

ORIGINAL IDEA: LOAB, the AI Art Woman

JD's Junji Ito Episode

I will be frank with you. For this episode, my intent was to cover LOAB, the AI Art Woman introduced to the world by twitter user [SUPERCOMPOSITE](#). It's the perfect time, as of writing this episode, for this.

There's talk about DALL-E, AI ART, and how terrible or good it can be for artists. Artist work gets stolen, as DALL-E art prompts use them to "create" images. Debates on the loss of meaning in art created by computers. Tech bros having a hand in this, not artistically minded and just making big breasted Frozen characters.

It's the perfect time to talk about the horrors of AI creating a horror creature but... and Ben is hearing this now too for the first time, I chickened out.

Not because I was too challenged with the questions I was asking: what makes art meaningful? Is it because a person made it? I don't think so. Damien Hirst exists (maker of The Physical Impossibility of Death in the Mind of Someone Living) and I personally think that just because he's making art it doesn't mean anything. That's just someone who makes art, with a lean towards capitalism and being a jackass. JD, you don't like him? Nope! Ever since I tried to write a paper on him. God, even the bastion of insanity, TikTok hates him. Is it because I was unready to challenge AI and our fears about being overtaken by Cortana, Siri, or Alexa. We know that AI can be useful and harmful. These two things can exist. It wasn't some sort of research challenge, like I said, the current time I wrote this whole thing AI was popping. LOAB is new! It's still freshly weird and fucking insance.

Nope.

It's because I was scared. Holy shit I hated these photos. I debated just doing this without looking at the images, I have the sensitivity warning on twitter so I don't see gory images (or even random ass things that twitter decides is bad to look at). But god that's like if I decided to do an art history thing and then look at one part of a painting but still move forward with it. Yes, I know I remember the Ben Drowned ep – but I covered what was necessary to the meme and the scariness. I can't do that with this.

So right now, I'm gonna have Ben look at the [thread](#) and see whether it's just as frightening to him as it is to me.

[PAUSE]

ORIGINAL IDEA: LOAB, the AI Art Woman

Now that that's out of the way, let's get to the real thing I'm covering this episode: straight from the love of my life, we have – the Enigma of Amigara Fault Meme.

You knew I would get into this, someday. You might also be saying to yourself - LOAB scared you but Junji Ito doesn't? Oh he *does* but it's tolerable with the stories. I have a way to read the books and any PDFs I have. If you want that secret, hit me up at iscreamyoumeme@gmail.com.

What is the meme?

If you're not familiar, the meme shows a semi-nude man up on a mountain side pointing at a hole in the mountain that is seemingly shaped just like him. The man is screaming "th-this is my hole! It was made for me!". This meme comes from Junji Ito's *The Enigma of Amigara Fault* (2002), which is a story about human shaped holes showing up on the side of a mountain following an earthquake. People become drawn to their seemingly corresponding holes and flock to the mountain¹.

I encourage everyone to go and read it, I'm sure it's available online somewhere if you can't source the actual book – there's even folks reading it outloud on YouTube and if you pay me... I'd read it to you readily. Let's make that a Patreon tier when the time comes, yeah?

Anyway – the meme was popularised on 4chan's /x/ board due to the strangeness of the translations. Particularly the "drr... drr... drr..." part of the whole bit. Although it was released in 2002, it really popped off in 2006².

Who is Junji Ito?

To really get into the nitty gritty of this meme, we have to start off with my man Junji Ito.

Junji Ito, born in 1963, is a horror artist, in the Manga medium. Dental Technician, Author, Artist, there's nothing that my man can't do but he just couldn't find a balance doing all of this – my man eventually stuck to being an artist.

You might know him for *TOMIE* (femme extremely fatal), *UZUMAKI* (spiraling weird not spiraling haha), *GYO* (something smells fishy in here), and for today's *THE ENIGMA OF*

¹ [The Enigma of Amigara Fault | Junji Ito Wiki](#)

² [The Enigma of Amigara Fault / This Is My Hole: Trending Images Gallery \(List View\) | Know Your Meme](#)

ORIGINAL IDEA: LOAB, the AI Art Woman

AMIGARA FAULT which is in the *GYO: UGOMEKI BUKUMI* (FISH: GHASTLY SQUIRMING) and *VENUS IN THE BLIND SPOT* collections.

In my opinion as someone who draws and does art sometimes, Junji Ito has a really wonderful hold on human anatomy, eeriness, and helplessness. I'll go over this later but this is the reason, I think for the most part, why he's such an effective horror writer and artist.

One neat thing I found out a couple of months ago when I was watching a video on Silent Hill Monsters is that Guillermo del Toro mentioned that Junji Ito was going to be a part of the Silent Hills video game series with him and Hideo Kojima but that kind of went by the wayside because of Konami. If you're familiar with the Silent Hill Universe, you might think it's a great match in terms of styling, writing, and GDT and HK with JI is a fucking dream of a team. It's sort of my Avengers Assemble.

