Using Anime in Teaching and Understanding Major International Relations (IR) Theories: A Case Study of How a *Realist Hero* Rebuilt the Kingdom

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Abstract: The literature on Political Science education has already established the use of popular culture in teaching International Relations (IR) theories. However, the same recognition does not extend to anime despite its documented potential as an educational tool in the literature. This paper argues that anime contributes to IR and Political Science literature both as an object of study and as a tool in teaching and understanding major IR theories. Using the case of *How a Realist Hero Rebuilt the Kingdom* (*Realist Hero*), this paper demonstrates how major IR theories can also be illustrated through this series. Though earlier analyses of the series focused on realism, this paper builds on those analyses and, at the same time, utilizes other major theories, such as liberalism and constructivism. These three major IR theories were then used to analyze the international politics of the *Realist Hero* series by focusing on the significant events that transpired in the two-season anime series by J.C. Staff, Co., Ltd., as well as the continuation of its story in the light novel format, written by Dojyamaru.

Keywords: Political Science Education, International Relations, Popular Culture, Anime, How a *Realist Hero* Rebuilt the Kingdom

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Introduction

International Relations (IR) literature considers the Peace of Westphalia in 1648 as the start of the modern state system due to the recognition of the sovereignty of states in domestic affairs.[1] IR literature also considers major developments such as the Industrial Revolution, the First World War, the Second World War, and the Cold War as important historical epochs that helped shape IR as an academic discipline.[2] Although author Francis Fukuyama, an International Relations scholar, argued that the post-Cold War period marked the end of history due to the victory of liberalism,[3] ongoing global conflicts still necessitate reviewing such a conclusion.

However, IR theories extend beyond the analysis of real-world events. As the literature recognizes, popular culture references, including anime, can also be used as a tool for education.[4] This paper, therefore, attempts to use the case of *How a Realist Hero Rebuilt the Kingdom* (*Realist Hero*) to understand IR theories from an anime perspective. Apart from understanding these theories, this paper will also offer insights into how *Realist Hero* can be used to teach IR theories. While there are other recognized theories, such as post-structuralism, Marxism, and feminism,[5] the discussion will focus on the major IR theories: realism, liberalism, and constructivism.[6]

While some essays cover information about the series using IR theories like realism and liberalism,[7] as well as King Souma's practice of realpolitik in the earlier parts of *Realist Hero*,[8] *there are more* events in the *Realist Hero* storyline that can be used in understanding state behavior. Students and instructors can use *Realist Hero* to explain the behavior of the Kingdom of Friedonia (formerly Elfrieden; hereafter referred to as Friedonia) and other major powers in the series, primarily through realism. Apart from

realism, other major theories such as liberalism and constructivism, which were identified earlier, were also applied to explain Friedonia's behavior.

Using Popular Culture as a Tool in Teaching and Understanding International Relations Theories, and Why Anime Can Also Be Utilized

In political science, there is a growing literature on the use of popular culture references in their teaching pedagogies. For instance, media forms such as novels and films were used in conjunction with nonfiction texts in teaching an introduction to politics and government class.[9] Meanwhile, other scholars have utilized newer popular culture references, such as HBO's *House of the Dragon*, in teaching American Politics and Comparative Politics concepts.[10]

This shift is also reflected in IR studies, where literature recognizes that popular culture is now being used to explore IR concepts.[11] For example, films were used to discuss IR concepts and theories.[12] In addition to films, political science scholars have also utilized games,[13] spy novels,[14] and simulations using HBO's *Game of Thrones* series[15] in their class discussions.

Although scholars acknowledge the effectiveness of popular culture references in their respective class discussions, some of them have also recognized its pitfalls. For instance, Jacob Stump has encountered problems using popular culture references in his class, such as "skepticism among the students" and "the balance between entertainment and education."[16] Since using popular culture references may require independent learning from students, it is required to provide scaffolding and to reiterate the "learning goals for the course throughout the semester."[17] Regardless of individual views on the use of popular culture references in classes, they remain relevant, especially since the

American Political Science Association has acknowledged their importance through its "'Politics, Literature, and Film' Section."[18]

Unlike mainstream popular culture references, there is sparse literature on anime as a possible tool to study those theories. According to Jaqueline Berndt, scholars have examined anime from foreign policy and nationalism angles.[19] For example, Japan is known for implementing a program called "Cool Japan," which uses anime as an export product in East Asia and Southeast Asia.[20] In terms of its domestic significance, studies such as Takayoshi Yamamura's have explored the use of anime such as *Gate: Jieitai Kanochi nite, Kaku Tatakaeri*, to help change the image of the Japan Self-Defense Forces (JSDF).[21]

