

Kill la Kapital: A Contribution to the
Anarcho-Marxist-Leninist-Maoist-Kill-la-Killist(With Satsuki Characteristics)-Akkoist
Analysis of the Themes of *Kill la Kill*

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#anime

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Kill la Kapital

The core feature of *Kill la Kill*, separating it from our world, is the life-fibre. Our investigation must, therefore, begin with the analysis of the life-fibre. Their initial appearance is that of clothing. In this role, they appear as a power booster. People wearing life-fibre clothing have elevated physical abilities, can transform, etc. However, life-fibres clearly have a will of their own; heavy reliance on them renders the user unable to control themselves, they act as parasites on the user, and ultimately, they have a goal of their own: the assimilation of humanity into themselves, under their control. Life-fibres are capital, simultaneously bolstering the user's strength and draining them of energy, simultaneously 'empowering' their users and rendering them subservient. The former is the capital-labour relationship; the latter is the capital-capitalist relationship.

In the former, through labour's subservience to capital, it is granted increased power. That is, the productive power of labour is multiplied. Machines do not figure into our analysis; here I am referring solely to the power of cooperation in labour, which first arises in manufacture, at first simply by having all labour occur in the same manufactory, or by bringing together in one building the labourers of many trades, and later by further dividing the labour into ever smaller, simpler components. This power comes about as the direct result of the capitalist having sole control over their labour. We see this in life fibres. Those who completely submit to the life fibres, e.g. Ragyō, gain much more power from those who resist them, like Satsuki. This increase in power has a cost, however. Through labour's subservience to capital it loses its ability to think. Intellectual power, planning, etc, become concentrated in capital.

The life-fibres manifest the capital-capitalist relationship in a similar way. The initial drive for capitalist accumulation is the contradiction between the use-value and exchange-value of money. The former is unlimited; money is the source of infinite power. This power is limited by the latter, the quantity of money. As such, the capitalist is in constant pursuit of more money, in constant pursuit of more power. Once the capitalist has entered this cycle of accumulation, capital has seized control of them. In the same fashion, life-fibres seize control of those who use them. Ragyō is the key example of *Kill la Kill*, being fully under the control of life-fibres from the start of the show. She

appears in control of life-fibres, using them relentlessly, making decisions autonomously and so on. However, every decision she makes furthers the life fibres' goal.

That goal is constant expansion. Capital aims towards infinite growth. This is a threefold process. First, expansion to every human society. Second, expansion into every field of production. Third, conversion of non-commodity use-values into commodities. The first is most relevant for life-fibres. We see them spread across the universe, from planet to planet. On each planet, they seize control of the mode of production best suited to them, e.g. humans, and mould them to their use. This is the same process we see capital undertaking in its early stages; seizing hold of manufacture and adapting it for its own use. At the same time, production is expanded. The process of life-fibres taking over a species gives birth to greater productive abilities; humans become able to increase their numbers drastically. In terms of aesthetics, the life-fibres take the form of suits when finally acting themselves. Suits are associated with capital. Once life-fibres have fully taken over a planet, they encase it within themselves and harness all its energy to explode it, sending them flying again through space to their next host. This is the process capital takes: seize upon a means of production, endlessly expand production, and destroy the very environment and workers that production relies upon.

The capitalist stewards this expansion. Ragyō is the capitalist in *Kill la Kill*. There is the obvious aspect; Ragyō literally runs a massive conglomerate. In relation to life-fibres, she acts as their physical embodiment. Ragyō makes the decisions that will lead to the Celestial Cocoon Seed Planet faster. She appears to make these decisions herself, but ultimately if she made different decisions, the life-fibres would replace her. Therefore, while the process (expansion) towards the goal (destruction) is set in stone, she directs the methodology of that expansion (the use of her corporation to spread life-fibre clothes around the world.)

Matoi Isshin opposed this goal. We must understand him broadly as 19th-century leftist political economists, and specifically as a merger of Marx and Bakunin. He arises in reaction to the increasing power of life-fibres and opposes them. However, his actions within his life are broadly

failures, beyond the creation of analytical apparatuses (weapons and just general theories) with which his successors can fight the life fibres. These include Satsuki, the scissor blade, nudist beach's weapon, and Senketsu. However, in essence, all the anti-life-fibre groups stem from Isshin and yet fight against each other due to differences in methodology.

