Self-sacrifice: Y2 Vol 5 he took on the role of a monster, so his class isn't destroyed, even had a quote in his mind "People may call me a monster, no one wants to be the one who made the 'Evil' choice. In the end, someone needs to make those decisions, it's the only way to succeed in this world" which also destroyed his friends group (which he actually really liked as they were the first real friends he had alongside Horikita and Hirata) and made him the outcast and the "evil" of his class, despite him being the one who saved it.

Escapism: Him trying to escape and conceal his past and abilities as well as wear an "Ordinary Person" mask until he was threatened. ANHS is his escape point, where he tries to start from a blank list after the cruel fate he got from his birth.

Contradiction: He has a lot of contradictions. From being really cruel to Horikita on an Island, to in the next volume "Horikita Suzune was in class D, and the very first friend I made in this school. I was her first friend as well, but she was solidarity, standoffish person"
Also, him saying that winning is the main thing people should focus on and saying he'll do anything to win... But then in Vol 5, which is very soon after, in his monologue he said that he wanted defeat.

Nihilism: If we also take in account his ideology, Tool's monologue falls under that category by definition. But there's also the fact that he considers acting upon emotions a foolish action, hence disregarding the very concept of a human's personality. Him growing up and adapting to WR mindset as well as rationalizing Evil actions if they are efficient. He basically doesn't think that the "right" morals are correct one's, if the one which isn't right is more efficient.

Machiavellian: Not only is he a liar and manipulator, he also will do basically whatever for victory, even if it means stepping over others, controlling others, breaking the rule's etc., as long as the "Ends justify the means". He will do anything for his freedom, goals and victory.

Character Narrator: To further engage the reader into the environment of the story, the character, and the Aesop of a story, what some do is to have the story be narrated by one of its own characters. That character does the narration, and everything the reader takes in comes directly from his own Point of View. The character is usually also the protagonist, although there are exceptions (such as a First-Person Peripheral Narrator telling the story of a Non P.O.V. Protagonist).

This can make the story more challenging to understand since you only get to know what this character thinks: if there are other characters, and there is tension between them and the narrator, not only will you be in the dark about their purpose or morality, but all the info you get about them will be biased. Similarly, for a person who the narrator especially admires, they will be portrayed as much more heroic and generally better than they really are. In some cases, the narration could be even delusive, and the challenge is to understand the actual situation behind your referent's words. Ayanokoji Kiyotaka is the Narrator of Classroom of the Elite. But what's more, while we can see and understand more of him, he's a type of character who gets only harder to understand once you understand more and more since now his actual goals and motives remain a mystery. At the same time, what's even more, his narration is unusual (next point) making it only more interesting and engaging. Making Ayanokoji Kiyotaka as the narrator is amazing, since his philosophical and psychological values are seen very greatly through it.

Unreliable Narration: From calling himself ordinary in his mind, to sometimes saying someone is better than him (but later on finding how he's superior, and he knows it), to lying about not knowing something (for example he was in his monologue on Island Saying he doesn't know what Koenji wants to do or if he saw the Hint given by school, but then it was said he did know. Just a few examples.

Impact on characters: Because of him drastically changed life's (mentality, capability was changed or someone's past/current problems saved) of a lot of people:
- Sakura became more sociable, open and determined, and improved in capabilities.
- Hasebe is the same as Sakura, but at the same time she got over her disgust towards males.
- Kei from parasite whose whole life was escaping bullying and rough treatment and who'd do anything for it even if it meant she might get raped, to a more independent girl who can stand for herself in this world and can actually support others.
- Hirata he was haunted by his past the whole time, and being the pacifist he is, he'd even sacrifice himself over someone like Yamauchi who drags the class down. He had multiple breakdowns and couldn't bear it anymore. While currently he can get through it better, and he's got a bit over his past and even his friend who was in coma due to him not helping.

- Horikita from a standoffish person not seeing her faults and feeling too superior to even socialize. To date, even being kind to Sudo after he confessed and despite rejecting him, she was very respectful of his feelings. At the same time she became more sociable and open, and she stopped being arrogant and having a superiority complex, she also noticed and improved on her flaws. Currently, she's an incredibly developed character.
- Kushida From betraying a liar who wanted nothing more than recognition and to be the best and worshiped, even if it meant eliminating her own classmates or destroying her class. To currently being a good asset to the class, actually enjoying her time in ANHS and improving as a person, in fact she even developed some feelings for Ayanokoji after he accepted her real self.
- Ichinose is a weak, pacifistic character who can't handle pressure, stress and cruelty in the earlier volumes, who just wanted to have fun with her class and raise on top, living in illusions. To a more realistic approach, and even gaining a bit of Machiavellian mindset and becoming competitive, which even Ryuen said was disturbing, and she's not someone who's easy to face.
- Sudo From bottom of the class, hothead, arrogant, insulting with basically close to no capability and self-control. To currently a more respectable student who's now aiming to get in top 10 of academics, socializes and helps others as well as being more calm and rational. His growth was purely amazing to see.
- Ike a lil bit, from a hopeless pervert to someone who's at least going to try to improve and help those he wants to help.
- Matsushita She became from a stalker who hid her abilities and gone about everything to shadows, not ever hoping to win. To currently actually using her abilities and trying to help the class win etc., the plot of the story and said characters is also developing mostly by our narrator Ayanokoji.
That's by far not all of the characters too.

Development: a big amount of characters heavily developed, and he was the one who helped most of them, yet he while seeking change, can't find it himself, and can't change from his past. Even though he seeks change, mentally he's still stuck in those White Walls.

Irony: Irony of things like Development like I said where despite helping others he can't help himself nor anyone can help him, Irony of him being most defective human being despite being as close to perfect as anyone is, is also quite fascinating.

Fate: We already saw it many times, he's unlucky which is terrible of course. But most importantly, him being holder of TenchuSatsu fate, which means he won't be getting help from his family, he had terrible childhood, other's may sway him from his path and that he is the ruler of his own fate if he will try and get a hold of it (which falls in line with the story)

Deconstruction: There's a ton of details in the show, from little to big one's or even subtle details. That makes his character possible to understand better and get more information about him, and him being his own narrator make's even his monologues massive and informative for the series. The series gets more and more interesting and complex, and the amount of hidden feats and plots is just insanely high. And the more you read, the better you understand and the deeper you go into understanding this masterpiece.

Humanity: Not only shows the hidden side behind the masks of human's, also their true nature, and how it affects the results. Also shows the "Inhumane" side of the world. And it shows how a person can lose or regain his humanity. The series shown many different stereotypes of characters, and made them very realistically accurate, at the same time developing all of them very well.

Nature vs Nurture: Not only parallels of Hard work vs Talent, but also shows normal environment (Nature) vs WR (Nurture) and their differences. Not only shows how people's capabilities are relied upon the environment they are being raised in more than just the talent and genetics. Talent vs Hard work as well which is an interesting theme. False Genius against Natural Genius. Genes and limits of a human being as well as showing just how impossible equality is in our meritocratic world.

Self Acceptance: Only need to show Vol 2 for that.
*What was I getting worked up for? I had arbitrarily started analyzing Class D and considering the options. I didn't want to. I mean, she was the one who chose this school, right? Horikita and Ichinose were aiming for the top, not me. All I wanted was an ordinary, regular life where nothing ever happened. Otherwise? I couldn't do this.
I knew more about me than anyone else. I knew just how defective, just how foolish I was. I was a horrible human being.*
Not only does he call himself a terrible and defective human being, accepting his shortcomings and how he is as a human being, he also in the same volume stated how he's just a liquid or moldable clay waiting to take shape and that it

takes time to develop into a person. Basically implying he's not a person yet at all in a way.

Defective Nature: Not understanding some normal things, having trouble's with showing emotions, his twisted and purely "logical" self which can be one of the things making his actions evil. But they are more logical. He can't understand what normal person should be like at beginning of ANHS and just projected others on himself and took in what they act. He didn't even know what friends are. That's how defective is Ayanokoji Kiyotaka, who's also the most brilliant Masterpiece and the most capable.

Psychological trauma: WR speaks for itself, he was crying a lot when he was just a child, but was out into such inhumane facility, currently because of it he's not formed as a person, have defensive "WR" mechanism and detachment emotionally and psychologically from other's. It may not be noticeable for most since he doesn't fit a regular psychological trauma, and he doesn't seem to be sad or mad or anything. But his humanity was basically stripped away from him, he was a test subject in the WR project Experiment, nothing more.

Existential Crisis: He was in WR his whole life but now that he's in outside world he's still confused on what his real self is, especially at the start and the Vol 2 is the proof of that. Nor does he really accept his masks as well. He also started being contradictory to his own self even showing just how deep the WR affected him.

Perfection: Talking about Perfection, COTE and Ayanokoji shows about how Contradicting it is and impossible to be perfect, and that even if someone or something is almost perfect, we'll notice the small flaws usually more so than normal points. Even Ayanokoji himself rejects the thought that he is perfect even though it is true that he's the most perfect person objectively in ANHS. Since despite that he's also the most defective.

Pessimism: By definition he surely fits it well, he always thinks of different outcomes, obviously the worst case as well. He also can be seen as pessimistic in a way towards his communication abilities (especially the first 3–4 volumes show that).

Realism: Ayanokoji always thinks realistically without unrealistic expectations mixed in it. He thinks of realistic value's and possibilities. That's just how he is

since he has thrown away his emotions in WR. He will sacrifice even close people to him if it's a logically correct decision.

Projecting: It's a projection on Oneself, since beginning of COTE until Vol 3 he tried to act like an average guy, looking at how other's acted and tried to do the same, picking up their traits.

Self Loathing: Him knowing how foolish and defective he is, as well as trying to change. He doesn't like his own mindset and psychology, because it was forced upon him, not something he picked up himself

Observer expectancy: Easiest way to think of it, is how his father Atsuomi was always expecting him to be perfect, to be the masterpiece, and he forced those expectations upon him as well

Equality: excerpt: "Nowadays, people never shut up about the need for equality. A great man once said "Heaven does not create one person above or below another." It actually says we're equal at birth but then gaps appear. That the differences are the result of one academic efforts, or lack thereof. "Equality may be a false concept" but our inequality remains a difficult thing to accept" / "If I may, I'd like to pose an interesting question: "Are all human beings truly equal?" These days everywhere you go there's talk about the fight for equality. As a wise man once said, "Heaven does not create one person above or below another." People like to throw these words around. That's not the whole quote. It goes on to say that "... while we are all equal at birth, pretty soon, things begin to change. Academic effort is what sets some people apart to rise above the others. At any rate, humans change over time based on their actions. Truth be told, at the end of the day, equality is just a fantasy. And most of us go through life denying the fact that we live in a meritocracy."
Those both (Anime and LN version) also refer to the series itself, for example the "Merit" is the CP and ranking system. While the other also talks about how we are unequal once the gaps appear and that equality is just a mere fantasy, which also refers to the hierarchy in the school.

Dehumanization: WR, him being used as a Test subject along with other's. Him using other's, disregarding their selves and only caring about themselves. Those are both things that Atsuomi and Kiyotaka did. They both dehumanized other's at occasions, especially it refers to Atsuomi and how Kiyotaka was raised.

