Transcommunication Vol.8-2 Fall 2021
Graduate School of International Culture and Communication Studies

Special Feature

Binding Threads: The Emotional Structure of Attachment in the Animated Series *Demon Slayer*

Catherine Regina Borlaza

In a bid to expound on and explore literary treatments of emotion in the field of narrative theory, Patrick Colm Hogan in *Affective Narratology* underscores the relation between "story structures" and "emotion systems," demonstrating how specific narrative prototypes—such as the Romantic, Heroic, and Revenge—are "fundamentally shaped and oriented" by emotions.[1] In this paper, I employ Hogan's affective narratological approach in inquiring into the emotion of attachment which is arguably at the crux of the character goals, relations, and narrative structure of the animated series *Demon Slayer*.[2] The narrative structure of select episodes from the first season are examined to aptly demonstrate Hogan's theory of how emotion constitutes the basic unit of narratives, orients the goals and trajectory of a narrative, and structures and unifies a story. In doing so, this paper attempts to present pathways into examining typical narrative structures and motifs in anime guided by insights and approaches of affective narratology.

"Emotions Make Stories": The Place of Emotion in Narratology and Anime

That emotions play a crucial role in the development of a character or narrative and in the audience's experience and engagement with stories is obvious, but Hogan writes that more work must be done to systematize and further develop a theory of emotion in the study of recurring narrative structures: "[N]arratological treatments of emotion," Hogan says, "have on the whole been relatively underdeveloped at least in comparison with other aspects of narrative theory."[3] The narrative potential of emotion—how emotion and story structures relate to each other, how emotions would be approached and theorized in the study of narratives—has largely been ignored by scholars and theorists, with the exception of Ed Tan, one of the pioneers who incorporated research on emotion to the

study of narratives in film. Tan's study, however, according to Hogan, "is not really an analysis of emotion and story structures" as it generally focuses on "interest" as a central emotion in the audience's engagement with films and how this leads to anticipating events in the course of the narrative, eliding the specificities of emotion and the relation of complex systems of emotion to narrative units and patterns.[4]

Hogan explains the neglect of emotion in the study of narrative structures by identifying three reasons which pivot on problems and limitations in methodology; the first reason being that, "Modern narrative theory has tended to draw on linguistic models, which largely ignore emotions."[5] David Herman points out that linguistic models have in fact served as an explanatory framework for narrative structures since the inception of narrative studies, naming Tzvetan Todorov, Gérard Genette, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Claude Bremond, and Roland Barthes as the progenitors of this approach which borrows terminologies and "categories from traditional grammars" and "units of language" and adopts "grammatical paradigms" in discussing narratives.[6] More contemporary scholars such as Herman himself, Marie-Laure Ryan, Monika Flaudernik, and Manfred Jahn have also taken this approach, updating and reconfiguring existing narratological concepts and theories by "incorporating models and tools from discourse analysis, linguistic pragmatism, and cognitive linguistics."[7]

It cannot be denied that developments in this approach have tremendously contributed and shaped the field of narrative studies, but Hogan observes that it has "tended to orient research programs in narratology toward issues and explanations that had little to do with emotion."[8] This emphasis on developing narratological models from linguistics ones is somewhat related to the second reason which concerns "explanatory (and even descriptive) problems with early treatments of story patterns" that have consequently "tended to make the topic less appealing to recent researchers."[9] To illustrate this point, Hogan cites Northrop Frye's extensive work on describing and analyzing the recurrence of narrative patterns and symbols across literary texts but points out that Frye's "organization of the data and formulation of patterns" and the "explanatory framework for his findings" leave much to be desired. Scholars on story patterns Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg similarly fail to explain why rituals serve as a basis for emplotting narrative structures.[10]

Psychoanalysis appears to be a promising framework in the study of emotion and story structures, one that is relatively more developed and systemized and has been deployed in fact by scholars to examine this relation. But Hogan shows that this framework is not without flaws. This brings us to the last reason, which is that emotions in the study of narratives are often "framed in terms of a (somewhat problematic) psychoanalytical conception of desire or pleasure."[11] Hogan cites Peter Brooks, one of the most prominent

figures in psychoanalytic narratology, as an example for Brooks investigates how plot is structured and driven specifically by desire. His approach, though commendable in its effort to strengthen the connections between psychoanalysis and narratology, dilutes the spectrum and complexity of emotions, exclusively focusing on desire and describing it as "libidinal" — "sexual in origin if not in manifestation" — and as an encompassing emotional motivating force.[12]

These gaps in research and methodology are addressed by Hogan in *Affective Narratology* where "emotion systems" are configured as an organizing principle[13] in prototypical narrative structures, and theories and approaches to emotion developed in cognitive science are employed to formulate new paradigms in the study of narratives. To quote Hogan's central claim:

> [E]motion systems govern not only goals but also the ways in which stories are developed, what sorts of things protagonists do or encounter, how trajectories of goal pursuits are initiated, what counts as a resolution, and so on. In consequence, emotion systems define the standard feature of all stories, as well as cross-culturally recurring clusters of features in universal genres (romantic, heroic, and so on). Beyond — or perhaps below — these larger structures, the determination of story organization by emotion systems goes all the way down to the level of events and incidents, pervading the way in which we make causal attributions.[14]

This notion that emotion gives structure and shape to elements of a narrative is not entirely new in the study and production of anime, as Robert Brenner observes in *Understanding Manga and Anime* how "[i]n Japanese storytelling and culture, emotion is the key to all stories,"[15] "[influencing] everything from their art style to their genres" and in "building character and establishing the setting."[16] In particular, emotions in anime are coded visually. Certain animation techniques like action lines for instance highlight "the character's momentum and intense concentration" and enhances the emotional drama of the unfolding narrative sequence.[17] Lines and symbols signify particular emotional states and responses as classified by Brenner below:

A Quick Guide to Common Visual Symbols

- Sweat drop(s) = nervous
- Pulsing vein near forehead = anger
- Blush = embarrassed
- Prominent canine tooth = animalistic behavior, losing control

- Dog ears/tail = begging
- Drool = leering
- Ghost drifting away from the body = fainting
- Snot bubble = asleep
- Shadow over face = extreme anger
- Glowing eyes = intense glare
- Nosebleed = aroused
- Ice/snow = on the receiving end of cold or cruel behavior
- Chibi/super deformed character = extreme emotional state[18]

