

The Enigmatic Power of *Neon Genesis Evangelion*

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Abstract

In this study, I analyze *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, both the TV series and film versions, and examine what makes it appealing to Japanese viewers. Hideaki Anno, the creator of this series, is also mentioned. The *Neon Genesis Evangelion* series have been very popular for 25 years because of its complex story and unique philosophical ideas. In addition, the main character, Shinji Ikari, is far from being a hero - he is a coward who reluctantly participates in many missions, piloting the Evangelion Unit 01. The other Evangelion pilots, Rei Ayanami and Asuka Langley Soryu, are also interesting in their own ways. Furthermore, even though this anime series show many combat scenes, ordinary life, such as school life and the cohabitation of Misato, Shinji, and Asuka, is depicted, generating humorous and funny scenes for which viewers feel affinity.

Introduction

Neon Genesis Evangelion is one of the most interesting and exciting anime in Japan. It was broadcast in TV format during 1995–1996 with 26 episodes. This anime was so popular that it caused social phenomena. The theme song, “Cruel Angel’s Thesis,” was so popular that many people sang it as karaoke. In addition, figures of characters such as Rei Ayanami were popular commodities. Four film versions of *Neon Genesis Evangelion* were released in 2007, 2009, 2012, and 2021, respectively. These four films are different from the TV version. In particular, the last film, *Shin Evangelion*, is

unique and concludes the long story of the Evangelions (Evas hereafter).

In this study, I analyze the complicated story of *Neon Genesis Evangelion*, its characters, and their relationships. The plot involves a few secret organizations, and it is difficult to determine what their mission is at first. In addition, I attempt to examine the Angels and Evas as well as the pilots of the Evas. Moreover, I explain about Hideaki's background because it is relevant to his anime works, and his inspiration seems to come from his past experience.

Background of Hideaki Anno

Hideaki Anno, the director of the *Neon Genesis Evangelion* series, was born in Yamaguchi prefecture in 1960. After graduating from a local high school, he attended the Osaka University of Arts, but he was expelled in his junior year because he did not pay his tuition. He then went to Tokyo and joined the project for making *Nausicaa of the Valley of the Wind*, a film directed by Hayao Miyazaki, who was a renowned anime creator. After creating two animes, *Aim For the Top! GunBuster* in 1988–89 and *Nadia: The Secret of Blue Water* in 1990–91, Anno created *Neon Genesis Evangelion*.

The Hideaki Anno Exhibition is held at the National New Museum from October 1, 2021, to December 19, 2021. I attended the exhibition and was impressed by Anno's enthusiasm for animation and a special effects drama. In particular, he likes the Ultraman series, which are special effects dramas, very much and created an independent short film in which he himself played the role of Ultraman to fight an alien monster from outer space. In it, he takes an attacking stance and fires a destructive ray at the monster. It is somewhat humorous to watch a young man fight a monstrous creature from space on the screen.

I believe that there are some similarities between Ultraman and the Eva. First, Ultraman can be active on Earth for only three minutes. When two minutes and ten seconds have passed, a color timer on his chest starts to change color, from blue to red, while making a sound. As three minutes are the maximum time for which Ultraman can be active, he usually defeats the monster within this time. The Eva does not have a time limit, but its fighting is very intense and short. In particular, when the Eva switches to a beast mode or is awakened, it maximizes its power to destroy the enemy. Another similarity is that Ultraman is a transformed man belonging to the Science Special Investigation Corps, while the Eva is synchronized with a boy or girl and is inseparable from the pilot. In other words, Ultraman is a kind of large human with a special laser beam as a weapon, while the Eva is also a large artificial human with the ability to destroy the transparent barrier called the absolute terror field (AT field). It is

assumed that the Eva is Anno's version of Ultraman.

The Hideki Anno Exhibition in the National New Museum in Tokyo has a 1/45th-sized miniature of the original Third Village that appears in *Shin Evangelion*. Hideaki Anno said that he would like to try something new related to animation in the documentary called *Goodbye All of Evangelions ~ 1214 Days of Anno Hideaki* (2021). He also says that there is a limit to how much you can think in your head, and when you make a concrete model, you can see things that you could not see before. In the documentary, Anno pays particular attention to the location of the power poles. It is necessary for him to put power poles in the right position. It is often said that power poles and electrical cables spoil the scenery. He did not say why they were needed. I think they are necessary to create a sense of life in the village.