Identity crisis: Doesn't know his real self, uses different masks and adopts different patterns and habits as well as having a defensive Mechanism in "WR persona". There's quite a big amount of those in the series especially with Ayanokoji.
The Noh Mask: Ayanokoji's stoic and expressionless face + him faking his personality + trying to be "Normal" + hiding his cruel side (basically his monster which relates to the Noh Mask). Ayanokoji also relates to the "Ko-besimi" type which have no happy expression on itself, no humor or anything similar. Just a strict and serious face.

God complex: As the WR Masterpiece, he was worshiped as a God by other's and was set as an example and idol for them to try and reach. He also when serious knows that no one is on his level, hence him saying things like "You know why I didn't ask you the identity of other WR student? Because they weren't a match for me since the beginning" or the "Nobody is stronger than me, even when I'm going easy on them. Remember that"

Between heaven and hell: here refers to the ANHS being basically 2 sides if the coin. Heaven: Best school in Japan with promising future if you graduate and 100% entry rate to college/university and 100% employment rate. They also have free dorm and water, gas. They have free food there if needed as well as big amount of Private Points.
Hell: The Class competitions, the fact that you can't fail a single test, the hierarchy, the "loopholes" which make more cunning and evil people have advantage if used right, lack of points if you didn't perform well in 1st month. Decrease of point for any type of bad behavior spotted and huge lose for expulsion.

Fatalism: Ayanokoji always predicts and makes the match end before it happens, as one of the meanings of Fatalism. There's another one. „The time will come when your class, which has the certainty of absolute victory, will face the reality that win he is not able. I'll show you this. But I'm moving away precisely because I want my defeat. I want the future to be unpredictable. And I contradict myself because the answer is obvious, and yet I long for the opposite."

Ubermench (1)
Man is the middle between the animal and the superman Man who has overcome the stages of the spiritual development will become a superman.

Stage 1 - Camel is a person who endures and resigns himself to all the events in his life. From. He is a follower of a real slave. He can't even tell. Such was his childhood. The child took the whole event in the WR project for granted. He was a WR slave who directly followed orders.
Stage 2 (Leo) as a spirit ready to leave idols not postulated by himself, renouncing I must
(public morality), coming to him, I want (own free morality. The lion is a revolution, then a thirst of freedom, the desire to destroy prisons). Ayanokoji's revolution starts with leaving the WR project "the thirst for freedom and the curiosity of the outside world followed by destroying his fetters and WR Prison). Set a goal to prove the absurdity of public morality - the Perfect Human.
3-stage (Child) But a lion with aroman should become a child, since only a child can easily leabe the old and create a new one from a clean slate, earlier This creation is called the Game. The child is a pure spirit, ready for a new knowledge of the world.
ANHS It was the school that followed his metamorphosis from Leo to a child.
The child began to explore the outside world. Realizing his free will and how widely he can use it to realize his goal.
The morality of the superman He himself brings his morals and principles to society, he is the replacement for God, which dictates the rules." Which is what Ayanokoji did. All the people he manipulated were slaves to his will
Ubermench (2)
The superman is an image introduced by the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche in his work Thus Spoke Zarathustra. To designate a creature that, in its power, should surpass modern man as much as the latter surpassed the ape. Ayanokoji has surpassed man as much as man has surpassed the ape. Nietzsche urged people to strive for these qualities for metamorphosis into the superman
1. Superman pays no attention to morality Ayanokoji move does not pay attention to the moral factors that constrain a person, Nietzsche believed that morality is a fiction used by the house of mediocrity to keep the few prominent personalities.
2. The main thing is progress
Maybe not excessively or massively, but you can see the constant progress of Ayanokoji. His worldview on the world of people is an understanding of such terms as: friendship, love changes over time for him, the most important thing is his own progress and self-realization, which is what he strives for. Together with it, the whole society as a whole he naturally develops. By society, I mean "the people around him"

3. Superman is not a creature, but a creator, the superman is ruthless first of all and most of all to himself, he doubts and reconsiders his values that deprive him of his inner spiritual freedom and the joy of creative life.

Ubermench (3)

4) Superman is naive, like a child Nietzsche wrote that there are three types of people: a camel (laden with attitudes and rules). Lion (refusing any attachments and addictions) and a child (a person who is open to new knowledge and discoveries).
Camel following orders in WR. Lion escape from the WR and the child entering the ANHS Ayanokoji can see the full picture of the world to create their own laws and live by them.
5) Superman guided by the morality of the masters The morality of the masters evaluates actions based on whether they were good or bad consequences for those who committed them - "The stubborn princess didn't seem like she was going to throw in the towel. Wonderful. Yes, I thought it was wonderful. You were almost right. But unfortunately, Horikita, you were wrong about one thing. Right now, just for this moment, I'll tell you. I have never thought of you as my friend. I've never cared about you as a classmate. In this world, winning is everything. Your methods don't matter. I don't care what I have to sacrifice. As long as I have my victory in the end, I'll be fine. You, Hirata-no, all other people are nothing more than tools. I was complicit in what drove you to this. So, don't blame yourself, Horikita. You were useful to me." That's what he wanted to convey.

Excessive Human: Ayanokoji is an exceptional, talented and intelligent person. Who doesn't have a didn't really have a goal before ANHS, and he also is detached from other's.

Narcissus complex: He's seen as the unbeatable monster by likes of Ryuen, Tsukishiro, Horikita, Kei etc. While he himself also realizes that, he also doesn't show or express emotions and neglects them. Even going as far as expelling his friend who he also knew have feelings for him (Sakura).

Dark Triad: Comes from Machiavellian, Narcissism and Psychopathy. Machiavellian and Narcissism I already explained. Psychopathy - because of deficient emotional responses and lack of empathy. Ayanokoji is a combination of psychopathy and sociopathy.

Deindividualism: This one's obvious, like I said he doesn't know HIS self, only the one he got while adapting to WR, so this easily fits.
Determinism: In the case with Ayanokoji, anthropological and ethical determinism is appropriate - everything that happens in the world, including the course of history and human life, is predetermined by human will.
His determinism is demonstrated through his nature in WR, where he is an incomprehensible being, without his own will to decide for himself and what to do, his future seems to be carved on a tree and cannot be changed due to certain factors. His fate was predetermined by his father.

Dualism: His Fake self - the one he projected onto himself to be more normal. And his "Real" self that - The one developed in WR through experience. Or the one he's developing currently through ANHS experience.

Amor fati: should rather be seen as the love of fate and chaos, which is sometimes a reality. This love is not passive humility in the face of what is happening, it is not slavish obedience to events. Only by loving his fate can a person modernize. This is not quite optimism in the spirit of everything for the better, but not quite pessimism either. This rather gloomy fatalistic exercise of Amor foti is not stoic, since this phrase (Amor fati) means not just overcoming one's loss, mistakes, it means accepting everything, whether it be the cause of pain or pleasure Love of fate is combined with the concept of the Superman Ayanokoji has been going with the flow all his life. Fate, he does not hate his father or WR He does not experience the usual emotions for us, his existence was predetermined by his father even before his birth. For him, values and emotions do not play a role if we are all waiting for one the end is death.

Freedom: Ayanokoji's freedom lies not only in humanism, where he wants freedom in the form of a free life. Kouji is also trying to move away from the white room from a reality in which he was only a product of communism. This is also where his escapism shows up: Not wanting to have anything to do with the white room, he deliberately hides his abilities and tries to be an ordinary high school student. But Ayanokoji's internal conflict, or to be more precise, Ayanokoji's other personality, does not allow this and breaks out with a Machiavellian ideology: Exploiting others for one's own purposes. Kouji's image as a normal high school student is shattered, which makes him angry. Ayanokoji develops and realizes that the only way to achieve freedom is to remain defeated by his own tool, which he so develops. But even so, there is Kouji's fatalism where he believes he can never lose, so he doubts THIS. Kouji's true

freedom is to be defeated. And only in this way, he will be able to destroy his inner conflict and, accordingly, become free. Nietzsche .. Thus spoke Zarathustra "The most terrible enemy you can meet it yourself. The only obstacle to Ayanokoji's freedom is he alone. Which he himself confirms with the words about the contradiction in himself.

Negative Existentialism: The Dawn of Negative Existentialism. The concept of this philosophy lies in the decision of man: is his existence absurd or is there any value in him? Occurred at the beginning of the 20th century. Ayanokōji Kiyotaka considered his existence / contradiction of the norms of society. The reason for this was. Ideal man "A man who has surpassed human understanding, the Ideal" to be absurd. ,,From the bottom of my heart, I thought I wanted to. to this sad contradiction which I carry within me has been destroyed."

Existentialism: is a direction in which the subject of study becomes the existence of man with his ordinary problems, tragedies, emotions. The predominant value of existentialist thought is recognized as Freedom. A man is freedom himself. According to many philosophers, existentials is free, despite the real ability to achieve its goals The ability to choose and do choice is freedom Ayanokoji was locked in the White Room, like in a prison without the right to exit on the 15th birthday, he had a goal that he could not realize in the White Room, which is why he made a choice: to escape from the White Room despite the meager chances to realize himself humanly, a person can not by immersion in himself, but in search of a goal outside, which may be liberation, this is exactly what Ayanokoji thought Everything depends on themselves" Alnokodzhi believed that people are doomed to make choices and bear responsibility for it. Everything that does not belong to the inner "I" of a person does not matter, the whole world is spinning, because there is a person.

Ayanokōji Kiyotaka belongs to Nietzsche's "master morality" type. What is it? Master morality evaluates actions based on whether the consequences were good or bad for the one who performed them. If you need to beat, finish off morally, humiliate, appear pathetic and ordinary to achieve your goal, he will do it directly.

Triangulation is a method of manipulating communication through the intermediary agent. Recall the moment of the 1st year of study, before the special exam. Ayanokoji Kiyotaka manipulated through Manabu. This shows his nature, as later on he also helped Horikita Suzune and Horikita Manabu to make

up and helped Horikita grow through her brother, using his influence on her as a push.

Allusion (1)

Allusion (Shostakovich's 11th symphony)
Shostakovich's 11th symphony refers to the events of the Russian Revolution of 1905.
"...Ayanokoji-kun, are you asleep?" I pretended to be asleep when it appeared - the devil incarnates. Forcing me back to reality. Shostakovich's eleventh symphony began to play in my mind. "At that moment, Ayanokoji was thinking about equality," but Horikita (whose image he imagined as a demon / devil) returned him to reality - Finale, fourth part of the 11th symphony by Shostakovich-Tocsin (alarm clock or warning bell)

Allusion (2)

Allusion (Beethoven To Elise): Ayanokoji played - Ludwig van Beethoven's piano piece "For Elise" in the presence of Chabashira Sve Analysis of the play. In this case, the main theme alternates with episodes, which always have a slightly different character The first theme could be love? Maybe that's how it is the composer imagined confessing his feelings to his distant beloved
Second theme Hope for reciprocity or a premonition of an early meeting with your beloved Tre on the theme of the Martyr, the composer's mental anguish and the inevitable parting This was a comparison of Beethoven's relationship with Ichinose / Ayana
1) Ichinose realizes her love for Ayanokoji
2) Invites to meet in the evening to confess and hopes for reciprocity
3) Gets rejected...