However, anime is not only relevant in these areas. As the literature states, anime is also used in education. For instance, Berndt discusses that in academia, anime can also be studied in areas such as Japanese studies and media studies.[22] Meanwhile, Brent Allison presents the possibility of using anime as a pedagogical tool in teaching by incorporating anime in educating aspiring teachers, with mixed results.[23] Therefore, this paper seeks to bridge this gap by using anime to study IR theories.

Realist Hero can be incorporated into class discussions to supplement primary IR textbooks for teaching major IR theories. This paper also recognizes the need to balance things out, as pointed out by Brandon Valeriano,[24] as well as Shawna Brandle,[25] in their experience of using popular culture references in teaching IR courses. In terms of class activities and assessment, apart from traditional assessments, this paper echoes the suggestions of other scholars such as a paper connecting IR with the series,[26] meme-making and reflection pieces,[27] and group discussions,[28] to name a few. However, these

are only suggestions, and instructors can utilize different pedagogies and activities to integrate anime series like *Realist Hero* in discussing major IR concepts and theories.

Realist Hero: The Story Leading to the Friedonia's Establishment

This paper will briefly outline the plot of Realist Hero to contextualize its relevance in teaching major IR theories. Initially a light novel series, *Realist Hero* was eventually animated by J.C. Staff.[29] The story follows Souma Kazuya, who is unexpectedly summoned to the Kingdom of Elfrieden (Elfrieden) and appointed king by the previous ruler, Albert.[30] This abrupt change sparks a rebellion among some nobles.[31] Meanwhile, the Principality of Amidonia (Amidonia), led by Gaius VIII, seeks to reclaim its lost territory by attacking Elfrieden during its internal conflict. However, Souma successfully suppresses the insurrection,[32] and defeats Amidonia's military force.[33]

In the anime, Julius Amidonia, the new prince of Amidonia, eventually involved the Gran Chaos Empire in the conflict against Elfrieden, as Amidonia was a party to the Declaration of Mankind.[34] While the city of Van was returned to Amidonia, of the entire region of Amidonia was annexed by Elfrieden due to two key factors: 1) the dissatisfaction of the citizens of Van under Amidonia's control,[35] and 2) the involvement of Princess Roroa Amidonia, who played a role in having Amidonia annexed by Elfrieden.[36]

Eventually, the merger of these two states created Friedonia.[37] To solidify the claim of the new monarch, Souma Kazuya eventually renamed himself as Souma A. Elfrieden, and married royals such as Liscia Elfrieden and Roroa Amidonia, to further solidify his claim to the throne.[38]

Friedonia's Relations with Other Major Powers in *Realist Hero*

Since IR theories recognize the importance of states as "the dominant actor of IR,"[39] this paper will discuss Friedonia's relations with the other major states. This will also help students and instructors understand power dynamics in *Realist Hero*. However, to limit the paper's discussion, it will only cover Friedonia's relations with the following major states: the Gran Chaos Empire, the Republic of Turgis, the Nine-Headed Dragon Archipelago, and the Great Tiger Kingdom of Haan.

Friedonia's Relations with the Gran Chaos Empire

In the light novel, it was established that the Gran Chaos Empire (Empire) was the largest power in the Continent of Landia before the rise of Friedonia, as it headed the Mankind Declaration.[40] Volume four clarifies its provisions:

> First, the acquisition of territory by force between the nations of mankind would be deemed inadmissible. Second, the right of all peoples to equality and self-determination would be respected. Third, countries that were distant from the Demon Lord's Domain would provide support to those nations which were adjacent to it and were acting as a defensive wall.[41]

The entry of the Empire in the anime, as previously mentioned, initially created tension in its relationship with Elfrieden, as the Empire acted as a mediator on behalf of Amidonia. Despite King Souma's apprehension towards the Mankind Declaration, he nevertheless entered a secret alliance between his kingdom and the Empire.[42]

In volume seven, the Empire joined the meeting between Friedonia and the Republic of Turgis.[43] The goal of the meeting was to establish a medical alliance between Friedonia, the Republic of Turgis, and the Empire. By the fifteenth volume, the Empire also participated in the Balm Summit with other major states in the continent.[44]

