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Loss of Logos in *Berserk* (1997)

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Abstract:

This paper examines the anime *Berserk* (1997) through the concept of logos, understood not as rational discourse but as the psychic order that enables identity, meaning, and self-coherence. Bringing together object relations theory, trauma theory, and Jungian archetypal psychology, the study argues that the Eclipse arc visualises the collapse of logos rather than introducing the supernatural as a narrative rupture. Through close analysis of Guts, Casca, and Griffith, the paper traces how each character's logos is formed through early internalised object relations and later unravels under trauma. For Guts, logos is rooted in survival and distrust; for Casca, in loyalty to an idealised object; for Griffith, in the ego-ideal sustained through sublimation. When trauma destabilises these psychic structures, symbolic mediation fails, and archetypal forces erupt, externalising psychological breakdown as cosmic catastrophe. *Berserk* thus imagines trauma so absolute that it destroys not only subjectivity but the coherence of reality itself.

Keywords: Anime Studies; Logos; Psychoanalysis; Object Relations Theory; Trauma Theory; Jungian Archetypes.

Introduction

Berserk (1997) compresses an expansive part of the manga into a 25-episode arc that begins as a mostly realistic depiction of medieval warfare and ends in a cosmic, supernatural catastrophe.

The series follows the mercenary Band of the Hawk and, in particular, the intertwined fates of Guts, Griffith, and Casca. Renowned globally among anime audiences for its brutal imagery and infamous Eclipse arc, *Berserk* is equally striking for its problematisation of themes like loyalty, ambition, justice, and for the way these values fracture under the pressures of violence and desire.

The series follows the journey of Guts after he joins the Band of the Hawk, led by Griffith, with Casca as its only female fighter. Through Guts's bravery and brutal style of fighting, together with Griffith's military tactics and charismatic leadership, the Band is integrated into the king's army. Those victories, however, weigh heavily on Guts as he constantly has flashbacks to childhood memories and is always in doubt about his life goal whenever he compares himself to Griffith. These inner tensions are usually interrupted by Casca's scolding, jealousy, and accusations of impulsiveness, especially during Guts's early period with the Band. Griffith's dream of having his own kingdom is prophesied to him by a witch who gives him the Behelit, a magical "Egg of the King" said to grant its owner a kingdom. However, Griffith's soaring ambition and his narcissistic personality ultimately cause his downfall after a series of events. Although Casca and Guts slowly come closer, particularly after he saves her life and takes care of her when she falls sick during battle, Guts's long hesitation to leave the Band in search of his own meaning comes to an end. He fights Griffith for his freedom and wins the duel. After wounding Griffith's narcissism and disarming him, Guts leaves the Band as Casca realises the conflict of her feelings for Guts and her devotion to Griffith.

As a tactician, Griffith compensates for the loss of his most valuable commander by seducing Princess Charlotte to consolidate his position in the kingdom. As he sneaks out of Charlotte's room, the guards catch him for treason and throw him into a dungeon, where he is

subjected to continuous torture by a sadistic jailer. He loses his tongue, is repeatedly assaulted, and is rendered completely incapable of moving or speaking.

When Guts learns about the tragic events that happened to the Band, he questions whether what he had been in search of was right there all along: being in the Band of the Hawk. Upon returning, Casca also recognises her deep feelings for him. He reunites with Casca, and they consummate their love. They then execute a plan to free Griffith as the whole Band of the Hawk assembles under the leadership of Casca.

In the dungeon, Griffith, in his lowest state of mind and body, sees visions of supernatural beings and hears voices promising him an escape. After the Band frees him, he realises the shift in its dynamics and recognises that he is no longer the central figure but merely a shell of a person. He witnesses how Casca and Guts are closer and more intimate and have their own agency rather than being under his former control. He cannot accept this reversal in dynamics. Therefore, he attempts to pursue his dream alone by running away in a cart, but due to his weakness, he falls into the river. In a moment of desperation, he tries to kill himself by impaling his neck. In that exact moment, the magical Behelit appears in his hands and is activated through his despair and desperate desire, signalling the start of the Eclipse.