These visual cues mentioned—action lines and visual symbols—are consistently at play during the climax of all of Agatsuma Zenitsu's battle scenes in *Demon Slayer*. In episode 12,[19] for example, Zenitsu's extreme distress and shock at the appearance of a demon is signified by his body "shrink[ing]," taking on a "super-deformed" or "chibi" form.[20] The outline of Zenitsu is dramatically stylized, his eyes turn white as other features of his face are simplified, and a snot bubble hangs from his nose which indicates he has entered a state of unconsciousness. A few cuts later, however, after being provoked by the demon, Zenitsu's form becomes more solid, his face is partially shown with a shadow cast over his forehead, and his eyes are covered by the fringes of his hair. His emotional state changes with his appearance as he exudes a solemn and ominous presence, which is acknowledged by both the demon and another character; the former realizing Zenitsu's breathing had changed as he prepares to draw his blade, while the latter seems not to have recognized Zenitsu at all. We do not see Zenitsu draw his blade toward the demon, but the action lines accompanying his movement toward the demon suggests that he has, with great momentum and force, catching the demon off guard and slicing through its head cleanly. In the comical cut that follows after, Zenitsu reverts to his chibi form as the snot bubble pops and his gestures are exaggerated as he sees himself beside the beheaded demon. Changes in appearance as Zenitsu exhibits in this sequence indicates "the progression of characters and plot" in anime according to Brenner.[21]

Specific emotions of the audience are also stirred through visual cues facilitated by certain conventions in character designs. Distinct features of characters, such as their clothing, the shape of their eyes, their hairstyle, and appearance, reveal something about their nature, and accordingly orient how the audience should perceive and relate to these characters. "In a world where a character's emotional life is key," Brenner writes, "their nature is made to manifest in their appearance."[22] The contrasting representation of the appearance and nature of the protagonist and the antagonist of *Demon Slayer* illustrates this point brilliantly. Kamado Tanjiro fits the typical mold of shōnen heroes who have

"wide eyes," "an easy smile" and "a spiky hairdo," in the same manner that Kibutsuji Muzan is casted as the typical villain who is "older, leaner, dressed in a more elaborate way ... and has narrow eyes fixed in a menacing glare."[23] What is worth exploring further is the difference in the said characters' eyes. In the list below, Brenner categorizes the descriptive qualities of eyes rendered in manga and the corresponding attributes of characters which also applies to anime:

It's All in the Eyes
Large, round eyes = innocence, purity, and youth
Medium, oval eyes = still a good guy, but with a shady past
Narrow, squinty eyes = evil, sadistic, and vicious
Large irises = hero or heroine
Small irises or no irises = the bad guys[24]

Tanjiro possessing large, round eyes with large irises distinguishes him as the shōnen hero typically attributed with the following traits: "Heroes tend to be decent, honorable, and hardworking souls, although they may indulge in raucous humor or childish fits of pique. The particularly Japanese trait of a hero are usually present, including loyalty to ideals and family or the group, sticking to your guns in a fight even to the death, and honorable behavior at all times whether in work or play,"[25] which in the latter part of this paper will be explored in relation to the emplotment of emotion in the series. Muzan, marked by his narrow-squinty eyes with small and pointed irises, is the extreme: "Vicious, selfish, relentless, obsessed with power ... Often physically beautiful, but have few, if any, feelings or morals."[26] Brenner notes that these visual codes are vital to the consumption of narrative: "The frequent use of conventional visual cues is deliberate to make each story a quick read for commuting or a quick break."[27] Beyond the convenience it affords the audience, a codified system of visual symbols and imagery, according to Mark Macwilliams, makes more legible the structure of the plot and what to anticipate based on conventionalized appearances and animation techniques, and facilitates the audience's "easy identification with the stories' characters."[28] "Familiarity" with stock characters and plot structure and development signaled by specific visual codes "does not breed contempt, but rather facilitates intelligibility," resulting in a more immersive experience which can "arouse powerful emotions such as horror, sexual desire, or suspense in the audience."[29]

These are some of the ways in which emotion is intertwined with the production of anime, implied and evoked by character designs, visual motifs, and animation techniques, but what I would like to further investigate in the following sections veer away from the emotional appeal of visuals, and focus on the relation between emotion and the

basic units and structure of a narrative which Hogan explores in *Affective Narratology*—how the emotion of attachment, in particular, informs Tanjiro's goal, plots constitutive units of the narrative, and enhances the unity and impact of the story.

"The Smell of Blood": Inciting Incidents and the Establishment of Goals

The first episode[30] of *Demon Slayer* lends itself well to demonstrating the basic conditions which define an emotional experience and the narrative potential of emotion systems. Much emphasis is given to characterizing the main protagonist Tanjiro in terms of his relationship with the members of his family in the first few scenes. This underscores their intimate ties with each other while simultaneously highlighting some remarkable characteristics of Tanjiro. Kind-hearted and hardworking, Tanjiro as the oldest son considers and values the welfare and comfort of his family members over his own, evinced by the fact that he decides to take the dangerous trip down the mountain, trudging through the thicket of snow and enduring the harsh weather while carrying a basket full of charcoal he plans to sell in the nearby village, because he wants "everyone to be full" when they celebrate the New Year. Aside from introducing the protagonist, the episode also illustrates the present situation and the established roles and routine of the family members. Normalcy is established at the beginning of the anime, though we are made aware that some event had previously disturbed a different sense of normalcy before this present order, that event being the death of the father. This event, according to Nezuko, explains their present situation, "why everyone clings to [Tanjiro]" for support.

The family's present situation which Tanjiro acknowledges to be difficult but nonetheless full of happiness is disrupted when all but one of his family members are murdered by a demon. This is how stories prototypically begin according to Hogan—with "some sort of instability" that upsets the original order of things.[31] We come to realize that the original order is "fragile" or "temporary"—"fragile," meaning "readily open to enduring changes through some incident" and "temporary" in the sense that "the simple passage of time will produce non-normalcy."[32] Tanjiro himself recognizes the precariousness of their present situation in hindsight, how "life is like the weather. It's ever changing. Sunny days won't last forever. It won't keep on snowing too."