Nudist Beach is an Anarchist movement. It is much more decentralised, with no obvious leader. While Mikisugi appears to take charge near the end, we repeatedly see Tsumugu ignore his orders. Furthermore, they entirely refuse to use life-fibres. They are engaging in prefigurative politics and believe that the means must match the end, or the end cannot be achieved. It is for this reason (in addition to Satsuki's secrecy and overt antagonism) that they oppose Satsuki. Satsuki is a Marxist-Leninist-Maoist. Her plan of attack against life fibres is the establishment of a transitional state, Honnōji, from which she can attack Ragyō. This transitional state dedicates itself to building productive forces (life-fibre uniforms), which it can use as weapons against capital. However, in the case of Honnōji, these weapons are capital; Satsuki's plan is to use life-fibres to destroy life fibres. The aim of both groups is to direct the proletariat towards revolution.

We need to understand Satsuki's goals in terms of her speech in episode 1. "Fear is freedom." It is only through fear of Satsuki that the order within Honnōji can be maintained. Without this order, the socialist project falls apart. Freedom is predicated on the abolition of capitalism. For Satsuki, this can only be achieved through the disciplined party. As such, it is only through fearing Satsuki that they can gain freedom. "Control is liberty." Only the control of the party can oppose capital. Without the party, the life-fibres would take over anything. Any liberty in the future is dependant on the current control of the party. "Contradiction is truth." This speech is filled with contradictions, but they're true. This statement acknowledges the contradictions of the transitional state but ultimately declares them necessary.

She ends by declaring the students "pigs in human clothing." Satsuki does not trust them. They do not have the ability, she argues, to resist the life-fibres, and so must be controlled by the party. They must be guided to socialism by the party. In this speech, we also see, quite clearly in

retrospect, that Satsuki is not on her mother's side. For her, life-fibres in the uniforms are the means; for Ragyō, they are the end. We are not told what goal Satsuki has until much later in the show.

Nui is the bourgeois state in general, and, more specifically, the CIA or other special operatives. She acts to defend the interests of capital through any means necessary. This takes several forms. She first appears to interfere with the Naturals Election. In this case, her goal is to re-ignite Ryūko's anger, to push it at herself so that Ragyō's work may continue unimpeded. This works; Ryūko nearly dies in the fight and spends quite a while recovering. During her recovery, Nui disguises herself as a reporter. Her purpose here is to once again get Ryūko angry, placing her and Satsuki in conflict with each other.

Ryūko is the proletariat. Specifically, she is the industrial proletariat, the merger of constant and variable capital. She exists in this form, as that merger because of the actions of the capitalist. Ragyō's attempts to combine humans more completely with life-fibres are what gave birth to Ryūko. As such, she is innately attached to capital, much as the workers in a factory are. As a merger of life-fibres and humans, she herself is variable capital. Her weapon is also life-fibres. The proletariat's greatest weapon is their labour. The scissor blade is constant capital; when Ryūko uses it, it should be understood as the proletariat wielding capital, e.g. machinery, land, houses, etc., for their own ends.

Senketsu, as Ryūko's partner, is machinery. He forms her counterpart and cannot function without her. Note, however, that while Senketsu cannot function without Ryūko, the reverse is not true. Ryūko is very capable of fighting without Senketsu. Fundamentally, this is how machines work; they greatly enhance productivity but require the worker to function. In reverse, workers are able to get much more work done when working with a machine but can still act independently of the machine. In general, Ryūko and Senketsu demonstrate what *Kill la Kill* wants machine-worker relations to look like: cooperation, friendly. When they are under the control of their life-fibre

instincts due to Ryūko's rage, we see the reverse: the result of machinery in capitalism; control over the worker by the capitalist, which eats away at the worker.

The workers that do not use machinery (constant capital/life-fibres) are safe from this effect. Mako and her family are this group, vaguely lumpenproletariat, but also proletarians more generally. Trigger shows generally have a patronising view, at best, towards the lowest classes, so this is unsurprising. They have many negative aspects to them (sexual harassment, most notably), but they are ultimately good. Firstly, they are the most connected family. In this sense, they serve to be juxtaposed against the Kiryūins. Where Ragyō and Satsuki are cold and distant from each other, the Mankanshokus are very close. In this sense, they act as the ideal; the closeness of the Mankanshokus is the goal of communism. We see this at the end of the show, when everyone, stripped of their clothing, and thus of commodity fetishism, lay together naked.

Mako's family also demonstrates the effects of hegemony, ideology, and hypernormalisation. Nothing phases them. Crushing inequality, brutal repression, poverty, etc., all slide right off of them. This is the case for the vast majority of proletarians around the world. Their suffering is normalised, and capitalist ideology sees that they do not question the structures surrounding them, and hegemony sees that they reproduce behaviours that benefit the ruling classes across generations. All of these mechanisms keep the proletariat passive. However, they are necessary for a revolution. Without the support of the larger mass movement (actual support, not merely going along with it), a revolution is doomed to failure.