The Eclipse marks the shift into a supernatural realm where the God Hand members, Void, Slan, Ubik, and Conrad, appear in order to perform a ritual of human sacrifice that facilitates the birth of the last God Hand member: Femto. The ritual subjects Griffith to a mental and physical ordeal that prepares him for his transformation into Femto. After he agrees to sacrifice his comrades, “the feast” begins. All the members are branded with the mark of sacrifice that attracts hallucinations and grotesque monsters. By the end of the Eclipse, all the members of the Band of the Hawk die, except for Guts and Casca. Femto assaults both of them in different ways and ensures that they can never escape his grip. Guts loses an eye and an arm

while trying to protect Casca. Casca, in turn, reverts to a child-like mental state due to the severity of Femto's assault.

Understanding these narrative events is essential because the series stages the gradual erosion of relational bonds, symbolic order, and self-coherence long before the supernatural rupture of the Eclipse makes that collapse visible. Most scholarship on *Berserk* reads the Eclipse as a narrative or mythological climax. This paper instead treats the Eclipse as a psychological event: a visualisation of the collapse of psychic order under trauma. Reading the Eclipse through "logos" therefore reveals the narrative logic of trauma that binds the personal, interpersonal, and mythic registers of the series. This paper argues that *Berserk* dramatises the construction and collapse of logos, understood as the psychic order through which identity, meaning, and coherence are maintained. Through the intertwined journeys of Guts, Casca, and Griffith, the series shows how early object relations shape each character's logos and how trauma destabilises it, resulting in the Eclipse, where psychological collapse is externalised as supernatural horror. The following section traces the philosophical and psychoanalytic meanings of logos before turning to the anime's visualisation of its loss.

The Evolution of Logos

Logos (Greek: λόγος) has a long history of meanings, from cosmic order to rational discourse. For Heraclitus, it names the ordering principle of the universe that holds opposites in tension; for the Stoics, it becomes the rational, divine principle that structures reality and is shared as a "spark" in each person. Later, with the Sophists and Aristotle, logos turns inward toward language and persuasion, denoting both the power of speech and rational argument grounded in evidence. Across these shifts, logos consistently marks a relation between order and articulation, between the structure of reality and the word that expresses it. Neoplatonic and Gnostic traditions expand this further by casting logos as a mediating principle between the

divine and the human, the eternal and the material. Logos has travelled from naming the structure of the cosmos to naming the structure of the psyche. In *Berserk*, it is the latter that matters. For this study, however, the focus is less on theological speculation than on how logos becomes internalised as psychic order.[1]

Although the historical meanings of logos range from cosmic structure to divine mediation, its movement into psychoanalysis marks a decisive shift: logos becomes the psyche's ordering function. Rather than describing the order of the universe, it describes the capacity to create order within experience. This shift from metaphysics to psychology enables a reading of *Berserk* where the collapse of logos is the collapse of psychic coherence.

Logos in Psychoanalysis

The polysemy of logos continued in psychoanalysis, where it is re-examined either explicitly or implicitly by prominent theorists. Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) posed logos in opposition to religion. In *The Future of an Illusion*, logos means rational thought, while religion is cast as illusion: "Our God Λόγος, will fulfil whichever of these wishes nature outside us allows, but he will do it very gradually… in the long run nothing can withstand reason and experience, and the contradiction which religion offers to both is all too palpable" (54).

Within a Freudian framework, the psychic structure that *Berserk* portrays as logos can be understood through the dynamic between sublimation, narcissism, and the ego-ideal. In "On Narcissism: An Introduction", Freud writes that the ego-ideal is formed when the individual replaces childhood self-love with a self-image projected into the future: "What he projects before him as his ideal is the substitute for the lost narcissism of his childhood in which he was his own ideal." (94). The self must now live up to this ideal in order to sustain self-esteem. Freud further distinguishes sublimation from the formation of the ego-ideal: "Sublimation is a process that concerns object libido and consists in the instinct's directing itself towards an aim