Angels as Enemies or Friends

At the story's beginning, a strange monster called an Angel appears from nowhere, and this Angel has enormous power to destroy everything. An Eva attacks the Angel to kill it. Ironically, viewers do not know what the Eva is at this point. They just watch the battle scene, and they are overwhelmed by the enigmatic power of the Eva.

The first TV episode of *Neon Genesis Evangelion* starts with a scene in 2015, when Shinji Ikari, the protagonist, is waiting for Misato, a staff member who works for NERV, a secret organization whose mission is to protect humans from Angels who attack the NERV headquarters. Shinji calls Misato from a public telephone on the street, but she cannot answer because of the state of emergency in the area. Soon, Shinji sees that a huge monster, called an Angel, is fighting military forces near him. Misato finds him and urgently picks him up from the street in her car and drives him to the underground NERV headquarters.

Shinji has been invited by his father, Gendo Ikari, the director of NERV, to the NERV headquarters. Gendo had left Shinji 15 years ago in 2000. Since then, the father and son had not been in contact with each other, and their relationship is estranged. Shinji wonders why his father wants to meet him. Gendo tells Shinji that he is needed to pilot Eva Unit 01. Shinji refuses because he does not know anything about Evas and has never piloted such weird, human-like biological creatures. Gendo decides to change his plan, and Rei Ayanami is called to pilot Eva Unit 01. However, Rei's entire body was wounded in her last fight; she had to be carried to a bed and given an intravenous drip. When the NERV headquarters are shaken by an Angel attack, Rei falls out of the bed. She is in agony on the floor and bleeding.

Shinji feels sympathy for Rei. He does not want Rei to pilot Eva Unit 01 with a

serious injury, so he changes his mind and declares, “I will be a pilot.” Without any training, Shinji gets inside Eva Unit 01 to confront the Angel. The Eva steps out but immediately falls to the ground. When the Eva tries to stand up, the Angel attacks and tears off the Eva’s left arm. Since Shinji is in sync with the Eva, he feels extreme pain in his left arm. To make matters worse, the Angel stabs the Eva’s head with a spear. The Eva bleeds from the head and stops working mentally and physically.

Nevertheless, Gendo Ikari tells Fuyutsuki, the deputy commander, that Eva Unit 01 would defeat the Angel. The Eva, who had lost consciousness and motor coordination, suddenly stands up and runs toward the Angel. The Eva reproduces its left arm, breaks the Angel’s AT field, and destroys the heart-like red ball inside the Angel. The Angel’s body explodes and disappears, and a large cross appears, signifying the Angel’s death. Barkman (2010) indicates that *Neon Genesis Evangelion* uses biblical ethos as a dark inspiration for the story, and the huge cross is an example of Christian influence.

What is interesting in these beginning scenes is that even though Eva Unit 01 is in a moribund state and all indicators show that it has malfunctioned mentally and physically, the Eva recuperates and becomes stronger and wilder. Eva Unit 01 runs fast without the two electrical cables that provide it with energy. Then, the Eva attacks the Angel as if it is a beast. It is assumed that Eva Unit 01 and Shinji synchronize perfectly after its head is heavily damaged by the spear, and the injury triggers it to transform into a stronger and more powerful Eva. What Gendo and the other NERV staff witness is the beast mode of Eva Unit 01. As they watch the Eva eat the dead Angel on a big monitor, one female staff member feels a chill and is about to vomit.

The viewers wonder what the Angel is in the beginning scenes. What does it want to do? According to the book titled *Evangelion New Theater Version: Complete Book* by Special Agency Research Project Team (2012), the third Angel is called Sachiel. It has two legs and two arms, and a red ball in its chest. Its mission is unknown, and we do not know where Sachiel comes from. As soon as Sachiel acknowledges Eva Unit 01, which Shinji is piloting for the first time, it attacks the Eva that has appeared from the underground. It is assumed that Sachiel regards Eva Unit 01 as the target of the attack. However, there is no information on the background of Sachiel, so the viewers’ curiosity is enhanced, and I believe that this is a very interesting and stimulating introductory scene for the Angels.