Instability marking the beginning of a story invites from its cast of characters an emotional response. Hogan observes that when normalcy is disrupted, emotions logically arise, as "More often than not, emotions are a response to changes in what is routine, habitual, expected. We anticipate normalcy unreflectively. When our anticipations are violated, attentional force is triggered... and a sort of pre-emotional arousal occurs, an arousal that often prepares us for a particular emotion."[33]

Panic seizes Tanjiro as he comes home from his trip to the local village welcomed unexpectedly by the smell of blood. This scene in the first episode is read in this paper as the first "incident" in the story. Incidents, the smallest units in a narrative, are defined by Hogan as "the focal points of emotional response, the minimal units of emotional temporality."[34] In Tanjiro's case, the smell of blood provokes a particularly strong emotion and is directly tied to the disruption of normalcy in the narrative. This incident is part of a larger sequence of an emotional experience defined by four basic conditions which Hogan draws from studies in cognitive science. The four basic conditions are as follows: 1) eliciting conditions; 2) expressive outcomes; 3) actional response; and 4) phenomenological tone. Eliciting conditions refers to triggers of emotion, "situations, occurrences, / and properties to which we are sensitive in emotional experience and that serve to activate emotion systems."[35] Expressive outcomes are "the manifestation of an emotion that mark the subject as experiencing an emotion" —emotions that may be detected from "vocalizations (e.g., sobs)," "facial gestures (e.g., smiles)," "postural changes," "perspiration," and so forth. Actional response is "what one does in reaction to the situation" which may have desirable or damaging consequences to the subject. Lastly, the phenomenological tone is "what the emotion feels like" or the subject's attitude toward the experience of the emotion and situation.[36]

The first, second, and third conditions clearly play out in the narrative sequence anchored to this incident of Tanjiro smelling blood. What is read as the eliciting condition is the smell of blood and the sight of the murdered members of the family. Mixed emotions of panic, pain, horror, and sorrow manifest as Tanjiro cries and struggles with his breathing and are rendered through changes in his appearance linked to visual codes discussed in the previous section as his irises contract and a shadow is cast darkly over half of his face. Responding to the tragic death of his family, Tanjiro attempts to save the only surviving member, Nezuko. While descending the mountain carrying Nezuko on his back, Tanjiro attempts to make sense of the horrendous events that have unfolded by determining its cause: "Why did this happen? Was it a bear? Did the non-hibernating bear come out?" Read in light of Hogan's assertions, this reaction naturally stems from emotion. "When we experience an emotional spike" as Tanjiro is, overcome by a wave of conflicting emotions, "our cognitive response is partially automatic" Hogan explains. "Crucially, we shift our attentional focus. But just what do we shift our attentional focus to? It is relatively simple—causes, or possible causes. Almost immediately upon experiencing an emotion, we begin to attribute a cause."[37] This search for an explanation is interrupted as Nezuko awakens and is revealed to have transformed into a demon.

Crucial in defining the dominant emotion system which structures and shapes the narrative is Tanjiro's response to his sister's attempt at biting him. He puts his faith in

their bond as siblings, hoping that Nezuko will recognize him and overcome this part of herself that had become a demon. A clear goal and the implied emotion which orients it is made apparent: "I'll definitely save you. I will save you!" [Zettai tasukeru! Nii-chan ga tasukete yaru!]. Note how Tanjiro invokes his blood ties with Nezuko in the original which is lost in translation— "nii-chan" or "your big brother" "will definitely save you," gesturing toward a particularly strong emotion rooted in an attachment to a family member. Describing the emotional contour of attachment and its bearing on narratives, Hogan writes that it is:

> the emotion that leads us to want to be near someone else, to share a home with them, to have physical contact and cooperative interaction with them ... the main concern of attachment relations are the proximity / and well-being of the other person. In consequence, the main story lines bearing on attachment concern separation and reunion along with the well-being of the "attachment objects."[38]

In Tanjiro's case, it is an attachment that particularly revolves around wanting to remain in close proximity to his sister despite the danger it poses and in reclaiming the former state of his sister transformed into a demon. This emotion of attachment gives rise to his goal to protect and "save" her or to turn her back human.

The establishment and pursuit of a goal is just part of the basic structure of stories, according to Hogan. Obstructions to the achievement of a particular goal is crucial to the structure as well and is represented in the first episode with the appearance of Tomioka Giyu who attempts to slay Nezuko in fulfilling his obligations as a demon slayer. Aside from fulfilling this purpose in the structure of the narrative, Giyu also reveals the flaws of Tanjiro, namely, his weak resolve to save his sister and his tendency of being easily overcome by emotion. Giyu is correct in identifying these weaknesses of Tanjiro—and the latter sections of this paper will discuss more in depth how these weaknesses shape incidents in other narrative sequences in the anime—but the emotion that would propel Tanjiro to pursue his goal is not "the powerful and pure rage of unforgiveness" Giyu says it should be. Instead, it is his attachment to all the members of his family. This is already hinted at in the first episode, when Tanjiro's mother, accompanied by his siblings, appears by Tanjiro's side and says, "I'm leaving Nezuko in your hands," reinforcing Tanjiro's goal. This does not mean, however, that these family members have totally left the surviving siblings by themselves for in many crucial moments in the anime, the family members would reappear, taking on different forms through different means. The end of the first episode further contributes to reinforcing Tanjiro's goal to save and protect Nezuko, as Giyu, having sensed something special in the bond between Tanjiro and

Nezuko, sends Tanjiro to train with Urokodaki Sakonji.

"I'll Protect Nezuko": The Emotional Emplotment and Expansion of Goals

The establishment of Tanjiro's goal in the first episode of *Demon Slayer* affirms Hogan's observation that "goals are produced by emotional responses to situations."[39] The murder of Tanjiro's family and Nezuko's transformation into a demon can be read as emotional triggers which give rise to Tanjiro's goal to protect his sister and turn her back human—a goal that stems from profound emotional attachment. Goals, however, may not only be read as a product of emotion systems, but also as causally linked incidents, events, and episodes. Hogan describes a set of preference rules which distinguish between sequences of episodes and stories. These rules are premised on the pivotal role of goals in shaping and unifying a story:

> The causal chain and the emotions of a story should be subsumed within a minimal set of long-term goals; the causal chain should include actions on the part of a minimal number of agents pursuing these goals; and these goals should be specific enough so that the actional choices of the agents define concrete means of achieving these goals.[40]

From these preference rules, we understand that a story's coherence is reinforced by the goals pursued by the active agents of the story attempting to achieve them. Moreover, these preference rules provide us with a more nuanced understanding of the narrative function of goals and its relation to emotion systems. Emotion systems contribute to the formation of character goals which guide the character's actions. Consequently, these actions directed toward achieving certain goals influence the manner in which the narrative develops and the "trajectories of goal pursuits" taken by the character.[41] In tracing the development of Tanjiro's goals, we see how the configuration and expansion of the main goals are fundamentally tied to the emotion system of attachment. To reverse Nezuko's transformation and protect her are the goals established in the first episode, but as the series progresses, supplementary goals arise and intertwine with Tanjiro's initial or main goals. These supplementary goals include becoming a demon slayer, tracking down Muzan, and collecting blood samples to develop a cure for humans transformed into demons.

