precisely the fact that this new woman can provide the same constancy of affection and security (the home/hearth is starting to take form again) that allows the epic hero to believe that life may be worth living after all. Despite the horror, and despite the memory of all that was lost, there can be another woman, another home/hearth, another paradise.

This incidentally is also part of the "normal" evolution of every boy/man: as a woman his mother "belongs" to his father, and once he reaches a certain age, he has to "replace her" with another woman. In that sense, epic tales can be read as metaphors for the evolution from boyhood/youth into manhood. They function like creation myths, in a sense, and like the Bible, they tell us what a man has to lose and to do to regain his own personal "paradise". Thus, I would argue that the epic hero's redemption is only possible if he manages to exchange the lost woman with a new woman, who becomes the symbol of his regained life.

I would like to take a few minutes at this stage to consider characters who do not manage to achieve redemption. Luke Skywalker, for instance, meets with all the elements he needs to become the "hero" he was promised to be, though in his case the "woman issue" is slightly different, since he finds his sister, who can be seen as a symbol of the regained lost world – it was never completely lost ... (Hey?!) [its is important here, that Lukas has not finished the tale, but I would be ready to bet that episodes 7 to 9 would witness the encounter of Luke and "the new woman"].

This is not the case of Anakin Skywalker, however. His mentor, Obi Wan, is not strong enough to help him overcome the death of his mother, to help him deal with it, and his reaction to this death is the trigger that sets out his journey towards the dark side of the force. Anakin is not able to "accept" a new home or a new hope, he does not accept his mentor, and I suspect that Padme will fail to "redeem" him too. The ground is not "ready" for Padme's redemptive action: as Anakin has already refused to take the first steps towards recovery (mentor/surrogate home) everything he does will turn him further towards the dark side, even the gestures and actions that should have allowed him to regain his former self. [Since he turns into Darth Vader, it is quite safe to assume this, and it is also quite safe to assume that Padme will play an important role in his relentless journey towards his destiny, as indicated at the end of ep. 2.

Grendizer also has examples of such characters, whose destiny as antiheroes is centred around the loss of their home world, their own paradise: Ergastul/? in ep. 34 is one such example – he is the mirror image of Actarus/Daisuke, the antihero he could have become if it had not been for his encounter with Umon/Procyon, who provided him with a new home, Alcor/Koji who taught him to believe in the possibility of friendship, and Venusia/Hikaru, whom he is in conflict with at this very moment. Significantly, the last image in Ergastul's head associates the place and the female (his sister) who together constituted his lost

paradise.

This is where my argument in round 1.2 comes in, you see. I was not looking at specific characters in Grendizer, and I purposely avoided considering the actual dialogues as such to avoid the translation and interpretation issues our dear Prosecutor reminds us of. What I was looking at in my post was Actarus/Daisuke's evolution as an "epic hero" in the evolution of the narrative. He goes through all the traditional stages, as discussed above, but he also goes through the last stage – and this should please our dear prosecutor – namely that of accepting the presence of a new woman in his life. I am not talking about the nature of the relationship between Actarus/Daisuke and Venusia/Hikaru, nor was I talking about his attitude to women, which can vary along with interpretations and performances. What I was talking about is the SYMBOLIC STATUS OF WOMEN in the anime and its/their function in the development of the epic tale, or in other works, in Actarus/Daisuke's personal evolution as an "epic hero".

May I add that if I wrote that "I wanted to scream" or something like it, I wrote it in connection to the symbolic function of women or female characters in general (in this particular case, it happens to be Venusia/Hikaru). This emphasis on their symbolic value robs the female characters of their "human" or intrinsic value: they exist as a function of the epic hero and are denied a development OF THEIR OWN in the sense that they are a tool that will allow the epic hero to recover and to regain a kind of paradise. (Of course, one could the epic hero is a prisoner of "type" too, but this is another issue, and at least, he is allowed to develop "as a person" for himself, since the epic deals with the evolution of its hero). In a sense, my dear prosecutor, this and the fact that Actarus/Daisuke recovers his sister, and with this a part of the lost paradise, may also contribute to an explanation of Venusia's diminishing importance after the arrival of Phenicia/Maria. Indeed, once Actarus has resolved his conflict with her (the protector/protected/guilt triangle), Venusia HAS PLAYED HER ROLE, and in a sense becomes redundant in his evolution. She is the surrogate who will offer unrelenting solace and affection, and it is mainly in this capacity that we observe her after she integrates the team: she is an active member, yes, she has had to work hard to obtain it, but she is never "outstanding" – that "function" is left to Actarus/Daisuke's gung-ho sister, who represents another type (other discussion).

Venusia/Hikaru is still seen as in need of protection (King Gori, for instance) and she appears every time her "love" is needed (ep.58, for instance, where she alone cannot believe that Actarus/Daisuke can have turned against his friends).

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TTOTC - (round 1.2) Addendum/3

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To get back to my main argument, namely that the moment Actarus/Daisuke resolves his own inner conflict about allowing Venusia/Hikaru to join in the war effort actively, is also the moment he understands that nothing he could have done could have saved his home/paradise. There are elements that allow me to reach this conclusion: in the case of Actarus/Daisuke, it is difficult to identify one particular woman that might have been the trigger of his metamorphosis into an epic hero (and possible antihero), and if we consider his conscious memories, we have to admit that they show the murder of both his mother and his father, of men and women alike. But if we take his nightmares into account, the constellation is slightly different – his unconscious self seems to centre both his guilt and his failure on females rather than males.

At the very beginning, he has a nightmare in which he fails to protect a little girl. In a sense, this little girl symbolises ultimate vulnerability and of all the possibilities lost with his home/hearth/paradise – she unites the characteristics of women (vulnerability and haven) with their function (the bearing of children/the possibility of paradise). She also symbolise his fear and his guilt over the destruction of his planet, his guilt over his “failure to protect”. The nightmare I refer to actually contains all the elements of his failure location/place to be protect, little girl/symbol of those in need of protection and the over-dimensionally huge shadow of his enemy – the unrelenting personal enemy, the cause of his downfall and guilt, the incarnation of his own powerlessness. This dream is the entrance into one of the very first episodes (2 or 3, I think, I don't quite remember), but it is very vivid and in the logic of the epic tale, it marks the stage the epic hero has reached in his evolution: the location is earth and the girl terran, which suggests that he is starting to “accept” earth as a surrogate home, but that the task of defending/protecting it still seems to be an unachievable AND unbearable task. At this stage, only Umon/Procyon has been allowed to make some tentative steps into his world, and his horror is heightened by the fact that he is slowly recovering his wish to live.

The next vision of horror we witness is the delusional nightmare he is subject to after his encounter with Aphelie/Naida: here again, the nightmare vision is centred on a woman (Naida) carrying the body of her dead brother (still a child) and surrounded by a helix of screaming women. Again, guilt, failure to protect and loss of paradise-like home are closely connected to the woman as symbol. At this stage, he has accepted as a friend, though perhaps not completely as a fellow warrior (the TFO doesn't really help here). Venusia/Hikaru, on the other hand, knows about Actarus/Daisuke's identity, but has not yet started to ask for an “active part” in the war effort. She is now “a woman in need of protection” associated with his surrogate home, and his guilt over his failure to protect his own world has not been resolved yet, as episode 29 quite clearly shows. Actarus/Daisuke is very vulnerable to Aphelie/Naida's accusation, and the reason for this is, in my opinion, that he still believes this himself. Aphelie/Naida the incarnation – the symbol made flesh, as it were – of his failure to protect physically confronts him in this episode, yet he has undergone a certain evolution since the first nightmare involving the little Terran girl: though episode 29 thus confronts Actarus/Daisuke to his failure once again, this time, the vision of the over-dimensional enemy is absent.