In Episode 6, a large object in the form of a regular octahedron appears and a sharp spear spins from the object, which drills underground to reach the NERV headquarters. This is the 5th Angel, called Ramiel. It is clear that Ramiel attempted to destroy the NERV headquarters. Since Ramiel shoots a long-range particle cannon, the Evas cannot approach it closely to attack it, so Misato Katsuragi, the chief of operations, decides

to use an electron gun. She orders power plants all over Japan to send electricity to one place and commands Eva Unit 01 to shoot the electron gun. It is a very dangerous mission, and Misato also orders Rei Ayanami, the pilot of Eva Unit 00, to protect Eva Unit 01 from Ramiel. Shinji mistakenly fires the first shot, and Rei blocks the beam from Ramiel with a shield. Shinji hits the target correctly in his second attempt, and Ramiel is destroyed completely.

In Episode 16, the 12th Angel, Leliel, appears. This Angel exists as a black-and-white patterned sphere in the air. In fact, its shadow is an entity, and the black-and-white patterned spheres are illusions. Shinji does not notice that the shadow on the ground is a genuine Angel, and Eva Unit 01 is absorbed by the shadow. It seems that Leliel wants to provide Shinji with an opportunity to reflect upon who he really is inside Leliel. In one scene, Shinji contemplates that he has two selves within himself: a core self and a self that acknowledges the core self. I believe that Leliel wants to assimilate Eva Unit 01 and its pilot Shinji because the Angel is curious about Evas, a creature that is similar to the Angels.

In Episode 17, Gendo Ikari says that “the Angels try to acquire wisdom.” I believe he is suggesting that the Angels are attempting to acquire abilities to compete against human beings and control them. Kitamura (2010) says that the Angels gradually make progress in communicating with the Evas they fight and send messages to Shinji. In Episode 18, Toji Suzuhara, Shinji’s classmate, is chosen as the pilot for Eva Unit 03. However, Eva Unit 03 is highly affected by the 13th Angel, Bardiel. Bardiel appears as a mucosal fungus that erodes an entry plug of Eva Unit 03, which Toji controls, and the Angel eventually affects the whole Eva. Shinji is ordered to destroy Eva Unit 03, but he is hesitant to attack because Toji is inside the Eva. As a result, Eva Unit 01 is switched to an automatic fighting mode, and regardless of Shinji’s intention, Eva Unit 01 destroys Eva Unit 03. Fortunately, Toji survives, but Shinji decides not to be a pilot anymore.

Kaworu Nagisa is the last Angel that shows up in the TV series in Episode 24. He appears as an adolescent like Shinji Ikari, and Shinji feels friendship with him because he seems to understand Shinji’s ambivalent situation. Shinji trusts Kaworu. However, Kaworu reveals that he is an Angel, and he will kill Shinji unless Shinji kills Kaworu. Shinji unwillingly crushes Kaworu with the Eva’s hand.

I do not mention all the Angels in the TV series *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. What is important about the Angels is that they want to mingle with the Evas as well as erode the psychic sphere of the pilots, particularly of Shinji and Asuka. At first, the Angels’ mission is to destroy the NERV headquarters, but they gradually focus on the Eva pilots and attempt to invade their minds.

Adam is the 1st Angel, and the Evas are made from Adam. Adam was discovered in the Antarctic, and this discovery caused the Second Impact in 2000. Many people died, but there was one survivor, Misato Katsuragi, who stayed inside a firm and strong capsule. Lilith is the counterpart of Adam. NERV had captures Lilith and keeps her crucified in the basement of the NERV headquarters (Ortega, 2007). Lilith is created according to the Kabbalah, the ancient Jewish tradition of a mystical interpretation of the Bible. Lilith was given as a wife to Adam and produced children (Drazen, 2014).