From episodes 2 to 5[42] of the series, the first supplementary goal arises as an actional outcome to fulfill Tanjiro's main goal: becoming a demon slayer to protect Nezuko and to seek out information about the transformation of humans into demons. A crucial

situation in episode 2 calls into question Tanjiro's capabilities to carry out his main goal to protect his sister. Having restrained the demon Tanjiro and Nezuko encounter at a shrine, Tanjiro is hesitant to kill it as he weighs his reasons for killing the demon and attempts to think of a less painful way to slay it. Urokodaki acts as an intervening figure in the episode who identifies Tanjiro's weakness and how it inhibits the attainment of his goals. Urokodaki observes that Tanjiro's indecision or his "shallow determination," which stems from his extreme compassion and sympathy for others, will cause only harm to others. Not only will he be unable to protect himself and his sister from others, but he may also endanger those around him by travelling with his half-demon sister who Urokodaki worries may crave human flesh. Urokodaki here is able to highlight the consequences of Tanjiro's actions and the responsibilities he must fulfill if he chooses to remain attached to Nezuko.

Tanjiro's training under Urokodaki addresses the weaknesses that serve as a barrier to achieving his goals. The tests and traps set up by Urokodaki compel Tanjiro to quickly respond and decide on the appropriate course of action. Of particular interest is how the configuration of the first test is able to strengthen Tanjiro's resolve to protect his sister. In order to become accepted as Urokodaki's trainee, Tanjiro is tasked to descend the mountain before sunrise. Realizing that the mountain is riddled with traps, Tanjiro for a moment panics and acknowledges the possibility of passing out and dying from the oppressive conditions of the mountain, but then asserts that he must make it down the mountain and subsequently comes up with a plan to achieve that. At this particular juncture in the episode, Tanjiro's self-conscious examination of the given situation and his plotting of actions to overcome it can be read as a moment of appraisal. Hogan defines appraisal as the "process of evaluating the ways in which a particular, interpreted situation affects one's ability to achieve one's goals."[43] Rather than losing hope, Tanjiro analyzes how to appropriately respond to the situation while accepting that in his present capacity, he cannot dodge all traps. For Hogan, "we respond to the meaning of situations for us thus their consequences for the things we care about." Appraisal "allows us to evaluate the importance of the goal at issue and the bearing of the emotion-provoking incident on that goal."[44] By overcoming this test, Tanjiro will be able to train under Urokodaki to become a demon slayer, but more than that, it means that he will be able to return to his sister alive, fulfilling his promise that they will stay together. In this sense, Tanjiro is not only attempting to reach the foot of the mountain in order to complete the test but is also attempting to reunite with Nezuko. This episode, overall, strengthens Tanjiro's resolve to become a demon slayer, a supplementary goal in achieving the main goal to protect his sister, while fulfilling the main goal to continue being with and protecting Nezuko.

Episode 3 is configured to further develop the trajectory of Tanjiro's supplementary goal to become a demon slayer by presenting more obstacles to amplify the significance and emotional intensity of attaining said goal. Hogan describes how the achievement of goals gains emotional significance. First, by "the complete loss of any possibility for achieving the goal"; and second, by "increasing the difficulty of achieving the goal."[45] The second can be seen in the two obstructions in this episode: a physical obstruction in the form of a boulder and a blocking figure, Sabito. Having learned the basic techniques in breathing and wielding a katana and trained to build up his strength and stamina, the final test Tanjiro must fulfill in order to join the Final Selection to become a demon slayer is to split a boulder into two using a katana. But after exerting all his effort in continuing with his training to cut the boulder, Tanjiro still fails. He evaluates his current condition in relation to his goal to protect his sister: "Am I too weak for this? Is Nezuko going to die just like that?" The actional outcome from this appraisal of the situation, his decision to work even harder, does little to help him, and Tanjiro acknowledges this when he encounters Sabito: "I trained hard, I gave it my all, but I'm not getting anywhere. I can't move on." Responding to this, Sabito urges him to forge ahead despite the difficulties, implying that it is futile to dwell on efforts that seem useless. He also critiques Tanjiro's failure to apply the techniques learned from Urokodak, pointing out that the knowledge and breathing techniques were simply memorized instead of "impart[ed] onto [the] body."

Because of Sabito's disposition toward Tanjiro, he may be read as a blocking figure, which according to Hogan impedes the hero's achievement of his goal.[46] Sabito is an antagonizing force which Tanjiro must overcome, but simultaneously acts as a helping figure along with Makomo who assists in the development of Tanjiro's goals to become a demon slayer. With the intervention of Makomo and Sabito, Tanjiro unwittingly splits the boulder into two and participates in the Final Selection. The knowledge Tanjiro gains while training with Urokodaki, Makomo, and Sabito culminate in episode 4, "Final Selection," where he encounters and slays another blocking figure, the morphed demon with hardened skin and many arms.

Having survived the Final Selection, Tanjiro achieves the first supplementary goal to become a demon slayer. From episodes 6 to 7,[47] we see the development of the second and third supplementary goals: to seek out information about Muzan who Urokodaki suggests is responsible for if not implicated in the murder of Tanjiro's family and the transformation of Nezuko; and to protect others from the fate that befell on his family. These two goals arise as a response to Tanjiro's encounter with the swamp demon abducting young women. The swamp demon refuses to reveal any information about Muzan, impeding Tanjiro's attainment of the second supplementary goal. What Tanjiro finds peculiar is how the mere mention of Muzan's name elicits terror from the demon,

emphasizing Muzan's oppressive rule over the demons he has spawned. Tanjiro's resentment toward Muzan is further intensified as he sympathizes with one of the villagers, Kazuma, whose fiancé was devoured by the swamp demon. Tanjiro relates to Kazuma's loss due to the loss of his own family, strengthening his resolve to not only track down Muzan but to also protect others from what he and Kazuma have suffered.

It's fitting that after this pronouncement that in episode 8,[48] Tanjiro picks up the scent of the demon who murdered his family and confirms that it is Muzan. Tanjiro was able to fulfill in part his supplementary goal to track down Muzan and collect information about him—he is horrified to learn that Muzan lives among humans, disguising himself as one, and even has a human wife and child who are unaware of his true identity. Their encounter was brief and Tanjiro's goal was impeded when Muzan transforms a passerby into a demon which Tanjiro attempts to restrain, allowing Muzan to escape. Though separated from Muzan once more, Tanjiro encounters Tamayo and Yushiro, two demons who live an alternative life to their kind, who will play a role in generating Tanjiro's fourth supplementary goal: to collect blood samples from demons who possess Muzan's blood.

