



The Representation of the Erasure of Ohara's History: A Social Critique of World Government Power in the Anime *One Piece*

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the representation of the erasure of Ohara's history as a form of social critique of the World Government's exercise of power in the anime *One Piece*. This study employs a qualitative descriptive method, drawing on the sociology of literature approach and a mimetic perspective. The primary data source in the anime *One Piece*, particularly episodes 275 - 278, which depict the tragedy of Ohara. The data consist of dialogues, narration, character actions, and scenes related to historical research, the destruction of knowledge sources, and the control of information. Data were collected through observation and note-taking techniques and analyzed through the stages of identification, classification, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that the tragedy of Ohara represents several forms of social critique concerning the use of power to control knowledge and history, including the suppression of knowledge, the destruction of sources of knowledge, the erasure of history, the control of information, and the use of suppressive force through the Buster Call. The scholars of Ohara are portrayed as an intellectual group seeking to uncover suppressed history, whereas the World Government is portrayed as an institution that exercises its power to restrict research and control the information available to the public. From a mimetic perspective, these events can be understood as a representation of social issues concerning the relationship between knowledge and power. Meanwhile, the sociology of literature perspective reveals an unequal power relationship between the intellectual group and the institution that holds political authority. Thus, the tragedy of Ohara in *One Piece* functions not merely as part of the narrative conflict but also as a representation of social criticism directed at the abuse of power, the control of knowledge, and the erasure of historical information.

Keywords: erasure, Ohara's historical, social critique, anime One Piece

INTRODUCTION

Literary works serve not only as a form of entertainment but also as a means to represent various issues within society. Drawing on Erich Auerbach's theory of mimesis, literature can reflect the reality of human life and social conditions through the depiction of events within the work. The Ohara tragedy in *One Piece* can be understood as a representation of social issues concerning the relationship between knowledge, information, and power. The conflict between the scholars of Ohara and the World Government illustrates a scenario where those in power attempt to restrict historical

knowledge, destroy sources of information, and control what the public knows. Over time, literature has evolved beyond traditional forms—such as novels, short stories, and poetry—to encompass popular media like film and anime. As a form of visual narrative, anime possesses the capacity to convey social ideas through its characters, dialogue, plot, conflicts, and depicted events. Consequently, anime can be examined as a subject of literary study, given its representation of social life and its connections to real-world societal realities. One anime that frequently addresses

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social and political issues is *One Piece* by Eiichiro Oda. Beyond its themes of adventure, friendship, and struggle, *One Piece* portrays various issues regarding injustice, discrimination, the exercise of power, freedom, and the relationship between the government and the populace. A key instance illustrating these themes is the tragedy of Ohara Island, depicted during the Enies Lobby Arc. Ohara Island is portrayed as a hub of scholarship and historical research, home to archaeologists and scientists striving to uncover world history that the World Government had long concealed. The presence of the Tree of Knowledge—a repository of learning—underscores the vital role of knowledge in the lives of Ohara's inhabitants. Conflict arises when the World Government deems the Ohara scholars' research into the "Void Century" a threat. The research had the potential to reveal various facts about world history and the existence of ancient kingdoms that had been deliberately concealed. The World Government subsequently banned research into this history and took repressive action via a "Buster Call," resulting in the destruction of Ohara Island and the deaths of the majority of its inhabitants. This event demonstrated not only the destruction of a territory but also an attempt to eradicate a source of knowledge and sever access to historical information.

The Ohara tragedy is a compelling subject of study because the issues depicted in this fictional world parallel various real-world social problems. Controlling information and history serves as a means for those in power to maintain their legitimacy and dominance. In this context, the erasure of history is not merely the removal of past records but also a method of controlling public knowledge and understanding of specific events. This is evident in the story, where the World Government not only destroyed Ohara but also constructed a narrative portraying the island's scholars as a danger to the world. Such actions demonstrate practices of silencing, information manipulation, and the shaping of public opinion