other than, and remote from, that of sexual satisfaction," and he warns that "a man who has exchanged his narcissism for homage to a high ego-ideal has not necessarily… succeeded in sublimating his libidinal instincts." (94). In this model, sublimation routes instinctual energy into socially valued forms, while the ego-ideal raises the demands placed on the ego. Logos, which is understood here as psychic organisation, meaning, and self-coherence, depends on the ego's ability to satisfy the demands of the ego-ideal through sublimated activity. When sublimation fails or is disrupted, the ego cannot sustain the ideal, and the ordering function that keeps the psyche coherent becomes unstable. This vulnerability to collapse becomes a crucial bridge to Jung's exploration of what happens when the ego can no longer mediate the forces of the unconscious.

In Carl Jung's writings, the influence of archetypes on the psyche, particularly on the ego, is clearly traceable. Jung initially describes the psyche as "the totality of all psychic processes, conscious as well as unconscious (*Psychological Types* 463) " and notes that "the autonomy of the unconscious … begins where emotions are generated ("Conscious, Unconscious, and Individuation" 278)", such that traits unfamiliar even to the individual emerge when "the ego-consciousness is thrust aside by autonomous contents that were unconscious before" (279). He further links eruptions of affect to the archetypal layer of the psyche, defining the archetype as "a powerful emotion brought into its original form" (*Children's Dream* 150).

Jung later argues that "the archetypes are the numinous, structural elements of the psyche and possess a certain autonomy and specific energy which enables them to attract, out of the conscious mind, those contents which are best suited to themselves" (*Symbols of Transformation* 232). While it is commonly said that people have complexes, Jung stresses the lesser-acknowledged reversal: "complexes can have us" (*Structure and dynamics of the Psyche* 96). The danger emerges when archetypal forces dominate the ego to the point of psychic

possession: "[A]nyone possessed by an archetype cannot help having all the symptoms of inflation. For the archetype is nothing human; no archetype is properly human. The archetype itself is an exaggeration and it reaches beyond the confines of humanity" (Jung, *Nietzsche's Zarathustra* 1343).

Together, these insights map the mechanism by which archetypal forces move from influencing the psyche to overpowering the ego. Archetypes are not inherently destructive; they become overwhelming only when symbolic mediation fails. Possession occurs when the ego can no longer sustain its ordering function and is overtaken by archetypal intensity. This distinction becomes essential to understanding why the Eclipse in *Berserk* represents not the arrival of evil but the loss of psychic structure—a collapse of the ego's capacity to regulate archetypal energy rather than the invasion of a foreign force.

While various traditions redefined "logos", this paper focuses on the definitions that show how tragic figures construct and lose their speech, reason, and order under the pressures of trauma.

The importance of logos in studying *Berserk* comes from its relation to trauma theories, specifically in the way trauma resists symbolisation (logos). However, the logos for each character, whether it is language, psychic order, meaning, or subjectivity, is shaped by their early life experiences that define what is normal, familiar, and carries "order" for them. What takes shape as normal in the early stages of life, especially negative experiences, becomes the familiar and is sought after in later stages. The series shows how the unhealthy "norm" led to trauma and compulsive repetition, which in turn led to either the challenging or the loss of logos.

Various psychoanalytic lenses bring into focus key scenes where logos is either established or challenged. Object relations theories (Winnicott, Fairbairn), for example, trace the dynamics within the characters' childhood flashbacks. These early wounds prepare the

ground for trauma theory (Caruth; Freud), which reveals how the aftermath of trauma leaks throughout the series, from Guts's endless search for meaning to Casca's emotional conflict and Griffith's transformation. The Eclipse shatters the realistic order, forcing a shift from psychological to archetypal dimensions, where Jungian archetypal lenses become essential to grasp the collapse of one logos and the rise of a new one. Before analysing *Berserk*, the following section shows how logos is formed through object relations in childhood, and how trauma challenges or destroys such formation.