Pilots of the Evangelions

Fourteen-year-old boys and girls are selected as pilots of the Evas, which are large artificial fighters. Without these pilots, the Evas do not move or function. The first pilot is Rei Ayanami. She is a clone of Yui, Gendo Ikari's wife. As the story goes, Rei is obedient to Gendo, and she always follows his commands. She does not express her emotions or feelings like a sensitive girl. Even though she attends the local junior high school, she does not have any friends and often misses classes because of injuries caused during fights against the Angels. She seems to seclude herself from her classmates.

Rei Ayanami lives by herself in a room in a large complex, which seems to have no other residents. When Shinji visits Rei to give her some documents from school, he notices that the door is unlocked and enters the room. He is surprised to see many bloody bandages and medicine capsules in the room. It is apparent that Rei is frequently injured in many parts of the body. Rei finishes taking a shower and wipes herself with a towel, and she recognizes Shinji. Shinji is embarrassed by her nakedness, but Rei does not care about Shinji's reaction. This brief encounter is the beginning of their relationship.

Shinji Ikari is called the second child. He is the son of Gendo Ikari, the director of the NERV, and before the first episode, they had not seen each other for 15 years. Shinji believes that his father had abandoned him, so he has only hatred for his father. Gendo Ikari views Shinji as a pilot of Eva Unit 01, not a son, so when Shinji refuses to pilot the Eva, Gendo tells Shinji to leave the organization. The NERV's main mission is to fight the Angels, and a pilot should thus be energetic and aggressive. Contrary to the qualification criteria for a pilot, Shinji appears to be shy, reserved, passive, and timid. It is obvious that he is not suitable as a pilot for Eva Unit 01.

Nonetheless, Shinji becomes the pilot mainly because he wants to be praised by his father. In his childhood, he did not experience a cozy and warm atmosphere in his family. Yui, his mother, passed away when he was a little child, and Gendo abandoned Shinji to pursue his dreams and ambition. Shinji has low self-esteem and lacks self-

confidence because his family was broken in his childhood. Therefore, Shinji does not understand why his father invited him to the NERV headquarters, and he has conflicting feelings toward his father.

The main reason why Gendo contacts Shinji and asks him to be the pilot of Eva Unit 01 is that the Eva had absorbed Yui, Shinji's mother, by accident, and it is believed that it would accept Shinji as a pilot in the way a mother would warmly accept her child. Therefore, Gendo has no doubt that Shinji is the best pilot of Eva Unit 01. Not knowing this, it is natural that Shinji refuses to pilot Eva Unit 01. As the story goes, the relationship between Shinji and Gendo improves. Shinji believes that he is praised by his father when Eva Unit 01 defeats an Angel. He is pleased to hear compliments from his father and starts to regain his self-esteem.

Because of the character of Shinji, *Neon Genesis Evangelion* becomes a coming-of-age story (Nepier, 2003). At first, Shinji is bullied by one of his classmates, Toji Suzuhara, whose younger sister is injured in a fight between Eva Unit 01 and Sachiel, the third Angel. As Shinji is hit by Toji, he curses his destiny of being a pilot of the Eva. However, he regains his confidence when he defeats an Angel. He stops himself from feeling miserable and worthless about his life. By piloting Eva Unit 01, he becomes mature and is capable of feeling confident in his actions.

Asuka Langley Soryu is a girl from Germany, who first appears in Episode 8. She is the third child, and the pilot of Eva Unit 02. She is proud of herself and feels overconfident about piloting Eva Unit 02. At first, she does not show any weakness as a pilot. In reality, she is only pretending to be cheerful, positive, and independent to conceal her inner wound. She was not loved by her mother, who had mental problems and eventually committed a suicide. This was a traumatic experience for Asuka, and she tried to overcome the trauma by practicing hard to pilot Eva Unit 02. She leads Shinji and Rei in attacking the 10th Angel, Sahaquiel. However, she gradually loses confidence in fighting Angels. As a result, Eva Unit 02 faces a psychological attack by the 15th Angel, Arael; she loses her spirit completely and is unable to pilot Eva Unit 02 for a while.