to safeguard the interests of the ruling power. From the perspective of the sociology of literature, literary works are understood as integral to social life due to their connection with societal reality. A mimetic approach further allows literature to be viewed as a representation or reflection of real-life experiences. Consequently, the events experienced by the people of Ohara can be analyzed not only as a conflict within the *One Piece* narrative but also as a representation of social issues concerning the interplay of power, knowledge, freedom of thought, and truth. In this instance, the Ohara scholars are portrayed as intellectuals striving to uncover and uphold historical truth, despite facing a vastly more powerful political entity. Previous studies have examined *One Piece* through the lens of social issues. Research by Fatma Helmalia Saimima and Yuniar Sakinah Waliulu explored the representation of racial discrimination and social stratification in the *One Piece* Sabaody Arc, employing approaches based on representation and semiotics; their findings indicate that *One Piece* can serve as a medium for depicting social inequality. Additionally, research by Abdul Azis and Aulia Rahmaddin analyzed characters in the *One Piece* Wano Arc using a sociology of literature approach, focusing on social relationships and values related to character education. Another study by Ahmad Rifqi examines the representation of racism in the anime series *One Piece* using a semiotic approach. Collectively, these studies demonstrate that *One Piece* has been widely analyzed as a work that reflects various social issues within society. However, these prior studies differ in focus from the present research. While earlier works emphasized discrimination, racism, social relations, and character education values, this study specifically concentrates on the Ohara Island tragedy and the practice of historical erasure as a form of social critique directed at the authority of the World Government. Thus, this research aims to fill a gap in the literature regarding how historical erasure, the restriction of knowledge, the



silencing of intellectuals, and the manipulation of information are represented through the Ohara tragedy in *One Piece*. This focus constitutes the study's novel contribution, as it links the issue of historical erasure to social criticism concerning the dominance of political power within a work of popular culture.

This study employs the approaches of mimesis and the sociology of literature to examine the relationship between events in the fictional world and social reality, particularly regarding power, knowledge, freedom of thought, and the manipulation of information. Through this research, the aim is to understand how anime—as a form of popular literature—can represent social issues and serve as a medium for critiquing the abuse of power and the control of history.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Mimesis views literary works as a form of representation of life's reality. In *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*, Erich Auerbach (2003) positions the representation of reality as a crucial element of literary study. Analyses of Auerbach's thought also indicate that mimesis addresses the interplay between text, history, and the reality represented within literary works (Lu, C., 2020). In this study, mimesis theory is applied to examine how social issues are represented through the tragedy of Ohara Island in the anime *One Piece*, specifically focusing on the relationships between power, knowledge, and information control.

The sociology of literature is an approach that examines the relationship between literary works and social life. According to Wiyatmi (2013), literature is linked to social life because authors create works based on their experiences, their environment, and the societal realities surrounding them. Consequently, literature can serve as a medium to represent various social phenomena, such as interpersonal relationships, social values, conflicts, and societal living conditions. In this study, the sociology of literature approach is used to analyze the representation of social life depicted

through the characters of Ohara and their interactions with other characters in the work under study.

Social criticism in literature constitutes a way of expressing views or responses regarding various issues occurring in society. In literary works, social criticism can be conveyed through characters, dialogue, conflict, or events that illustrate social inequalities and problems. Soekanto (2017) explains that power relates to the ability of an individual or group to influence others, causing them to comply with a desired will or course of action. This concept of power can be used to examine relationships of domination, inequality, and the abuse of power within social life. In this study, Soekanto's (2017) theory of power is employed to analyze social critiques concerning power relations—specifically, how power is used to influence, control, or dominate others as represented in literary works.

These three concepts are employed in a complementary manner. Mimesis is used to examine the representation of social reality within the **One Piece** anime; the sociology of literature is utilized to understand the relationship between the work and social issues; and social criticism is applied to identify the forms of critique emerging from the tragedy of Ohara Island. Within this framework, the Ohara Island tragedy can be analyzed as a representation of social issues concerning the interplay of power, knowledge, and society.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative descriptive method. This method is used to describe and analyze data—comprising dialogue, scenes, character actions, and events—found in the *One Piece* anime, specifically episodes 275–278, which recount the history of Ohara Island. A qualitative approach was selected because the research data consists of words, dialogue, actions, and visuals, which are interpreted within the social context present in the narrative work. Data collection was carried out using the "listen and note" technique;