The Idea Of A Superman/Ubermensch (Horikita Suzune in early Volumes) and The path of a Superman/Ubermensch (Kiyotaka Ayanokoji)

At the beginning of the novel, Raskolnikov sees himself as a "superman", a person above the
crowd and above the moral rules that govern the rest of humanity, gradually separating himself from society. His murder of the pawnbroker is, in part, a consequence of his belief that he is above the law and an attempt to establish the truth of his superiority.
Raskolnikov's inability to repress his subsequent feelings of guilt, however, shows him that he is not a "superman." Although he realizes

that he does not live up to what he imagined for himself, this all comes close perfectly to the character of
Horikita since she sees herself superior since the meeting with Ayanokoji and does nothing to hide it, in fact she has various problems related to socializing with others linked to this aspect of superiority, she wants to reach Class A above all to demonstrate this superiority to her brother, and when this dream fails she understands that she must change her approach and model to follow, and understands that she is not yet up to a "genius" which all comes back to her showing Dunning-Kruger effect and her not understanding all the principles yet.
On the other hand, Ayanokoji is the genius and the Supermanz the superior person that Horikita wanted to visualise herself as and to become one in order to get approval from her brother. Ayanokoji overcame all of the steps to become the Ubermensch and we clearly see just how superior he is to the others. Unlike Horikita he also doesn't have the Dunning-Kruger effect and knows his actual difference in comparison to others. The dynamic also heavily relies on Ayanokoji guiding the person with the Idea of Ubermensch to be closer to the actual Ubermensch, as Horikita improves on her flaws and becomes much capable thanks to him. She starts realising her downfalls and the good of the others, steadily and surely improving and developing as a person and as a leader thorough this path with the personalised Ubermensch like Ayanokoji.

Ayanokoji(Ubermench) and Hirata (Last human + pacifist) dynamic: 1) If Ayanokoji is a superman, then Hirata is his opposite, the Last Man, The last person is a pacifist and conformist A person who does not put good people at different levels in the hierarchy are all equal for him. An idealist who wants to create an ideal society. All of the above is well written by Hirata. 1) Pacifist - He wants to resolve all disputes and conflicts peacefully, without any negative incidents.
2) Comrade or opponent for him, it does not matter to everyone he treats you with respect.
3) The idealist, despite how insignificant his class was, he did not see in
it's nothing wrong. Even when Sudou hit him, he didn't hesitate to forgive him.
4) Ideal society: Hirata wanted to create a friendly and cohesive class where there would be no conflict.

Ayanokoji(false genius) and Sakayanagi (Natural genius) dynamic: The False/Artificial Genius and Natural genius:

Sakayanagi Arisu is a natural genius, and claims to have potential. A person is determined from the moment of his birth (depends on genes). Her goal: to prove that no training room can surpass genes. A person's potential is determined from the moment of birth. This is the structure of human society. People cannot surpass what is written in their genes."
Ayanokoji Kiyotaka is an artificial genius. Masterpiece of the White Room, A man who surpassed human understanding.
His goal: Find a person who will surpass him.
From the bottom of my heart I thought I wanted this sad contradiction that I carry within me has been destroyed."

Ayanokoji (Persona) and Karuizawa (Shadow) dynamic:
Archetype of the Shadow Ayanokoji painted earlier. Persona (from the Latin word "persona", meaning "mask") - In Jung's understanding, a persona serves the purpose of impressing others or concealing one's true identity from others. The mask is just a thin protective shell that helps her natural relationship with the outside world. The undeveloped Persona makes a person very sensitive, he feels threatened even in ordinary interactions with others. Karuizawa has been bullied throughout middle school." Because of what, she developed a fear that others would find out about her weakness and over she will be bullied again, which is why she put on a mask of an independent and arrogant girl mask, which allowed her to make friends relations with others, but even being under the mask she had a fear that her past will be revealed.

Ayanokoji/Icarus symbolism: Ayanokoji's curiosity about his speculative idea of his own freedom. This is a direct reference to the Greek story of Icarus. Ayanokoji and Icarus are trapped by the actions of their fathers. They share a common trait character curiosity about the outside world. Icarus and his father wanted to escape from prison using the wings of Icarus's Daedalian father) warned Icarus not to fly too close to the sun, the same one was too blinded by the thought of freedom and did not listen to him. As a result, he burned his wings and died. Literary interpretation has considered the myth of Icarus as a consequence of excessive ambition. An Icarus-related study of the Daedalus myth was published by the French hellenist Françoise Frontisi-Ducroux. In the philosophy, The myth of Icarus moral is to “take the middle way” by warning against heedless pursuit of instant gratification. In this sense it highlights the greek idea of Sophrosyne (Greek: σωφροσύνη), which etymologically means healthy mindedness and from there self-control or moderation guided by knowledge and balance.

With the literature interpretation, it may be his ambition to get the freedom he desires no matter what he has to do, while with the philosophical way, it's more simple as all his actions are intentional and level headed, he always controls himself whenever he needs to and is guided by his knowledge, keeping things balanced between his freedom and his other desires like seeing others grow.
Ayanokoji, being a masterpiece of WR, was imprisoned as if in prison for over 10 years but in one day, he managed to escape and until now he has gained freedom, but will this freedom "benefit him or not? Ayanokoji's father is afraid that Ayanokoji will fly too close to the sun"
Dust you are and to dust you will return" that's what the father wanted to convey to Ayanokoji
... Dust you are and to dust you will return a quote from the Bible that has 2 meanings-1) person is mortal.
2)everything comes to an end - In this case, the second is appropriate, Freedom will sometimes end, and then "Ayanokoji fall and go back to the WR"

12 Archetypes: Archetypes are innate ideas or memories that predispose people to perceive, experience and react to events in a certain way. The shadow contains our immoral thoughts. The shadow is the unknown dark side personality, the figure of the Shadow personifies everything that the subject does not recognize in himself and that everything still - directly or indirectly - again and again pops up in his mind, for example, defective traits of his character. 1) The figures undergo further development and take on the appearance of people, causing pity, which we tolerate, but at the same time look down on them.
2) later shadow figures" find friends of loved ones' relatives.
3) Usually the figures of the Shadow appear for the first time not in human form, but in the form of monsters.
Ayanokoji does not show his true nature when he arrives at the high school. 1) Ayanokoji, wearing a mask, took on the appearance of an ordinary, unsightly student. Even students with the worst grades could assert themselves by looking down on him. 2) Over time, he found people with whom he was comfortable communicating and his future lover 3) The monster is exactly how the appearance of Ayanokoji was remembered in the eyes of Ryuen and his company.

Split personalities pt 1.

"I've been watching you since school started. The Ayanokoji-kun back then and the Ayanokoji-kun now are like two different people. Your presence, the words you use... It's like you have two different personalities." (Hirata vol 4)
To start with the prologue, the idea of equality is mentioned, and how would you, as the viewer, fix it. Ayanokoji takes us through his thought processes on education and how he believes it's unequal, but through further reading, this entire chapter ties into how he views his life. Knowing what his father has done to him due to volume 5, where Saya says, "I know quite well how incredible you are." I've been looking forward to this. I'll be able to realize my dearest wish by destroying the greatest masterpiece that your father ever made. " Ayanokoji is a product of society's inequality, which he states is the cause of school in volume 1, "Do you or do you not encourage learning to create a difference?" So then, education creates an imbalance." Overall, this entire introduction is Ayanokoji displaying his imbalance through being developed as a human who is supposed to be above others. However, while he was created for this one purpose, Ayanokoji introduces another personality that tries to stay out of his father's shackles by keeping a neutral position. Ayanokoji's personality that he made for school is introduced by this quote: "I'd only felt joy at being nearly free of obligation." This highlights that Ayanokoji wants to detach from this ultimate meritocracy, but soon he'll find out he went to the wrong school for this.

Ayanokoji split personality pt 2.

"I'd left the White Room physically, but some part of me would always be stuck there, where we lived in a state of constant self-defense. You shouldn't need your guard up at all times in normal, everyday life. Going out with Satou would've let me experience normal joys, a normal relationship...but I couldn't visualize what "normal" might look like for me yet. I'd worked to protect myself against any opponent who might arise; I didn't know how to stop. No one else mattered, so long as I won.' Although Ayanokoji was stuck in a cycle of being chained for freedom, Ayanokoji's split personality throughout vol. 7 was finally given a dilemma. After Ayanokoji found out he was free from the Chabashira shackles and even his father's because he would be protected from subjection thanks to the principal, Ayanokoji tries to bury all of his responsibilities to achieve true neutrality again. However, introducing Sartre's idea of free will, Sartre believes humans are born with free will, which holds very few outside variables, meaning everything we do is our burden to hold, and only little things like your birth aren't your burden. Ayanokoji is someone who made his own choices, like the idea of being buried, the acceptance of the Ryuuen. challenge, the promise to get to class A for Horikita, protecting Karuizawa, and even the

subjection to the white room so he could gain the knowledge he craved for. Ayanokoji's dilemma is answered during this time of absolute freedom from every shackle. Ayanokoji finally realizes that even after he's free from everyone's expectations, he still has his own expectations of himself.

Ayanokoji neutrality

"To live is to suffer, to survive is to find some meaning in the suffering."
At the beginning of the first chapter, Ayanokoji views Horikita as the devil, which is very important to his character due to his perspective of characters reflecting himself (which I'll elaborate on further on later in the analysis).

He also assigns Shostakovich's Symphony No. 11 to Horikita, which is a revolutionary song. Horikita in the series is marked as someone who delivers trouble to Ayanokoji's neutral world, which Ayanokoji resolves by just becoming her servant. Starting with this position, Ayanokoji threw himself into, knowing the despair it'd cause signifies the statement "To live is to suffer, to survive is to find some meaning in the suffering." As previously stated, the "masterpiece", which is what he is viewed as by everyone, is derived from constant pains and trials to become what he is now. Ayanokoji calls Horikita the devil because he denies his suffering and labels it as bad. However, he subjects himself to more suffering, which shows he still believes that suffering brings value. Ayanokoji's two personalities are hard to distinguish when he is trying to stay neutral or trying to construct his stage. Either way, both lead to him positioning himself in the shadow where he can live a life of neutrality by making friends and protect this life without being in constant threat of being the leader of the revolutionary movement.

Ayanokoji perspective (tools)

"the one selfs enemy is the other"
In volume 3, we get a stronger perspective on how Ayanokoji views people. I have never thought of you as my friend. I've never cared about you as a classmate. In this world, winning is everything. Your methods don't matter. I don't care what I have to sacrifice. As long as I have my victory in the end, I'll be fine. You, Hirata, and all the other people are nothing more than tools. I was complicit in what drove you to this. So, don't blame yourself, Horikita. You were useful to me." Ayanokoji directly mentions that everyone is a tool. Ayanokoji also sees the interaction with people as suffering or regretting while living in

despair. These two details about Ayanokoji greatly tie into the Sartre "Hell is other people" quote. Ayanokoji is put into a position that directly goes against the version of himself that he sees (his neutrality) because of the lens of others that view him as the "perfect human." The looks of others allow Kouji to see his consciousness, such as Horikita, who he calls the devil because she defies his neutrality, but he also calls Chabashira-sensei, goddess of death, for her ability to also do this through statements such as "the most defective" or her most significant role of getting to class A.
Alone, Ayanokoji is free, able to be the normal one he wants to be, but when he hears others, he's able to see himself truly, the perfect human he's made to be, the tool he's made to be. Other people Ayanokoji sees that reflect an aspect of him are Karuziawa, who in volume 4 plays into becoming a "parasite." Ayanokoji turning Karuizawa into a parasite is like his situation in volume 1 where he sticks to
Horikita. This shows how Ayanokoji woke up to his inability to stay neutral due to the others, such as his father, Horikita, and the one who drove in the nail, his sensei.