As this brief conceptual history suggests, *logos* has shifted from naming a cosmic or theological order to designating a human capacity. In psychoanalytic thought, this movement turns inward: logos is no longer the structure of the universe or the principle of persuasion, but the internal capacity to organise experience, to symbolise, and to sustain a coherent sense of self. This inward, psychological sense of logos as psychic order, speech, and meaning-making under pressure underpins the present reading of *Berserk*. Before archetypal collapse becomes relevant in the Eclipse, the foundations of logos must be traced in early psychic formation.

Logos, Object Relations, and Trauma

As shown in the previous section, the meaning of "logos" in psychoanalysis carries different connotations. In this study, the focus is on subjectivity, meaning-making, and psychic coherence. In object relations terms, logos is only as stable as the internal objects that support it. These aspects are shaped mainly by social and familial conditions in childhood, a claim that runs across object-relations theory, even though its major thinkers approach it differently. Fairbairn emphasises that the psyche is shaped through internalised relationships formed in early dependence (Fairbairn 64-65). Winnicott, by contrast, highlights the facilitating role of the good-enough caregiver in enabling the emergence of the infant's true self (Winnicott 148). Freud and Caruth, in their studies of trauma, explored the repetition aspect of trauma and its

consequences, whereby traumatic childhood experiences, as in the case of the tragic figures in *Berserk*, can be repeated in adult life. Before turning to the analysis of the series, the following section examines how logos is constructed from an object-relations perspective and how trauma affects that structure.

According to Donna Savery's reading of Wilfred Bion's container–contained model, the infant's dependence on a caregiver to transform overwhelming emotional experiences (beta elements) into bearable, thinkable forms (alpha elements) involves a process that the infant can gradually assimilate and later internalise as a capacity for containment. In this model, the infant projects their distress onto the caregiver, who transforms this distress into a tolerable emotional experience that the infant can later retain as a capacity for self-regulation (Echoism 19). This process enables the infant to begin developing a capacity to think and respond to inner experiences. While this model focuses on the transformation of unbearable emotional elements that overburden and challenge the infant's capacity to process such experiences, object relations models take a broader view, examining how significant figures are internalised as psychic "objects" that structure the inner world.

To clarify what "object" means in this context, the following overview is based on Donna Savery's account. Savery summarises the psychoanalytic use of the term as referring to an internal representation of another person, experienced in whole or in part, and felt to be psychologically significant within the individual's inner and outer worlds (24). Savery notes that internal objects are symbolic representations of people we have experienced, taken in through early relational processes and continuing to interact with one another within the individual's inner world. Drawing on Melanie Klein and Ronald Britton, she explains that emotional life consists of ongoing relations with objects, both internal and external, and that impulses to love, hate, and understand ourselves arise from these object relations (24).

These object relations are central to this case study for how they disrupt the individual's sense of subjectivity and psychic coherence. As Savery continues to explore ego-destructive objects within object-relations theory based on Bion's views, she states that when the infant fails to introject a helpful, thinking, and containing object (usually the mother), there is no internalised mental space in which feelings can be thought about and transformed (27–28). Without containment, the infant begins to perceive the object as hostile to curiosity, as if the desire to know were punished or persecuted. The external world comes to feel dangerous to the infant's desire to explore. The external object may then be internalised as a persecutory figure that functions as an ego-destructive superego, attacking curiosity, thought, and psychic growth. These dynamics of persecutory objects and failures of containment will be examined in the analysis of *Berserk*.

Logos, understood as psychic growth, meaning, curiosity, and communication, is formed through the internalisation of objects and, its quality depends on the nature of those objects whether, good or bad. Trauma theories show how logos can be dismantled by the very patterns that first structured it.