the researcher repeatedly viewed episodes 275–278 to comprehend the plot, dialogue, scenes, and character actions related to Ohara's history. Relevant data were then recorded and categorized according to the research focus. The data were analyzed using mimesis theory and the sociology of literature approach. The material object of this study is the *One Piece* anime (episodes 275–278), while the formal object is the representation of the erasure of Ohara Island's history. The research data consist of character dialogue, scenes, actions, and events concerning the research conducted by Ohara's archaeologists, the ban on researching the Void Century, the destruction of Ohara Island, and efforts to preserve the memory of the island's history. The primary data source for this study is the *One Piece* anime, episodes 275–278. Secondary data sources were obtained from journal articles and prior research concerning the sociology of literature, mimesis theory, and the concept of social criticism. Mimesis theory is employed to examine how the erasure of history is represented within the narrative. The sociology of literature approach is used to analyze the relationships among the World Government, the Ohara scholars, and the public within the context of power and knowledge. Furthermore, the concept of social criticism is applied to interpret the nature of the critique conveyed through this representation of historical erasure.

The analysis process comprises the following stages: (1) identifying data related to the erasure of Ohara's history; (2) classifying the data based on the forms of historical erasure; (3) analyzing the connection between these actions and power dynamics within the story; and (4) interpreting the social significance of these actions as a critique of the World Government's power.

The data are subsequently classified according to the forms of historical erasure

identified within the research subject.

Table 1
Analysis Indicator

Forms of Erasing History	Areas of Focus
Banning of Knowledge	Prohibitions on historical research or the seeking of information about the past.
Destruction of Historical Sources	Actions taken against sources, locations, or entities holding historical knowledge.
Control of Information	Restrictions on information accessible to the public.
Construction of an Official Narrative	Dissemination of specific information to shape public understanding of Ohara.

RESULT

Based on an analysis of the Ohara tragedy in the *One Piece* anime, it was found that the erasure of history is represented in several forms: the prohibition of historical research, the destruction of sources of knowledge, the withholding of information from the public, and the construction of narratives that support the authority of the World Government. These representations demonstrate that control over history is exercised not only through violence but also through the control of knowledge and information.

Research Analysis Results Table



Table 2
Research Analysis Results

Data	Forms of Historical Erasure	Power Relations	Forms of Social Criticism
Episode 277 at minutes 03:39 - 06:40 {katsute saketa sono oukoku no na wa..... }	Prohibiting knowledge of history	World government restricts research	Criticism of restrictions on the freedom to acquire knowledge
Episode 277 at minutes 08:38 - 09:00 ({Toshokan no hi o kese~! mizu o mawase~! hon o toshokan no soto e!})	Destruction of historical sources	Power uses force to eliminate sources of knowledge	Criticism of the abuse of power
Episode 277 at minutes 06:16 - 06:20 {Rekishi to tomoni yobiokosareru sono oukoku no sonzai to shisou koso ga omae tachi sekai seifu ni totte kyoui nano de wa nai no kana ?}	Control of information	Power determines the information received by the public	Criticism of information control
Episode 276 at minutes 16:22 -16:24 {Kuhaku no hyaku nen o ou koto ga dou iu kekka o umu ka sekai ni shirameru koto gadekiru}.	Construction of an official narrative	Society loses access to history	Criticism of the erasure of historical memory

Data 1

Prohibition of Historical Knowledge

The erasure of history regarding the Ohara tragedy began with a ban on research into the Void Century. In the story, Ohara's scholars conducted research on Poneglyphs to uncover a long-lost history. This research was deemed a forbidden act by the World Government. Episode 277 (at the

03:39–06:40 mark) shows Professor Clover in dialogue with the Gorosei regarding the scholars' findings. Clover explains that the research on the Poneglyphs revealed a history lost during the Void Century and the existence of a great kingdom in the past. He also hypothesizes that this history was deliberately erased by the World Government.

A key piece of dialogue in the scene is:
Professor Clover: {katsute saketa sono oukoku no na wa..... }

Indonesian Translation: "The name of that kingdom, which once flourished, is....."

Just as Professor Clover is about to utter the kingdom's name, he is shot by World Government agents. This action demonstrates that knowledge of past history is not permitted to be freely known. The Ohara scholars' research was considered a threat because it had the potential to reveal history that the World Government had concealed.

Thus, the scene illustrates the prohibition of historical knowledge—a situation where those in power attempt to prevent the public from accessing information about the past that could threaten the official narrative.

