

# *Anime History*



## *Anime and the Disabled*

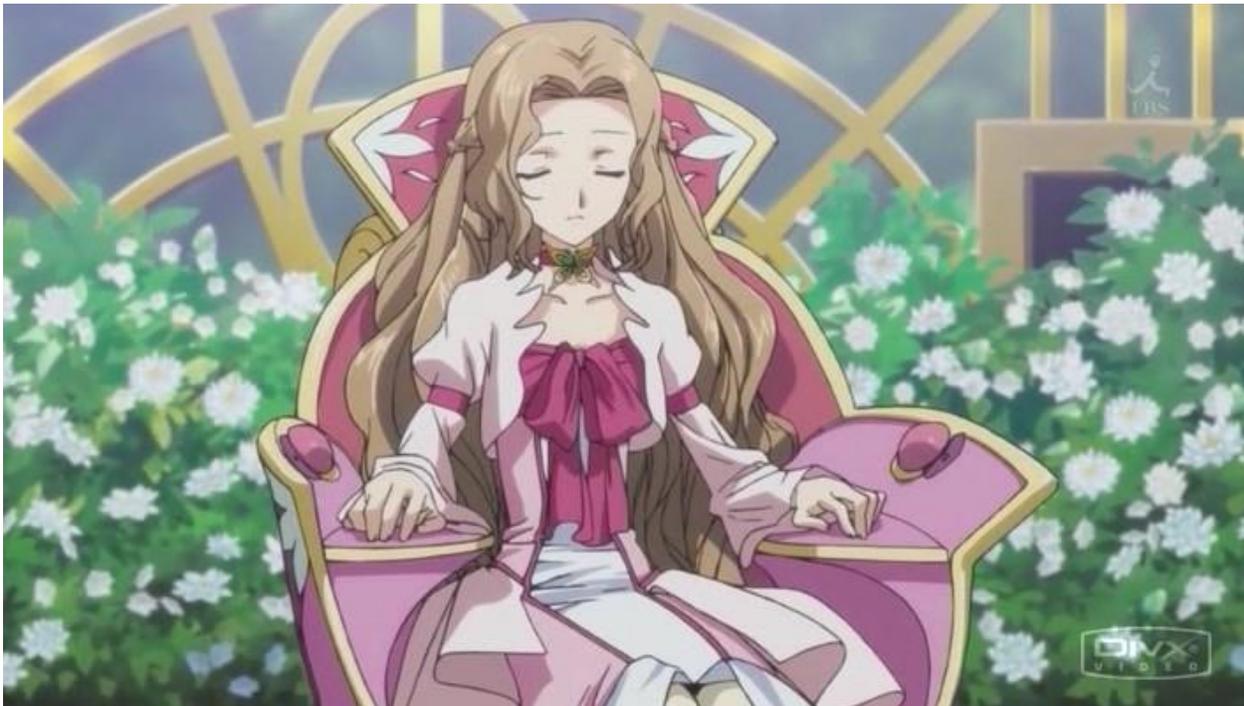
**Anime Historian**

[Youtube.com "Anime History"](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCv3p0D8111111111111111)

### Anime and the Disabled:

This article is going to focus on the exclusion of people with permanent disabilities from anime. When we look at anime, we see that people with disabilities are very rarely shown in anime. This is significant in looking at the nature and status of disabled people in real life versus how they are portrayed in anime. The use of anime as a media incorporates a variety of genres but the absence of a major “disabled voice” in anime signifies social standing of real disabled people as well as the perception of disability as a sexualized group.

Nunnally:



Nunnally from Code Geass is an example of a disabled woman in Anime. Let's explore what she means to my argument. Yes, she is perceived to be permanently disabled for most of the series. To be frank, she's portrayed as weak and helpless. But what about when she overcame the Geass command and opened her eyes? Re-watch the scene after this. She only gains power and control of her environment when she is able to overcome her disability. She is then, helpless until she overcomes that disability. She is also shown as ignorant of sexual love which can be interpreted in terms of what genre she's in. Code Geass showed sexual attraction, both normal and derisive, in some of its characters. Therefore, Nunnally's exclusion from being portrayed as a sexual being can be interpreted in terms of the social value of people with disabilities in Japanese culture.

