

Code Geass:
Lelouch of the Rebellion

Elevator Pitch { This series is especially fascinating, as it presents many of the telling aspects of race, racialization, and postcolonial theory within the context of a *mecha* anime with giant robots

Synopsis

In a futuristic world (one with lasers and the aforementioned giant robots; don't forget to suspend disbelief), a direct analogue of the real-world nation of **Japan** has been conquered and subjugated by the fictional "**Holy Britannian Empire**" (which, counter-intuitively, is situated in North and South America, *not* Britain). By the time the series begins, Japan, as such, has ceased to exist as a sovereign nation, and has no political autonomy or ability to determine the circumstances of its population; to cap it all off, the conquering nation strips away even the name of the place, re-dubbing it "**Area 11**".

In this world, we are introduced to a couple of characters who will ultimately become integral to the anticolonial struggle to regain Japanese independence. We also encounter individuals who have the continued subjugation of Japan in their best interest. The series as a whole follows the tumultuous conflict and the people caught up in it through its various phases and stages of development

We'll be watching S1, E1 in class. The episode covers the backstory of colonial domination and some of the opening moves in the fight against it

Key Characters

We've literally got a cast of dozens by the end of the series, so these are some of the main folks I want you to pay attention to, given the ways that they problematize issues of identity construction within the colonial situation

Lelouch is the series antihero. Note that he is of the same race as the Britannian colonizers, but becomes the hero of the rebellion *against* the empire (swearing to "crush"/"destroy" the empire for reasons that are made clearer as the series progresses). Initially, he is simply a Britannian high schooler.



Comrades to Liberate Japan

Former Best Friends, Now Ideologically Opposed

Kallen is bi-racial (her mother was a Japanese colonial subject, and her father was Britannian). Nevertheless, she fights for a liberated Japan, choosing to embrace that part of her identity



Suzaku is full-blood Japanese. However, he opts to take an assimilationist approach by working as an "Honorary Britannian" in the hopes of becoming a citizen of the Empire, and changing policy through being an example