Secret Organizations: SEELE and NERV

There are two secret organizations that play important roles in *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. The first is SEELE, which consists of 12 members, and its chairman is Keel Lorenz. SEELE's mission is to implement the Human Instrumentality Plan, as indicated by the Dead Sea Scrolls. The Dead Sea Scrolls are documents about Angels, human beings, and the origin of human beings. SEELE would like to terminate human

beings who have individual souls and reunite all the souls into one big and perpetual soul. This is the purpose of the Human Instrumentality Plan, and they consider this the happiest state for SEELE.

NERV is the umbrella organization of SEELE, and Gendo Ikari is its director. In Episode 21, it is explained how Gendo Ikari and Professor Kozo Fuyutsuki came to know each other. In 1999, Fuyutsuki was a professor of metaphysical biology at Kyoto University. One of his students was Yui Ikari, a smart young woman who wrote an interesting paper on biotechnology. Somehow, Gendo Rokubungi got to know Yui Ikari, and they got married. At that time, Gendo changed his family name from Rokubungi to Ikari. They had a baby named Shinji. Unfortunately, Yui passed away when she entered Eva Unit 01. Gendo contacted SEELE and proposed that he and Fuyutsuki could carry out the mission that SEELE wanted to achieve, and Gendo formed an organization called NERV. Fuyutsuki took the position of NERV's deputy commander.

Three more important characters are part of the NERV. Misato Katsuragi is the department's chief of tactical operations. She usually issues commands to the Evas. In addition, she stays with Shinji to keep an eye on him. Later, Asuka also stays with them in Misato's apartment. In her apartment, Misato is relaxed and likes to drink beer. When he first comes to the apartment, Shinji is shocked to find a penguin in the bathroom and runs out without wearing anything, while some beer cans hide his crotch area. I believe this is one of the funniest scenes in *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. Thus, although this is an intense, gloomy, and dark anime, because of some humorous scenes inserted in the story, it becomes more acceptable and familiar.

Ritsuko Akagi is a scientist who contributes to the experiments on the Evas. Moreover, she is in charge of the management and operation of the MAGI, a combination of three supercomputers that her mother, Naoko, created. The MAGI comprises Casper, Balthasar, and Melchior, each of which represents a scientist, mother, and woman for Ritsuko. The MAGI maintains and protects the system of the NERV headquarters. When an Angel invades the MAGI network, making it malfunctioning, Ritsuko enters a secret operation space to fix it. What is notable about the space is that it has many post-it notes on which her mother has written memos. These memos attached to the supercomputers are hints for fixing them. Ritsuko feels that she can talk to her mother while fixing the supercomputers.

In Episode 21, it is revealed that Ritsuko's mother had a love affair with Gendo Ikari. Rei Ayanami, presumably the first clone of Yui Ikari, tells Ritsuko's mother that she is of no more use to Gendo. Hearing this, Ritsuko's mother goes crazy and then strangles and kills Rei. Another love affair that is important to the story is the one between Ryoji Kaji and Misato Katsuragi. They dated when they were college

students. Then, they became separated. After several years, Ryoji returns to Japan to accompany Asuka Langley Soryu. Ryoji gets back together with Misato. Even though Asuka often expresses her love for Ryoji, he ignores her because she is too young for him. His real job in Japan is to conduct clandestine intelligence operations as ordered by Gendo Ikari. In addition, he has a part-time job of secretly investigating NERV for the Japanese government. Moreover, he is a spy who is involved in espionage to keep Gendo Ikari under surveillance as commanded by SEELE. Thus, he is a spy for three organizations and is in a very dangerous situation. He collects secret information on the Second Impact that caused the devastation of the Antarctic and other parts of the world in 2000. Before the Second Impact, some experiments were conducted, which awakened Adam, the first Angel, and this is the beginning of the attacks by Angels (Ballus and Torrents, 2003). Ryoji predicts that he may be killed by someone in the near future, so he gives Misato a USB memory stick in which secret information is stored.