It is his guilt alone, his failure alone, and this too is an important stage in his evolution as an epic hero: he has to accept his past, his guilt and his loss in order to overcome his fear and his enemy. As for the redemptive action of Venusia/Hikaru – well, he has had to save her a couple of times, and since she found out about his secret identity, the intimacy between the two characters has shifted to another level. She is now associated both to his past and to his present, and little by little she comes to incarnate the possibility of the presence of “another woman” in another home/hearth.

When Venusia/Hikaru joins the team, her status in the epic tale changes again – she must still be protected, but she is now an equal partner, she is also allowed to protect. This is extremely significant in the psychological evolution of the character, since mutual protection characterises partnership, the kind of relationship that a man is meant to develop with a woman other than his mother (to get back to the boy to

man interpretation ;-)). Of course, a child instinctively wants to protect its mother or loved woman, but in the epic tale, this is revealed as not only illusory but also the source of the epic tale, since the failure to protect triggers the epic development of the character. To allow a woman, the woman whose presence was accepted, to take a course of action that will throw her in the way of danger and even perhaps death – another LOSS – presupposes that the epic hero must have resolved his guilt complex over his failure to protect the original home/hearth. To allow her to enter combat, to protect in return, he must have understood that he alone is not responsible for the protection/destruction of his world, that the idea that one can protect other people is often an illusion, and that to gain life one has to risk loss. If Actarus/Daisuke was still a prisoner of his guilt, he would never have allowed Venusia/Hikaru to fight because as a woman she symbolises the centre of his new home/hearth. Like the world he has lost, his instinct is to protect this world, now that he has accepted it. It has become essential, the centre of his new stability, and yet, he allows its most powerful symbol to wilfully expose herself to danger. The only conclusion I can see is that he has managed to readjust not only his perception of himself, but his perception of Venusia/Hikaru/women and the symbolic role they have hitherto had in his life and perception of life/his own self/his own guilt. Indeed, I cannot remember any horror visions involving women after Venusia/Hikaru has entered the team, which again suggests that he has managed to resolve that part of his conflict with his part.

Thus Actarus/Daisuke's evolution follows that of the classical epic hero; there are different patterns, of course, but the epic pattern in Grendizer allows its hero redemption, and it also allows him to regain some of his lost paradise (the constellation Venusia/Hikaru – Phenicia/Maria, which again would be interesting in the manner of their leaving: did they choose between two worlds? This I think is a matter for another discussion.)

I hope that I have made my ideas a little more clear this time. You see, dear colleagues, I was looking at the structure of the anime and at the symbolic function of the characters, rather than the characters per se. I hope the honourable judge and the honourable members of the jury will take these ideas into consideration when they review the evidence brought before the court.

I will repeat once more that it is my belief that at the time Vegalia/Rubina re-enters his life, Actarus/Daisuke has already resolved his guilt complex. I won't deny that it might have played some part in his reaction to Vegalia/Rubina's death, but I believe that his reaction cannot be completely explained through guilt, as the epic structure of the story suggests that his major guilt issues had been resolved by this time previously.

Unless, of course, it is another kind of guilt altogether ...

;-)))

Thank you for listening to our argument.
Ciao, ciao,

Agnes (Defence Attorney with a very sore head!)

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Gerdha

The Prosecutor General...

Tue Apr 29 08:23:44 2003

80.116.18.145

... thanks immensively the Defence Attorney for posting these considerations. And I thank Her also for the kind words about my supposed skills. It's always nice receiving a compliment from such an intelligent and amazing person like Ms. Agnes, it's a real honour for me and she is made my day. ^_^

I understand the direction and approach of the Defence to TTOTC, and I understand also from where it comes: the french edition of Grendizer lets effectively infer to the viewers the described relationship between Duke Fleed and women. It was something I noticed immediately when I saw the french episodes. So from a French fan perspective, the Defence's discourse is perfect and makes sense.

But as I have already remarked in the past, this is a particular approach of the French edition. The Daisuke character I know has nothing to do with the personality the Defence Attorney has described. I agree to some extent to the first part of Defence's analysis, even if I would like to add a remark about the manga. Agnes, I suppose you are talking about the manga version edited in France, right? Well, that is Gosaku Ota's manga, which is not the original one. The original manga was written directly by Go Nagai - and ironically is the only Grendizer manga edited up to now in Italy - while Ota's version was released after the anime, and is not connected neither with the older version of Nagai nor with the TV serie. So I would not consider Ota's manga as a reliable source about the analysis of the TV eps. Anyway, apart from this, I share some considerations expressed in Round 1.1. But instead, I cannot agree with Defence's view described in Round 1.2 (Daisuke & women).

It's a problem of dialogue content in different versions, after all, so I suppose the Jury and/or the Judge should decide how to handle this topic now. If I could put a proposal on the table, I can accept Defence's theory provided She will allow me to use some dialogues content as a proof in my under preparation Second Addendum about Matroska n°3. This will allow me not only to give a complete overview of my theory, but also to answer properly to the Defence about Her here proposed vision.

Well, even the Prosecution is exhausted now... and asks for the permission to go to sleep! LOL!

Thanks again for posting Your theory, my dearest Defence Attorney. You are great as usual. See you later around... ^_^

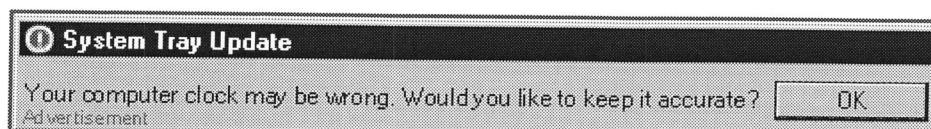
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Gerdha

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jérôme

mistake I was confused

Wed Apr 30 01:53:15 2003

212.198.0.96

!!!!

Gosh, that was a speech! I'm really mesmerized again! This trial is becoming a riddle from which I can't really find a possible solution!

Those readings /hearings are really interesting and the judge has still many posts to read!!!

esp. the addenda!

But you made your point!!! and pretty well I must say!

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Gerdha

TTOTC - questions to The Defence & some comments

Wed Apr 30 03:46:28 2003

80.116.18.83

Dear Agnes,

I have given a quick read to your Addendum during coffee break, so more comments could be posted later. But I need some preliminary explanations, in order to be sure to have understood correctly your point of view.

- 1) Why do you believe that it's possible to apply to Grendizer the "classical" european literature epic hero approach? I mean, Grendizer is a japanese anime whose author is a man called Go Nagai, who has a particular approach to storytelling. Why do you think that this factor has to be disregarded?
- 2) you say that you don't refer to dialogues in your analysis. Well, are you sure that the vision you have of Hikaru character (for example) and even of Daisuke's personality are not influenced at all by the dialogues you have listened in the French version?