Data 2

Destruction of Sources of Knowledge

A second form of historical erasure is depicted through the destruction of Ohara and the sources of knowledge contained within it. In Episode 277 (at the 08:38–09:00 mark), after Professor Clover explains the scholars' findings regarding the ancient civilization and the historical link between it and the rise of the World Government, he is shot, and the order to destroy Ohara is executed via the "Buster Call" operation. Ohara's library and sources of knowledge are subsequently set ablaze and face destruction. This event demonstrates that the physical destruction of a location can simultaneously serve as an attempt to eradicate historical sources. The Ohara Library functioned not merely as a repository for books but also as a symbol of knowledge capable of revealing a concealed history. Amidst the crisis, Ohara scholars attempted to save the books by removing them from the library and casting them into the lake.

They shouted:

Scholars: "Extinguish the fire in the library! Divert the water here! Get the books out of the library!"

This scene illustrates the scholars' efforts to preserve knowledge from destruction. The Ohara

Library was not just a place to store books; it was a symbol of knowledge and history—a repository with the potential to unveil the history of the past.

Data 3

Information Control

The erasure of history is also represented through attempts to control the information accessible to the public. This dialogue is spoken by Professor Clover as he explains the significance of history to the World Government. The scene takes place in Episode 277 (at the 06:16–06:20 mark) outside the Ohara Library.

Professor Clover: "Isn't the true threat to you—the World Government—the very existence and ideology of that kingdom, which would be revived along with the revelation of its history?"

The dialogue demonstrates that the history and ideology of the ancient kingdom are perceived as a threat because they could reveal information concealed by the World Government. By controlling information regarding this history, the World Government dictates the knowledge accessible to the public. Following the destruction of Ohara, information about the event was no longer in the hands of the people who experienced it; instead, it fell under the control of the World Government. Thus, the erasure of history in *One Piece* was not achieved solely through the destruction of Ohara but also through the control of information and the restriction of public knowledge concerning the past.

This illustrates that those who control information possess the power to shape how events are understood. Such control reinforces the World Government's image as a power that dictates not only people's actions but also their knowledge of the past. Consequently, the erasure of history in the *One Piece* anime did not end with the destruction of Ohara Island; it extended to efforts to deny the public access to knowledge about the event.



Data 4

The Construction of the Narrative Regarding Ohara

Another form of historical erasure is evident in Episode 276 (at the 16:22–16:24 mark) through the construction of a narrative concerning Ohara and its scholars. The destruction of Ohara not only eliminated a location and a source of knowledge but also influenced how the public perceived Ohara and the research conducted by its scholars.

This is evident in the dialogue spoken by the character Spandam:

Spandam: {Kuhaku no hyaku nen o ou koto ga dou iu kekka o umu ka sekai ni shirameru koto ga dekiru}.

Indonesian translation:

"We can show the world the consequences that arise when someone attempts to uncover or investigate the Void Century."

This dialogue reveals an effort to shape public understanding regarding the consequences of researching the Void Century. Thus, the erasure of history was carried out not only through the destruction of sources of knowledge but also through the construction of a narrative regarding Ohara and its historical research.

DISCUSSION

The four forms of historical erasure in the Ohara tragedy demonstrate that power operates not merely through repressive actions but also through the control of knowledge and information. These representations can be understood through the perspectives of mimesis and the sociology of literature, which examine the relationships among the work, social reality, power, and knowledge.

The Prohibition of Historical Knowledge

The shooting of Professor Clover while he attempted to uncover history represents a restriction on the production of knowledge. From a mimetic perspective, the scene illustrates a social issue regarding power structures attempting to curtail knowledge deemed threatening.

Meanwhile, a sociology of literature perspective reveals an unequal relationship between the intellectual class and those in power; scholars possess the capacity to generate knowledge, whereas the World Government holds the authority to restrict and suppress it. Thus, the scene serves as a social critique of power maintained through the silencing of knowledge.

The Destruction of Knowledge Repositories

The destruction of the library and the scholars' efforts to save the books demonstrate that the erasure of history is also carried out by destroying the repositories of knowledge. From a mimetic perspective, this event represents the social issue of losing historical sources due to the actions of those in power. From the perspective of the sociology of literature, the destruction of Ohara illustrates the use of institutional force to eliminate spaces for knowledge production and preservation. The attempt to rescue books from the library constitutes an act of resistance against this historical erasure and reinforces the social critique regarding the use of power to destroy historical sources.