Junji Ito is, for a lot of people, kind of that guy where you look at him and wonder – how the hell does this shit come out of this guy? He just looks like an uncle to me, not because I'm Asian but it just... that's just a guy. How does he hold so many people's nightmares in the palm of his hands? Well... let's chat about it.

What makes Junji Ito scary (to me, to people, to Ben)?

Ben, to get this whole section started – Is Junji Ito scary to you and why? If not, why not?

[PAUSE FOR DISCUSSION]

Well for me, Junji Ito is very scary. I have a couple of books and I've read quite a few of his stories and watched a couple hundred takes on each one of his stories over the past couple of years. Everyone's got something to say about him and his fucked up spiral man and the nasty fish – but the throughline in all of them is that he is fucking amazing at his craft and how he uses it to scare you even in the most confusing of ways.

Junji Ito has a control of this... thing that frightens us and has this intimate knowledge of it, so of course he knows how to manipulate it to the best of his abilities (which is like a lot).

If we look at this meme out of context, it's hilarious – yes. This dude's up on the side of a mountain and pointing at a hole that kind of looks like it could be for him but like is it really? It just kind of looks like a general humanoid shape. How does this, in the hands

ORIGINAL IDEA: LOAB, the AI Art Woman

of Junji Ito become scary? Well let's zoom out for a second and look at the general horror theatrics of Junji Ito.

I recently watched a little video called *Julia Teaches You How To Draw HORROR CREATURES AND ART* from Drawfee on YouTube, held by illustrator Julia Lepetit, and it was a great study on what makes something effectively scary. I'm gonna go over her points because I agree with a lot of it when it comes to what makes creatures and horrors effective and connect them with Junji Ito's work.

Let's start with the following "it's only a man... he's just a guy in the world" – this is the idea that the horrors do not have to be some kind of monstrous four armed creature like the Staff from SCP-3008 or Momo it could be just some guy.

For example, *Uzumaki* has this terrifying hypnotic aspect to it that is beyond comprehension right? People in this town get fucking wild with spirals and it drives them to this sort of painful existing. Somehow though, we get an "it's only a man... he's just a guy" horror in it too.

The man who attempts to eat Kirie's brother after he turns into a snail. He becomes sort of obsessed, because of his hunger, for the moment Kirie and Shuichi aren't so scared of the spiral – it's out of their control – what they fear now is this man driven to insanity by way of hunger, attempting to eat Kirie's brother.

Junji Ito somehow in the midst of quite a few of his horrors just manages to make another point of scare in a normal ass person. An existential crisis with a bit of that man on the street that just fucking gives you the icks.

Next we have "uncanny valley" which I've touched on in a bunch of my stuff - particularly the Clown Phenomenon episode that you should listen to again cos I'm just going to lightly touch on it here.

As a refresher, uncanny valley is... to borrow exactly from my Episode 3's Clown Script:

"[...] is the idea that the closer something looks to a human, the more we are okay/at ease with it. However, there is a point (or a valley) where it becomes just a little bit off - a little too something else. We're not comforted by it anymore and it no longer passes our 'if yes, then human' program in our head; we're just plain old creeped out by it"

Consider how well Junji Ito knows his human anatomy and how it shows in *Uzumaki* – how he can identify aspects of the human body and use them in Mrs. Saito's descent

ORIGINAL IDEA: LOAB, the AI Art Woman

into insanity after her husband's passing. There is literally a panel on page 55 of Uzumaki that has this human body diagram in it, that shows the inside of the body and it gets down to the mechanics of an ear and, if you've read, you know exactly what makes this bit scary.

He knows anatomy so well that he can weaponize it against us by shifting something and making it just a bit stranger and a lot more scarier. He's fantastic at uncanny valley and it can be seen in many of his works.

Last in the Lepetit video is the "Looming Weirdo" – which for Julia is a creature that is unseen but you know it's there and somewhere and most of all – you know what it's capable of sometimes. It's this thing that's sort of a presence that you know exists but you do not see it and when you do... bam.

The Neighbour's Window has a really fantastic looming weirdo. This eerie neighbour in the shadows is threatening, terrifying, and horrible. I was eating while I was re-reading this and I had to stop eating my perfect beautiful lumpia because the texture started getting freaky in my mouth because of the terror I was getting from the eventual moment that the woman steps into the main character's room.

Its threatening sort of mysterious nature is fucking wild and and when you do see it, the longer you stare the more insane it becomes. Say goodbye to your lumpia and bang bang sauce.

Now that we know why Junji Ito is scary for me and a lot of folks, let's go into why *this* meme is scary.

Why is this scary/funny?

"This is my hole!" is funny out of context and even potentially in context. Me saying that, will never be taken out of context and used against me at a later date, not at all!

You might think - ah, compulsion makes this terrifying! This immediate attraction and then drive to go to the hole that is yours and just... go in it. Maybe it's the enigmatic nature of it – the title says it right there right? So it must be that. Think of that idiom that folks always use "curiosity killed the cat..."