Honnōji academy is the case study of that revolution. In essence, it is a metaphor for the modern PRC. The economy of China is capitalist but under the control of the CPC. Similarly, Honnōji uses life-fibres extensively. They form the backbone of Honnōji's system. However, unlike in the case of Ragyō, as examined above, Satsuki has complete control of the life-fibres in Honnōji. Her entire fighting force (the economy) is life-fibres, the same as Ragyō. This control is maintained through ironclad discipline. Opposition to Satsuki is stamped out as it appears. The Elite Four and

the club system have unquestioned control. In *Kill la Kill*, it serves as the primary vehicle of the China metaphor, both for its support of China and critiques of capitalism.

Beginning with the school itself, the critique is implicit through the show but appears most explicitly in episodes 4 and 7. Education within a capitalist context is critiqued on two fronts. First, its importance is satirized. This is done primarily in episode seven through the rapid increase in the Mankanshoku's wealth after Mako begins doing well in club activities. This absurdity, in addition to critiquing poverty, attacks the idea of education as a determiner of life outcomes. The viewer is left to question why students as young as 15 or 16 are placed in a position where their failures could lead to future poverty.

Episode 7's criticism is centred on wealth, however. This episode embraces material conditions while, at the same time, emphasising the role of the superstructure in influencing the base. As Mako's family increases in social status, two things happen. First, they become more distant. The existence of capital entails commodity fetishism and alienation. The more capital, income, etc., possessed by an individual/family, the more these phenomena appear. As the family becomes more wealthy, the distance between members of the family increases. Eventually, at high wealth levels, the family is entirely atomised. The family itself becomes destroyed; the only relation a person might have is with money, which we see in the case of all members of the family.

Material conditions shape the family to be this way. As their wealth increases, it shapes their attitudes. Their habitus becomes in line with middle class, and then upper class, families. This is a material analysis, a non-liberal analysis. Furthermore, as their wealth increases, we see them become less and less willing to relinquish it. We see this as both Mako, and her family reject Ryūko when she demands a return to their past situation. Their familial love for Ryūko is completely abandoned; all that remains is love for capital. However, *Kill la Kill* acknowledges the superstructure; it is possible for Mako to, through force of will, emotions, etc., see through her greed. This is why Satsuki smiles; it shows her that her conclusions are correct, that her method is correct.

Episode 4 is a sharper critique of education. Ryūko and Mako have a near-impossible time even getting to school without capital (Senketsu in this case). Meanwhile, those students with uniforms (explicitly in the middle and upper classes) take a leisurely bus ride to school. These episodes make the same point; it is impossibly difficult for students from the lower classes to do well in school. Furthermore, we must understand this difficulty as resulting from the middle and upper classes; it is not happenstance. It is a system created by Gamagōri, Ōgure, etc., to keep the lower classes in their position for greater stability and control.

The Naturals Election is an example of that focus on control and stability. While the stated objective is to re-organise things, in reality, it is to purge the weaker members of the party, allow some stronger non-party members in, and so on. Ultimately the purpose of this is to increase and refine the power of Honnōji. It is, under no circumstances, meant to actually change the power structure. This is why Satsuki does not actually start the election from square one; those who have already earned her trust: the elite four, the club leaders, etc., continue to hold their capital. As such, the results of the elections mostly see people in the same place as before the election.

As a critique of capitalism (of course, applying to China as well), we must further examine how the various 'competitors' in the election kept their capital from before it began. In this sense, the Naturals Election points out that the competition in capital is not fair. There is no chance that the lowest classes rise to the top. In the context of SWCC, there is also a critique that in many cases, being friendly with the party leads to riches. In that sense, already being a member of the party leads to easier victory in this competition. *Kill la Kill* is also interested in examining how China must expand its influence.

The Kansai Battlefield Trip becomes relevant here, along with Nudist Beach. Primarily both Kansai and Nudist Beach serve as internal enemies to Satsuki's Honnōji. Both refuse to fall in line with her methodology of opposing Ragyō, despite agreeing with her end goal. Furthermore, neither are even aware of that end goal. This is because in order for Satsuki's method (building of productive forces under the nose of Ragyō before stabbing her in the back to work, she must be caught unaware. As

such, all other socialist movements are suppressed. We see this in China today. The aim is to trick the west into believing China will liberalise so that they do not take the same measures they did against the Soviet Union. As such, left unity, and indeed most 'leftist' policy, is abandoned in the face of pragmatism.

It is because of this, and because of Satsuki's failure to trust her the students that her revolution fails. In the first instance, Nudist Beach would have been of great assistance to her campaign, if only for their scientific know-how. Her failure to cooperate with them reduced the number of soldiers on which she could call while simultaneously draining her own resources to fight them. It is possible to construct the argument that their destruction was necessary for the deception to succeed. However, the success of the deception is not the success of the revolution.