Originally, the Greek term 'trauma' referred to a wound inflicted on the body; since Freud, it has come to denote a psychic wound inflicted on the mind (Caruth, *Unclaimed Experience* 3). In *Beyond the Pleasure Principle*, Freud observed the compulsive tendency to repeat painful experiences, seeking "unpleasure" rather than pleasure. He linked this repetition compulsion to the death drive (61-62). Building on this, Cathy Caruth in *Unclaimed Experience* extends Freud's notion of repetition to describe the "belatedness" of trauma, which appears as involuntary flashbacks and dreams (92). This belatedness produces the paradox of trauma: the event is experienced with overwhelming immediacy, yet returns belatedly in involuntary flashbacks and repetitions because consciousness fails to register it at the time. Caruth notes elsewhere that "it is the incomprehensible act of surviving– waking into life– that repeats and

bears witness to what remains un-grasped within the encounter with death" ("Parting Words" 10). The repetition, then, is less an act of understanding than the manifestation of a fractured psyche in which meaning, language, and reason, the very functions of logos, begin to collapse under the weight of what cannot be articulated. Because the psyche cannot mediate the experience through language, this fracture between experience and comprehension marks the beginning of the loss of logos: the collapse of the subject's ability to think, speak, or make meaning in the awakening that follows trauma. Thus, when traumatic repetition overwhelms the psyche's capacity for symbolisation, logos does not merely weaken; it fails, and the subject loses the capacity to think, speak, and remain a coherent self.

Analysis

With the philosophical and psychological contexts of logos established, the following analysis focuses on key scenes in *Berserk* (1997) to trace how this principle takes form, fractures, and is ultimately lost. The analysis proceeds through three stages: early psychic formation, trauma repetition, and archetypal collapse, to show how personal order is mirrored in cosmic disintegration.

Recovering from his wound after his first fight with Griffith, Guts wakes from his feverish nightmares with Casca warming his body. In these dreams, skeletal figures shout at the little version of himself that he should have died. The nightmare recalls his childhood escape from his first mercenary band, which belonged to his step-father Gambino. Guts later kills Gambino in self-defence. In the same nightmare, Guts is pinned down by a massive monster while Gambino, petting his dog, ignores Guts' screams for help. Other flashbacks reinforce the same patterns: even when little Guts fights well or brings back spoils, Gambino responds with rejection and contempt.

These memories reveal a childhood structured around persecutory objects that both threatened and abandoned him. Fairbairn's theory clarifies the psychic function of such objects: when the caregiver is sadistic or rejecting, the child internalises a "bad object" that becomes a superego persecutor. In this split, one part of the ego longs for the caregiver's approval, while another absorbs the repudiation and turns it inward. Guts carries this internal persecutor into adolescence. His logos, his sense of what the world is and how one must live, becomes rooted in vigilance, violence, distrust, and solitude rather than relational security. After he joins the Band of the Hawk led by Griffith, he consistently sits apart from them, throws himself into battle toward death, and becomes destabilised when he realises others have dreams grounded in meaning rather than mere survival.

Bion's model further clarifies the shape of Guts's logos. Guts grew up with no emotional container, no soothing parent, and no meaning-making dialogue, but instead with attack, blame, emotional abandonment and abuse. Without a caregiver to metabolise overwhelming emotion, no inner thinking space could form, and subjectivity could not develop securely. Survival became identity.

Thus, for Guts, logos does not mean speech, connection, or purpose: it means living alone, against the world. What appears later as an existential crisis is not sudden: the Eclipse merely exposes the fragility of a psychic order built on trauma from the beginning. Long before the Eclipse, the tension between individuality and belonging had already hollowed his inner world; he could survive, but he could not symbolise his experience.

In a parallel moment to Guts's fever scene, Casca and Guts take shelter in the woods after she collapses from illness during battle. She wakes to find Guts warming her body. When she regains strength, she tells him of her past: the constant raids on her village, the famine that drove her father to sell her to a nobleman, and the assault that followed. Griffith intervened and offered her not protection but a choice by handing her a sword so she could defend herself.

This moment becomes the hinge of Casca's psyche: the first time she was not acted upon but permitted to act, and the first time her body was returned to her through agency. The possibility of autonomy exists in that moment, but it becomes immediately bound to the figure who granted it.