The relationship between the Kingdom and the Empire essentially flourished. However, the 16th volume of the light novel revealed that relations were dissolved when the Empire disbanded due to overstretching and the attack of the Great Tiger Kingdom of Haan on its territory.[45] The Empire eventually become the Kingdom of Euphoria (Euphoria), with Empress Maria being succeeded by her sister, Jeanne Euphoria. The new Queen eventually ended up marrying Friedonia's Prime Minister, Hakuya Kwonmin, and the former Empress ended up marrying King Souma, thereby becoming Friedonia's informal vassal state to their shared relations.[46] Euphoria also joined the maritime alliance afterwards.[47]

Friedonia's Relations with the Republic of Turgis

In volume six, King Souma expressed his intent to visit the Republic of Turgis (Turgis), by asking Hakuya Kwonmin to arrange the details for a possible state visit.[48] His state visit to Turgis happened in volume seven.[49] During this visit, King Souma met with the head of states of the Empire and Turgis, which ended with the establishment of a medical alliance between the three states. Turgis eventually joined the Maritime Alliance, together with Friedonia, the Nine-Headed Dragon Archipelago[50], and Euphoria in volume 16.[51]

Friedonia's Relations with the Nine-Headed Dragon Archipelago

In volume 12, Friedonia's initial impression of the Nine-Headed Dragon Archipelago (Dragon Archipelago) was that it threatens its own territorial waters.[52] As early as volume nine, it was established that ships from the Dragon Archipelago has been attacking Friedonia's fishing vessels.[53] In volume 13, the reason behind the intrusion is attributed to a sea monster called Ooyamizuchi.[54] This paved the way for the Friedonian and the Dragon Archipelago fleets to cooperate in slaying the monster. After, allowed Friedonia and the Dragon Archipelago fostered good bilateral relations, which including the betrothal of future monarchs and the exchange of naval bases. Their good bilateral relations also led to the establishment of a maritime alliance, which Turgis and Euphoria also joined.

Friedonia's Relations with the Great Tiger Kingdom of Haan

Volume nine introduced the nation of Malmkhitan, a member state of the Union of Eastern Nations that is ruled by Fuuga Haan.[55] In volume ten, Malmkhitan had unified after eliminating internal opposition.[56] By volume 13, Malmkhitan is the largest country in the Union of Eastern Nations and was able to reclaim land from the Demon Lord's Domain, a feat that the Empire was not able to do.[57] By volume 14, Malmkhitan was able to consolidate as a single state in the Union of East Nations by decimating smaller states, such as the Kingdom of Lastania and the Duchy of Chima, and was renamed the Great Tiger Kingdom of Haan (Tiger Kingdom).[58]

As the Tiger Kingdom expanded, the Lunarian Orthodox Papal State (Papal State) also recognized Fuuga Haan as Holy King, establishing an alliance between the two states. King Souma has previously rejected the title of Holy King and acted against the spread of

the influence of the Papal State in Friedonia.[59] By volume 15, its power is considered equal to the Empire's Mankind Declaration and the Maritime Alliance.[60] By volume 16, the Tiger Kingdom further expanded by incorporating the Mercenary State of Zem (Zem) and some vassal states of the Empire under its territory, which eventually led to the dissolution of the Empire and the creation of Euphoria.[61]

Despite its imperialistic goals, the Tiger Kingdom cooperated with the other states in the continent. It worked with Friedonia to treat diseases in the Spirit Kingdom of Garlan[62] and participated in the Balm Summit.[63] The two nations also collaborated militarily to free territories from the Demon Lord's Domain.[64] By volume 18, the tension between Friedonia, its allies, and the Tiger Kingdom escalated into open conflict, resembling a "hot war" between two opposing camps, unlike the Cold War dynamic between the U.S. and the Soviet Union.[65]

Using *Realist Hero* as an Example in Teaching and Understanding Major International Relations Theories

As discussed earlier, popular culture is useful for introducing IR concepts and theories, though the focus has predominantly been on Western references. This paper argues that anime can also be useful for teaching and understanding IR theories. To accomplish this goal, this paper adopts Zach Lang and Ronnie Olesker's use of content analysis approach, previously applied to the context of *House of the Dragon*.[66] However, unlike their focus on American Politics and Comparative Politics,[67] this paper will focus on major IR theories. Before applying *Realist Hero* to these theories, this paper will discuss their origins, tenets, and types, followed by an analysis of *Realist Hero* through the lens of different IR theories.