In Episode 25, Shinji Ikari mulls over what he does. He regrets that he killed Kaworu, an Angel, who was in the form of a human. Shinji feels sympathy for him because Kaworu understands the difficulties that Shinji faces. He convinces himself that it is his responsibility to kill the Angels. Otherwise, he would be hated by his father, Gendo Ikari. Shinji also thinks that it is necessary for him to find who he really is through communication with others. In other words, remaining lonely without any contact with other people cannot define who a person really is. In Shinji's case, his mother is dead, his father is estranged, and he does not have close friends. He notices that he is curious about Rei Ayanami, who is usually alone and taciturn. Gradually, he becomes more interested in Rei and tries to break down the invisible barrier around Rei.

In Episode 26, Shinji reflects on his identity. Getting inside Eva Unit 01 is the only time when his father, Gendo, praises him. At first, Shinji assumes that he is not needed by anyone and feels lonely. However, when he synchronizes with Eva Unit 01, he is sure of who he really is by acknowledging others around him. As a result, he confirms who he is and finds a place where he feels comfortable. The psychological state of Shinji is well depicted in Episodes 25 and 26.

Evangelion Series on Film and *Shin Evangelion*

In addition to the TV series, *Neon Genesis Evangelion* has several film versions. In 2001, *Evangelion: 1.0 You Are (Not) Alone* was released. This story takes place in 2015, 15 years after the Second Impact that devastates many parts of the Earth, and half of the world's total population were dead. The story is similar to the TV series episodes.

Shinji Ikari is invited by his estranged father, Gendo Ikari, to NERV where the Evas,

artificial humanoids, are made to attack Angels. At first, Shinji is unwilling to pilot Eva Unit 01. However, upon seeing that Rei Ayanami, another pilot, is seriously injured after a fight against an Angel, he changes his mind and decides to be a pilot and fight the Angel. Eva Unit 01 is awkward and does not walk smoothly at first, and it is heavily damaged by the Angel. However, during the fight, Eva Unit 01 is awakened and goes out of control. It fiercely and violently attacks the Angel and defeats it instantly.

Shinji attends junior high school and feels lonely. One of his classmates, Toji Suzuhara, hits Shinji because he thinks Shinji is to blame for his younger sister being injured in an attack. Shinji believes that he is not responsible for the girl's injury. He tells his classmates that he cannot help but control Eva Unit 01 to protect all the villagers. When another Angel appears in the village, two of his classmates, Toji Suzuhara and Kensuke Aida, get out of the gymnasium and watch the real fight between the Eva and Angel. Unfortunately, they are close enough to be attacked by the Angel. Shinji notices them on a hill, so he lets them enter the Eva's cockpit. After Shinji defeats the Angel, Toji, who had hit Shinji, apologizes to him.

Evangelion: 2.0 You Can (Not) Advance, released in 2009, is the second film out of the four film versions. In the film, Shinji and Gendo Ikari visit the grave of Yui Ikari, Shinji's mother, and then Misato picks Shinji up. On the way back, they witness an Angel moving in the sea. Asuka Langley Shikinami is the pilot of Eva Unit 02, which defeats the Angel. Asuka also starts attending the local junior high school. She does not get along with her classmates, including Shinji and Rei, and decides to be independent in her life.

Eva Unit 03 is imported to Japan from the United States, and NERV conducts experiments on it with Asuka as the pilot. However, Eva Unit 03 is eroded by an Angel and goes out of control. Eva Unit 01, which Shinji pilots, attempts to control it. As soon as Shinji comes to know that Asuka is the pilot of Eva Unit 03, he refuses to fight it. Gendo Ikari orders a staff member to change to the Dummy System to make Eva Unit 01 autonomously attack Eva Unit 03. After a while, Eva Unit 03 stops moving completely. Through the Dummy System, Eva Unit 01 attacks and eats Eva Unit 03 even though Shinji tries to stop. Shinji decides not to be the pilot of Eva Unit 01 any longer, and he is arrested because he does not follow Gendo's commands.

In *Evangelion: 2.0 You Can (Not) Advance*, three children, Shinji, Rei, and Asuka collaborate to attack the 8th Angel. The Angel comes from the sky and falls into the sea. All three Evas run to where the Angel has landed and try to stab its red core. This is the first time that they attack the Angel together, even though they prefer to be alone and independent at all times.

