
I was wrong

(Tuesday, 10 May 2005) - Contributed by Adam (Vergil) - Last Updated (Wednesday, 13 July 2005)

Steve, enjoy this while you can.

This is a ramble for my college roommate of two years, Steve. The rest of you can read it and comment, but only Steve has the ability to make a giant “l told you so” and rub it in my face.

I watched Trigun on Adult Swim today, and they played the episode “Live Through.” This is the episode that I apparently didn’t pay enough attention to on my second or third watch of Trigun. After watching this episode, I will bow my head respectfully and admit defeat. You were right.

For those of you who don’t know what I’m talking about (and for Steve in case he hasn’t figured it out yet), for the tenure of our two years rooming together, Steve and I argued over the quality of the anime Trigun on several times. While I would admit it an alright anime, I had made it my point in the last few years to try and deflate all those who kept talking about it like it was the greatest thing to happen to anime ever.

The source of the argument is primarily its ending. Those of you who have not watched Trigun, quit reading this post. Seriously, stop now and wait until the next ramble.

The ending of Trigun leaves it ambiguous as to whether or not Vash the Stampede killed his brother Knives at the end of the show. I had argued that particular detail happened to be the most important point of the show. During my second watch through of the show (For the record, if I had it my way, I would have not seen the show through in its entirety three or more times), I came to realize the plot revolves around a disagreement between Vash and Knives, two super humans engineered to aid mankind, over a simple concept: Is it alright to kill in order to save others. Vash, siding with this mentor Rem, believed that no one has the right to take the life of another, while Knives thinks this is rubbish and the good should be saved, even if it means you have to kill the bad.

At the end of the series, Vash and Knives have a confrontation and Vash, the hero, turns out victorious. What is left for questioning is if in the process of winning, Vash kills his brother in order to save others, meaning that ultimately Knives won. If Vash did not kill him, then in the end Vash wins.

As it turns out though, it is not in the final episode of Trigun that contains its series spanning message. Its message is not if it is right to kill one in order to save others, despite how much you might think so. Its message, which should have come to me more quickly with all the Christian symbolism throughout the show is actually very similar to what Christianity teaches you.

- We, as humans, are all sinners by nature.
- It is therefore fruitless to expect to be perfect, for only god is perfect.
- The only chance we have at the kingdom of heaven is to attempt to live good lives and atone when we sin since, as humans, we will sin.
- This is okay.

In the third to last episode, Vash kills Legato in order to save the insurance girls, in theory allowing Knives to win. In "Live Through," when Meryl risks her own life to stop someone from shooting Vash makes him realize this fundamental Christian truth. Before he killed Legato, Vash had avoided sin. Now that he had sinned, he came to realize what Rem really wanted to teach him was that it is never too late to achieve forgiveness. Vash who had now sinned, could still be saved by acknowledging his sins and seeking forgiveness by trying to save Knives, which is what he does in the following episode. Like she had always said "I am just happy that my ticket to the future is blank."

So, as Steve tried to tell me all along, the show isn't about right or wrong, but about the journey Vash goes through to realize this truth.

Or at least that's what I think Steve was trying to tell me. If I'm wrong please correct me, by

e-mail if you have to.

I still don't like Trigun as much as Cowboy Bebop or Ghost in the Shell: Stand Alone Complex though.

P.S. Do not misunderstand this post. I understand Christian truths because I was educated Catholic. I by no means intend to resume that practice now.