Well, I have to say once again that, even if I have not analysed deeply your post, I think I have understood the general overview of your approach. And I have to say again that I see Actarus' story in the anime as very different from yours. You know I have no literature skills so I am not able to say if a specific different type of hero category can be applied to him. But for sure I don't agree with the view you have proposed, and particularly about the type of relationship he has with women.

In a funny way, Agnes, we are coming back full circle to our very first MM exchange, LOL! ;-) The old back times when I told I prefer to stay strict to the anime during analysis. I mean, this poor accouter has no knowledge to say that your perspective is wrong in general; at the opposite, I firmly believe that all you have said about the characteristics of a certain type of hero are correct. But what I mean is that I don't believe they can be applied to Daisuke Umon.

And as a side note, when I talked about guiltiness feelings in my AoP I was referring to something very specific. Specific for Duke Fleed. I did not think about a "hero" type, I thought to Grendizer pilot character. It's true, I did not explained in details what guiltiness feeling I was talking about. I avoided it for some reasons, and I understand now the time has come to explain deeply my theory. I will do it in the Matrioska n°3 Addendum, but this could mean that probably that coming post would become a SSSSMM... and it would require also more time for writing... but it will arrive, that's for sure!!! ^_^

Thanking you in advance for your attention,
your Prosecution Attorney,
Gerdha
:-)))))))))

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Agnès

Re: TTOTC - questions to The Defence & some comments

Wed Apr 30 04:54:07 2003

80.90.43.42

Dear Gertha,

Thanks for reading these addenda and for taking the time to comment. Of course, I am happy to answer your questions.

Prosecution:

1) Why do you believe that it's possible to apply to Grendizer the "classical" european literature epic hero approach? I mean, Grendizer is a japanese anime whose author is a man called Go Nagai, who has a particular approach to storytelling. Why do you think that this factor has to be disregarded?

Defence:

I was not using a model of "epic tale" in particular (this is not a particularly European model), and I was certainly not trying to apply a model to the anime. In fact, I just recognised certain recurring patterns in movies and stories told in the epic mode, and Grendizer just presents some of these when dialogues are not taken into account (cf. answer to question 2).

You know, my perception of the epic mode was also deeply influenced by Japanese culture and Japanese animes, which fed my imagination as a child. The whole part about suicide (or recovering the wish to live) is far more obvious in Japanese material than it is in European or Western material, as the "I am not worthy to live after what I have done" attitude is much more developed in the Japanese movies I have seen/books I have read. Indeed, it is through my reading/watching Japanese material that this particular pattern became obvious to me, and that I was able to recognise it in Western material.

Epic tales can be found in many cultures, and I am quite confident that these can also be found in Japanese culture, and the epic mode, though partly culture specific, also has elements that transcend culture. I was very careful not to read anything into the anime (believe me when I say that), but to observe ONE aspect of the character and his evolution, which happens to be characteristic of the epic mode in many tales. I believe that we can agree that Actarus/Daisuke feels guilt over the loss of his planet and about the fact that he survived (hence the idea that he has to accept this new chance), and I believe that this part of his character evolves throughout the anime.

Please note that when I say "a classical epic feature" (or something like that), I am not referring to the Greek/Roman classic period, but I was using the word in the sense "a recurring pattern", a feature that one can observe again and again. (I am sorry, this may have caused some misunderstanding)

The other field I used in this analysis, though I did not refer to it as such, are some (very) basic/simplified notions from psychoanalysis, which also transcend culture, and I tried to make sure that the assumptions I made would be psychologically feasible, on the one hand (I wouldn't be surprised if "woman" signified "hearth" in Japan, and indeed in many other places in the world :-))

The reason I chose to refer to Star Wars or Braveheart, is that I wanted to choose examples that the widest number of people on this forum would be familiar with. I thought that other examples of the epic mode might help to show how the pattern works.

Prosecution:

2) you say that you don't refer to dialogues in your analysis. Well, are you sure that the vision you have of Hikaru character (for example) and even of Daisuke's personality are not influenced at all by the dialogues

you have listened in the French version?

Defence:

:~))) You know, dear Prosecutor General, that was exactly my point in my preliminary comments ... so I could return the question to you? How do you know that your interpretation is not coloured by the dialogues you have heard?

[I hate being an attorney, really ... I prefer sharing to "fighting" but since we are playing that game! I hope, at least the prosecutor will be proud of my baby attempts at being an attorney :~)))]

Seriously, now. I have tried to involve posts by other people in my analysis, especially what you and Suzi sd, and considering suing the court for damages (inhuman cruelty) :~)))]

Seriously Gerdha, I hopes this answers your questions, and will allow you to better destroy my argument :~)))

Have a nice evening, all of you,

Agnes [Exhausted Defence Attorney]

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Agnès

just a couple more comments

Wed Apr 30 08:38:00 2003

212.24.201.245

... as I was interrupted before, unfortunately, so the defence of the defence had to remain incomplete.

First of all, I hope that my last post made clear that I did not disregard Go Nagai or his team in my analysis, in the sense that the notion of the epic I developed in my addenda is to a large extent based on JAPANESE "epic" animes. I understand that the Japanese may use other categories, but the patterns I refer to are recurring in Japanese material too. The term "epic" may be ill chosen, but what it describes are often present in the animes I have watched. Maybe I should add that my first experience of the epic mode in this particular sense was Japanese, i.e. [three guesses] GRENDIZER!!! :-)))

The prosecution also asks whether I was not influenced by the French version in my perception of the Hikaru character. I realise that this is a question that is dear to our favourite Prosecutor General, so I will take some time to explain exactly which elements I used in my analysis.

In fact, I was very careful not to involve my own perception of Venusia/Hikaru as a character with a personality, because I know that we do not agree on how to interpret her personality (versions issues, etc. etc.). Nor did I involve aspects of the personal relationship between Actarus and Venusia. Really, I made a point of making myself look at her only as a symbol or possible factor in Actarus/Daisuke's evolution with regard to the depiction of his relationship to fighting (hence guilt/protect, etc.)

I compared the function she has in the anime and the different eras that one can recognise in her overall evolution. This was linked to your own analysis of the different eras/periods and to your own argument that Venusia/Hikaru seems to "disappear" in a way after Phenicia/Maria's arrival.

There are different stages in this evolution, which again have been discussed here:

At the beginning she is very young, slightly in love with Actarus/Daisuke. She keeps running after him, and he keeps making excuses.

Then she finds out who he really is, and starts worrying every time he is fighting. She starts longing for a chance to help him, and she starts looking for ways to help him in her own way (ep. 34, for instance)

The second period of the anime starts, and Venusia/Hikaru, now strong through the blood transfusion, starts insisting on her rights to take part in the action and eventually, she manages to convince Actarus/Daisuke that she can do it. Venusia then becomes a member of the team.

For a while, the anime focuses on her first steps as a pilot and as an active member of the team and the marine spazer is a bit of a star, but very soon, a new spazer is developed and in need of a pilot ... and in comes Maria/Phenicia, who from this moment onwards becomes the most prominent female character in the series. This continues until nearly the end of the anime, where as you pointed out, the narrative trend seems to return to more "adult" concerns.