Tanjiro asks the healer Tamayo how to reverse Nezuko's transformation, to which she responds that an antidote may be developed. To achieve this, a large and diverse sample of blood from demons who possess a thick amount of Muzan's blood is needed. Tanjiro not only realizes the benefits of this to his sister, but also to all mankind: "It will save not only Nezuko, but even more people." The antagonizing forces Temari Demon and Arrow Demon, deployed by Muzan to capture Tanjiro, disrupt their conversation. Since the two demons claim to be part of the Twelve Kizuki (Demon Moons) who are in possession of Muzan's blood, slaying them will help in fulfilling the fourth supplementary goal. The difficulty of achieving Tanjiro's goals is amplified because the two demons are stronger and recover faster than the previous demons faced in the previous episodes. By being able to adapt and pinpoint the weaknesses of the demons, Tanjiro, Nezuko, Tamayo, and Yushiro are able to defeat the demons.

A crucial point in the narrative arises when Tamayo proposes to keep Nezuko with them as it is dangerous for Tanjiro to fulfill his goals with his sister beside him. Tanjiro sees how this will secure Nezuko's well-being but refuses the offer when Nezuko holds his hand. As a kind of call back to their separation in the first episode, Tanjiro proclaims that, "We want to be together. We'll never part ways. We won't part ways again," showing how the decisions made by Tanjiro are influenced by the insistence of familial attachment. In sum, the episodes examined show us how main goals branch out into supplementary goals, which are all influenced by emotion systems and appraisals.

"A True Bond": The Emotional Relevance and Continuity of Attachment in *Demon Slayer*

The previous two sections have explored some of the narrative potentials of emotion: how emotion constitutes the basic unit of narratives whereby temporal experiences are defined by a character's emotional response to situations, and how emotion systems shape and influence the pursuit and expansion of a character's goals, which consequently affect the trajectory of a narrative. This last section ponders the larger function of emotion systems in defining and unifying a story.

In the second chapter of *Affective Narratology*, Hogan examines what makes a story a story and argues that emotions are an important factor in distinguishing between stories and mere sequences of events. Stories differ from sequences because of the profound causal relation that exists between the temporal experiences narrated. Three factors strengthen the causal relation of occurrences in stories: causal continuity, emotional continuity, and thematic unity. When events unfold in the same timeline and the same space and when the outcomes of these events are consequential to the characters involved, we are more likely to read these events as causally related.[49] The proximity of story spaces may be further strengthened through emotional continuity—when the events narrated intertwine "[contributing] to a single emotional experience."[50] The events are thus mutually relevant for they convey the same emotions. This may be executed through several narratological means according to Hogan: the emotions expressed by characters or explored in the events, for instance, may overlap. Emotional memories may be shared by different characters, but the appraisal and effect of these memories on the characters may differ. Emotions, moreover, may be further enhanced depending on the development, pacing, and build-up of events. Events may be emotionally consequential to characters—the stakes affect both the emotional states and goals of the characters.[51] The last factor is related to some of the concerns of the second factor—the theme which emerges from particular events, which are tied to or negotiate specific emotion systems, may serve to unify the occurrences in a story. The theming of a particular emotion and the discussion of different positions with respect to an emotional event in the narrative, for instance, may be contradictory in order to enhance or intensify the emotion. In *Demon Slayer*, the events that unfold from episodes 15 to 21,[52] which comprise the longest story arc in the first season of the series,[53] highlight how the unity and significance of events are enhanced through the emotional and thematic relevance and continuity of attachment.

Embedded in the opening events of episode 15[54] is the central theme of the arc and arguably of the entire series. The parting words of Hisa—the owner of the House Bearing the Wisteria Crest who willingly accepted Tanjiro, Zenitsu, and Inosuke into her abode

and helped them recover from their previous mission at Tsuzumi Mansion—puzzles Inosuke. She wishes for their safety and reminds them to "be proud of yourselves and strive to survive at all times." While Zenitsu thinks it is pointless to ponder on these words, Tanjiro attempts to interpret the significance of Hisa's advice: "To be proud of ourselves is to comprehend our position and to be able to bear it with a clear conscience and do the right thing." How does one determine one's position? What does it mean to have a "clear conscience"? And what is "the right thing" to do? In asking these, Inosuke questions the nature of social relationships and interactions between humans (which he had little exposure to as he was raised by boars), and uses this advice to misconstrue Hisa's conduct towards them: "Why did the old woman have to wish us a safe journey? She's not even my relative, so why did she do that? She didn't comprehend her position, did she?" These questions are not only prompted by Hisa's advice during the parting ceremony, but also by her actions towards Inosuke throughout their recovery period. She offers to wash his soiled clothes, prepares for him a comfortable alternative wear, and cooks them hearty meals, which left an emotional imprint onto Inosuke. Though unfamiliar with this kind of interaction between people (which explains his bewilderment), Inosuke is moved.[55] What Inosuke's questions suggest is that these affectionate and caring gestures should only be exchanged between people related by blood. These questions problematize what actions and feelings are appropriate and allowable within certain relationships—relationships between family members, between comrades, friends, and acquaintances—and the story arc reveals how such rigid relational categories built around roles and obligations are complicated by the emotional ties shared by people.

We particularly witness how hierarchical relations are drawn and crossed when Tanjiro and Inosuke encounter Murata. Murata is horrified when he discovers that Tanjiro belongs to the lowest rank. He claims that it is hopeless to send in such low-ranking soldiers and asserts that the situation calls for the skills of the pillars, the most skilled demon slayers. This hierarchy established amongst demon slayers is disrupted as Inosuke attacks and insults Murata and demands that he explain the situation. Murata responds to this by asserting his position as their senpai, implicitly reminding him of the expected conduct between the different ranks. Relations are once again crossed when Murata reveals that his own comrades slaughtered each other, which is considered taboo.[56] It becomes apparent that this scene is attempting to contribute to and complicate the arc's central theme, revealing how the established roles and relations are asserted, maintained, and defied.