Realism and its Application in Realist Hero

Before realism became a formal IR theory, scholars associated thinkers such as Kautilya, Ibn Khaldun, Thucydides, Niccolò Machiavelli, and Thomas Hobbes with the realist idea.[68] These thinkers viewed politics as a struggle for power deeply rooted in human nature. While these thinkers were essential in understanding realism, its rise as an IR theory is credited to the conditions leading to World War II, which "diametrically opposed to the Wilsonian liberal idealist approach."[69] As Or Rosenboim points out, "'realist' approaches have influenced both the practice of international relations and the academic study of world politics."[70]

Realism is based on two main tenets: the existence of egotistical human nature reflected on state actions, and an anarchical international system.[71] IR scholars also recognize additional realist tenets beyond human nature and anarchy: the state as the central actor, the concept of power, and the idea of survival and self-help under an anarchic international system.[72] Realist IR have several strands: classical realism, neorealism or structural realism, and neoclassical realism.

Classical realism, whose main proponents are E.H. Carr and Hans Morgenthau, argues that under conditions of anarchy, state behavior is a reflection of human nature.[73] Structural realism, or neorealism, challenges classical realism by arguing that anarchy is structural and that states must be able to help themselves to ensure their security.[74] The proponent of structural realism, Kenneth Waltz, further argues that "competition and conflict among states stem directly from the twin facts of life under conditions of anarchy: States in an anarchic order must provide for their own security, and threats or seeming threats to their security abound."[75] Neorealism is divided into offensive and defensive realism, which differ on the relevance of zero-sum game politics and the necessity of

conflict in international politics.[76] Lastly, the literature also discusses neoclassical realism, which believes that "understanding the links between power and policy requires close examination of the contexts within which foreign policies are formulated and implemented."[77] Neoclassical realism combines classical and neorealist assumptions, emphasizing that leaders play a role in managing the affairs of the state and that even if a state is strong, a weak leader can jeopardize a state's security.[78]

Given the dominance of realism as an IR theory, it is only apt that this paper applies realist IR theory extensively in discussing the dynamics in *Realist Hero*. Even if there have already been analyses on this topic, as mentioned earlier, this paper also supports and builds on those assertions. While using Friedonia as the focal point, it will also discuss the view from the Tiger Kingdom in applying realist IR theory in *Realist Hero*.

A good example of realism in *Realist Hero* is the situation with Amidonia before its annexation by Elfrieden. It exemplifies King Souma's acknowledgment of an anarchical international system by occupying the capital of Amidonia, Van, and forcing them to pay reparations to weaken the other state for Elfrieden's survival.[79] Although Amidonia involved the Empire to counterbalance Friedonia and demand Van's return, the effort was short-lived, and Amidonia was eventually annexed by Elfrieden. Additionally, King Souma dealt with the threat of the Papal State, a minor country with widespread religious influence, by simply cutting the adherents of his state and appointing a bishop to steer away the adherents from the Papal State's influence.[80]

Apart from an anarchical international system, *Realist Hero* also shows how the balance of powers works. For instance, King Souma also showed his aptitude with it by creating his own bloc, i.e., the maritime alliance, which aims to address any threats at sea, whether natural or artificial.[81] The maritime alliance, established by Friedonia, was joined

by the Dragon Archipelago and Turgis in volume 13 and Euphoria by volume 16. The maritime bloc, as an alliance, was tested when the Tiger Kingdom attacked Friedonia in volume 18.

Another concept that realist IR scholars highlight is self-help. In *Realist Hero*, King Souma ensured Friedonia's survival through significant investments in research and technology. In terms of research, he supported educational institutions[82] and funded research projects suited for the battlefield.[83] In terms of technology, he gave Genia Maxwell more funding after she invented the Susumu V propulsion device.[84] King Souma also commissioned the Hiryuu, an aircraft carrier, which also includes the dratroopers (*Realist Hero*'s version of paratroopers), which are wyverns equipped with the Susumu V propulsion device.[85]

