

<https://youtu.be/EMXkMvLbnD8>

The otaku room is a nothing more than a microcosm of the otaku identity. A private stand-alone simulation created solely to detain one's indulgent hobbies. This is an air-tight and picturesque reality cobbled together with odds-and-ends to create an environment completely unique to the inhabitant. Each unique room is a visual overload. There is too much to focus on and countless more questionable items lying around to get lost thinking about. I find a certain voyeuristic pleasure in searching for pictures of other's rooms because they can tell more about a person than any forum self-introduction, diary entry or life-long friendship ever could. This is a place for the individual to thrive and create whatever they wish, away from the prying eyes of judgement just outside their window. The otaku room isn't simply representative of the all-consuming otaku enslaved to capitalism; it's representative of a lifestyle of beautiful self-indulgence.

Take a gander at any otaku room and you might feel overwhelmed at all there is to see. It is a misbegotten reality crafted with the trembling hands of someone with nothing to lose. Otaku are obsessed with idealism. We are characterized through our obsessions, with hyper focused areas of interest, oftentimes being very niche or on the fringe. So becoming an embodiment of said idealism, is to become an "ideological warrior," it's the only path in the end. This mythical figure lives in complete acknowledgment of their faults and many contradictions while simultaneously forgoing the ability to ever look back and be a *riajuu* again, all for the sake of chasing the idealism they believe in so much. In doing so, they accept the inherent insincerity of their practices for the sake of becoming a larger-than-life model for society's worst case scenario. Ergo, becoming an ideal themselves. Burn all bridges! You either die a hero or live long enough to see yourself become the villain; rejecting idealism for the sake of avoiding humility is the approach of a coward. Behind closed doors there is nothing left to feel ashamed of. Thus, otaku hide between four walls fortified by their methodically chaotic collages of *bishoujo game* posters, wall scrolls and bookcases. No more reminders of the outside world. Colors coalesce into a psychedelic otaku fever-dream. Clashing colors become uniform; kaleidoscopic mosaics form as the lights dim, interests intersect, and reality bends to your will. You are now surrounded only by beautiful things.

Bookcases are filled to the brim with the physical media that *riajuu* have since left behind. Hobbyists continue to buy into the formats of yesteryear because it's something tangible. Something to hold onto. Something to grasp tightly and say "this is what I love." Physical proof of the intangible love towards things that only exist within your mind. DVD's, Blu-rays, manga, light novels, magazines, video game cartridges, CD's... All of these can be obtained easily online for free, and many do acquire them that way, but some of us still cling to this practice with white knuckles. There is no actual benefit to filling the space of your six-tatami mat room with archaic simulacrum of our twisted love. Yet, otaku buy and buy and buy. It was never a question of "Should I collect" but rather "I need more." We are an all-consuming existence. The monetary amount and the products to show for it are a measure for our love. Pushed to the fringes of disillusionment, we became nothing more than an absurd byproduct from the late-capitalist society that nurtured our birth. In a fit of irony, otaku throw copious amounts of money at the corporate overlords to give reason to their obsessions. Nothing else to use that money on,

lonely rooms are filled to the brim with underage 2D girls in short skirts plastered onto these four walls.

A syrupy girly voice repeats "*Pururin purupururin pururin*" for the umpteenth time, filling the stuffy air of a room lit only by the dull blue glow of a computer monitor. Week-old ramen cups and bottles line the desk and dust has since overrun the entirety of this setup. This is the otaku room, a self-created world: a Reality Marble. The worthless objects we choose to fill it with are suddenly prescribed a ludicrous value of our own assignment. "Priceless." we breathe, as we slowly look up the skirt of a *joshi kousei*'s figure from our favorite *ero*ge. These 1/6th PVC girls we line our shelves with are not necessarily a suppressed desire to play with dolls as a grown man, rather, they are an attempt to tear 2D from its fictional bindings and display it within our trembling hands. Their loving heart might only weigh about 100 grams, but it's the weight of everything I've left behind. This is our world: create, erase, redraw.

~Another World, Another Chapter~

Madarame Harunobu rushed to meet me after our lecture. Together with the rest of the club we take the train to make a regular trip down to Akiba after lectures one lazy Friday afternoon. We intended to pick up our pre-ordered special edition copies of the new *ero*ge that was released today. We find ourselves in a daze, window shopping on the circa-2003 Akiba-strip lined with colorful characters only seen on our TV's while the distant sounds of fighting games come drifting in the summer breeze. We finish our stop at *Gamers* and bid our farewells to Dejiko before making our rounds through Tora-no-ana's selection of *ero-doujinshi*. Night is quickly approaching and our stomachs stubbornly remind us of our mortal limitations, so we pick up a quick bite at the cheapest shop off the beaten path. Laughing over salty foods and cold drinks, though we soon find ourselves discussing *Kujibiki Unbalance* once again. The ride home is veiled in silence, but we do not mind at all. Then we part ways, I turn to wave "later" but not "goodbye" to the gang, knowing each of us is about to go jerk off to our recent haul. A queer smirk tickles my cheek at this thought, and we are all filled with the same playful feelings. I retreat to my lair; my safe haven, my entire world. The lights flicker on, illuminating all these beautiful things, as I lay down my bag and posters, letting it all sink in; **"This is how I live, love it or leave it."**