With the appearance of the demon Rui, the established relation between demons is challenged. Rui tells them, "Do not come here to disturb my family," contradicting the knowledge that demons do not work together much less recognize themselves as a family. As the episodes in this arc progress, we learn that four other demons constitute this

family: a mother who spins silk to control demon slayers like puppets, a fierce father with an extraordinary hard skin, an older brother who commands a swarm of spiders, and an older sister who can create silk cocoons to envelop and dissolve humans. The visual imagery of spider silk ties in well with the theme of attachment: the silk produced by the mother is described as "tough" and "thick" which resonates with Rui's assertion that their "ties [as a family] will never be broken." But a spider's silk is weaved to catch prey, suggesting that ties may be predatory and oppressive as seen in how the demon mother and the demon older sister deploy silk as a means to manipulate and inflict harm onto the demon slayers. These configuration of the visual imagery of silk and relational ties are enhanced and elaborated on with the events that unfold.

The pairing of the characters is highly relevant in exploring the arc's central concern of relational ties and attachment. The emotional bonds shared between the pairs contrast in episode 15 to 16.[57] While Rui doubts and threatens the demon mother, Tanjiro expresses his gratitude towards Inosuke, supports him, and insists on working together to overcome the challenges thrown at them by the demon mother. While Rui forces onto the demon mother the obligation she must fulfill to him as her son, Inosuke willingly adjusts to and applies Tanjiro's calculative style of combat. On the one hand, we sense a bond of trust developing between Inosuke and Tanjiro, stemming from Tanjiro's genuine concern for Inosuke and Inosuke's acceptance of Tanjiro as a reliable comrade; and on the other hand, the bond between the mother and Rui is revealed to be built on terror and scorn which compels the mother to surrender and welcome death in order to "untie" herself from her relations with Rui. The mother's surrender is emotionally intensified as Tanjiro appraises the turn of events: "The demon smelled of suffering and fear, enough to make her desperate for death." It is worth pointing out how Tanjiro's strong sense of smell here and in many episodes before enables him to empathize with demons which opens pathways into uncovering the suffering and past of these demons.[58] In the demon mother's case, her emotional memories reveal that she was abused by the demon father for being unable to fulfill her duties as the mother of Rui's family. The gentleness of Tanjiro's gaze, however, reminds her of someone who in her previous life gazed at her in this way and cherished her.[59] The revelation of the presence of one of the Twelve Kizuki in the mountain intensifies Tanjiro's resolve to fulfill the supplementary goal of collecting blood samples from those associated with Muzan. These sequences of events overall seem to critique Inosuke's prior assumption that affectionate and kind gestures should only be exchanged between family members as we see how people unrelated by blood (i.e., Hisa and injured demon slayers, Tanjiro and Inosuke) share a more profound bond than those who identify themselves as part of a family (i.e., Rui and the demon mother).

Although Zenitsu was separated from Tanjiro and Inosuke and did not share the

same experiences with them, his situation evokes the same emotions and engages with the same questions, enhancing the emotional and thematic continuity and relevance of attachment. The storyline of the mother appears to intersect with Zenitsu's in the sense that the mother desired to break free from the familial ties and duties imposed onto her by Rui, while Zenitsu chooses to affirm the bond between him and the old master who trained him.

Left behind by Tanjiro and Inosuke at the foot of Mount Natagumo, Zenitsu points out that he is unlike his companions who are extraordinary fearless—he is a coward. When he suddenly remembers that Tanjiro brought Nezuko with him into battle, Zenitsu rushes to look for her. Though the effect is comedic, we will come to understand later on Zenitsu's obsessive behavior over Nezuko. In episode 17,[60] Zenitsu encounters another member of Rui's family: the half-human, half-spider older brother who leads a swarm of spiders with toxins that can transform humans into spiders. Having been bitten by one of the spiders, Zenitsu runs away.[61] The natural response of his body is to climb up a tree which enkindles an emotional memory of his old master scolding him when he also climbed up a tree to escape his training: "Get it together. Don't cry. Don't run away. Your actions are useless." Zenitsu's appraisal of this memory resonates with Tanjiro's response to Sabito's provocations in episode 3.[62] In both their respective situations, they feel stuck:

> Tanjiro: "I trained hard, I gave it my all, but I'm not getting anywhere. I can't move on."
> Zenitsu: "I've been trying, but I've achieved nothing from training..."

The acknowledgment of their limitations in these emotional appraisals lead to an evaluation of their goals, and more importantly, what lies at the heart of their motivation to pursue these in the first place. Arguably, for Zenitsu, he strives to survive because of his old master.[63] What was seen as a weakness by the demon older brother is Zenitsu's strength: knowing one move that was developed and polished beyond perfection with the encouragement and guidance of his old master. These words uttered by Zenitsu's old master left an impression on him: "Learning one move is enough for you to celebrate. Since you could only learn one move, then you must hone it to perfection. Practice it to an extent that's beyond perfection." It frustrates Zenitsu how learning only one out of the six forms of the Thunder Breathing Style pleased his old master. We come to understand this when the old master compares his mastery of a single move to the process of forging of a katana: "After the katana is hammered and refined multiple times, the impurities and excess components are removed to improve the purity of steel in order to create a strong katana." Zenitsu remarks that this must also be why his old master kept beating

and tiring him. This connection between the katana and Zenitsu is reinforced when the old master encourages him to "become a stronger sword than everyone else." In the previous episodes, the katana was deployed as a weapon to split objects into two[64] and slay demons; here it is used as a metaphor for enduring and preserving amidst hard and heavy blows which is related to the old master's insistence that Zenitsu should not give up.

The old master's words are given more weight when Zenitsu recalls his background as an orphan who had no expectations or familial obligations to fulfill, which contrasts with the demon mother burdened with these. Zenitsu's desire is simple: to protect someone, "even if it's only one person in this lifetime." This explains his obsession over marriage—he yearns for a stronger connection with someone that may be achieved through marriage which comes with certain obligations he must fulfill. He recognizes that for others, his fulfillment desire is impossible: "Nobody expects me to achieve that at all. Whenever I fail for the first time, I'll cry and run away. Everyone will think I'm hopeless and stay away from me after that." His old master, however, believed in what Zenitsu could achieve and did not let him run away from his training. It might have been the case that at first, the old master was imposing this connection between them, but in the end Zenitsu chose not to sever their ties as he still holds onto his old master's words to guide him. In this sense, we see how emotional memories and the emotion system of attachment serve as motivating forces for characters to act. In Zenitsu's case, these helped him unleash a powerful and magnificent move to defeat the demon older brother. All in all, Zenitsu's relationship with his old master reinforces the idea that a strong connection entails mutual commitment and that profound bonds, contrary to Inosuke's assumption, exist beyond familial ties.