This is ALL I considered in relation to Venusia/Hikaru's character in my analysis of her symbolic function. If you juxtapose this to the way in which Actarus/Daisuke's character evolves you can see that there is a parallel, and that he is less tortured in the second part of the anime (this too was said on the forum and seems to be generally agreed on - I did not invent it). It just seems to me that Venusia finally joining the team and Actarus/Daisuke becoming less "worried" and ambiguous about fighting in the process was too much of a coincidence to be left unlooked at.

Now it is my turn to ask a question: of course I believe you when you say that their relationship is different in the Italian version, and I would very much like to know how. (I know you are preparing yet another addendum :-)). Can you perhaps just tell me this: what is Actarus' attitude to Venusia's increased wish to participate in the war effort in the Italian version? I cannot believe that he is "in favour" of her joining the team right from the beginning: there is a conflict between them on this issue, isn't there, even if it is played out in different ways? All I considered in my argument was the existence of this conflict, nothing else.

This has been an exhausting day, Gerdha, really. You are a very tough adversary, you know :-))) I hope this answers your question and goes some way to convince you that I really did not involve my personal opinions of the characters "as persons" in the addenda (some of it shines through, perhaps, in part 1.2 as I was being flippant, but they are really not what I based my analysis through). I was really disciplined about this after reading the comments of the prosecution!

Well, my dear Prosecutor General, just like you last night, I beg to be allowed to retire and to get some sleep. Thanks again for this wonderful trial and for your patience and commitment to TTOTC. I am learning a lot.

Ciao, ciao,

Agnes.

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Suzi

You both gave a sore head

Wed Apr 30 12:26:16 2003

129.94.6.30

Agnea and Gerdha,

Alow me to say that despite my limited knowledge in philosophy and literature, I am quite impressed with the presentation of Agnes and I felt that she was really avoiding any personal interpretation of the characters (although I am not sure whether true interpretation will be more helpful).

I do have a few comments though but I will postpone that to another time as I really have a sore head after reading all these wonderful complicated posts, and I need to focus so that I could go back to work.

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Gerdha

More comments from The Prosecution side

Wed Apr 30 12:33:21 2003

80.116.18.56

Dear Attorney Agnes,

I am very honoured by your comments about my persona, really. Believe me, I am serious when I say you have gifted me with one of the best compliments I have ever received in my life. So now I have one more reason to not be able to sleep (yes, even if exhausted I cannot fall in Morfeo's arms...) ^_^ Well, instead of reading a book I will try to answer you immediately. And I hope Suzi will forgive me if I still delay of some hours my answer about ep9... but it is coming soon, it's a promise!

First of all, let me tell you Agnes that I appreciate your staying strict to TTOTC rules. And it's strange but mostly interesting how starting from the same point people can arrive to different conclusions. I would use the quote system to ease my answering.

"I believe that we can agree that Actarus/Daisuke feels guilt over the loss of his planet and about the fact that he survived (hence the idea that he has to accept this new chance), and I believe that this part of his character evolves throughout the anime" "Daisuke was disgusted by Grendizer, and that his reluctance to fight was linked to this particular disgust and that he had to overcome this particular disgust before he could become the protector of the earth? Well this is where my analysis came from. I thought that rejection of something is often connected to rejection of one's self. After all, Grendizer is responsible for his survival as well as for part of the genocide of his people at least. This ambiguity about a machine got me thinking about his own ambiguity about himself, and I just "followed the thread" in the anime, as it were." "I also concentrated on other elements that were identified in discussions on this forum, like the strange problem of his different attitude towards his sister's entry into the team - we discussed that too, I think. Why did he make such a fuss about Venusia/Hikaru becoming a warrior, but asked his father to allow Phenicia/Maria to join despite Procyon/Umon's misgivings?" "Really, I made a point of making myself look at her - Venusia - only as a symbol or possible factor in Actarus/Daisuke's evolution with regard to the depiction of his relationship to fighting (hence guilt/protect, etc.)"

Well, my theory about Daisuke's guiltiness is a bit more complex, Agnes. Yes, I agree with what you say, and I thank you for the reference to mine and Suzi's considerations about Actarus' psychology at the beginning of the serie. But those are surely factors for Daisuke for being SAD, while a GUILTINESS FEELING is something more and different. Why should he feel guilty over the loss of Flead? Why that dramatic nightmare in ep25 (it's a pity that only a few of us saw it, because to me that moment IS one of the key to understand the whole anime)? You know Agnes, we have noticed in that nightmare different particulars. You had your attention captured by Naida carrying his dead brother plus the other women with children. Me instead noticed more Grendizer covered by blood and surrounded by dead fleadians, which are the scenes just before; as Grendizer scene is located as first I think that it symbolises (uh, it's really ME who is talking about this??? ;-)) a cause-effect sequence. I did not wrote it in an outspoken mode in my AoP, but I thought exactly like Suzi that Daisuke suffered of a high depression illness with suicidal tendency in ep25. If Naida's accusation was false or anyway he would have felt guilty only for having escaped thanks to Grendizer, I don't think that that nightmare would have been drawn that way. I have no time now to go into details, I promise I will explain deeper my theory in my Matrioska n°3 analysis, but basically I believe that Daisuke felt guilty for having been HIMSELF the cause of the attack to Flead. And for having survived - believing for a long time even to be the only one - despite of this.

If I am right - I hope I will demonstrate it - the whole evolution of Daisuke's personality has to be read in another way: finding a new reason to live, to be alive, to give a sense to his own life. I believe THIS is the

recurring theme in the anime, at least from Actarus character point of view, and it is the interpretative key to understand his relationships with the other characters and his attitude towards Grendizer, the war and Vega. And to understand what happens in ep72.

I don't recognise in this storytelling approach anything comparable to usual "epic heroes" (I could be wrong of course, I am basing this consideration upon my school literature recalls which could be wrong or partial), and even in other animes. Other stories present us complex characters (other Nagai's works: Hiroshi Sheeba in Jeeg, or Devilman or Testuza Tsuruji in Great Mazinger – or Matsumoto's Harlock) but they have internal struggles for various reasons and not guiltiness feelings. I told once that in my opinion Grendizer is a one-off case in anime history, and the more I get to know information about it (ex. production notes) the more I am convinced about this. I think Grendizer was a sort of "laboratory" for storytelling experimentation, and some of the differences in the mood of episodes can be explained this way, as well as the often changes in the story direction.