In 2012, *Evangelion: 3.0 You Can (Not) Redo* was released. 14 years have passed

since the Third Impact occurred. It was triggered by Eva Unit 01, which Shinji piloted. During that period, Misato Katsuragi, Ritsuko Akagi, and other staff members formed an organization called WILLE, whose mission is to terminate all the Evas that NERV possesses. Shinji is captured by Misato, and he is in a WILLE space battleship, where Misato is the captain. The Eva comes to get Shinji and takes him to the NERV headquarters. Shinji sees the ruins of NERV buildings. There he meets Kaworu Nagisa, a child chosen for the Eva. Strangely, there is a piano there, and Kaworu plays the piano. Gendo Ikari suddenly appears and tells Shinji to get inside Eva Unit 13 with Kaworu when the time comes. Shinji meets a girl whose appearance resembles Rei, but she does not know who she is at all.

Kaworu takes Shinji to the aftermath of the Third Impact triggered by Eva Unit 01. Shinji is shocked that he had caused the Third Impact. However, Shinji does not want to take any responsibility for it, and he consoles himself by justifying that he did it to save Rei Ayanami.

Fuyutsuki, the deputy commander of NERV, invites Shinji to play Japanese chess called Shogi. Fuyutsuki tells Shinji about Yui, his mother. According to Fuyutsuki, Yui is now the control system for Eva Unit 01. When Eva Unit 01 was tested with Yui as a test pilot, the Eva absorbed her by accident. When Shinji first came to see Eva Unit 01, the building shook and something heavy fell due to an Angel attack. However, Eva Unit 01 protected Shinji from the falling objects despite not having a pilot. This indicates that Eva Unit 01 has a soul (Kitamura, 2010). In addition, Shinji learns that with Yui's DNA, many clones of Yui were made, and Rei Ayanami is a clone of Yui.

Kaworu invites Shinji to get inside Eva Unit 13 and get two spears, Longinus and Cassius, to change the world. Kaworu also takes the deification shutdown system choker from Shinji, just in case Eva Unit 13 triggers the Fourth Impact. Kaworu notes that the two spears transform into two identical ones. Eva Unit 02, which Asuka controls, attempts to prevent Eva Unit 13 from taking the two spears. Kaworu tells Shinji not to take the spears, but Shinji firmly believes that having the two spears will make the world stable and happy. Eva Unit 13 is awakened and devastates everything, and the Fourth Impact is about to start, but Misato prevents it from happening.

In 2021, *Shin Evangelion* or *Evangelion: 3.0+1.0 Thrice Upon a Time* was released. This anime is the final story of *Neon Genesis Evangelion*. A big space battleship, *Wunder*, where Misato Katsuragi is the captain, defends itself from enemies. These enemies are Eva 44A, a specialized aviation type, and Eva 44B type, a specialized power supply type, both of which are connected to each other by their lower halves. They are grotesque in their shape and attack the space battleship *Wunder*. Eva Unit 02, which Asuka pilots, and Eva Unit 08, which Mari (a new child) pilots, attack Eva 44A

and Eva 44B in Paris, France.

In the following scene, Asuka, accompanied by Shinji and Rei, wanders the red Earth in search of rescue. Eventually, the three are rescued by Kensuke Aida, who used to be their classmate, and they arrive at the Third Village, a village of refugees from the Near Third Impact. They are welcomed by Toji and Hikari Suzuhara, both of whom were classmates. Rei is taken care of by the Suzuhara family and learns human-like feelings and language through interactions with them, such as learning greetings, taking care of the baby, farming, and other jobs from the villagers.

On the other hand, Shinji and Asuka stay at Kensuke's house. Because of guilt and shock, Shinji is unable to speak and remains silent. When Asuka blames him, Shinji runs away from Kensuke's house and spends time alone at the site of NERV Branch 2. Shinji is watched over by Rei, Kensuke, and the others, and Shinji gradually gets better. However, Rei dies with a deification shutdown system choker on. The same day, *Wunder*, which is preparing for the final battle with NERV, makes a port call at the Third Village, and when Asuka returns to the space battleship, Shinji volunteers to board.

