

Thread by @khodazat: "I'm going to be posting some excerpts from the Hideki Anno/Yoshiyuki Tomino interview from the Char's Counterattack Fan Club Book. For refer [...]"

I'm going to be posting some excerpts from the Hideki Anno/Yoshiyuki Tomino interview from the Char's Counterattack Fan Club Book.

For reference, the book (released in 1993) was basically a doujinshi put together by Hideaki Anno. Beyond the Tomino interview...





機動戦士ガンダム
GUNDAM
 逆襲のシャア
 友の会

富野由悠季

会川 昇
 あさりよしとお
 茂原邦彦
 出淵 裕
 井上伸一郎
 内田健二
 大月俊博
 押井 守
 岸川 靖
 北爪宏幸
 ことぶきつかさ
 此路あゆみ
 サムシング吉松
 鈴木敏夫
 鶴田謙二
 永島 収
 早見裕司
 ふくやまけいこ
 勝田幸久
 美樹本晴彦





...it compiles statements on the film by industry members like Toshio Suzuki, Mamoru Oshii, Haruhiko Mikimoto, Masami Yuki and many more.

It's rare and expensive (ranges from \$200-500 for a copy) so I haven't read any of it beyond the Tomino interview that was posted online.

Also the interview is REALLY LONG so I'm only going to post the excerpts that interest me, not the whole thing.

Okay, so with all that out of the way, here's the first excerpt.

Anno: So, you know, I really love Char's Counterattack.

Tomino: (bewildered) Oh, thank you.

Anno: I was part of the staff, but even though I looked over all the storyboards, the first time I saw it I didn't really get it. It wasn't until I experienced working as a director in the industry that I felt like I understood.

Oguno: It turns out a lot of industry people enjoyed Char's Counterattack. We made this book because we wanted to gather their opinions into one place.

Tomino: (laughs) I believe you're being sincere. I know you're not just flattering me, I'm grateful, but... really? I hadn't heard that at all, that it was so liked.

Anno: I find it strange you didn't get any positive feedback. When it was playing in theaters, Yamaga, Izubuchi and I were so excited over it, we even wanted to start a fan club. But I guess besides us, the reception was pretty quiet. It didn't get a ton of coverage in anime magazines, not many books were released... I still find it strange you didn't heard anything at all, though.

Anno is VERY SERIOUS about CCA.

Anno: If I were going to put it into admittedly grandiose terms... (very seriously) I consider Char's Counterattack a cultural heirloom for future generations.

Tomino: Wow.

Everyone: (laughs)

Tomino: Speaking as the creator, on the contrary, I don't think it's that big a deal.

Oshii is also a fan of the film, apparently.

Tomino: I had a discussion with Oshii-san for a feature in Animage three months ago. He complimented to film, but I figured he was just buttering me up, so I just ignored it.

Anno: No, apparently Oshii-san really likes it. He's not the sort of person to praise others lightly.

Tomino: I know. But I'm older than him, so I figured he was trying to be respectful of his elders.

Anno: Oshii-san isn't so sly (laughs).

Inoue: He's not that put together as a person.

Then they all start sounding off on Porco Rosso/Miyazaki.

Ogura: Usually he's very critical of other people's works. Did you hear what he had to say about Porco Rosso?

Anno: Oh, I'm critical of Porco Rosso, myself.

Tomino: What was wrong with Porco?

Anno: As a picture, nothing. But because I know Miyazaki-san personally, I can't view it objectively. His presence in the film is too conspicuous, it's no good. In other words... it feels like he's showing off.

Tomino: How so?

Anno: He has the main character act all self-deprecating, calling himself a pig... but then puts him in a bright red plane, has him smoking all cool-like, even creates a love triangle between a cute young thing and a sexy older lady.

Tomino: Ha! I see what you mean. He and I are around the same age, though. So I get how he feels, unconditionally. So I may think, "Oh boy..." but I can't stay mad at him (laughs).

Anno gets a little too into talking about underpants, and Tomino of all people has to check him

Anno: From my point of view, he's being very presumptuous. Tomino-san, you put so much of yourself into your works, it is like you're dancing naked in them. I like that! (balls fists) In Miyasan's recent works, he makes you *think* he's dancing naked... but on second glance, you realize he's still wearing underpants. (getting carried away) I hate that! I feel like shouting: "Take it all off!" (getting really carried away) And to add insult to injury... he's wearing *fancy* underpants!

Tomino: You don't beat around the bush. We get it, we get it already.

Anno: (shrinking) Excuse me.

It would be Anno and Tomino to accuse someone of not being self-masturbatory enough...

Tomino: I do get what you mean, and I don't mean to play devil's advocate for Miyazaki, but... generally speaking, that's just how you get when you age. It's the same for me, surely. That was my first time hearing it put so frankly... but you get what I mean already. It does feel nice letting it all hang out, waving your dick around. That's how movies ought to be!