The shadow (1)

Karuizawa's dark eyes met with mine. People who carry darkness within are attracted to one another. Slowly, they erode each other. Those who conceal a deep darkness will readily embrace the darkness of others."Wh-what are you... you..." she stammered. If her past held her captive, then I had to forcefully free her from her shackles. Even if we weren't close, I could feel the darkness from her, through her skin. Yes. There were profoundly dark things left in this world that Karuizawa wasn't aware of.
I've mentioned that he tried building a shadow in which he could work, so he could avoid being thrown into the light. Ayanokoji's main point throughout the story was his split personality, which he used to "have a normal life," which, as mentioned before, is being destroyed slowly. In volume 5, the talk about his death that he is asking for highlights how contradictory his existence is. He tries to live in the shadows to keep himself alive as a normal human, but the more he despairs, and the more people he meets, the more his shadow grows to the point where it's no longer hiding that he's a normal human. The shadow that was made to keep him hidden is now swallowing more and becoming his new way of revolution, marking him as the leader. As the leader, it seems Ayanokoji is picking up the idea of burning up in the sun.

The shadow pt (2)

"That was precisely what allowed me to recognize the infinite bounds of human curiosity."

You taught us all kinds of things. Not just the liberal arts and sciences, but martial arts and self-defense techniques, and bits of worldly wisdom too numerous to mention. Learning fascinated me. I wanted to learn about the common, everyday world that you deemed worthless and turned your back on," I continued."

"Do you think I could learn what I have at this school if I stayed with you? What's freedom? What does it mean to be unconstrained? I couldn't have learned that in the White Room." I replied.

"Worthless bottom-feeders? Not at all. This is a place where I may discover whether human beings are made equal or not. I find that quite interesting."

You think that even incompetent morons can stand toe-to-toe with geniuses?"

"That's what I hope."

"You want to destroy my ideals, then."

Although Ayanokoji has accepted his expectations, one thing that still haunts him is the other: his father. His father has still constructed him as his ideal, and the white room symbolizes this perfectly. No matter how normal he tries to be, his teachings in the white room leave him in a state of absolute self-consciousness. Ayanokoji enrolled into the school to answer the question, "Are humans really equal?" It reflects his existence, and finally we understand Ayanokoji's core reason for why he exists: curiosity.

Humans exist and thrive for knowledge, which is why Ayanokoji learned everything he could from the white room, and why now he wants to taste freedom and everything that comes with it. The first plan of Ayanokoji was to self-destruct to reach his freedom with the shadow, but now he intends to use his shadow to supply the students with the ability to prove even the most defective can become equal to him. Ayanokoji is taking the shadow and fighting against inequality to destroy himself, which is why he went on the offense. Ryuuen can be seen as someone similar to Ayanokoji. Ayanokoji attacks him to teach him fear, something Ayanokoji doesn't have either, and to keep Ryuuen evolving, he frees Karuziawa from others and herself so she can also grow and acquire her truest potential, and he gives Hirata and Horikita a united class so they can push the defects to their fullest potential.

The fall of Icarus

"Even though his wings burned, Icarus flew as high as he could in search of his freedom."

Now that Ayanokoji is able to see himself, he wants to escape himself. Chabashira mentions that Ayanokoji is very similar to the Fall of Icarus legend. "Icarus flew out of the tower where he was imprisoned in order to gain his freedom. However, that wasn't achieved through one person's abilities alone. It was because his father, Daedalus, had constructed wings and instructed him to fly. He didn't fly because of his own intentions. Don't you think that sounds exactly like your current predicament?" Sooner or later, Kiyotaka will gladly pursue the means of his expulsion from school. You're welcoming your end, much like how Icarus fell into the sea and died after his wings were burned, because he'd flown too close to the sun." Chabashira mentions this poem to emphasize how Ayanokoji's point of view causes him to harm himself. No matter what happens, or how Ayanokoji thinks, he will always go back to his way of thinking, that he is an object made by other people. However, how Ayanokoji responds further reinforces Sartre's thinking on the subject of the self. You should know, Sensei. Icarus won't heed Daedalus' warnings. "Even though his wings burned, Icarus flew as high as he could in search of his freedom." Ayanokoji reminds her that Icarus defies the Gods and chooses freedom by returning to himself. Ayanokoji would rather self-destruct to prove he has his own free will than oblige his father and prove that he is the perfect human. The concept of the shadow is his way of swallowing the sun and then falling from God's grace.

Ayanokoji true self

"Can you bury me?"

"I wanted that, too. My destruction, my defeat-would mean that the old man would lose. I wanted the sad contradiction that I carried within me to be destroyed. I wished for that from the bottom of my heart."

This moment truly visualized Ayanokoji's true self in the series as of now. Ayanokoji loses at the end of volume 4 and Ayanokoji's talk with Sakayanagi's. Both times, an emotion stirred inside of him, excitement. Every time Ayanokoji is offered a way of destroying his "perfect human" role, he begs for it, but at the same time he fights against it. Contradiction stems from Ayanokoji, no matter if he drops his neutrality, because at the end of the day, being the perfect human and seeking to end your life is a contradiction in itself.

Ayanokoji vs Ryuuen: *Confronting the self*

Excerpt: "I had no idea what he was talking about. I couldn't see my own face or read my own expression, but I was certain of one thing. Something this insignificant would never shake me. I felt no emotions, and definitely not fear."
"It was like looking in a mirror of the person I'd been when I first started at this school. I wondered whether there would come a day when Ryuuen regained what he lost. I was sure of one thing, though. He and I were similar. And I could still use him."
Ayanokoji and Ryuuens dynamic hinges on Ayanokoji's true self and his self-destruction plan to be exact. Ryuuen is a cold man who has no emotions, no fears, and no striving for anything, but only for someone who can defeat him. Ayanokoji knows how this man works and, after finally answering his dilemma, he starts to put into plan the affirmation that someone like him can be free. Through the battle on the rooftop, Ayanokoji taught Ryuuen fear and kept him from dropping out of the school, so he could strive for more while leading him to attack class A, which is where Saya, a born genius is. The battle on the roof is Ayanokoji trying to close the line between his neutral persona and his true self. If Ayanokoji can learn fear by defeat, and can defeat class A with no genius, then Ayanokoji can finally achieve the equality he wants.

Free will
"If he really is dead, then that's all the more reason for me to stay in school. Matsuo helped me enroll, even though he knew you'd punish him. I must honor his wishes." A ridiculous reply for a ridiculous story. "You've changed quite a bit, Kiyotaka." I'd always followed his orders before. Well, I followed the White Room's orders. It had been my entire world. This man's sole failure was the one year he left me with Matsuo. During the conversation with his father, Ayanokoji is told that the person who helped him gain his freedom from the white room was killed, and it was all because of him. Ayanokoji's father tries to submit that whatever he does in his stead is for Ayanokoji to bear, but Ayanokoji throws it back at him by demonstrating that the only burden he has to comply with is what he did, which is to compromise Matsuo's safety by coming into the school. This entire discussion highlights Ayanokoji's free will, which his father is very surprised that his ideal son could even have. Ayanokoji's father raised Ayanokoji with a hard determinism perspective, believing that everything that happens is a chain delivered by others. By showing his father that he is free in this school from his father and Chabashira, he quickly demonstrates to his father that the sole mistake he made would be the end of his ideal. But as we know a part of Ayanokoji is still in the white room, so who knows if Ayanokoji will ever break the inequality inside of him.

Cognitive Biases

All the characters within COTE show different forms of cognitive bias. Ayanokoji shows (as stated previously) cognitive bias for example survivorship bias. What Is Survivorship Bias? Survivorship bias (or survivor bias) is a cognitive fallacy in which, when looking at a given group, you focus only on examples of successful individuals (the “survivors”) in the selection process rather than the group as a whole (including the “non-survivors”). In which we can relate to him choosing Kushida over Sakura, his own friend, due to Kushida being more capable. He also didn't mind some people in his class being expelled, so there'd be fewer problems. He also has a self-serving bias. The self-serving bias is defined as people's tendency to attribute positive events to their own character but attribute negative events to external factors. It's a common type of cognitive bias that has been extensively studied in social psychology. For example in Volume 7 when Atsuomi, his father, said that Matsuo died because of him enrolling in ANHS, he immediately in his mind blamed it on the Whiteroom and his father, seemingly also trying to convince himself he's innocent and it's not his fault.

Horikita has the Dunning-Kruger effect, an effect which occurs when a person's lack of knowledge and skills in a certain area cause them to overestimate their own competence. By contrast, this effect also causes those who excel in a given area to think the task is simple for everyone, and underestimate their relative abilities as well. We see Horikita constantly thinking she's special and superior to others, to the point of arrogance and uncooperativeness and even carelessness.

Ryuen shows the Gambler Fallacy (in his consequentialism): which is a mistaken belief about sequences of random events. Observing, for example, a long run of “black” on the roulette wheel leads to an expectation that “red” is now more likely to occur on the next trial. With this, we can easily tie in the "X" search, by which he not only thought he's got the advantage and sets up the scene, he also thought he knows how Ayanokoji thinks and that they are even birds of the same feathers. Just to in Vol 7 have this belief completely shattered by reality, yet he thought if he tried again, and again he'd win one day, and to prevent that, Ayanokoji planted fear into him.

Hirata shows Loss Aversion/Sunk-Cost Fallacy. What is Loss Aversion? Loss aversion is a cognitive bias that describes why, for individuals, the pain of losing is psychologically twice as powerful as the pleasure of gaining. The loss felt from money, or any other valuable object, can feel worse than gaining that same

thing. Just an example of Friends is easy enough to tie this to Hirata, as Hirata has an enormous amount of friends and classmates and while he is glad to have them, when Yamauchi was expelled he was absolutely saddened by this despite not even being well acquainted with Yamauchi. Of course even more, so we can think about Hirata's childhood friend who is now brain dead as well.
Karuizawa represents Aversion Cascade or also regret aversion, is something that occurs via fear of either commission or omission. In other words, it is the prospect of committing to a failure or omitting an opportunity that we seek to avoid. This obviously is tied to her fear of being bullied again and doing anything to save that, even becoming a parasite living on other's protection.
Kushida represents The bandwagon effect is the tendency for people to adopt certain behaviors, styles, or attitudes simply because others are doing so. More specifically, it is a cognitive bias by which public opinion or behaviors can alter due to particular actions and beliefs rallying amongst the public. She always wants to stay clean and positive for others and doesn't want to go against their needs or wants, opinions etc. She always supports it to not let her image crumble.
Classroom of the Elite does an amazing job upon showing the hypocrisy and biases that come within a meritocracy, and how such affect/influence people's thoughts and actions.