Kaname Tousen (Bleach):



Kaname Tosen is the blind hollow-shinigami hybrid from Bleach. Even being blind he is able to display power. However, this is not a clear cut case of someone being a role model for people with disabilities. Let me ask a question. In what way does the anime show his disability as hindering? Or to put it another way...do you feel that he has to overcome challenges because of his disability? In looking at a weakness-power dynamic, the disabilities weakness that would affect him is not considered. His blindness seems to be a character attribute without consideration of what the effects of a disability are. In fact, when I look at Tosen, I see a direct incarnation of the myths of the blind samurai. The blind samurai's loss of sight is not portrayed as a hindrance but as an advantage to "hone other senses." In this way, the blind samurai and, by extension, Tosen are characters with disabilities in anime but don't specifically represent realities of it.

#### *Japanese Women with Disabilities:*

Hiroko Yasuda and Carol Hamilton wrote an article in 2013 about the sexual lives of disabled Japanese women. In their article they examined autobiographical accounts of 6 disabled Japanese women. The most striking and recurring theme to each of their stories is the struggle with self-expression and self-worth due to social pressures experienced in Japanese society.<sup>1</sup> More clearly, the women were looked at as people who could not fulfill a proper woman's gender role as a mother and wife. And if I want to take it one step further, the article references the disabled sexual services men can receive from the government while there are

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<sup>1</sup> Yasuda, Hiroko, and Carol Hamilton. 2013. Investigating the Sexuality of Disabled Japanese Women: Six Autobiographical Accounts. *Women's Studies Journal*. 27, no. 2: 44.

no similar services for women. The lack of similar services for women implies that disabled women are not seen as sexual beings as defined by the social norm. This is important in looking at how social norms are enforced. But, that is not to say that people with disabilities aren't sexualized. The sexualization of disabilities is not seen as acceptable but rather minority voice in the "normal" Japanese discourse.

*Physical Disability as a Fetish: Lovemaps, Paraphilia and ETLE*

Lovemaps are representations of the sexual mind and its expression in particular sexual attractions.<sup>2</sup> In looking at attractions to physical disabilities we would be looking at the Paraphilic and Acrotomophilic lovemaps.<sup>3</sup> Paraphilia, aka sexual deviation, is the experience of intense sexual arousal to atypical objects, situations, or individuals.<sup>4</sup> This is a general category of sexual deviations and, within it, contains multiple sub-categories. The sub-categories belonging specifically to physical disability are:



Kegadoru: Injured Idol Fetish (2007)<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> Money, John (1986). Lovemaps - Clinical Concepts of Sexual/Erotic Health and Pathology, Paraphilia, and Gender Transposition in Childhood, Adolescence, and Maturity. New York: Prometheus Books. ISBN 0-8290-1589-2.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> American Psychiatric Association (June 2000). Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-IV (Text Revision). Arlington, VA, USA: American Psychiatric Publishing, Inc. pp. 566–76. doi:10.1176/appi.books.9780890423349. ISBN 978-0-89042-024-9.

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.weirdasianews.com/2007/11/23/kegadoru-injured-idol-fetish/>

Abasiophilia: Erotic interest directed at people with impaired mobility.<sup>6</sup>

Acrotomophilia: Erotic interest directed at people with amputations.<sup>7</sup>

Apotemnophilia: Erotic interest directed at people who are an amputee.<sup>8</sup>

In order to break down the difference between two and three, a concept named “erotic target location error” (ETLE) and “erotic target identity inversion” needs to be explained.

Erotic Target Location Error (ETLE): Sexual Preference in features that are somewhere other than on the sexual partner.<sup>9</sup>

Erotic Target Identity Inversion: Sexual arousal is based on seeing oneself in another form (Such as an infant, animal or, in our case, an amputee). The erotic target is oneself.<sup>i</sup>

The specific difference between Acrotomophilia and Apotemnophilia is where the erotic target is located. Acrotomophilia has an erotic target in the amputee whereas Apotemnophilia has an ETLE in finding sexual arousal in association with having an amputation.<sup>10</sup> However, these sub-categories are not polarized and can be experienced at the same time. Apotemnophilia is also associated with “body integrity identity disorder” which I will go over in the next section.