Anno: Yes, I agree. I don't like it when people try to obscure themselves like that. If you're gonna wave your dick around, wave it *all* around! If you don't have the guts to do that, then wear the best clothing you can.

Tomino: Right... Dress yourself to the nines!

Anno: Commit yourself to putting on a show. He couldn't do that. I felt betrayed. Like, this guy isn't *really* naked!

One last excerpt till later.

Anno: I love the stark nakedness of your work... though it might make the viewers feel

repulsed. When you make films, do you just not care about that?

Tomino: It isn't something I really think about.

In what may come as a shock to some, Tomino recognizes CCA as a flawed picture.

Tomino: CCA leaves a weak impression, doesn't it? I have so many regrets about not rounding it out more fully. Especially the ending.

Anno: It's very hectic. It just races through the running time.

Tomino: Right? It's a bitter memory for me. I became painfully aware of how short movies are. But when the previews ended, and it started playing in theaters, I'd reached a stage of acceptance. "It is what it is."

Anno: I think most people didn't get CCA the first time they watched it.

Tomino: I understand that. I understand why they might feel that way. It's not that I didn't notice the signs while making it, that it wasn't easy to understand or even easy to watch. All I can say is, "It may be frustrating, but that's what it is." ...I really do feel frustrated, though.

Tomino: All I can do is feel a sense of embarrassment over the realization that I wasn't able to become a movie director.

Here it is, the most important part of the interview.

Anno: What I felt while watching CCA was that you wanted to bring things to a close, Tomino-san.

Tomino: That close you're speaking of was job-related, to the bitter end. I felt like I had to make sure Gundam remained, as a series or even just as a name. I tried to do so by closing the curtain on the subject of Char and Amuro. If I had one thing to say about the way I did, it's that in order for me to develop as a writer, instead of concluding a war story... that is, yes, yes, yes. I thought it would be good if, maybe, I could highlight the sensuous elements... to the point that you'd think, "Could Char and Amuro be gay?" To me, fiction writing is, more than anything... like I just said, about conveying that sensuality, having the audience pick up on it... if they can't, it's no good. That's why that ending was the only one I could think of. Really, I would have liked to make it more sci-fi, more cool. But in the end it was all I could come up with.

Anno enjoys Tomino's anime because they're ~SEXY~.

Anno: You may not feel the same way since you're so used to looking at them, but I can only see anime characters as flat cels.

Tomino: I get that.

Anno: It's symbolic. I look at cels as a very crude mode of expression. But through those flat methods, the first time I saw Tomino's anime, it made me think of sex. Take Ramba Ral and Hamon. Those two aren't married, are they? She's his common-law wife. It's a racy relationship. I got the sense: "Oh, those two sleep together at night." Evoking that feeling through those shadowless images is worthy of not just praise but

accolades, in my opinion. You don't get that from Takahata-san or Miyazaki-san's anime. Tomino-san, only your anime gives me that association, CCA especially. Between Char and Nanai, for example.

Tomino: Yes, yes. I'm pleased if that's the case.

Tomino does have a way of implying characters are doing it without actually SAYING they're doing it, come to think of it.

Anno: I also really liked the portrayal of Char and Lalah in the scene where they're drinking tea together in the third Gundam movie. That... that was amazing (balling his fists again)! Illustrating the nature of their relationship through such a casual depiction.. I found it astounding.

Oguro: Including sex, the characters have a raw energy to them. CCA is overflowing with that kind of rawness.

Tomino: I'm grateful to you for saying that. I wish it was overflowing with *more* of that energy. I regret that it doesn't.

Tomino can't be friends with people who don't admit to being perverts. Like Yoshikazu Yasuhiko, say.

Tomino: I struggled with the animators of CCA. I probably could have explained it better, but they struggled to depict that energy you mentioned. It made me think of Yasuhiko-kun. The eroticism of his lines perfectly created that instinctive rawness. But unfortunately, Yasuhiko-kun's fatal flaw is that he doesn't consider himself a pervert...

Anno: Really? Even though he draws such sexy pictures!

Everyone: (laughs)

Tomino: He doesn't have that self-awareness, at all. That's why things between us ended up the way they did. We never had a conversation where I yelled at him: "That's why you're a perv! Just admit you like pussy already!" It was 15 years ago, after all... I didn't speak that way back then. It wasn't that I couldn't be that explicit, but our feelings weren't connected enough for me to be. So I just told him in a very ordinary way that I didn't understand his approach to life or his way of thinking.

Anno: You didn't breach the subject of sex.

Inoue: You were both still young (laughs).

Now we get to the fun part, Tomino's thoughts on women.

Inoue: In Tomino-san's work, women often betray their own side.

Anno: It's mostly women who do the betraying in your shows.

Tomino: Really?

Inoue/Ogura: (harmonizing) Really!