From Aki "The Fool Card"/"" The Joker Card"
"To have power and to fail to use it is a behavior of a fool"
The Symbolism behind Kiyotaka's Existence, how it ultimately affects the world building, power dynamics between classes in ANHS, and the story entirely.
Reference before getting into this analysis

"The Fool Card"
As mentioned before, The Fool is the only card in the Tarot Card Deck that has the number zero attached to it.
Among other things, The Fool card represents the very beginnings of one's spiritual journey. To summarize, The Fool card tells you to take the leap and follow your dreams. It tells you that you have all that you've ever needed to successfully achieve your dreams - that you have unlimited potential. And this card tells you not to listen to the naysayers, who may think that you are a 'fool' for going after what you want. Even though you have no idea how it will all play out, you choose to go on this quest and begin your adventure.
The Fool or The Joker Tarot card symbolizes Kiyotaka and the story so far, all the endings and beginnings that make up the journey of the story all started

with Kiyotaka, the ending or the conclusion of Kiyotaka's journey is already written in Y1V1 Prologue.
No, drifting's the wrong word. It wasn't a pleasant situation. I felt like I was in a haze, because I didn't know the urgency of near-expulsion. This was everyone else's problem, not mine, so it just didn't register as important. "Only a fool wouldn't use his innate abilities." Those words stuck in my head. "A fool, huh? I wonder if that's what I am, after all." As I closed the window, the television's cacophonous laughter pierced my ears.
The very first chapter of the LN is the prologue of Ayanokoji Kiyotaka, who narrates from the future, implicating that he has arrived at the conclusion of the story, and it is his afterthoughts after ANHS.
What does the joker card symbolize?
Joker: The Joker, Fool or Jester is a mysterious figure. He is found in the Tarot, where his number is zero, and symbolizes all the endings and beginnings that make up the intricate journey of life 'He is truly a wild card', and it is up to you whether you use him in your readings.
The story of COTE started with the ending of Kiyotaka, then we are to witness the beginning of the journey and how it is led to that prologue.
"But you know what? Don't you think there's one card in your class that shouldn't be mixed in?"
"The card that shouldn't be mixed...?" Hoshinomiya-sensei laughed and turned her gaze to me. "Yes, it's cheating. Sae-chan's class is the only one with a joker."
Considering that he is a student that shouldn't even exist in ANHS in the first place as stated in v7, he is the fool or the joker as symbolized in y1v8 where Kiyotaka keeps on getting the Joker Card during Old Maid and in Y2V8 where Chie-sensei's analogy of Sae's Class.
He, a student who shouldn't exist in an environment depicted as a miniature society, where society holds up the importance of Equality, he disrupted the equality of balance of classes in his year. Which also aligns to what Chie-sensei stated. From the moment he enrolled in ANHS, it caused an imbalance of student placement and assembly, the class that was negatively affected by this is Ichinose's class. Parallels to the Joker Card disrupting the balance of a card game.
This is hinted in Y1V11 when Ryueen stated that Ichinose's class doesn't have a proper leader. It is implicit knowing Kinugasa, it all aligns.
After listening to their opinions, Ryuuen stated his own evaluation of Class B. "The biggest weakness of Class B is Ichinose ... No, that is their absence of a proper leader." "W-wait a minute. What do you mean? Isn't Ichinose their leader?" people who should be better at making strategies. For this reason,

although Class D is lacking, there is still the chance of winning." "Ichinose and Kanzaki are not suitable to be leaders. They are the type that support the leader. If we treat him as a strategist in the class, Suzune and Katsuragi are "The absence of a proper leader" considering how the school is based of a miniature society and the importance of equality in society, the matter of enrolling and student class placement in their year is also in an equal manner based on potential and flaws of those students to the Joker/Fool symbolism, the Joker card in a card game disrupts the balance in a game, as referenced in Old Maid scene in Y1V8. Kiyotaka's Enrollment in ANHS disrupted the balance of equality.
In fact, X is also tied to this, as the Fool/Joker Card in the tarot Considering the mathematical references in the LN, an algebraic symbolism whereas X = 0 is X = Ayanokoji whereas 0 is correlated to the Fool/Joker Card, it's possible the solution x = 0 means that the value 0 satisfies the equation, so there is a solution. "No solution" means that there is no value, not even 0, which would satisfy the equation. In fact, Ryueen named the mastermind "X" in reference to equations and trying to find the X.
There is a reason why Kinugasa wrote "X" as what Ryueen would name the mastermind, I believe this is his fun way of writing symbolism. (The X part of this may seem like a reach but knowing Kinugasa's attention to detail, i'll repeat that this is all what he intended to write).
Zero and The Fool Card
Now, let's summarize everything and put all our disparate thoughts together.
• Zero = Everything. Nothing. Limitless, Raw Material, Unmanifested, Potential.
The Fool = Take the Leap, Begin the Journey, Chase Your Dreams.
• Moving To the Right = Towards Conscious Awareness
Moving To the Left - Towards Inner World Awareness
⚫ Judgement - The Fool - The World = Wrap up your long-standing cycles- Bravely Take the Leap - Become one with the World energies.
•The Fool at the Beginning = Discard your rational, conditional fears & logic, and take the leap to understand your inner world.

Vol 11.5 Year 1, Ayanokoji and Kei Peak: "People are creatures that grow and develop. And they are creatures that love to learn. That was instinct. Just like learning how to ride a bike or how to swim. Just like learning how to handle chopsticks and how to drink through a straw. I was learning to love, through Kei, and it was something I hadn't learned to do in my life so far. Something I hadn't been able to learn in the White Room. I was compelled by my inquisitive mind.

Also, there was one other important reason for me choosing Kei for this. It was because this romance was necessary for Karuizawa Kei to grow as a person.

Looking ahead to the next year, her relationship with me was going to be very important. If Kei continued to live as a parasite that needed to attach itself to a host, she would eventually break down. This step was vital to prevent that from happening.
I wondered what kind of expression I had on my face right now? Was I smiling? Or did I perhaps have a look of embarrassment? Maybe I looked flustered, or maybe I had a big, goofy grin? I didn't know.
I didn't know what kind of look I had on my face right now.
... No.
That's not right. I did actually know the look I had on my face right now. I knew what I was thinking and what I was trying to do.
People take joy in learning. It's the same whether it's studying, exercising, or even when you're playing a game. You feel pleasure when you realize you've improved.
It was the same with love.
I didn't know anything about love. Not romantic love, and not familial or platonic love. I didn't know anything about the relationships between men and women. The shyness and the pleasure that awaited them in those relationships, I didn't know anything about those things. I was sure that I would find answers for each of those things in the near future.

But nothing would probably change as a result. I was just learning is all. I would grow and move forward. I could say that Kei was like a textbook about the opposite sex for me, in a manner of speaking. Once I was done reading it, that textbook would have served its purpose.
Or perhaps...
Maybe there was a future in store that wasn't like that? Would I become someone irreplaceable to her, never leaving her side? I didn't know. There was a part of me that wished for that to happen. And another part that realized it was impossible.
Please, I prayed.
At this moment, as I was smiling happily while embracing someone precious to me, I sent up a prayer. As I gently hugged Kei. I silently wished to myself that I would become a young student who would vow to take care of her."

Growing up in the most socially devoid environment like White Room, Ayanokoji never had the opportunity to develop feelings for anyone and therefore never truly understood the significance of relationships. Watching everyone around him develop feelings for each other and get drawn together led him to follow the crowd and attempt to fit in. Being the most rational being, Kiyotaka knew that the chances of him gaining emotions were zero but hoped that helping karuizawa, who is mentally weak, develop as a person would have a similar effect on him as well. He still views Karuizawa as a tool, but he also takes her very seriously as giving up on her would mean giving up on learning the one and only thing he could never truly comprehend; "why humans need emotions." His contradictory state of rational thought, telling him he'll never change and be the same, and his hopeful part wanting to be wrong are also clearly evident. Ayanokoji Kiyotaka is developing as a person but yet he himself doesn't realize he already does. That's how big of an impact the White Room had on his psychology.

IDEOLOGY & IDENTITY CRISIS

Ayanokoji's ideology that he developed as a result of the influence the white room had on his subconscious mind is Machiavellianism, which is the main reason for his feeling of superiority to others and god complex. Ayanokoji's conscious goals to experience the outside world and prove the value in humans are highlighted in his identity crisis: Ayanokoji created a mask in order to adapt and be an ordinary student in ANHS, however, his inner self is an antithesis to his external personality. His "WR self" lacks morality and prioritizes winning by any means while the "ANHS self" desires to understand love and satisfy his curiosity about the world, denying his existence as a "masterpiece" and the WR teachings. To invalidate his existence, Ayanokoji tries to find someone that can defeat him, Horikita is a good example as Ayanokoji hinted at that possibility while helping her grow.

HYPOCRISY/JOURNEY

Ayanokoji is lying in his monologues and denying that he is a genius, however, there are a few moments in which we get the chance to catch a glimpse of his self such as the tool monologue in V3. He is subconsciously believing to be superior and wouldn't hesitate to use his father's/WR teachings that he despised, thus he's also a hypocrite. Although he started helping others because

they would prove useful in the future, Ayanokoji started to form genuine connections with people. His journey is one of understanding love, bonding with people, and relying on them.

Ayanokoji's Fate

Ayanokoji started helping others develop and become better people to reinforce his belief of value within people(Horikita, Ichinose, Sudo) but he's only his father's experiment of the ideal leader that can rule Japan. Therefore, Ayanokoji's existence is just his father's definition of "the perfect human", which lacks love and warmth, and is centered around the ability to rule using power. After he finishes high school, Ayanokoji will simply go back to his father and be his "masterpiece", as a result, he doesn't believe in a change of his fate as he denied the benefits of memorizing Manabu and Tachibana's phone numbers and was uncertain about the future of his relationship with Kei.

Ayanokoji ideology and perspective development

Ayanokoji learned about love and warmth through Kei. This is visible in the parallel between him looking down on Sakayanagi (His subconscious superiority) in Vol 5 Illustration to in Y2 Vol 3 being different from that, and him going down to help Nanase climb the mountain (Conscious desire). Ayanokoji is stretching his hand towards her, symbolizing his will to help others, and understand them, as well as the difference between him and his father. Ayanokoji changed from seeing people as tools to making efforts to understand them and even look more like them.

Beginning of Self Acceptance

Ayanokoji denies his White Room self by lying he's not a genius but more and more students are starting to see his abilities, and he's forced to accept that. "Accept the inferiority, both black and white make the whole man" (Jung).

One of koji's goals is to prove he's not a masterpiece, however. He needs to accept both his WR self and the self he's trying to build at ANHS in order to become whole. A good example is when he used his abilities to defend against Nanase but not mercilessly beat her, symbolizing how he integrated the two

parts of him and managed to show compassion, a step towards being different from his father

The inquiring mind.

Creation of a masterpiece. The perfect human who would lead Japan into the future. From the moment he was born, Ayanokoji was subject to the training of the white room, where he gained incomprehensible knowledge, martial arts skills, and tips of wisdom for someone his age. The white rooms purpose for proving the philosophy of Nature. To create a genius that can defeat that of nature. Ayanokoji's unprecedented talent created him to become the sole survivor of the white room's vicious 4th generation. A genius amongst geniuses.