For example, I had already explained that probably Maria's introduction was a sudden accident not previously visioned to cover the role of Drill Spacer's pilot; there could have been no struggle for Actarus in accepting her in the team as the scriptwriters needed a Drill Spacer's driver soon available, fullstop. It's not a good explanation for the story arc, but it's unfortunately the truth likely. Scriptwriters could not "waste time" for a new struggle for Actarus in that moment of the serie, because Toei wanted to increase the ratings soon (I hope my friend Alcor will be able to update Nagaifans site in the coming days, so you all could understand what I am talking about...), and that's why Maria – a new alien character with special strength and powers who did not need to be trained for driving the third spacer – was chosen as the best solution to cover the role of the new member of Grendizer team. This sudden "interruption" of Daisuke's evolution had a double consequence: from one side Maria took the leading role in the anime as she was a character "without a past to be guaranteed" plus the counterpart of Alcor (one day I will post an MM about my theory about him) and from the other side Actarus had to "disappear" both for resurrecting Mr. Kabuto and because probably the scriptwriters had lost his "path" so to speak. And Venusia's evolution had to follow him, for more than one reason. Scriptwriters took unfortunately a while to reconstruct a "story" and they succeeded only from ep62 on, when in fact starts the final arc, where particularly the closing episodes show again us Daisuke Umon as the main character of Grendizer, and his personal story becomes suddenly once more the main inspiring topic. That's why I don't agree with you, Agnes, about the vision of Daisuke's character towards Venusia and Maria. I am convinced that, if no problem of ratings would have occurred, Grendizer story would have been differently developed in the central part of the anime, and what we have seen instead is the result of a list of compromises.

"Now it is my turn to ask a question: of course I believe you when you say that their relationship is different in the Italian version, and I would very much like to know how. (I know you are preparing yet another addendum :-)). Can you perhaps just tell me this: what is Actarus' attitude to Venusia's increased wish to participate in the war effort in the Italian version? I cannot believe that he is "in favour" of her joining the team right from the beginning: there is a conflict between them on this issue, isn't there, even if it is played out in different ways? All I considered in my argument was the existence of this conflict, nothing else."

Yes, Agnes, also in the Italian version Actarus is not in favour for Venusia becoming part of the fighting team in the beginning, and there is a struggle between them. But the difference between the French and Italian editions lays in the reason behind it. In the Italian version, it's not a matter of "girl protection" from hero's part or – that what's left me speechless when I saw the French "Venusia trilogy" - a sort of subtle or expressed misogyny from Daisuke. The struggle between them has a different cause. Actually, some of the dialogues between Actarus and Venusia in ep37 and ep39 are totally amazing for me, and are far away from the French edition. Actually eps 37-38-39 are one of the reasons why my interpretation of both Daisuke and Hikaru's characters is distant from yours, Agnes. I admit it's mostly a dialogue content issue in this case (but I will elaborate deeper in another post...) but I cannot hide that they are a big reason also why I cannot recognise the "epic" arc you have described referring to hero-girl "classical" relationship as existing in Grendizer.

Oopss, it's 3.30 AM and still I cannot sleep despite the exhausting.... adrenaline's jokes, right?

Thanks once again for the attention, dear Defence Attorney – and all Court & public. I am learning too a lot through this trial, at least about myself. Believe me. So thanks a lot to all of you for the opportunity you gave me to participate to TTOTC. It's really an amazing experience – which seems by the way to have lot a long long way to go....

Your happy Prosecutor
Gerdha

^ _ ^

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Jérôme

Epic in Japanese culture!!

Wed Apr 30 22:29:52 2003

212.198.0.96

Dear Agnès and Gerdha,

I guess the judge somehow has to settle things here!

Both your arguments are fundamentally appealing! I would add something though! First in Japanese culture there is an epic mode as well actually very close to the European one. The reason lies in the fact, I guess, that Japan was the only country outside Europe to have know and developed a Feudal system in many ways comparable to our own in the Middle Ages when Epic stories were developed. I already mentionned in a previous post Le dit Du Gengi which is definitely an epic story! So Agnès' arugument sems to me completely a valid one.

I just watched the Italian version of the Vegalia/Rubina episode and I'm most confused indeed. I have to watch the French version again and I definitely have to analyse this!!

There are differences and I would say as a first impression that the way the Italian actor gave his performance to Actarus has a major role, this would eventually be in favour of Gerdha. It seems obvious to me now that the Italian version is more appropriate than the French one but it raises questions and issues I cannot answer or explain!

It's is more appropriate because one feels that the images and the voices just fit better! It has really been a shock for me esp for ep 25 as I've posted it!

Nevertheless the Vegalia/Rubina episode raises more issues now esp. because I do believe that Actarus felt something for her and this may have been love both in the French and the Italian versions! What about Venusia now??

About Go Nagai and his background we have already mentionned that in Great Maz and in Maz Z he used a lot of European references esp. Greek ones. Therefore it seems rather logical that he might have used some for Grendizer in the narrative!

I still have to read more addenda!!!!

You do want the death of the judge!!!!LOL

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- Re: Epic in Japanese culture!! — Suzi, Wed Apr 30 23:00
 - ironic!!! — Jérôme, Thu May 1 03:36
 - oopssss.... dear Judge... (ep72) — Gerdha, Wed Apr 30 23:14
 - yes I was referring to the last scene... — Jérôme, Thu May 1 23:52
 - Re: yes I was referring to the last scene... — Gerdha, Fri May 2 00:30

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Gerdha

oopsss.... dear Judge... (ep72)

Wed Apr 30 23:14:58 2003

80.116.19.93

dear Jerome, I think I could be entitled to answer you, right? ;-)

"I just watched the Italian version of the Vegalia/Rubina episode and I'm most confused indeed... There are differences and I would say as a first impression that the way the Italian actor gave his performance to Actarus has a major role, this would eventually be in favour of Gerdha. It seems obvious to me now that the Italian version is more appropriate than the French one but it raises questions and issues I cannot answer or explain!"

Well, I am REALLY happy not only that The Judge saw the Italian version of ep72 but that he liked also the dubbers performance. Indeed seeing the French version I thought - like Suzi - that Daniel Gall's performance was terrible, probably the worst in the whole anime (sorry, and please take into consideration that I am making these comments OUTSIDE the courtroom, LOL!). But what issues are you talking about? The Judge MUST raise questions to the parties, absolutely!!!!

"Nevertheless the Vegalia/Rubina episode raises more issues now esp. because I do believe that Actarus felt something for her and this may have been love both in the French and the Italian versions!"

Please, may you explain better what are you referring to? Maybe to the death scene? Well, if so you should know from my very first MM on ep72 (my story about my relationship with the ep) that at a very first sight it gave me a shock too - and I am talking about the same version you have just seen, so in a way I am happy it has raised the same reaction in you: this means I am not completely crazy! LOL! But it could mean you could follow my same path in solving the issue...;-)

"What about Venusia now??"

Ah, dear Judge, you will see, you will see... I have already left lots of seeds about my reasonings in AoP, but anyway I am really happy nobody seems to have still noticed what I have noticed, and no one seems to have had my same insight... so my next post about Matrioska n°3 could really be a big surprise for the whole Court.... I am thrilled and a bit scared for the challenge, now that even The Judge is doubting and supporting more the Defence (Agnes, you are so great and I feel so "little" in front of you) I am really alone... but challenges is what make life interesting, right?

Waiting for Judge's comments

The Prosecutor General

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 - [Re: yes I was referring to the last scene...](#) — Gerdha, Fri May 2 00:30



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Suzi

a few comments about Hikaru

Thu May 1 00:32:51 2003

210.8.232.5

Agnes,

I was quite impressed by your discussion and analysis-it is great, yet I still can't see a direct relation to ??? love/no love to Rubina (or maybe, I lost track, correct if I am wrong).

However I have a few remarks about a few things that you said about Hikaru (and I believe that these are the believes of many Grendizer viewers). I am sorry I have been trying hard to avoid involving my profession again but I just can't any more, my most favourite character in Grendizer is accused wrongly of weakness, and I just can't stand and watch.