The emplotment of emotional memories functioning as motivational triggers can also be observed in episode 18[65] when Inosuke faces the demon father alone. Overwhelmed by the father's amplified power after molting, Inosuke loosens his grip on his sword and lowers it, admitting defeat. As the demon father closes in on Inosuke, he suddenly remembers what Tanjiro told him before their separation: "Don't die! Before I come back, don't die!" And Hisa's advice as well: "You should be proud of yourselves and strive to survive at all times." These memories specifically feature characters who have shown kindness towards Inosuke and he responds to this by proclaiming that he will not give in and by continuing to fight back. When the demon father strangles him, he is reminded of one of his earliest memories of being separated from a woman who he does not remember but appears to be his mother, telling him that he "must live on." One of the pillars, Shinobu Kocho, provides us an answer to why certain emotions are unearthed and remembered especially during dire situations: "It has been said that people see flashbacks of life at the brink of death, so they'll know how to avoid the fate from

past experiences and memories." As a mechanism for survival (as well as a narrative device for ensuring the continuation of the narrative), memories are recollected as in the case of Inosuke who is being urged by these characters to strive to survive. This narrative device is once again employed in Tanjiro's confrontation with Rui.

Flung to a different side of the mountain, Tanjiro witnesses how Rui harms the demon who identifies herself as Rui's older sister. Confused, Tanjiro asks: "Aren't you comrades?" Rui, offended by this question, says: "Don't group us with the kind of fragile relationship. We are a family. There's a strong bond between us." Tanjiro's response synthesizes the insights about attachment suggested in the episodes leading up to this scene:

> "Be it your family or comrade, if there is a strong bond between each other, you are equally precious to each other. Just because there isn't a strong bond between each other, you say it's fragile. That's definitely not true. If you two are connected by a strong bond, I'll be able to smell trust. But I could only smell fear, hatred, and terror from you two. That's not a bond. It's fake. It's a forged bond!"

Enraged by this assertion, Rui attacks Tanjiro. In the course of their battle, Tanjiro's blade breaks from Rui's thread and he struggles to defend himself from the web launched towards him. Nezuko then intervenes, protecting her brother from the whip of threads. Rui realizes that despite being a demon, Nezuko protected her human brother, and the two siblings, who are expected to be enemies, stay together. This kind of relationship which transgresses boundaries and defies nature and social expectations is what Rui desires—a "true bond." He bargains with Tanjiro, offering to spare his life in exchange for his sister which would completely inhibit Tanjiro's main goal to protect and remain by Nezuko's side. Rui insists that a bond may be created between him and Nezuko through fear and terror which Tanjiro points out is not what a family bond is. It is here that one of the central questions of the arc arises: What binds family members together?

Rui clearly expresses his position on this: what binds families together are the duties they are expected to fulfill: "A father has a father's duties. A mother has a mother's duties. Parents protect their children. Older siblings protect their younger siblings. No matter what. At the risk of their own lives. I believe that anyone who doesn't know their duties shouldn't exist." Familial bonds such as Tanjiro's relationship widh Nezuko in the anime suggests the fulfillment of certain obligations. The first episode emphasizes this as Tanjiro evokes his position as the older brother and his duty to protect his younger sister. But the obligation and responsibility Tanjiro fulfils as an older brother is willingly accepted and carried out; these were not imposed onto him like how Rui has done with the members of his demon family. Tanjiro's relationship with Nezuko suggests that at the

heart of the bond between family members is this selfless desire to freely give ourselves to others without wanting anything in return. This resonates with Hogan's explanation of the emotional goals associated with attachment relations which is to sustain interactions with the person or object of attachment without "further purpose beyond the interaction itself" and to preserve the "emotional and well-being" of the person or object.[66] While Tanjiro tries to the best of his abilities to protect Nezuko and ensure that she transforms back into human, Rui inflicts suffering upon his demon family members. Attachment as an insistence to remain beside the person or object of attachment is evoked, moreover, when Rui reunites with his human parents. Thinking that he will be separated from his parents in the afterlife, his human father and mother appear to comfort him and insist that "we'll always be together wherever we go."

Tanjiro also reunites with his father but only in memory. It is important to note that this is the first and only time in the entire first season that the father fully appears at a crucial moment when Tanjiro is at the brink of death.[67] Tanjiro recalls a memory of him and Nezuko dancing as their father looks over them and reminds Tanjiro to execute the proper breathing technique: "Consolidate your breath. Be a God of Fire by all means." This scene then cuts to another memory where Tanjiro, his mother, and his other siblings are watching their father perform a ritual. Shifting to a different but related scene, the father explains the hinokami kagura breathing technique to Tanjiro and insists that this, along with the hanafuda earrings, must be passed down from one generation to the next. The hinokami kagura which links generations of the Kamado family together enables Tanjiro to break through Rui's threads. Tanjiro recognizes that, although physically absent, his father and his memories helped and saved him. This appears to resonate with what Hogan observes as a distinct effect of attachment relations between family members: "Our bodies are pervaded by the emotional memories of those early attachments."[68] Tanjiro's connection to the father is somatic and embodied in the sense that his execution of the hinokami kagura affirms the bond between him and his father.

Taking into consideration these sequences discussed, the Mount Natagumo arc demonstrates how emotion is structurally and thematically encoded into narratives to causally unify and enhance sequences of events. By examining the configuration of relations between characters and the development of scenes, the conflicting positions on and elaboration of the theme of attachment becomes more prominent.

Binding Threads: Emotions and Story Structures

Instead of focusing on the interplay of visual emotive conventions, this paper has attempted to present an alternative approach to examining emotions in anime. By

analyzing select episodes from *Demon Slayer*, the potential of emotion in structuring narratives observed by Hogan are brought to light—specifically, how narratives may be organized into units of emotional responses to situations, how emotion systems inform and expand character goals and consequently the trajectory of narratives, and how stories may be structurally and thematically enhanced and unified by emotions. The popularity of the *Demon Slayer* franchise may largely be due to the dynamic animation of Ufotable and the worldbuilding and character designs by Gotouge Koyoharu, but the emplotment and enhancement of the universal emotion of attachment which has been uncovered in this paper may have also contributed to the overall appeal of the series.