Everyone: (laughs)

Tomino: You can't call that betrayal when a woman does it. Women are quick to change their stance on things. So to a man, it looks like betrayal. But only from his point of view.

Ogura: Inoue-san said it earlier. In Tomino anime, the women who end up traitors are always the ones tied up with men.

Inoue: On the surface it looks like they're turning traitor due to some principle or ideology, but really, it's because they've reached their limit with a man.

Tomino: They give up on their men. Why do they abandon them? It's a sort of basic self-instinct, I think. "Women can't survive without depending on someone." That's an epistemology men came up with. Women are quick to change sides once they think: "I can't live like this." "This doesn't feel good to me." "You're not the ideal sex partner for me."

Tomino doesn't need to read history books, he's already got this shit down!

Tomino: It's proven true over 4000, 5000 years of recorded history. It wasn't like that in matriarchal societies, though. Women didn't run away back then. But at some point, due to war, men took the reins. Once they had, women took what initiative they could to survive. They said they couldn't fight, because they had to give birth to children, that the men had to do it. Men back then were stupid, so they fell into the pattern of being protectors. And women thought, "Eureka!" That's why they rush into the direction of whoever will protect them. But if they feel he's not an appropriate mate, they'll escape just as fast. That's how women are. And that's why they had to create an economic system where men still have to provide in peace time, or else women wouldn't go along with it. I think that's why we have the system we have now.

Anno: My impression is that our economic system was made by men, for men.

On creating the character of Nanai...

Tomino: Sometimes men want to cling to women. I thought, Nanai is probably the kind of woman Char would like to cling to. More than anything, I created Nanai as a character that Char wouldn't look silly holding onto. When thinking about what kind of woman that is, I get in touch with my inner 'masturbatory rhythm'. I ask myself, what kind of woman would make Char's dick feel good? That's what I mean when I use the word 'fleshy'. She's a woman painted on a cel, but here (points to the crotch) she has volume. Characters that don't have that fleshiness are sure to look unattractive to the audience.

Anno: I think so too.

Tomino: It might be hard for younger people to hear, but as you get older, you start to understand more that you can't *not* think about people and characters without factoring in sex. That's why I absolutely had to give some thought to the state of Nanai's pussy. Especially while writing the story and drawing the storyboards; "I don't want her pussy to be all sad and tired out. If it is, Char will seem pathetic for sticking it in her, and she'll seem like a dull woman."

Tomino: This isn't off the record, by the way. At all. I'm not saying anything that would hurt my honor, logically. So go ahead and write it down! I don't mind.

Anno: Right.

Oguro: (raises hand) Are you sure?

Tomino: I'm sure.

Tomino: From there, I came up with how Nanai should act. Like, how she would sit. There's a scene where she sits in Char's lap, and in it I wanted to give an idea of what she's like when she's being laid. It was a challenge to myself, no joking matter! When I get that into it, I work so hard on the storyboards, by the time I'm done I'm crying: "Yes! I did it!" Then, when the animators don't get it right, I yell: "You idiots! What're you thinking?" When I'm not happy with the scene, but have to okay it anyway, I go limp... my mood, I mean. I can't get my dick up, either. It's even more infuriating when I'm picking out voice actresses. So many of them just start cooing right off the bat, as if you get turned on the moment you're touched. That's wrong... Have a degree of dignity when you're being bedded by a man! Think to yourself, "If this man doesn't lick my pussy, I'll kill him!"

In other news, Tomino seems to have whole-sale forgotten lines from his own film.

Oguro: There was a line in the movie where Gyunei says, "Many women have heard the Captain whisper Lalah Sune's name in his sleep."

Tomino: (hysterically laughing) There was?

Anno: There was.

Oguro: When I heard that line, I was dumbfounded.

Tomino: (happily) Of course you were!

Anno: It sounded very realistic to me (laughs).

Oguro: Hearing that line, I imagined how the women in bed with Char must have tried to play things off in the morning (laughs). There's so much background in that one line, it's incredible.

Tomino: There was such a line? I'm happy to hear it.

Anno: Yes, it was a good line.

Tomino: It must have been.

Re: Quess.

Oguro: Regarding Quess, what kind of girl is she, in your mind?

Tomino: The exact kind of girl she is in the movie. If you want to know why I included a girl like her in the story, the honest answer is that I just did it from a technical perspective, and I do have some regrets about that. "There needs to be a character like her to move the story along." That's the truth of it. Maybe I could have come up with some impetus without using Quess; in that case, maybe it all goes back to what we were discussing earlier, about lolicons. I created her as an antithesis to that character mold. Basically, she's a girl who's overly aware of the fact that she's a child. Looking back at it now, I may have created her as a response to the types of girls in Miyazaki's movies.

Kogawa: So she's like the opposite of Elpeo Ple?

Tomino: Not in my mind. They're the same. The difference is that Ple is more straightforward, Quess tries to act adult.