Through an object-relations lens, this memory reveals Casca's inner world. Fairbairn explains that, in the absence of a reliable caregiver, the child idealises the first figure who offers safety, and identity comes to form around devotion to this figure rather than autonomy. Griffith becomes that idealised object for Casca. He is the one who assigns her value and makes her life bearable and meaningful. Her logos becomes centred on Griffith: serving his dream, keeping his image, and holding the rest of the Band in line. She replaces selfhood with belonging and her identity with loyalty and devotion to Griffith.

Such traumatic formation of the logos fuels Casca for years until it is challenged by another male figure. Later in the series, Casca's emotional world becomes divided between Griffith and Guts. It collapses entirely following Griffith's imprisonment. Later, when she witnesses Griffith in the Eclipse, she is torn between the reality she sees and her devotion to him. The Eclipse discloses the truth of her fragile constructed meaning. The idealised figure turns into an agent of violation and assault, echoing the first traumatic encounter with the nobleman. Casca's logos, structured around loyalty, disintegrates completely once the figure around which it was constructed is exposed as another member of an abusive pattern."

As for Griffith, two scenes are especially revealing: one before the Eclipse, when he overhears Guts and Casca and realises the changing dynamics within the Band, and another during the Eclipse, when his dream of a kingdom returns as a flashback. After a year of physical mutilation and psychological breakdown in prison, Griffith watches the Band move on without him, especially Guts and Casca, who share a bond grounded in love rather than devotion to him. He is forced to face the reality he cannot tolerate: being powerless and dependent. With

his capacity to lead, command, seduce, and inspire destroyed, the foundations of his identity give way. His failed escape and fall into the river externalise a psychological truth: a self that exists only through greatness cannot survive ordinariness or helplessness.

The flashback during the Eclipse reveals what formed Griffith's logos and how it collapsed. Griffith's logos is organised around what Freud describes as the ego-ideal: a perfected image of the self projected into the future that the individual must live up to in order to sustain self-esteem. His dream of becoming a king is not merely an ambition but the psychic ideal through which coherence and self-worth are maintained. His beauty, charisma, leadership, and discipline operate as *sublimations*—socially valued channels through which instinctual drives are redirected into achievements, loyalty, and power. As long as these sublimated forms of libido continue to nourish the ego-ideal through military victories, political ascent, and the admiration of others, Griffith's logos remains structured, coherent, and stable.

Imprisonment annihilates not only Griffith's body but the entire structure that sustained sublimation: speech, beauty, command, mobility, and audience. In Freudian terms, this collapse removes the mechanisms through which the ego could satisfy the demands of the ego-ideal. What follows is not simply despair but the catastrophic return of narcissism without sublimation — a state in which the self can no longer endure the gap between the ideal and the real. The suicidal gesture after his escape therefore marks more than despair; it signals the moment when the ego-ideal becomes psychically unbearable and the ego collapses under its demands. From this perspective, the Eclipse becomes intelligible not as a turn toward evil but as the consequence of sublimation's failure: when the ego-ideal remains absolute and unreachable and all sublimated supports have collapsed, the psyche seeks restoration through a totalising, catastrophic solution.

Different characters develop different *logoi* from childhood trauma and each collapses in a distinct way that reveals what gave their life meaning. For Guts, logos

is built on survival, distrust, and self-reliance. For Casca, her logos is founded on loyalty, devotion, and self-abandonment toward an idealised figure, Griffith. For Griffith, his logos is constructed around grandiosity, destiny, and sublimated narcissistic ambition. Each logos functions only as long as the surrounding world reinforces the psychological order that sustains it. When trauma destabilises their worlds, their logoi begin to fracture, and each crack signals the coming collapse. Guts's and Casca's logoi collapse when they witness the whole truth of Griffith's desire and his directed violence at the Band of the Hawk. Because the logoi of others were bound to Griffith's, his was the most inflated and externally dependent, making its collapse not merely personal but cosmic. His breakdown triggers the collective collapse. For Griffith, the loss of beauty, power, and charisma after imprisonment is not merely bodily trauma; it signals the collapse of sublimation and the ego-ideal, which means the loss of logos itself. The Eclipse, then, visualises externally what had already collapsed internally: the supernatural horror reveals the psychic and emotional fragmentation, and the breakdown of inner reality becomes the breakdown of the world.