"The second period of the anime starts, and Venusia/Hikaru, now strong through the blood transfusion, starts insisting on her rights"

Please allow me to comment on that briefly.

This sentence implied that Hikaru was weak before the transfusion, and I think that this is absolutely wrong. What is your definition of "strong"? Is it physical fitness or the ability to kick and punch?

Hikaru, despite her delicate nature was strong from the start of the series (and by strong here...I mean both physical fitness and the ability to give effective kicks and punches).

My evidence from several episodes.

In ep 6 she kicks Banta with her elbow in his stomach when he harrases her in the bus. I haven't seen this ep in French but in the arabic version Banta screamed : "you are strong..very strong". And we notice in a fight between Banta and Koji in ep 3 that they both had equal strength.

In ep 23 we see Hikaru climbing a mountain on a horseback. Honestly, if one had no physical fitness, one will not be able to reach 1/4 of the height she reached. In the same ep we see her running uphill to alert Duke. Seeing these scenes I can assure you that her exccercise tolerance is excellent.

In ep 39, she wins the gold medal in Gymnastics. I am not a sports person but I know that sports champions are created in years not in months. For her to win this medal, I suppose she had been training in gymnastics since she was a child.

I know some of you will say now, she only won the medal because her strength was enhanced by tranfusion with Daisuke's alien blood. My answer to that..."bull shit"...excuse my language.

Any donated blood cells get destroyed by one's immune system within 4-7 days of the transfusion.

OK, you will then say that the transfusion enhanced her powers in ep 27. Yes, I agree not because it was alien blood but because she desperately needed it. And trust me any person who desperately needs a blood transfusion, his/her powers will be enhanced once they receive the blood, even an old frail woman leave alone a young fit adult.

I see the transfusion between Hikaru and Daisuke differently. For me it symbolises their unity in love and life as man and woman..

Hikaru was never weak, she is the type of a person whose actions speak louder than words.

By the way guys, she was driving the most complicated combination module of the three spacers.

You all think that Maria is the cleverest because she mastered the combination of Drill Spacer with Grendizer first go. Think again. Maria was driving the simplest module in terms of combination, afterall she just had to stay in a position and it is Dizer which has to adjust his angle and his speed to join the Drill Spacer. Whereas the Marine Spacer was the trickiest of the three in terms of adjusting theangle and the speed so that its concavity could mould with Dizer's body contour.

We saw Maria drive the three modules, but we never saw her combine with Dizer in the Marine Spacer.

Personally, I don't think that she could do it. Maria has always been the one who speaks more than works.

Please do not rip Hikaru of the credit she deserves. She may not be as physically attractive as Maria, but deep down she is much more beautiful and that is why Daisuke loved her, to his sister's jealousy that there was another remarkable woman in his life who also has a strong sixth sense (psychiic powers if want to call them that way), selfless unconditional flowing love and a much more appealing personality than hers.

I am not trying to undermine your posts, Agnes. They are excellent but I just liked to snap the chance to restore some dignity to one of the most remarkable characters in Grendizer.

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 - [end of the previous post!!! my mistake!!!](#) — Jérôme, Fri May 2 00:12
 - [like Suzi, I agree](#) — Agnès, Fri May 2 03:30
 - [I agree \(nm\)](#) — Suzi, Fri May 2 00:40
- [soulmating, soulmating!!!!](#) — Gerdha, Thu May 1 00:53
 - [comment about blood transfusion](#) — Suzi, Thu May 1 19:30
 - [Re: comment about blood transfusion](#) — Gerdha, Thu May 1 20:02
 - [and I would add](#) — jérôme, Fri May 2 00:16
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 - [absolutely! No reference in italian at all \(nm\) \(nm\)](#) — Gerdha, Fri May 2 22:23
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 - [Re: comment about blood transfusion](#) — Suzi, Thu May 1 22:51
 - [sorry I have not finished](#) — Suzi, Fri May 2 00:50
 - [Re: comment about blood transfusion](#) — Agnès, Thu May 1 21:06
 - [I forgot to underline this...](#) — Gerdha, Thu May 1 01:04
 - [you could see this jealousy in ep 69 and several others](#) — Suzi, Thu May 1 01:21

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Gerdha
soulmating, soulmating!!!!
 Thu May 1 00:53:01 2003
 80.116.18.79

Oh, Suzi, I am shaking and I have tears in my eyes. I read your post and I cannot still believe you have said the following:

"I see the transfusion between Hikaru and Daisuke differently. For me it symbolises their unity in love and life as man and woman.."

I cannot help but screaming that I totally agree with you. This would have been intended to be a consideration in my Matrioska n°3 analysis, but I don't care if I have already revealed one of my points because I am so happy to find somebody in the Grendizer world who thinks exactly what I have always thought!!!!

"Whereas the Marine Spacer was the trickiest of the three in terms of adjusting the angle and the speed so that its concavity could mould with Dizer's body contour.

We saw Maria drive the three modules, but we never saw her combine with Dizer in the Marine Spacer. Personally, I don't think that she could do it."

Yes yes yes yes yes yes!!!!!! Finally another person who noticed that Maria never combines Marine with Grendizer!!! Yupp!!! And I would have to say more on the matter of Marine Spacer, but this time I will keep the secret for my MM.... ;-)

Anyway, I would say that the medical doctor himself affirms that Actarus' blood is special, and Hikaru is really able to recover at an unusual speed. But I agree with you with all other your considerations!!! Suzi, you've made my day!!!!

A happy happy happy
 Gerdha

:~))))))))))))))))))))))

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Gerdha

I forgot to underline this...

Thu May 1 01:04:44 2003

80.116.18.79

Suzi wrote:"She may not be as physically attractive as Maria, but deep down she is much more beautiful and that is why Daisuke loved her, to his sister's jealousy that there was another remarkable woman in his life who also has a strong sixth sense (psychic powers if want to call them that way), selfless unconditional flowing love and a much more appealing personality than hers."

Well, this is the only part of your post I don't completely agree with. I mean your comments about the relationship between Maria and Venusia. I agree that it starts the way you described, but it evolves during the serie... even if Hikaru seems to disappear in the Araki era, in reality something happens... but you will understand what I am talking about later...

Urgh, I would need more days off to take care of Matrioska n°3... I am becoming impatient with myself for finding the appropriate time to dedicate to it!

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- you could see this jealousy in ep 69 and several others — Suzi, Thu May 1 01:21

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Suzi

you could see this jealousy in ep 69 and several others

Thu May 1 01:21:56 2003

210.8.232.5

But yes, I agree with you that while their relationship started that way, it evolved gradually into friendship, a deep one too (evidence is present in ep 72, and was stressed further in ep 74).
You are dragging me into another MM about Hikaru and Maria's relationship. but I'll talk about it later.

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Agnès

Oh I agree, I agree ...

Thu May 1 04:51:45 2003

212.24.201.190

Thanks Suzi and Gerdha, for taking the time to read all of this, and for your comments.