The primary reason for the failure of the revolution was the immediate subsumption of the student base into life fibres. This is because the students were, through exposure to them, accustomed to clothing/life-fibres. *Kill la Kill* thus argues this: because China is a capitalist economy, the people living there are accustomed to that. Therefore, it would not be difficult to envelop them in a capitalist system as we see globally. The largest barrier is only the government; due to the harnessing of capital, the people are already used to it. As such, capitalism would face no resistance from the people in China. A capitalist takeover would not be met with a counter-coup but with passive acceptance.

The conclusion of one particular line of this argument is that capital cannot be destroyed through its own use unless controlled by the highly disciplined party. This party cannot control all capital directly, however. Not every part of the party (e.g. club leaders and members) is as highly disciplined as the elite 4. As such, Satsuki's policies of centralisation acted against her. The students were not trusted with information about the revolution, but rather simply trusted to make sure it functions. This is *Kill la Kill*'s largest critique of China; that contemporary China has failed to build an adequate mass movement to properly defeat capital.

This lack of an adequately prepared movement is why Ragyō is able to immediately take control of the entire student body using life-fibres. While Satsuki's party discipline allowed her to control the life-fibres, it left the rest of Honnōji unprepared for the realities of war with capital. While Satsuki's party, the elite four primarily, may have been working towards the destruction of life-fibres and were prepared for that, the larger student body was not. As such, capital was able to manipulate the movement, seizing control of them. This is because while the party (Satsuki, the Elite 4, etc.) were aware of the plan, the proletariat was not. Ryūko, as the proletariat, is also made easily manipulated by capital due to this.

As a result of being taken over by capital, Ryūko goes full fascist under Ragyō's control. Immediately she positions herself in opposition to the liberatory movement led by Satsuki and Nudist Beach and believes herself to be on the same side as Ragyō. This is the mass movement of fascism; the worker acts against their own interests while believing that they share a common cause with capital. Furthermore, fascism manufactures a prelapsarian past to drive the movement. In Ryūko's case, this past takes the form of a family life with Ragyō, of having a good childhood and so on. In this state, the proletariat places itself in opposition to other members of the proletariat as well as the revolution.

The revolution can only be won by the proletariat, which requires fascism to be defeated in the proletariat first. This is accomplished through love and understanding, as in how Mako dispelled Ryūko's fascism. However, the show argues that if the fascists cannot be made to abandon fascism, they should be opposed with full force. Mako, Satsuki, etc., all fight against Ryūko when she appears and even aim to kill her if necessary. This fight is essential in that it leads to the proletariat gaining an openly revolutionary character.

Through the show, Ryūko is continuously not class conscious. She refuses to acknowledge the importance of defeating Ragyō, generally aims to better her own situation, and so on, without questioning the systems themselves beyond hatred for those at the top. When Nudist Beach attempts to radicalise her, she refuses the call, only helping because she wants to save people she

knows. This changes at the end; her goal becomes the destruction of Ragyō and the abolition of capital. In her fight against Ragyō, we see *Kill la Kill* assert that there will be no cooperation with capital and that it will destroy itself before it gives up its power. Despite Ryūko's attempts at bringing Ragyō over to her side, she chooses to kill herself rather than abandon capital.

The proletariat, Ryūko, is the only one capable of defeating capital but requires the support of all other parts of society, the mass movement, the party, the lumpenproletariat, etc. This is why Ryūko is the only one who follows Ragyō into space; while the transitional state is helpful in opposing capital, it cannot fully destroy it. The mass movement is essential in this revolution because, without mass participation of the proletariat in the revolutionary process, a true break with capital cannot be achieved. This is the main line of the show's critique of Satsuki: that she failed to really work together with others in her revolution. The idea of using life-fibres to oppose the life-fibres is never subjected to heavy critique in the show.

Kill la Kill is communist theory. It focuses particularly on how a revolution should proceed, and more specifically, examines China. The show argues that, while China's strategy of building productive forces and fooling capital is good and has mostly worked so far, they must re-ignite Maoist era mass movements to fully complete the revolution. Unless they do so, any attempts at revolution will be stymied by a populace that does not see itself in the revolution, does not understand the point of it. Compelled by their current position in capitalism, the revolution may even be rejected as too extreme or unnecessary. The show also critiques capitalist society along several lines, particularly inequality and education. Through this, the show demonstrates the absurdities inherent to capitalism, as well as its failure to deliver on its promises. This paper is an overview of what I see as the primary points of *Kill la Kill* in relation to life-fibres=capital. Further research could examine any one of these in-depth or investigate other aspects of *Kill la Kill*. A better understanding of theory is necessary for praxis, so this research is helpful in that regard and not a waste of time at all, in the slightest.

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Works Cited

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