When the logos collapses on a psychological level and the individual loses their identity, meaning, and their psychic order, experience can no longer be processed through narrative or rational mediation. In this case, the ego loses its function as a mediator between the conscious and the unconscious. What follows is the unconscious taking over through dreams and archetypes. It is at this point that trauma theory and archetypal lenses converge. In Jungian terms, the ego is possessed by archetypal forces: the unconscious no longer supports the ego but replaces it, since archetypal activation can subordinate the ego when it is no longer capable of symbolic mediation. The traumatic unassimilated experiences that breached the ego and weakened it return as horror repeated by the victim, here Griffith, on a collective scale; the Band of the Hawk. The archetypes do not replace a weak ego with strength; they remove the

boundary that once filtered and humanised Griffith's grandiosity. As a result, the Eclipse is not an interruption of realism, but the externalisation of the characters' inner collapse.

The psyche becomes vulnerable to the unconscious forces when the ego loses control under the heavy trauma it endured. Griffith becomes ego-empty before archetypal possession happens. His inflated ego is overwhelmed with the supernatural God Hand members. Rather than treating the God Hand as literal demons, this paper reads them as dramatisations of archetypal forces that mirror Griffith's psyche. However, the God Hand members do not change or convert Griffith into something new. Instead, they articulate him, elevating his psychic blueprint to a mythic scale. They translate his psychic structure into mythic form by helping him replace human helplessness with mythic meaning and by offering him the possibility of becoming an influential figure who transcends his human limitations. In other words, the archetypes do not take over because Griffith is weak; they manifest because weakness has erased the human limits that once restrained his already archetypal grandiosity. Collapse does not replace grandiosity with emptiness; it strips away the last boundary that kept it human. Therefore, what takes control is not something foreign to Griffith but the unrestrained expansion of what was already inside him. In that sense, not only is each God Hand member assigned a role to ensure that the Eclipse happens, they also embody the destructive aspects of archetypes that Griffith already performed during his ascent. This reading does not imply that the collective unconscious is historically shaped; rather, *Berserk* symbolically links archetypal energies with the legacy of war within its fictional world. The psyche becoming mythic does not imply it becomes private. In Jung's model, when ego boundaries weaken, the distinction between personal and collective contents becomes permeable, allowing individual trauma and collective forces to synchronise. The appearance of the God Hand is therefore not just Griffith's personal unconscious breaking through, but the convergence of private and collective trauma

into a single event. Visually, the series shifts from a realistic tone that follows personal collapse to a supernatural and mythic register that depicts collective catastrophe.

The Eclipse begins when Griffith reaches absolute helplessness and tries to kill himself. In that exact moment, his ego collapses, and the Behelit appears in his hand. Its activation is not separate from the collapse, because it marks the point at which the unconscious replaces the ego. Everything that follows becomes the externalisation of Griffith's psyche as archetypal forces take control in succession. The destructive version of archetypes appears as Void, Slan, Ubik, and Conrad, not as fixed one-to-one correspondences but as symbolic parallels to traits Griffith already expressed in life**.** Void, for example, can be read as an embodiment of the psychic emptiness that Griffith compensated for with power, dominance, and ambition. Slan's comment on his friendship with Guts and her erotic illusions played on other members can be interpreted as a negative manifestation of eros, reflecting Griffith's instrumentalisation of intimacy. Ubik and Conrad, with their control over causality and manipulation, symbolically align with the narcissistic strategy and emotional calculus Griffith used throughout his ascent. Thus, the sudden rupture from realism to supernatural marks the collapse of reason as a principle of reality. Time here, like trauma's repetitive memories and dreams, becomes circular, looping through dreams, sacrifices, wars, and defining moments in Griffith's journey. The God Hand members play their role in redefining Griffith's journey to be in alignment with his original narcissistic ego-ideal before imprisonment. As a price for his transformation, the members of the Band of the Hawk are the final piece to complete his sacrifice in this cosmic (collective) ritual. When the Band members are marked with the Brand of Sacrifice, trauma is literalised as an inescapable and eternal condition for the only two survivors of the Eclipse—Guts and Casca—marking their bodies and souls, and with them, their psychic order. The ritual therefore not only completes Griffith's transformation but also collapses the logoi of all three protagonists in parallel.