I apologise for the use of the word "strong" here (my mistake; I was really tired, and this was lazy of me - really I am very angry at myself about this!!). You are right, there are many ways of apprehending the idea of strength - in fact I agree with you and with your analysis of Hikaru/Venusia - I never considered her weak, on the contrary, as Gerdha well knows :-))

I don't know about other versions, but in the FV the link between Venusia's increased physical power and the blood transfusion is EXPLICITLY made (also at the time of Maria's "quest" to join the team). This may be a French idiosyncrasy - in that case, please let me know.

For me, this blood transfusion thing has always been a very cheap excuse or pretext anyway, as if normal women with normal capacities could not take part in the war effort, pilot aircrafts (or drive cars, for that matter :-))

Whether one accepts the blood transfusion as a (very poor) patriarchal excuse to let Venusia/Hikaru enter the team or not, there is a caesura in the narrative (the death of Hydargos/Blacki, Venusia's increased involvement and endangerment, etc.) In my "theory" the climactic events surrounding Blacki's demise are in part responsible for Actarus/Daisuke's "enlightenment", his realisation that he cannot protect Venusia/Hikaru, nor anybody else for that matter, from the effects of war, and that she might as well join in the battle. There really is a change in the development of the narrative at this particular point, and I would personally be quite happy NOT to consider the "blood transfusion" as the factor that allows Venusia/Hikaru to enter the team.

As for the link to the love-story question, well it was this: Gerdha had argued that Actarus/Daisuke's reaction to Vegalia/Rubina's death was not motivated by grief for a lost love, but by the chance she had represented to preserve the existing peace between Flead and the Vega empire, the chance he had missed to materialise. To me, this suggested, that in Gerdha's interpretation, his reaction was in part motivated by guilt over his inability to prevent the destruction of his people and his home.

My argument was that this guilt complex was at least partly resolved the moment Venusia/Hikaru entered the team. Again, this argument works on the level of narrative structure and symbolism, and I tried not to involve my impressions on the characters' more nuanced personalities [to adhere to TTOTC rules].

I like what you say about "restoring some dignity to one of the most remarkable characters in Grendizer", and oh, how I agree. You know, for me too, as for you and Gerdha, Venusia/Hikaru is remarkable because she is an ordinary woman (like you and me, I expect) coping and doing well in extraordinary circumstances.

Yet, and this is what always "bugged me", the vantage point, or perhaps even the overall "ideology" of the anime is patriarchal. Independently of dubbing issues and despite all her qualities and her strength, Venusia/Hikaru is often visually depicted as "helpless" in the sense that the narrative deliberately puts her into situation in which she is helpless and humiliated (cf. her hanging from the branch over the waterfall in ep.34 or "Why did King Gori pick her and not ... Alcor/Koji?!!!! cf. our discussions earlier on this forum. Why does she have to be humiliated in this particular and cliched way? When Alcor/Koji is taken prisoner he always gets a chance to fight back - at least verbally - before things are "done" to him. Venusia/Hikaru does not get this chance in the narrative.)

Hikaru/Venusia is by no means the only one to be given misogynistic treatment - I always thought that Phenicia/Maria's reaction to the cyber-rats was ridiculous (and gratuitous from a narratological point of

view; moreover, it really does not fit her personality to be scared of rats - my opinion, of course), but the worst for me is the Minos/Minas entity (Gandal/Lady Gandal?). A tiny mean woman imprisoned in a man's head, a man whom she keeps annoying and who cannot get away from her nor she from him? I don't think any comment is necessary here (cf. their final "disagreement" and its consequences).

[don't get me started on these types of issues, it is always very dangerous :-)))]

Gerdha, I am aware that your interpretation of the guilt issue in relation to Actarus/Daisuke is more complex, and so is mine, really. In many ways I agree with what you say, but I could not involve this in this particular argument without relying on information that is only available through dialogue, and thus liable to variation.

As for your argument that Actarus/Daisuke is feeling sad rather than guilty at the beginning of the anime - well, that does not seem very plausible to me. Guilt is one of the major feelings people who have survived tragedies (let alone a genocide) have to come to terms with, even if it is only the "Why them and why not me?" question. In the case of Actarus/Daisuke, who in your own argument had a chance to avoid this genocide (through an arranged/forced marriage - please correct me if I misunderstood!), I cannot imagine that his primary feeling could have been sadness; indeed, sadness is not strong enough to explain his revulsion against Grendizer at the beginning of the series, and the presence of Grendizer in his nightmare in ep.25 seems to bear that out to (thank you for pointing that out). Indeed, it is drenched in blood and responsible for much of the genocide on Flead, but it is also responsible for his escape and his newly found ability to counteract his enemy efficiently this time. The presence of Grendizer in this dream suggests that at this stage, he has not come to terms yet with his own involvement in Flead's demise, as I argued in my addenda.

I will answer the rest of your post (the strangely separate routes our argumentation seem to be taking despite our efforts to adhere to the same principles) at a later time, as I think that what you are saying there is quite important and central to TTOTC.

However, I have to rush now, and I do not have the time to reread this to make sure that it is coherent/complete, or that it makes sense.

I hope to have shown that my personal view of Hikaru as a character with a personality was not involved in my analysis of her symbolic value and that of course I agree with both of you on her strength as a character. Sadly, our own qualities as people with personalities are often overlooked in view of our gender (male or female, for that matter) ... which is why I like Venusia so much ...

Hoping to hear from you soon in this wonderful venture!

Agnes [Defence Attorney ... still learning!]

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Suzi

comment about blood transfusion

Thu May 1 19:30:23 2003

129.94.6.30

Gerdha,

the doctor in ep27 said that Daisuke's blood was special because it could not be classified as any Earthling blood group i.e. A, B, AB, or O yet it was compatible with blood group O which is known in case of a recipient of blood transfusion to be only compatible with blood group O and in case of an O NEGATIVE blood group, the transfused blood has to be O negative and nothing else as in Hikaru's case. He said he wanted to analyse it further because of this remarkable finding (which I think would be any scientist's first instinct when confronted with a new discovery).

Agnes,

In the arabic version, there was no indication that Hikaru acquired special powers after the transfusion. But in all versions, she recovered fast which is expected in a case of a fit young adult, and that she was deeply grateful for Daisuke's blood donation that saved her life and that she was willing to do the same for him risking her life by misleading Blaki.

I wish I had time to comment on the issues you raised about Maria but I will do that later.

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Gerdha

Re: comment about blood transfusion

Thu May 1 20:02:41 2003

80.116.19.27

Suzi, the same version (word by word) is in the italian edition too. But I thought that, given the incredible speed of the recovery of Venusia (she is able to ride a horse few minutes after waking up from a coma, and I can tell you that riding a horse requires a lot of strength especially in legs) that Daisuke's blood could have something more than a simple high compatibility with earthling's. In fact doctor's comment is made before she wakes up, and when it happens he is really surprised and does not want her to leave the bed immediately.

Agnes, the comment from Daisuke in ep50 about Venusia and the blood transfusion is only in the French version. Actarus' speech to Procton in the italian edition is completely different. In the Italian edition nobody in no moment in no episode refers explicitly to special "powers" acquired by Venusia from the blood transfusion. But it's a fact that she is able to drive Double and Marine Spacers without any special physical training (which was needed instead by Alcor, and he was used to drive a spacer!) which is a particular that in my opinion cannot be explained only with the fact she is a strong girl used to work in a farm.