Effect on Characters

Ayanokoji has some of the most interesting effects on the people around him I have ever seen out of a character. Tragically however, it is a testament to Ayanokoji's tragic existence. Ayanokōji has an inept understanding of how the human psyche works and how to relieve fundamental problems concerning the human mind. This is evident through his help with Ichinose, Kei, and Hirata overcoming their pasts. Ayanokoji through his inner monologue tells himself that his objective for saving these people is because they will be useful in the future. While this may be true, is that it? Hirata in volume 11 faces the dilemma of feeling isolated without the ability to show weakness or frustration in front of his classmates, maintaining a facade for the sake of others. In volume 11.5, Ichinose faces this exact same dilemma. Ayanokoji's humanity and self desire is shown in his inner monologue during vel II, where he wishes for a relationship in which "One can cry with another." A relationship in which one cannot lie to the other. An equal. Tragically, Ayanokoji states in volume 11.5 that he feels apart from him would always remain in the white room. His heart and mind remains in a state of constant alert, unable to open himself to anybody. In the theory of Determinism, once habits implanted into someone occur, they are extremely difficult/impossible to change. Ayanokoji bears his own burden of being the masterpiece of the white room. If he ever tells anybody what he is, they could be in danger. His past will always come to haunt him. While Ayanokoji has "saved" many of his peers from completely collapsing, will anybody ever be able to save Ayanokoji from his isolation? Someone he can become human to? Show the emotion he never knew how to show? Just like the other children in the

white room Ayanokoji witnessed vanish because of isolation, he will be subject to the same fate. Vanish, never to be seen again.

Transcendentalism vs Romanticism

We see Ayanokoji's father build the "perfect human" or "masterpiece" that we know of as Ayanokoji. He wants to achieve perfection and self-actualization (like most transcendentalists) and he built an ideal, that is the perfect human. Moreover, that perfect human is referred to as God by others, which shows the connection between Ayanokoji's father's goals to build a perfect existence and the goals of a transcendentalist.

In contrast, Kiyotaka values the individual's merit, through their emotional growth and individuality, not an ideal that all must reach, similar to the way Kiyotaka was always compared to the 5th+ generations, as he was the "ideal". Kiyotaka, unlike his father, falls under a more romantic view as he values not intellectual growth or a creation of an ideal, but each individual finding their own form of value or merit within society. He believes more "what people are feeling", and how they want to grow rather than creation of an ideal which ties more into his contradicting nature.

Thematic impression

He's the embodiment of "Equality" It's said that God is the only perfect being but he's the portrayal of "perfection" The Author of Cote implements a quote. It goes "Heaven does not set one man above or below another But what is Ayanokoji? He's achieved the unachievable By being the "Above". There's more it's also said in the quote academic effort is what sets the "equality" apart while the white room was a stricter academic environment. His own existence is denying equality as he is the "perfect human" but he's filled with defectiveness, contradictory, and hypocrisy. His existence is applied to that.

Confirmation Bias (A bit more about it)

In arguing whether people truly have "merit", Ayanokoji uses confirmation bias (tendency to search for, interpret, favor, and recall information in a way that confirms one's beliefs) in deciding whether people have merit. For example,

Ayanokoji's at the end of Y1 argues that Horikita's merit and potential as an existence has grown. However, was her growth and development that of her own work and production? Can the newfound merit within Horikita be considered her own merit, as it was not her who cultivated that growth? Or is Ayanokoji's own beliefs in Horikita's growth, due to his bias, the only thing that has truly cultivated by itself?

Lying, Simple Denial, and Projection

It is in this illustration, and at this moment that we see Ayanokoji at, arguably, the lowest point he's been in since going to ANHS. It is at this moment when we see lying to himself about his own abilities and sense of self. He is denying his superior and abilities, and this is represented by him looking away and to the right, something he directly states (in Volume 3) is a sign that a person is lying. As such, Ayanokoji is lying to himself by calling himself defective. Moreover, we see the characterization of his denial in the fact that Ayanokoji is walking away from Horikita. As he is denying himself mentally, he is physically denying Horikita, walking away from her and denying her the chance to speak with him and get him to explain. Also, in explaining, Ayanokoji has to admit his influence within the actions of the trial, causing the observer effect upon his "experiment" to understand if all people have merit.

Such admittance would be equivalent to Ayanokoji admitting the fact that he was wrong, and proving that it is not people who inherently have merit, but his influence that gives them merit directly before his monologue, as he converses with Horikita, Ayanokoji blames Chabashira for the change in Horikita, directly saying "I assumed that this change in Horikita's behavior was Chabashira-sensei's doing." This statement directly contradicts what he'd previously said, claiming that "The always-sharp Horikita probably picked up on some of my thoughts." Showing how, as he is also projecting, denying his actions and placing the blame upon Chabashira's shoulders. As Ayanokoji walks away, he faults another, walking away from the guilt and blame that comes with the consequences of his own actions.

The Noh Mask

I already talked about Ayanokoji interior being fitting for The Noh Mask concept, but now here's a little more:

In every illustration (excluding the V1 Kushida image) we consistently see the exact same expression on Ayanokoji's face. No matter the occasion, he has that slight frown, never changing. However, we perceive emotions within his face, due to the angling, shading, and eyes, just like that of a Noh mask. As Ayanokoji literally can't express himself, false expressions are represented within the illustrations of COTE, to create a sense of emotion within Ayanokoji.

His Subconscious Superiority

Ayanokoji actively attempts to deny his own superiority throughout the series. However, in moments in V3, V7, and V11, we see his subconscious understanding of his superiority arise as he consciously admits it. This is characterized in Ayanokoji looking down upon others, and the frame of reference of the drawing. We see Ayanokoji literally looking down upon everything, as he himself both understands and admits his own superiority within those exact moments. In Volume 3, we see the cracking of his "mask", and he admits his true line of thinking. In Volume 7, we see him both literally standing to stop Ryuen, physically showing his superiority, and looking down upon Ryuen. Ayanokoji is inarguably above Ryuen, in every sense. In Volume 11, his relationship with Sakayanagi is shown, as he looks down upon her, and she looks up at him, representing their feelings and thoughts towards the other.

Self Insertion

A self-insert is a character who is meant to represent the author or the readers, most often in a very idealized sense. Basically, a self-insert is a character you want to put yourself in the shoes of, and imagine oneself as that character. Ayanokoji in the first (roughly) 2 and a half volumes puts on a mask and plays the role of a self insert. We see him fit all the categories of a self-insert: Inherent altruism, being OP yet not using such powers, "pulling" women yet being denser than a pile of bricks, and the act of a "normal" person.

Ayanokoji, the Self-Proclaimed Self-Insert

We see Ayanokoji's facade in volumes 1-3 as he builds this character for himself, playing out the role of a cliché, self-insert protagonist. We see his actions as he tries to maintain his facade of a self-insert, with silly events such as Ichinose's incident with Chihiro in Volume 2 and his friendships that he had with the Idiot

Trio, who seemingly played the role of "perverted friends" of the protagonist often seen with the self-insert characters. Over time, Ayanokoji attempts to incorporate concepts which surround a standard self-insert character, trying to build upon his facade, and turn it into reality.

The Critique of a Self-Insert

As Ayanokoji's "mask" falls and his true self is revealed, he plays an interesting job in judging his own facade. As the reveal in volume 3 happens, Ayanokoji's entire fake idealization falls, and he is forced back into the bitter reality. Similar to the sense of a real person putting down a media, Ayanokoji has to put down his own false identity and false mentality, and come to terms with both his reality and his own, contradictory existence.

Smile:

Conversely, while Ayanokoji maintains the facade of being a normal member of his class and a normal person in general, we see his mask slip as his multiple lines of reasoning intersect. The volume ends with him wishing for Horikita to smile, a seemingly sweet and selfless gesture meant to portray a "true" sense of friendship in spite of self-interest like that which is critiqued by Ayanokoji. Yet, Ayanokoji says priorly that a smile is an act of "vulnerability".

Ability was paramount, huh? I felt my chest tighten. We'd been isolated from the world and now thrust into this situation. Perhaps we were cursed. Horikita seriously planned on getting into Class A. Her will was unshakeable. However, our path out of Class D would not be an easy one. Considering our current performance, it was hard to imagine us even reaching Class C. What should we do from here? I imagined that things would turn out as they should. For the time being. I'd do my best. At the very least, though...I wouldn't mind seeing Horikita smile.

That vulnerability being the ability to participate in the transaction of social capital, friendship being reliant on weakness just as much as strength. Ayanokoji's mostly straight face is consistent in the art as well as other character's perceptions of him, signifying how even though he claims to be normal he never truly will be, he has no "vulnerability", no weakness in which he needs the sympathy of others, and as an extension of that no need to treat others as equals in the first place. The "truth" he is searching for and the crux of

the series is yet to be truly found by him, and being the 1st volume it's only natural there would be more.

Man/Reality (1):

Ayanokoji talks about two opposing views in the prologue, the objective truth: equality being fundamentally unachievable, and his subjective ideal: humans striving for equality.
So, my answer would be, "No, we are not equal." To be human is to be unequal . Equality does not exist.
I don't think it right to simply say that we are unequal and then live our lives based on pure instinct. In other words, though "equality" is a complete lie, we cannot accept inequality, either. Right now, I'm trying to come up with a new answer for humanity's eternal question.
Contrary to most people struggling with the problem of inequality, Ayanokoji sees man as irrational in face of a rational reality, the opposite of how we view man as rational and reality as irrational. Ayanokoji's ideas on what is and isn't rational, and the decisions he makes reflect his being as either one of those two opposing entities.

Man/Reality(2)

We see Sae succumb to induction, her status as a Class D teacher leads her to treat her job lightly thus keeping the students from Class D, and therefore her, from ever rising the school hierarchy. Similarly, the existence of unfairness in the past leads people to accept unfairness as an immutable aspect of life rather than something that can change.
"Are you saying that you can't accept what happened? But it's an excellent example of how unfair the world is. In fact, you could call it a microcosm of our unfair society."
"Certainly, society is not equal, no matter how idealistic you try to be. However, we are human beings, living things that can think."

Hume was a proponent of the problem of induction, avidly against the reasoning that past experience can be used by itself to predict the future. Ayanokoji points out that the human capacity to think, their ability to be rational, is ironically a caveat to what one would consider rationalism. Humanity's inherent potentiality can overcome induction and the cyclical nature of social standing if you never accept it.

Existence precedes essence:

If you couldn't tell from the anime episode titles, Cote derives a lot of its social commentary from French Philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre. Sartre theorized that existence, i.e. the actions you take, is more definitive of a person than their essence, or who they are internally.

Long ago, in a bygone era, a great man said that heaven does not set one man above or below any other. However, he did not necessarily adhere to the idea that everyone is equal. Did you know that there is more to that famous passage? The rest goes like this: Everyone is equal when they are born, so I ask, why do we see differences in position and status? And it continues: Do you or do you not encourage learning to create a difference?

At birth, our essences are the same, we are all human and we all are actively experiencing life. However, our existence, our talents; whether in academics, athletics, or leadership, are more definitive of us in the real world.

Reason/Passion:

In David Hume's A Treatise to Human Nature, he says "Reason is, and ought only to be the slave of the passions, and can never pretend to any other office than to serve and obey them."