WILLE, led by Misato Katsuragi, launches a strategic plan to destroy NERV. They attack the NERV headquarters in the former Antarctica with the space battleship, *Wunder*, which drops Asuka's Eva Unit 02 and Mari's Eva Unit 08. Both Evas break through the large army of NERV's space battleships, but a new swarm of smaller enemies strand Eva Unit 08, and the Eva Unit 02 heads for Eva Unit 13 alone. Asuka tries to launch a stop signal plug into Eva Unit 13, but fails. Asuka tries to resolve this situation, but Eva Unit 13 suddenly restarts.

In *Shin Evangelion*, Gendo Ikari confesses his honest feelings about himself and Shinji. Shinji finds himself confronted by Gendo at the NERV headquarters. Gendo explains that since humans cannot perceive the negative universe as it is, Shinji's memories of the past are recreated. In an imaginary world made of memories comprising special effects and rapidly changing locations, such as the Third New Tokyo City, Misato's apartment, and Rei's apartment complex, Eva Unit 13 controlled by Gendo fights Eva Unit 01, which Shinji pilots with a spear in hand.

The scene suddenly changes, and Shinji and Gendo begin a dialogue in an old train. Gendo reveals his past, inner thoughts, and wishes to Shinji. Then, Gendo reaches a non-existent fictional "Imaginary Evangelion" and reveals that his goal is to create an "adjunct impact," where fiction and reality are the same. The Imaginary Evangelion turns into a giant in the form of Rei.

Shinji tries to stab himself with the spear to remake the world, but Yui, his mother, appears as if to protect him and sends him back to the original world. Eva Unit 01 stabs

Yui, and Eva Unit 13 stabs itself with the spear, leaving Gendo inside, and disappears. The other Evas are pierced by the spear and disappear one after another. Shinji then sits on the beach near the blue sea. Mari returns, and her last Eva disappears.

The scene suddenly changes again, and Shinji, now an adult, is sitting on a bench on the platform of a train station. On the opposite platform, Rei and Kaworu are chatting, and Asuka is also there. Mari approaches Shinji and removes his deification shutdown system choker, holding hands, running up the stairs, and leaving the station. This is the last scene of *Shin Evangelion*.

The *Neon Genesis Evangelion* TV and film series have attracted many people in Japan for a quarter of a century. This is because Shinji Ikari is a boy with mediocre merits. He does not have any qualities of a hero and is psychologically conflicted about himself and his family, particularly his father. However, he gradually builds his confidence by becoming the pilot of Eva Unit 01. He decides not to get inside Eva Unit 01 a few times, but in the end, he confronts his father and fights him with Eva Unit 01.

Second, the series belongs to the genre of a combat anime, and every battle scene has a sense of realism that keeps your heart racing. In a battle scene, Shinji and Eva Unit 01 are at first in a weaker position, and yet they regain power and overwhelmingly defeat the Angels in the end. In contrast, in some scenes, the Eva pilots ordinarily spend time in places such as junior high school, Misato's apartment, and the Third Village. I think that the contrast of battle scenes with the places of ordinary life is amazing, and the viewers feel affinity for the story of this series.

Conclusion

Neon Genesis Evangelion is a popular anime that has one of the most complex stories. The ideas behind the story are philosophical and sometimes difficult to understand. Nevertheless, this anime series have been very popular and have been part of the conversation for a quarter of a century. The main character is an ordinary boy who is too timid to join the battle. Still, he gradually grows psychologically, meets his estranged father, and builds a relationship with him step by step. The other pilots are also unique. Rei, in particular, has an elusive personality that is not of a typical young girl. Asuka, on the other hand, is very active, says what she wants, and does not hesitate to speak her mind. Even though she does not like Shinji, she scolds him as an elder sister who cares about him. *Neon Genesis Evangelion* shows battles between the Evas and Angels on the surface, but it also depicts the conflict between the son and father. Moreover, it shows the struggle and pain of being part of an estranged family. It has the

power to draw viewers by successfully incorporating the everyday lives of boys and girls into a story that shows exciting battles and inner conflicts among the characters.

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