By the end of the Eclipse, the horrors and violations that occur during a night of feasting on human bodies and terror are impossible for either of the two survivors—Casca and Guts—to assimilate. Guts's fragile wish for a life with Casca collapses during the Eclipse, and the trauma he endures is compounded by what happens to her. Griffith's violation not only destroys Guts's hope for love and belonging but also forces him back into a psychic world organised by trauma and revenge. The result is a return to the same violent repetition compulsion that has shaped him since childhood. Casca is in no better shape as she loses her ability to speak and her psyche reverts to a child-like stage. As Femto, Griffith transcends humanity by severing all ties to it and fully identifying with the archetypal energies that fuelled his megalomania. In the Eclipse, each character loses the logos that structured their inner world, and the destruction of these inner functions produces the destruction of the world around them.

The Eclipse arc at the end of the series visualises the return of unassimilated trauma, showing how it takes different outward forms depending on its origins in childhood. This arc marks the moment when multiple individual psychic breakdowns culminate in a metaphysical collapse, transforming personal tragedy into a cosmological one. *Berserk* imagines trauma so absolute that it annihilates logos, and when logos dies, not only the self but the world loses its coherence: meaning collapses, speech fails, and reality rewrites itself in the language of myth.

Conclusion

This paper examined how the characters in *Berserk* (1997) established their logos, understood as the psychic order through which identity, meaning, and self-coherence are maintained, and how trauma eventually destabilised or destroyed that order. Throughout the series, trauma functions not only as an injury but also as a force that exposes the fractures within the structures that made life meaningful for the characters. Whether that structure was built on distrust and isolation (Guts), self-abandonment in devotion to an idealised figure (Casca), or the ego-ideal

of a great destiny (Griffith), the loss of logos happens when the foundations no longer sustain the self under pressure.

The object-relations theory clarified why these foundations collapse. A logos formed around the internal absence of a good object is defensive rather than secure, rendering it vulnerable to the repetition of the original wound. Berserk visualises this dynamic through flashbacks and, in the final arc, through supernatural symbolism, making the mechanisms of psychic breakdown explicit rather than merely suggestive. The collapse depicted in the Eclipse is therefore not a narrative rupture but the culmination of a traceable psychological logic already set in motion in childhood.

The three characters reveal different routes to the same outcome. The three characters reveal different routes to the same outcome. Guts's logos, rooted in distrust and survival, disintegrates when the possibility of belonging emerges and is then violently withdrawn. Casca's logos, formed around loyalty to the one who granted her agency, collapses when that figure becomes the source of violation, annihilating autonomy and subjectivity. Griffith's logos, centred on the ego-ideal of transcendence, falls when imprisonment destroys the bodily and symbolic instruments of his grandiosity, resulting in a surrender to archetypal forces. Although the logoi of the three have different origins, they all result in the loss of their logos because when the structures that organise experience collapse, the self collapses with them. The Eclipse externalises the collapse of psychological order using supernatural symbolism.

The Eclipse arc in Berserk (1997) shows that trauma does not operate in isolation or remain confined to the individual's inner order; it becomes a meaning-making force that reorganises perceptions of self, others, and the world. In this sense, *Berserk* does not merely depict the ruin of the three characters; it imagines a world in which the collapse of logos within the psyche causes the loss of logos in the world. Once meaning fails, the self fails, and when the self fails, reality can no longer hold.

Notes:

1. This overview draws on the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy* entries on Heraclitus, Stoicism, Sophists and Aristotle, and Neoplatonism and Gnosticism. For a broad conceptual survey of the term *logos* across Presocratic, Stoic, Aristotelian, and Neoplatonic philosophy, see the relevant entries in the *Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Complete bibliographic details for each entry are provided in the Works Cited.

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