### *DPW's and Body Integrity Identity Disorder (BIID)*

Desires to be pretend to be disabled or want to be disabled are extensions of the sexual preferences described above. DPW's are a group of people who have the sexual preference expressed toward people with disabilities. DPW actually is short for Devotees, Pretenders and Wannabes which exists along a continuum.<sup>11</sup> On one end, the devotees find sexual arousal in its

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<sup>6</sup> Milner, JS; Dopke CA (2008). "Paraphilia Not Otherwise Specified: Psychopathology and theory". In Laws DR & O'Donohue WT. *Sexual Deviance, Second Edition: Theory, Assessment, and Treatment*. New York: The Guilford Press. pp. 384–418. ISBN 1-59385-605-9.

<sup>7</sup> Money, J (1984). "Paraphilias: Phenomenology and classification". *American Journal of Psychotherapy* 38 (2): 164–78. PMID 6234812.

<sup>8</sup> Money, J; Jobaris, Russell; Furth, Gregg (1977). "Apotemnophilia: Two cases of self-demand amputation as a paraphilia". *The Journal of Sex Research* 13 (2): 115–125. doi:10.1080/00224497709550967. JSTOR 3811894.

<sup>9</sup> Lawrence, A. A. (2009). "Erotic Target Location Errors: An Underappreciated Paraphilic Dimension". *Journal of Sex Research* 46 (2–3): 194–215. doi:10.1080/00224490902747727. PMID 19308843.

<sup>10</sup> Ryan, C. J. (2008). "Out on a Limb: The Ethical Management of Body Integrity Identity Disorder". *Neuroethics* 2: 21. doi:10.1007/s12152-008-9026-4.

<sup>11</sup> Bruno, Richard L. (1997), "Devotees, Pretenders, & Wannabes: Two Cases of Factitious Disability Disorder", *The Journal of Sexuality & Disability* 15 (4): 243–260

appearance, while at the other end, the Wannabes have intense desires which may prompt self-harm to fulfill.<sup>12</sup>



Manga Shop in Tokyo

These Wannabes suffer from a condition known as “Body Integrity Identity Disorder” where people feel they would be happier if they were an amputee.

### Interpretations:

This is not attempting to discourage anime as suppressing a particular social group. I'm looking at how Japanese society views people with disabilities and how it reflects in anime. There can be three interpretations to why women are not in anime.

#### 1. Financial:

I do not believe that a physically or mentally disabled character in anime would be a smart business choice. I think if someone wants to actually make money on a product they need to strive for a large target consumer group. Probably social activism < financial necessity.

#### 2. Societal Expectations and the lack of social integration.

The societal pressures experienced by these women take them out of the public eye. When creating a manga or anime, authors draw upon their personal experience to create an interesting story. I believe it would be difficult to create a story that includes a main character that functions with a disability when they probably haven't had normal social interactions with one.

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<sup>12</sup> Bruno, Richard L. (1997), "Devotees, Pretenders, & Wannabes: Two Cases of Factitious Disability Disorder", *The Journal of Sexuality & Disability* 15 (4): 243–260

### 3. Social Sexual Norms vs. Fetishes

The sub-culture that conflicts with mainstream public norms may affect why they're not in anime. This is telling of more fetishes than just this specific one. Japan is perceived as a culture that accepts a wide array of sexual expressions in anime/hentai. However, social pressure to experience sex in a certain way may affect the number of people who want to express their desire through it. This I feel is the weakest of the three explanations but I feel there is some validity to the pressures of social sexual norms vs. fetishes.

#### Conclusion:

The reasoning for the lack of inclusion of the disabled community in anime is due the real life exclusion of the same group. Societal pressures keep them out of the public eye and the shame experienced by this social group creates a difficult environment for activism on this subject. Mainstream Anime, for the most part, is not used as a method for which social activism can be extended. Anime is a reflection of social norms and the lack of expression of a variety of disabled characters reflects the same social norms.

Thanks for reading this you guys. If you want to see what I look like check out my YouTube channel "Anime History" <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCusUdEhoXT8fvVyDCAYSkmg> I'm also on Google+ as "Anime Historian." If you want to e-mail me for any reason, I can be contacted at "animehistorian@gmail.com"

I appreciate everyone who takes time to read this and hope that I have made a difference by this article. Thank you.

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<sup>i</sup> Freund K; Blanchard R (1993). "Erotic target location errors in male gender dysphorics, paedophiles, and fetishists". The British journal of psychiatry : the journal of mental science 162: 558–563. PMID 8481752