*Even though my eyes were closed, I understood. I could feel the devil's essence as she waited for her slave to awaken. So, as a slave, how exactly would I get out of this situation?
My computer-like brain instantly executed all the calculations to arrive at the answer I most needed.*

Throughout Vol 1, Ayanokoji and Horikita's dynamic follows this line of thought, Ayanokoji's rational decisions alone would amount to nothing, so he needs to.

Horikita's desires as a crutch in which he can act on. This ties back to Ayanokoji's opening monologue, as he looks for a way to search for equality without the irrationality of other people who try to do the same. Since he can't both be the face of reason and have his own desires, he fulfills those of others in hopes that his goal will be achieved.

Normative Social Influence:

As a reflection of rationality, Ayanokoji often associates people's worth with their value to society. In order to rationalize his refusal to give an elderly woman a seat on the bus, he points out the value of youth in Japan in comparison to the elderly, judging that value dictates what privileges one does and doesn't get.

Now, of course, the elderly have undeniable worth to Japan. But the youth will continue to support Japan into the future. Also, considering that our society ages more and more every year, you could say that our youthful value only increases. So, if you were to examine both the elderly and the young and ask yourself which group is more valuable, the answer should be obvious. That's really the perfect argument, wouldn't you say?

Despite his monologues showing that these are his genuine beliefs, when confronted about his decision he plays it off as an unwillingness to stand out. He plays his informative social influence (his desire to uphold his belief system) as normative social influence (his desire to blend in with the crowd). This is the first indicator that Ayanokoji has something to hide, that being his true psychological state.

The Gaze:

When people say "appearances can be deceiving" they forget that the deception comes from one rusting what an appearance implies. The basis of modern sociopolitical ontologies lies in what Sartr calls the "Gaze", the cumulative social perception of others. While the gaze may initially give one a feeling of power as they are in a position to evaluate others, that evaluation also becomes a measurement of oneself. One is also defined by how they themselves define other people.

"You don't seem to be afraid."
"Afraid? Why? Because he looks like a delinquent?" I asked.

"A normal person would try to keep someone like him at a distance." "I guess, but he doesn't seem like a bad person to me. And you don't appear to be scared either, Horikita."

"It's mostly defenseless people who stay away from those types. If he acted violently, I could rebuff him. That's why I don't withdraw."

Ayanokoji is seen as unusual by Horikita for not being afraid of Sudou because he fits the social perception of a fundamentally violent and unfriendly person. While Horikita does the same because she had already taken that social valuation into consideration, she is superimposed by Ayanokoji since her evaluation of him is that of a loss for lack of better words. This "Gaze" becomes the rux of Volume I's story and towards the veracity of Ayanokoji's persona.

The Gaze(2):

Conscious and Unconscious scrutiny through the medium of eyes and words is the basis for art as well as political structures. As Ayanokoji is able to escape these things, the true political nature of his self-contained artwork, his own eyes and words are given meaning by the readers. Even if he is able to fool everyone else into overlooking him due to his average nature, the gaze which he cannot escape and the gaze in which he defines himself, the self/ object relationship between art and audience, ultimately pervades his life.
No one else's eyes or words would ever reach me. I could start ag-no. I could begin anew entirely. A new life. I resolved to enjoy my time here to the fullest, but without drawing attention to myself. Still in my uniform, I dived into my already-made bed. I felt far from tired, however. I was so incredibly excited about my new life that I was unable to calm down. My eyes remained wide open.

As another famous French philosopher, Paul- Micheal Foucault says, the "gaze" of intent is the only to integrate politics in art. His eyes remained wide open, thus he will keep on changing regardless whether he knows someone is gazing at him.

Common Sense:

In his attempts to live a typical high school life, Ayanokoji relies on common sense, taking actions specifically because of their foreseen results. Common

notions and occurrences lead to a form of categorical superiority, where specific actions and attributes lead to success, devolving into nepotism.

Inferior. As a result, the incompetents at the top tried desperately to kick lown the truly superior students. In the end, we settled on a system of hereditary succession."

*A system of hereditary succession meant that things like social tanding, prestige, and employment were passed down to future generations
At those words, I groaned unintentionally. My chest hurts.*

As a society, an idea of perfection is created and imposed upon its members, and we are unable to acknowledge its subjectivity. We turn perfection into both something that has not already been achieved and something that we are able to access. These notions can only be corrected when we come face to face with an objective truth, a conclusively "perfect human".

Is-Ought Problem:

Whereas Horikita's reasoning to save the academically underachieving students is rooted in a positive statement, that she is going to lose points if he is expelled, Ayanokoji's reasoning is rooted in a normative statement, that being that in order for his attempts at friendship to hold meaning he ought to become friends with them, necessitating that they won't be expelled. Hume would say that Ayanokoji's reasoning isn't based in truth because of this, yet we have seen so far that he is at heart a person built on rationality.

The power of violence certainly was effective. Well...if all I did was gather them together, there wasn't anything particularly wrong with cooperating. After all, due to Horikita's stance against friendship, she wouldn't be effective at diplomacy. Furthermore, it'd taken a lot of time and trouble to become friends with Sudou and Ike. I'd hate for them to have to drop out so quickly. Sensing my hesitation, Horikita pressed me.

In order for one to gain social capital, one must forgo rational thinking and uphold lies like promises and moral obligations, regardless if you do hold to them in the end. Through this juxtaposition, the entirety of society is founded on deceit and manipulation, leaving the only truth to be an individual's

self-interest. This dogma becomes the nexus for the same inequality Ayanokoji laments in the prologue.

Indifference(1):

The people who've interacted with Ayanokoji so far see him as apathetic, Kushida going as far as to call him "fundamentally indifferent to other people". The average perspective leads them to believe he is a person without convictions, yet in accordance with the themes and philosophies presented in the volume thus far, social capital is the bread and butter of their current Japanese society.

"So, you think she has good instincts for people?"
"That's why I said I believed you. Ayanokoji-kun, you're fundamentally indifferent to other people, aren't you?" I didn't remember doing anything that would make her think so, but Kushida seemed confident in her assessment.
"It's not an out-of-place judgment. Back on the bus, you didn't show any interest in giving up your seat to the elderly woman."
Ah, so that's what she was talking about. She'd picked up on what was happening that first day. She had understood that I'd no intention of giving up my seat.*

Characters like Ike and Sudou have negative value placed upon them because they do things that jeopardize the social microcosm that is Class D while characters like Kushida and Hirata are looked up to and praised for furthering that society. You are either too stubborn or stupid to know better, a contrast from Ayanokoji, leaving the only conclusion being that his indifference implies an immunity to social stigma. As his teacher says chapters prior, some people like being incorrectly evaluated.

Indifference(2):

Adam Smith in his Theory of Moral Sentiments more aptly describes it as sympathy. Meaning that sympathy is the currency in which social transactions occur, whether it be mutually beneficial relationships or threats, all events occur through the lens of sympathy and through the single behavioral axiom of self-interest.

"You're physically capable. From your swimming, I can tell you're one of the most capable girls in the class. Superior. However, we both know that Sudou's physical abilities far exceed yours. Ike has better communication skills than you. If the test took the form of a discussion, Ike would certainly be useful. Really, you'd most likely bring the class average down. So, does that make you incompetent? No. Every individual has his or her own strengths and weaknesses. That's what it means to be human."

As a form of encouragement, Ayanokoji says that to be human is to have both "strengths and weaknesses", saying that Horikita's weaknesses serve to develop a need for sympathy in which other people like Sudou and Kushida can fulfill, whereas her strengths can be a source of sympathy. "As we have no immediate experience of what other men feel, we can form no idea of the manner in which they are affected, but by conceiving what we ourselves should feel in the like situation." The only way to sustain the current society is to be both strong and weak in some sense, because facilitating the transactions of sympathy is what stabilizes it. One could say that indifference, or apathy, is metaphorical to the dissolution of currency, and the only way to completely cut off sympathy is to be without weakness and unwilling to lend your strength.

Mauvaise Foi:

Living a life that is measured improperly is essentially living a life in what Sartre calls "Mauvaise Foi", or Bad Faith. A life of contradiction where you suppress your desires is how Kushida acts, keeping her hatred and "true self" hidden in favor of a socially acceptable one. But for Ayanokoji, hiding his socially acceptable self, one that uses his full potential aiming to score perfectly average on every assessment. To he who lives within this contradiction yet doesn't do so for the "Gaze" of other members in his society but rather the "Gaze" of some other being, the line between true and false self becomes blurred.

"Yeah. That's what I want out of life, though. That way, my existence has meaning." She answered without hesitation. Kushida had a singular way of thinking. Her own internal rules demanded she get close to Horikita.
"Let me tell you something, while I have the chance. I absolutely despise gloomy, ordinary guys like you."

The fantasy of a cute Kushida that I'd carried until now had been shattered, but I wasn't actually that shocked. Most people possessed both a public face and a private, inner self, after all. However, I felt like Kushida was both telling the truth and lying right now.*

He asks Kushida multiple times, "which is the true you", because to him both facets of oneself exist for the same purpose. Just as he truly desires freedom from social obligation, his fake self is a tool to reach that end. Freedom is freedom, regardless if brought upon by truth or lies. In the same vein, happiness brought by Kushida's false kindness is the same as that brought by real kindness. The end goal, what he values most, is the same. There is no such thing as bad faith because what you pretend to be is also a reflection of who you really are.

The Absurd:

Ayanokoji's contingency doesn't find an external justification, his indifference leads his talent to become unused by his society, making himself have no meaning. Camus calls the absurd the meeting between human needs and the universe's denial, yet in Ayanokoji's case the universe needs the talents of the individual to keep itself meaningful. If man were to collectively deny the universe, it would collapse. The events going on around him necessitate him as the impetus for their resolution, yet he in his "foolishness" chooses not to intervene.

*No, drifting's the wrong word. It wasn't a pleasant situation. I felt like I was in a haze, because I didn't know the urgency of near-expulsion. This was everyone else's problem, not mine, so it just didn't register as important.
"Only a fool wouldn't use his innate abilities." Those words stuck in my head.
"A fool, huh? I wonder if that's what I am, after all."
As I closed the window, the television's cacophonous laughter pierced my ears.*

The world, unable to reconcile itself with its absurd existence, dangles its imposed value as a reward for those who give into its allure. The piercing of "cacophonous laughter" in Ayanokoji's ears serves as punishment for his indifference. In the same way people fall into despair when the religious values they hold prove to be dead, such as Nietzsche points out, there becomes

another form of despair when someone with talent and ability hides it. Is it truly selfish to allow the only arbiter of your value to be yourself?

True Merit:

Even Horikita is skeptical of Ayanokoji's intentions, in which Ayanokoji responds that he is searching for true merit. This oxymoronic statement shows the conflict between "merit", a subjective quality defined by deserving the praise of others, and "true", the objectivity rooted in his Apriorism. His foundation for epistemic truth is reason and reason alone, which is why, even in what is strictly defined as a meritocratic school system, he still seeks true merit, because what we call ability presently is really what we want for ourselves.

"Because I want to know what a person with true merit looks like. What is equality?" "Merit, equality..."
"I came to this school to find answers to those questions." *The words freely spilled out of me before I could collect my thoughts.*

If someone with merit independent of other people exists, it will allow the rise of true egalitarianism, an equal fundamental human worth that can't be achieved through euphemisms and the like used by society today as a bandaid for that pervading question.