Realism can also be used to explain the actions of the Tiger Kingdom. Starting as a small state in volume nine, it expanded its territory by uniting the Union of Eastern Nations under its control by volume 14. To expand its territory further, strategist Hashim Chima advised Fuuga Haan to accept an alliance with the Papal State.[86] Hashim Chima also orchestrated the Tiger Kingdom's influence over the Spirit Kingdom of Garlan by volume 15.[87] By volume 16, the Tiger Kingdom incorporated Zem and parts of the former Empire's territory. According to the series, Tiger Kingdom expanded to gather more human resources to sustain its day-to-day operations.[88] In volume 18, the Tiger Kingdom went to war against Friedonia. Fuuga Haan claimed the attack was vital for the kingdom's survival, stating, "It sounds like Souma and his gang are plotting something. If they pull off whatever it is, we'll stand no chance...."[89] Whether this analysis was correct or not, the Tiger Kingdom's rationale is also rooted in realism, as it seeks to survive and continue

existing as a major state under the condition of self-help in an anarchical international system.

While realism plays a significant role in *Realist Hero*, it is not enough to fully appreciate the diverse IR theories depicted in the series. As demonstrated, King Souma is also capable of forging alliances and cooperating for the welfare of the state, which is an example of liberal IR theory. In addition, *Realist Hero* series emphasizes the creation of different ideas and values, reflecting constructivism. These examples will be explored in more detail in subsequent sections.

Liberalism and its Application in Realist Hero

Before liberalism emerged as a formal IR theory, several philosophers laid its foundation. For instance, the literature recognizes St. Thomas Aquinas and his idea of "just war" as one of the thinkers that influenced liberalism's development.[90] Enlightenment thinkers such as Immanuel Kant, Jeremy Bentham, and J.S. Mill are also credited as the founding fathers of liberal IR.[91] They advanced the idea of transcending state boundaries. However, it was the League of Nations and Woodrow Wilson that focused attention on international building.[92] Although largely sidelined after World War II, liberalism became the dominant IR theory following the Cold War due to the rise of globalization and democratization.[93]

Unlike realism's emphasis on competition, liberal IR theory emphasizes the "notion of harmony or balance amongst competing interests. Individual, groups, and for that matter, states may pursue self-interest but a natural equilibrium will tend to assert itself."[94] Andrew Moravcsik argues that liberal IR theory focuses on preferences as defined by domestic and international social contexts, rather than capabilities and

institutions.[95] He also notes that state behavior is subsumed to societal interests and, simultaneously, is capable of interdependence in the international system. Liberalism also contributed to the "Democratic Peace Thesis," which argues "that wars do not occur between constitutionally liberal democratic states."[96] This idea was tested by Michael R. Tomz and Jessica L. P. Weeks in their study *Public Opinion and the Democratic Peace*. They found that a war between democracies is less likely to happen due to the importance given to public opinion by democratic regimes, whose views are shaped by morality.[97]

Like realism, liberalism has several strands. One is neoliberal institutionalism, which is described as "a school of thought within liberalism that emphasizes the scope of cooperative behaviour within the international system while not denying its anarchic character."[98] Jervis argues that "establishing an institution can increase cooperation."[99] Another strand of liberal IR theory is complex interdependence, developed by Robert Keohane and Joseph Nye, which distinguishes between "high politics," such as traditional security, and "low politics," such as non-traditional security issues.[100]

While this paper supports the realist assertions on *Realist Hero*, given the title of the series, this paper also argues that liberalism can also explain Friedonia's behavior. For example, King Souma formed partnerships and alliances in the series. To showcase how liberalism can be used to analyze *Realist Hero*, this section will explore the different bilateral and multilateral relations established by Friedonia. Lastly, this section will also discuss how King Souma's application of liberalism exemplifies what liberal IR scholars argue regarding the formation of the idea of "democratic peace."

In terms of cooperation, the series demonstrates Friedonia's ability to establish strong bilateral relations with the Empire, Turgis, and the Dragon Archipelago. It also

managed its relations with the Tiger Kingdom until the latter decided to attack in volume 18.

In addition to bilateral relations, King Souma led Friedonia in forming a non-military alliance and organizing a continent-wide summit. A medical alliance, composed of countries such as Friedonia, Turgis, and the Empire, was formed to address medical threats. In volume 15, a Balm Summit was convened, including Friedonia's traditional allies and the Tiger Kingdom.

Beyond bilateral relations and alliances, *Realist Hero* exemplifies the liberals' theory regarding "democratic peace." The medical alliance led to the growth of the medical field. In particular, King Souma suggested that it should not be a competition between countries but rather a shared aspiration to protect everyone, as diseases do not discriminate in terms of citizenship.[101] The maritime alliance also added the formal recognition of the laws of the sea as a value that alliance members should share.[102] In this case, King Souma achieved relative peace, with conflict arising only between Friedonia and the Tiger Kingdom, another superpower in the series.