Endnotes

1 Patrick Colm Hogan. *Affective Narratology: The Emotional Structure of Stories* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska, 2011), 1.
2 *Demon Slayer*, Netflix, directed by Sotozaki Haruo (Tokyo: Aniplex/Ufotable, 2019).
3 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 1.
4 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 11.
5 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 15.
6 David Herman. *Story Logic: Problems and Possibilities of Narrative* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2002), 2.
7 Herman, *Story Logic,* 5.
8 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 16.
9 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 15.
10 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 16.
11 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 15.
12 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 17.
13 As opposed to the dominant notion in narrative studies that time organizes story units which was proposed and developed by Genette.
14 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 2.
15 Robin Brenner. *Understanding Manga and Anime* (Westport, Connecticut: Libraries Unlimited, 2007), 41.
16 Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime,* 60.
17 Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime,* 28.
18 Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime,* 52.
19 Sotozaki, "The Boar Bares Its Fangs, Zenitsu Sleeps," *Demon Slayer* (Tokyo: Ufotable, 2019).
20 Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime,* 56.
21 Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime,* 28.
22 Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime,* 40.
23 Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime,* 28.
24 Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime,* 42.

25 Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime,* 45.
26 Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime,* 48.
27 Brenner, *Understanding Manga and Anime,* 44.
28 Mark Macwilliams. "Introduction" in *Japanese Visual Culture: Exploration in the World of Manga and Anime* (New York: M.E. Sharpe, 2008), 10.
29 Macwilliams, "Introduction," 10.
30 *Demon Slayer,* "Cruelty," Netflix, directed by Sotozaki Haruo (Tokyo: Aniplex/Ufotable, 2019).
31 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 80.
32 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 80.
33 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 30.
34 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 32.
35 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 2-3.
36 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 3.
37 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 34.
38 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 199-200.
39 Hogan, *Affective Narratology*, 78.
40 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 85.
41 Hogan, *Affective Narratology*, 2.
42 *Demon Slayer*, "Trainer Sakonji Urokodaki," "Sabito and Makomo," "Final Selection," "My Own Steel," Netflix, directed by Sotozaki Haruo (Tokyo: Aniplex/Ufotable, 2019).
43 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 44.
44 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 88.
45 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 93.
46 Hogan, *Affective Narratology*, 93.
47 *Demon Slayer*, "Swordsman Accompanying a Demon," "Muzan Kibutsuji," Netflix, directed by Sotozaki Haruo (Tokyo: Aniplex/Ufotable, 2019).
48 *Demon Slayer*, "The Smell of Enchanting Blood," Netflix, directed by Sotozaki Haruo (Tokyo: Aniplex/Ufotable, 2019).
49 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 72.
50 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 72.
51 Hogan, *Affective Narratology,* 106-107.
52 *Demon Slayer*, "Mount Natagumo," "Letting Someone Else Go First," "You Must Master a Single Thing," "A Forged Bond," "Hinokami," "Pretend Family," "Against Corps Rules," Netflix, directed by Sotozaki Haruo (Tokyo: Aniplex/Ufotable, 2019).
53 Known as the Mount Natagumo Arc, this arc consists of seven episodes. The producers of the anime divided the series into the following arcs upon the TV rebroadcast: the first story arc titled the Final Selection Arc, alternatively known as The Bonds of Sibling, consists of the first five episodes; the second story arc, the First Mission Arc, consists of two (episodes 6-7); the third story, the Asakusa Arc, consists of three (episodes 8-10); the fourth, Tsuzumi Mansion Arc, consists of four (episodes 11-14); the fifth, Natagumo Mountain Arc, consists of seven (episodes 15-21); and the last arc of the first season of the series, Rehabilitation Training Arc, consists of five episodes (episodes 22-26). See "Story Arcs," Fandom, https://kimetsu-no-yaiba.

fandom.com/wiki/Story_Arcs; and "Story Arcs – Kimetsu no Yaiba (Demon Slayer)," Otapedia, https://otakumode.com/otapedia/anime/kimetsu_no_yaiba_demon_slayer/arcs.

54 *Demon SLayer*, "Mount Natagumo," Netflix, directed by Sotozaki Haruo (Tokyo: Aniplex/Ufotable, 2019).

55 In several frames in episode 15, tufts of cotton appear to be floating around Inosuke when he is moved by the actions and words of Hisa and Tanjiro. This visual cue compliments the "fluffy" feeling as Inosuke describes it in episode 16, or the warmth evoked by kindness.

56 In the previous episode, Inosuke assaults Zenitsu who was protecting what he claims to be Tanjiro's most precious possession: the box Nezuko hides in. Tanjiro reveals that the reason why Zenitsu did not fight back: "Drawing swords against other members is a big taboo."

57 *Demon Slayer*, "Mount Natagumo," "Letting Someone Else Go First," Netflix, directed by Sotozaki Haruo (Tokyo: Aniplex/Ufotable, 2019).

58 Many similarities may be drawn between emotion and scent, the most prominent ones being that the two are unseen but felt and that they are varied but distinct.

59 Another interesting detail to note here is how Tanjiro's figure is overlaid with the ambivalent figure of the person who had cherished the demon in her previous life. In episode 5, when Tanjiro beheads the morphed demon, Tanjiro's figure in the demon's eyes is also overlaid with the figure of Urokodaki's younger self. These instances suggest that Tanjiro mirrors particular figures of attachment and evokes emotional memories.

60 *Demon Slayer*, "You Must Master a Single Thing," Netflix, directed by Sotozaki Haruo (Tokyo: Aniplex/Ufotable, 2019).

61 Zenitsu has always tried to avoid dangerous situations in an attempt to preserve himself, unlike Tanjiro and Inosuke who unquestionably confront situations head on in notably different ways—the headstrong Tanjiro refuses to give up no matter how difficult the situation (and will even literally use his head as a weapon if the situation calls for it); Inosuke on the other hand, dives headfirst into situations, confident that his physical strength and abilities will help him pull through.

62 *Demon Slayer*, "Sabito and Makomo," Netflix, directed by Sotozaki Haruo (Tokyo: Aniplex/Ufotable, 2019).

63 Recall Hisa's words: "Survive at all times," This advice led up to Zenitsu's recollection of his old master.

64 Tanjiro uses the blade to split the boulder into two and cut Sabito's mask in episode 3; in this arc, the blade is used to cut the mother's silk and to pierce through the father's skin.

65 *Demon Slayer*, "A Forged Bond," Netflix, directed by Sotozaki Haruo (Tokyo: Aniplex/Ufotable, 2019).

66 Hogan, *Affective Narratology*, 199.

67 In the earlier episodes, it was Tanjiro's mother and his siblings who appeared or who are remembered by Tanjiro and Nezuko.

68 Hogan, *Affective Narratology*, 200.