Just my opinion, of course. :-)

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- [and I would add](#) — jérôme, Fri May 2 00:16
 - [I remember it too ...](#) — Agnès, Fri May 2 03:32
 - [that dialogue is only in the french version \(nm\)](#) — Suzi, Fri May 2 21:01
 - [absolutely! No reference in italian at all \(nm\) \(nm\)](#) — Gerdha, Fri May 2 22:23
 - [yes that's the one!!!](#) — jérôme, Fri May 2 17:55
- [Re: comment about blood transfusion](#) — Suzi, Thu May 1 22:51
 - [sorry I have not finished](#) — Suzi, Fri May 2 00:50
- [Re: comment about blood transfusion](#) — Agnès, Thu May 1 21:06

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- Re: yes I was referring to the last scene... — Gerdha, Fri May 2 00:30

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Jérôme

Good point(s)!!!! and well taken into consideration by the

Fri May 2 00:08:18 2003

212.198.0.96

judge!!

Your defense on the Hikaru matter is excellent and you managed to get out of the trick the eminent member of the jury had put you in!!!

Yes we love Venusia/hikaru for what she is, this bold and wanting individual who thrives for more ...everything...recognition (from her father and from Actarus), self-esteem (she wants to be herself), power (in a sense she wants to be useful in this war and to take control of her life)...but it's true that the narrative is biased in a patriarchal way I would even say a macho way, somehow! She's the one who is put in danger as you perfectly quoted from the anime.

As far as Actarus' acceptance of Hikaru in the team, I would add to your flawless argumentation one thing : that Actarus cannot protect her any longer as he would have loved to is certain, but there is something else which linked to what you wrote : he cannot fight alone, so he's compelled to allow people enter the fight and this at the time endless war. Just as he couldn't help but accepting the help of Alcor, he can't resolve himself not to accept Hikaru especially when Grendizer has been in such terrible danger of complete annihilation. She saved him and Alcor could be incapacitated another time a

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- end of the previous post!!! my mistake!!! — Jérôme, Fri May 2 00:12
 - like Suzi, I agree — Agnès, Fri May 2 03:30
 - I agree (nm) — Suzi, Fri May 2 00:40

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Jérôme

end of the previous post!!! my mistake!!!

Fri May 2 00:12:09 2003

212.198.0.96

She saved him and Alcor could be incapacitated another time as well. So the only plausible solution was to accept Venusia even though this could mean her death during battle, risk she was more than willing to take (this should end the debate on her supposed weakness by the way!).

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- [like Suzi, I agree](#) — Agnès, Fri May 2 03:30
- [I agree \(nm\)](#) — Suzi, Fri May 2 00:40

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Gerdha

Re: yes I was referring to the last scene...

Fri May 2 00:30:18 2003

80.116.19.52

Uhm, I see. It's interesting, The Judge is walking the same path now of The Prosecution 25 years ago.. ^_^
Same doubts, some thoughts, same questions, same everything! So he needs now help to overcome all of this without taking 25 years for the goal, LOL!!! And I will be pleased to offer assistance to Him and all The Court ^_^

Okay, I should work hard on my MM on Matrioska n°3 really now, but before I have some more duties on TTOTC to accomplish...

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Agnès
like Suzi, I agree
 Fri May 2 03:30:30 2003
 212.24.201.74

The Defence Attorney, now sitting in the Court House cafeteria, sipping a very black coffee, would like to share the following considerations with her colleagues outside court hearings. What would you like? Tea? capucino? Espresso? Mineral Water? ... Energy Drink, perhaps?

In a sense, accepting that he needs the help of other people is part of the process of accepting that he cannot deal with the situation, or in other words, he cannot "save the world all" by himself, nobody can. Alcor/Koji insist on this (in the French version he says that he has the "powers of a semi-God" but that now he lives among humans, and that since he aspires to be human (the French "un homme de la terre" is slightly more complex here, as it does not involve connotations of human origins) he should live by human rules, and realise that what makes us "human" is that we help each other in difficult situations.

Of course, I did not involve this in my original arguments because this particular bit relies on dialogue. I would be very interested to know, though, whether this idea is also expressed in the Arabic, Italian and original versions.

In a sense, one can also argue that accepting one's humanity is also in part accepting one's fallibility and one's limited abilities (something that often happens during one's twenties - our teens being the time for "excess" and discovery of philosophical notions of justice and injustice and the corresponding lack thereof in the real world). It means learning to apprehend the notion of personal responsibility, and negotiate a sense of responsibility that would manage somehow to reconcile "the absolute concept" with one's own (realistically perceived) potential and capacity for responsibility and for realistic action. In a sense, one has to learn to come to terms with the gap between one's wish for a "perfect world" in which injustice does not exist, and the fact that as a single human being, one cannot "make everything all right for everybody".

I guess that this is why we form communities, and this is one of the lessons Actarus learns in the course of the first period of the anime. To me, as argued previously, Venusia/Hikaru's entrance into the team marks the moment he finally understands this and accepts his "humanity", though in his case we should perhaps say the moment he accepts his limitations and integrates human society.

I am not talking about the "prince" aspect here, as I think that this is only a factor that might have heightened his sense of his own personal responsibility, but about the "normal" process of growing up. In his case it is negotiated between his natural/alien identity and his civic/human identity.

This too is part of the resolution of what I called his "guilt/protector" complex, and I humbly thank our dear judge for allowing me to add these comments (outside court, of course, since they partly rely on dialogue. If everybody agrees though, I would be happy to have this considered as "evidence").

To conclude, one could also argue that in this process, Actarus/Daisuke manages to readjust his exaggerated sense of his own importance and capacities (not in a negative sense, of course, but in relation to his ideals and expectations of himself), and that his evolution allows him to recognise the grey spaces in his own character.

"Nosce te ipsum - know thy self" - that is the stage, the first step towards "wisdom", he has reached now.

Dealing with guilt then becomes a matter of permanent negotiation with one's self, but it is no longer compulsive and uncontrolled, it is no longer the primary impulse that dominates the personality and the reactions of a character. This is why again, I am willing to concede (out of court, of course), that Actarus/Daisuke may have felt some guilt over the failed marriage that was to save everything, but that it cannot explain his whole reaction.

The Defence is not quite sure whether it was a good idea to share these consideration, as like everything we say, it can and will be used against us in the court of law by our very able Prosecutor General, but I would also like to convince my "friends" rather than my colleagues that my perception of Actarus/Daisuke transcends "type". These basic considerations about growing up are part, though not all, of this. (I do need to keep things/arguments back for further TTOTC dealings, you know, even if these were to do better justice to the AoP).

Hope you all enjoyed your coffe/mineral water/energising drink.

Ciao, ciao.

Agnes [Defence Attorney now off to get a real coffee - that virtual stuff just doesn't have the same kick :-)))]

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jerôme

yes that's the one!!!

Fri May 2 17:55:20 2003

212.198.0.96

It troubles me now and theVegalia scene as well, really!

Dear Agnès you did make your point in several instances and I'm most convinced but I remain lost nonetheless!!

I need probably the watch again the French version after the Italian one!!

Those dubbing issues!!!!

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