Constructivism and its Application in Realist Hero

As an IR theory, constructivism achieved "a 'mainstream' status comparable to the realist and liberal traditions."[103] It challenges both realist and liberal IR theories by emphasizing the importance of "ideas and norms" in international politics.[104] Alexander Wendt, a pioneer of constructivism, aimed to advance the study of international politics "by developing a constructive argument, drawn from structurationist and symbolic interactionist sociology, on behalf of the liberal claim that international institutions can transform state identities and interests."[105]

Wendt explains that "a fundamental principle of constructivist social theory is that people act towards objects, including other actors, on the basis of the meanings that the objects have for them."[106] Ted Hopf identifies four key themes in constructivism: 1) the relevance of both actors and structures in global politics, 2) anarchy as a social construct, 3) the importance of identity in global politics, and 4) the recognition of discourse as power.[107] Essentially, constructivism argues that international processes are outcomes of interactions.[108]

Hopf identifies two strands of constructivism: conventional and critical.[109] While both share similar goals, they differ in terms of approach, as well as in analyzing how identities are formed in the international system. However, the literature suggests that these differences have compromised the position of constructivism as a major IR theory, thereby necessitating its recalibration.[110]

Although *Realist Hero* clearly emphasizes one IR theory, as seen in its title, this paper contends that constructivism can also be applied in explaining Friedonia's behavior. Friedonia and its monarch, King Souma, demonstrate adaptability in terms of state-to-state relations. Additionally, Friedonia and King Souma have undergone identity shifts. Lastly, the changes brought upon by King Souma's leadership have ramifications for the discourse in *Realist Hero*.

Regarding Friedonia's relations with other countries, this paper notes a positive shift in how the series portrays its interactions with the Empire, Turgis, and the Dragon Archipelago. Despite King Souma's apprehension about the Declaration of Mankind agreement, Friedonia and the Empire overcame King Souma's apprehensions by fostering good bilateral relations. Friedonia's improved relations with Turgis and the Dragon Archipelago enabled them to establish the maritime alliance.

The paper also notes the souring of Friedonia's relations with another major power, the Tiger Kingdom. While there were periods when both countries were able to cooperate, such as the Balm Summit in volume 15 and the military operation to liberate territories in the Demon Lord's domain in volume 17, hostilities arose when the Tiger Kingdom launched a military campaign against Friedonia in volume 18.

In addition to shifts in bilateral relations, the paper also highlights the need for Friedonia and King Souma to forge new identities. As depicted in the light novel, Friedonia was born out of the union of Elfrieden and Amidonia. This new identity was crucial for uniting the people, given the conflictual history between the two regions. At the same time, to further solidify his rule, Souma Kazuya adopted the name Souma A. Elfrieden in volume ten.

However, the most significant constructivist development in the anime is the focus on discursive change, particularly in non-military issues. For example, throughout the series, King Souma recognized the need to improve social service delivery, such as healthcare[111] and education.[112] Moreover, given his adverse reaction to the institution of slavery, King Souma made significant changes that rendered slavery legal in name only, while granting more rights to slaves in Friedonia.[113]

Conclusion

IR theories can be studied not only through academic texts but also by using popular culture. While Western popular culture has been well-documented in academia, the same cannot be said for anime. Therefore, this paper explored the use of anime as a tool for studying major IR theories.

As an isekai anime, *Realist Hero* provides a valuable example of how major IR theories can be applied to international politics. This paper applied the three major IR theories—realism, liberalism and constructivism—with an emphasis on realism, to explain Friedonia's relations with other major powers in the series. By using these major IR theories to explain *Realist Hero*'s dynamics, this paper presents an opportunity for instructors to integrate anime into their discussions of anime theories, and students a new way to learn these concepts.

Despite its strengths, there are also limitations that this paper can cite. Other IR theories can also be used to discuss the politics of *Realist Hero*. In addition to IR theories, *Realist Hero* can also be used to understand political philosophy as the series references the works of Niccolo Machiavelli and other realist thinkers. While this paper demonstrated the potential of using anime to teach major IR theories, the ideas shared are suggestions for how *Realist Hero* can be used in classroom discussions. Further research is needed to assess the efficacy of using anime references in discussing IR theories.

Notes

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