Information Control

The control of information regarding the Void Century demonstrates that the erasure of history is not always achieved by destroying evidence, but also by restricting the information accessible to the public. From a mimetic perspective, this represents an inequality in access to information. A sociology of literature perspective reveals an imbalanced relationship among the ruling authority, the intellectual class, and the public in determining what information may circulate. Consequently, information control serves as a social critique of the use of information as an instrument of power to uphold a specific historical narrative.

Shaping the Narrative of Ohara

A statement made by the character Spandam in the *One Piece* anime illustrates an attempt to

shape public understanding regarding research into the Void Century. From a mimesis perspective, the construction of such narratives represents the capacity of power to define the meaning of an event. Meanwhile, the sociology of literature perspective reveals that political authorities possess a greater ability to determine the information received by the public. Thus, the erasure of history concerns not only the loss of historical facts and sources but also the shaping of narratives that influence how society understands an event.

The Relationship Between the Four Forms of Historical Erasure

These four forms of historical erasure constitute an interconnected process. The banning of research limits knowledge production; the destruction of sources eliminates material that could be used to understand history; the control of information restricts public access to knowledge; and the shaping of narratives influences how society interprets history. These four forms can be understood as a series of power mechanisms for controlling knowledge. When historical research is prohibited, the production of knowledge becomes limited. When historical sources are destroyed, evidence for understanding the past becomes increasingly difficult to find. Furthermore, when historical information is controlled, the public faces limitations in acquiring knowledge. Subsequently, the shaping of narratives enables those in power to determine how an event is understood by the public.

From a mimesis perspective, this sequence represents a social issue concerning the relationship between power and knowledge. The Ohara tragedy illustrates how power can influence the processes of producing, storing, disseminating, and interpreting historical knowledge. Meanwhile, the perspective of the sociology of literature reveals an imbalance of power relations among those in authority, intellectual groups, and the general public. Groups possessing political and military

power hold a strong position in determining what knowledge can be produced and disseminated. Thus, the Ohara tragedy in the anime *One Piece* can be understood as a representation of social criticism regarding the use of power to control knowledge, information, and the public's historical memory. The erasure of history during the Ohara tragedy did not occur through a single act but rather through a series of mutually reinforcing actions—ranging from the prohibition of research, the destruction of knowledge sources, and the control of information, to the shaping of narratives. Through this representation, *One Piece* demonstrates that control over history is fundamentally a form of control over knowledge and the way society understands the past.

CONCLUSION

Based on the study of the Ohara tragedy in the anime *One Piece*, the erasure of history is represented in several forms: the prohibition of historical research, the destruction of knowledge sources, the withholding of information from the public, and the construction of narratives that support the authority of the World Government. These four forms demonstrate that the erasure of history is not achieved solely through the destruction of historical evidence but also through the restriction of research, the control of information, and the shaping of public understanding regarding specific events. Drawing on Erich Auerbach's theory of mimesis, literary works can represent the reality of human life and social conditions through the depiction of events within the work. The Ohara tragedy in *One Piece* can thus be understood as a representation of social issues concerning the relationship between knowledge, information, and power. The conflict between the Ohara scholars and the World Government illustrates a scenario where those in power attempt to restrict historical knowledge, destroy sources of information, and control the information accessible to the public.

Furthermore, drawing on Wiyatmi's (2013) perspective on the sociology of literature, literary



works are linked to social life and can reflect issues occurring within society. The Ohara tragedy highlights the relationship between the intellectual community, the public, and the authorities. While the Ohara scholars sought to uncover history through research on the Poneglyphs, the World Government endeavored to halt this research and control the dissemination of its findings. Thus, the work represents an imbalanced social dynamic between those who possess knowledge and those who hold power.

Meanwhile, based on Soekanto's (2017) theory, power is defined as the capacity of one party to influence or control another. In the Ohara tragedy, the World Government exercised its power to stop historical research, destroy sources of knowledge, erase information about Ohara from the public consciousness, and construct a narrative that served its own interests. This demonstrates a power disparity between the World Government and both the scholars and the general public.

Consequently, by integrating Auerbach's mimesis theory, Wiyatmi's (2013) sociological perspective on literature, and Soekanto's (2017) theory of power, the Ohara tragedy can be understood as a representation of social criticism regarding the use of power to control knowledge and history. The erasure of history unfolded through a series of interconnected actions—ranging from banning historical research, destroying knowledge sources, and withholding information from the public, to shaping a narrative that upheld the World Government's interests.

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