People became drawn to the side of the mountain because of these holes that they believed to be theirs. This, for some of the characters, might not have killed them but it did end badly for them – if you remember the end of the story. Does it scare us that something could be so enigmatic and confusing that it could draw us to it easily and potentially lead us to our doom?

ORIGINAL IDEA: LOAB, the AI Art Woman

Think about the Death Drive or the “call of the void” and maybe some other self-destructive behaviour³. Sigmund Freud, my one sided enemy is often linked with this idea – apparently better linked to Kierkegaard even by the anti-homie – that we have this strange... urge to jump? Or just do something dangerous. Not actually a drive to do something dangerous but it’s like Kierkegaard’s thing “He whose eye happens to look down the yawning abyss becomes dizzy. But what is the reason for this? It is just as much in his own eye as in the abyss, for suppose he had not looked down⁴,” – which from the full text people have been taking⁵ as something related to High Place Phenomenon which is “a sudden urge to jump when in a high place”⁶. Could we then translate this into the people in this space, not just us and why we would fear this? Like... what do you think? If you saw a space like this and it fit you, would you have the urge to just.. Slide right in?

Let’s touch on the fear of the whole story itself – is it touching on the need to literally... fit in? Is it touching on the fear that we have that we might not fit it and the difficulty of doing so and coming out the end without any damage and trauma?

Now, I know you might be thinking that I’m going to touch on collectivist cultures, and specifically Japan, in this but I am definitely not going to do that because I don’t want to speak on a culture like that - so I’m going to speak on something I am familiar with instead - so forgive me if I’m looking over that because I don’t want to misspeak.

Instead, I would urge you to seek writers, authors, people who do live in those societies and get their take on this because I assure you there’s quite a lot!

I am instead going to speak from the place of an immigrant but also as an immigrant without an accent and with a fairly... okay background. I went to a private Montessori in the Philippines and we spoke English for most of the day. My grandparents did fairly well. When I moved to the U.S to follow my parents, I didn’t struggle with being called a FOB and I wasn’t bullied for anything like that. I watched and terrible stood by silently as fellow immigrant Filipinos would get mocked for their accents (Choosday, Istop, The “Fs” and “Bs” of it all). I thought, here I am dodging bullets all because I could speak English and, even at some parts, was fairly light skinned compared to other people.

However, in High School, despite the lack of bullying and all that hurtful jazz, I did go through a struggle with my gender identity and sexual orientation. I was internally struggling with the idea that I could be Lesbian or Bisexual. I was basically seeing this shape on the side of the mountain, these expectations that society at large might have for me as a (at that time) late teen girl and what would happen when I become an adult woman when I don’t exactly want to be one. I was considering whether I needed to shove myself into the side of that mountain and let

³ [The Enigma of Amigara Fault | Junji Ito Wiki](#)

⁴ [A Short Note on Kierkegaard and Dizziness](#)

⁵ [Please tell me about the death instinct : r/psychoanalysis](#)

⁶ [High place phenomenon: prevalence and clinical correlates in two German samples.](#)

ORIGINAL IDEA: LOAB, the AI Art Woman

myself be mangled by my own thoughts, other people's expectations, and everything else. Is that the general fear that Amigara is touching on?

You might go - hell yeah, JD – that's exactly what this bad boy is touching on! Well, dope! We just nodded at each other and agreed.

Now, back to the meme – is it scary? Out of context I do not agree but Ben, let's go through the panel together:

[PAUSE]

So yeah, whatever we felt there we felt it. To me, it's one of the more tolerable scaries in Junji Ito's collection. GYO literally has GYO itself and that one story where the dad is fucking stuck under a fucking PILLAR and is unable and refuses to move.

One last thing before I conclude this, is for the people who got into Junji Ito after this meme or ended up finding the panel in context and what they might have experienced: FRIDGE HORROR.

Ben, what do you think Fridge Horror is or do you know what it is?

[PAUSE]

To define it, Fridge horror is "when something becomes terrifying after the fact"⁷. Here's an active IRL example: For 2 years when I worked in the office (in SF) I would walk in the early morning when it was still dark – with my earphones on and blasting music. I would take alleyways and random street - knowing that I will always end up at the office. But now that I think about it – I was completely unaware of my surroundings and not paying attention. I was alone for the most part and got through it completely fine. Which is not what folks recommend you do in a city.

Shout out to Kendota_Tanassian on r/outoftheloop for this wonderful term⁸.

Think about the panel and consider the sort of terror or ick that a person may have felt once they realised that this man that's climbing into this thing that's going to swallow him up and he will be alive-ish through this whole thing and going through it in agony. Then later, the realisation that people in the current space of this story found holes that were just exactly for them but in the story we know that the holes have been around for such a long time that it took an earthquake to reveal it?

⁷ [Fridge Horror - TV Tropes](#)

⁸ [r/OutOfTheLoop: "what is the deal with the "this is my hole" comic? why is it considered to be so disturbing?"](#)

ORIGINAL IDEA: LOAB, the AI Art Woman

It's the horror after the fact when you're in your shower and washing your hair and thinking – damn. What the fuck?

This is *your* hole but... how?