Friends:

In Ayanokoji's attempts to make friends at the beginning of the first Volume, he tries filtering what he sees as systemic relationships into his rationalistic brain. What that means is that he believes that by doing a certain thing at a certain time in a certain way, that will undoubtedly bring you closer to friendship. Yet, even though not relying on what he called the natural way humans become friends, he does in fact change his relationship with Horikita at a time opposite to what he thought was logical

By distilledeyes (Redditor)

Ayanokoji's Motivation:

Section 1: His motivations before he enters the school, and whilst he dips his toes into the school (occurs from around up until Y1 V4.5):

I'll start off with a question: What motivated Ayano to go to this school?

I think there are two answers to this: one that is obvious, and another that is more obscure. For Section 1, I'll only really be talking about the obvious one, I'll be coming back to the obscure one in Section 2.

So what is this obvious answer? You probably know it already: To live a quiet, peaceful, ordinary life as a high schooler in ANHS.

But to pivot from that… Why? Now, you might think the answer to that is simple, but let me show you that it's not.

If you've read Y1 V1 and Y1 V2, you'll remember several moments where his actions contradict this goal he's defined for himself. He says to himself time and time again in those volumes that he wishes for this quiet life, but as Horikita points out at the end of Y1 V2 (highlighted in the text below):

*Horikita: "That's not what I meant. I want to know what you're thinking."
Ayano: "I'm thinking 'This is annoying,' and 'I don't have any motivation to do this.' Stuff like that. That's what I'm thinking. Even if you took back what you said just now, Horikita, I do intend to live my life quietly. Whether we aim for Class A or whatever, that's it."
Ayano (Narration): I'd hoped that answer would satisfy her, but Horikita didn't listen.
Horikita: "If you really hated drawing attention, you wouldn't make all this effort to get involved. You say you're someone who 'dislikes trouble,' after all. Yet you act all evasive and non-committal even while you help me. Why?"*

And Horikita makes a fair point, which Ayano ends up acknowledging. He can say all he likes about not wanting to help but the fact of the matter is: he does help them (Horikita, Sudo and Sakura). So why does he reject Horikita's notion, and keep telling her he wants this quiet life (in other words, not to help people)? Why would he even perform those actions in the first place if he wanted this quiet life? Why does he adhere to such an idea in an almost desperate way, if you look at the text, at this point in time? I think there are two reasons for this.

Firstly, the more shallow reason: He wants to get back what he missed due to being a part of the White Room.
He feels like he lost something, and he wants to get it, to feel a semblance of balance within his life that had, up until this point, only been dedicated to the White Room. It's like FOMO (fear of missing out). In a way, it's not really that he truly desires for the quiet life but that he wishes for it. This is something he laments to himself in Y1 V7, though it is a metaphorical lament:

*Ayano (Narration): The first 'winter' I experienced. It's this cold and somewhere deep down inside, I never thought I'd be able to see this view. There's a song about a dog that saw snow and excitedly ran about. I can empathize.
If it ever snows, I wonder if I'll be just as excited.*
(***Note: Borrow Saadisfy's words but Snow in Japanese literature symbolizes 'innocence' so this means that he wonders if by continuing to try to live this quiet life that he thinks is this innocent life, will be excited about it? Basically his way of asking himself whether or not this is something he'd really be able to enjoy.)
*Ayano (N): I exhaled and recalled the events that transpired today. Meeting with my father, the existence of Chairman Sakayanagi and that the policies of the school don't mean anything. I also achieved much in seeing through Chabashira-sensei's lie. Because with just this alone, I'll be able to make significant progress forward.

Ayano: "...shall I put an end to it?".

Ayano (N): So far I've mostly kept it behind the scenes but the way the exam results are announced, the more Class D continues to prosper, there'll be no avoiding malevolent attention. Inevitably, the surveillance would intensify and you'd be able to investigate who it is that's at the center of it all. As a matter of fact, although I set Horikita as that person in the center, Ryuuen realized that it's faked. Sakayanagi also knows my past and it's only a matter of time before Ichinose starts doubting it as well. If I want to turn back, now's my only chance.*

Notice that in this monologue of his, he's rationalizing. He's telling himself what he believes will be the case if he does continue to be 'X' and operate behind the scenes, almost in an attempt to prod himself, despite the fact he already knows what he should be doing to 'win,' and to get that quiet life. But why does he need to prod if he knows the 'right way' to go about the showdown with Ryuuen?

Because he's hesitant and indecisive. And that's why I call this reason the shallow one.

It's something he believes he should have been able to experience, untainted by the White Room, not something he truly wants at this moment in time. The fact he ends up saving Kei over preserving this quiet life is proof of this. Because if he did value it over everything else, he wouldn't go save her, but he does.

Anyways, as I said before, this quiet life was sort of a wish more than a true desire. And the thing about wishes is that we long for them even though they may not be within the realm of possibility for us. So why does he wish for this quiet life, where does the FOMO come from? It comes from his desire to be normal. The fact he fakes his personality in the earlier volumes (especially in Y1 V1 and V2) extends from this; here's an example:

Ayano (N): Conclusion: I'd pretend not to hear her. I had dubbed this the "Sleeping Strategy." If she (Horikita) were a kind girl, then she would say something like, "Aw, well, there's nothing to be done. I'd feel bad to wake you, so I'll forgive you. ★" "If you don't get up, I'll kiss you!" would also be okay.

He's trying to conform to the other students in his class by acting like what he thinks is normal (Note: this is definitely not how a high schooler typically acts but he did have zero anecdotal experience before this so it's a given he would think based probably on stereotypes he's seen).
This is his way of trying to live that quiet, ordinary life, by acting in a way that he thinks is normal. "I should feel this way, right?" It's a question like that that drives him on. But the fact of the matter is he doesn't actually think these really cringey thoughts like the one I show above. It's all a facade, something he forces himself to think (probably trying to become this normal high schooler by ingraining habits into himself).
That's why, despite this quiet life where he doesn't do anything troublesome, he contradicts himself and helps people. Because at the end of the day, he's experienced the horrid place that is the White Room. He says it himself, almost in an accepting and self-realizing way (Y1 V7):

Ayano (N): I am a first year high schooler. I am 16 years old. However, my knowledge far exceeds the amount learnt in a lifetime. I realized it, was made to realize it. That humans have an endless amount of curiosity.

It's undeniable that his personality has been morphed by the White Room. It has certainly been a large part of his life, taking up around 14 years of his time and turning him into the "masterpiece" that we see glimpses of time and time again in the story. His time in the White Room may be an impossible feat to forget, and the memories essentially branded into him by it will probably never truly fade (due in part to how much it traumatized him). I'm saying some cruel stuff, but it's true, I believe.
And it is truths like these that he struggles to bring himself to accept, as he begins his school life (though he does end up overall doing it, as seen in the quote above. Hindsight is 20/20).
In Y1 V1 and V2, he helps people out despite disliking trouble and wanting to live this quiet life. But he rejects this in Y1 V2, affirming to himself that he knows himself (in an instinctive, almost habitual manner) and that he's a terrible person. He doesn't even humor that there could be some truth to what Horikita says, or that there could be more to why he wanted to help people like Horikita.
And then he tells himself so many times he'll never get over what he experienced within the White Room, like this monologue in Y1 V7.5:

Ayano: I'd left the White Room physically, but some part of me would always be stuck there, where we lived in a state of constant self-defense. You shouldn't need your guard up at all times in normal, everyday life. Going out with Satou would've let me experience normal joys, a normal relationship…but I couldn't visualize what "normal" might look like for me yet. I'd worked to protect myself against any opponent who might arise; I didn't know how to stop. No one else mattered, so long as I won. Maybe I'd be this way until the day I died.

So how could he enjoy living such a quiet life, ignoring his experiences and what led him to becoming the masterpiece of the White Room? How could he truly want to think, act and feel in a way that he thinks he should be, rather than based on what has morphed him into the person he is, as he enters the school?
This probably seems sort of fucked up of me to say, 'cause it might sound like I'm trying to denounce him of his ability to become a regular highschooler. But I don't think he can bring himself to blank out that portion of his life (which the monologue above supports) and live like it never happened (even if it has fucked him up deeply). At least, in the way he thinks he should be living his high school life, by living this quiet life.
This is something that fortune-teller he went to in Y1 V4.5 talks to him about, indirectly telling him to decide his own path (so to not force this quiet life onto himself) and not to be fake:

*Fortune-teller: “Fate tenchuusatsu is certainly rare. However, that doesn’t necessarily mean that your entire life will be marked by misfortune. It’s true that the overall outlook is bad. There are negatives: you won’t have the blessing of your parents or your family. However, the rest is up to you, individually. You alone decide what you can do and can’t do.”
Ayano (N): She had a grim expression on her face, but I could see compassion in her eyes.
Fortune-teller: “You don’t need to be pessimistic, and you don’t need to act like you’re starring in a comedy, either.”*

As I said before, if he genuinely valued such a life, he’d refrain from throwing it away, right? But it's clear from Y1 V7, when he chooses Kei over that quiet life: he truly didn’t want this. He’d rather save someone who he describes as being ‘an irreplaceable existence’ to him over that life. Almost as if a life with such a person, connections with people like Kei, is what he wanted. But I’m getting ahead of myself.
Now for the second reason, which isn’t one that is quite evident unless you fish for clues:
He wants vengeance against his father.
You might be thinking: ok, Mr. distilledeyes, pump the brakes. He certainly says in Y1 V7 that he came to this school out of a self-described “adolescent rebellion” and to choose his own path, as he calls it. And he does show a desire to want his old man to lose by being buried by people such as Sakayanagi or Ryuuen. But that doesn't mean it's also the reason he wanted a quiet life...
But I think it is, at least, up until around Y1 V4.5.
One of the biggest hints is in Y1 V1. As Ayano reflected on the class situation post them losing all their class points and them having to work together for the midterm, he pondered his father's words:

*Atsuomi: "Only a fool wouldn't use his innate abilities."
Ayano (N): These words stuck in my head.
Ayano: "A fool, huh? I wonder if that's what I am after all."*

Why do these words of his father stick in his head at this time in specific? Why does he feel like a fool? (Note: And let me remind you, immediately after this, he ends up helping out Horikita and Kushida to get the class past the midterm, by getting answers from an upperclassman and saving Sudo, using his abilities to help.)

As I mentioned earlier, in Y1 V1 and Y1 V2, Ayano constantly affirmed to both us and Horikita that he wanted a quiet, peaceful life. This manifested in that first excerpt I pulled out, where he said he's getting annoyed because of Horikita's pestering. And then there's the part immediately after that argument, where he told himself that he knew himself better than anyone else, that he's a fool, and that he's a terrible person.

Because of the use of the word fool twice, it sort of clicked to me. He believes his father's words. He thought himself a fool for wanting to hide his abilities (Note: And let me emphasize it was only for that reason, not for wanting to come to the school or any other reason. After all, even later on in the novels, he never really showcases regret for wanting to come here (besides feeling guilty about Matsuo the butler)).

But he still pursues this quiet life despite believing he's being a fool. Why? It is his way of rejecting his father.

By not using the gifts burned into him by his father, by the White Room, he rejects his father's wishes. It would explain why he gets so defensive and irritated with Horikita when she stipulates that he doesn't truly want this quiet life he says he wants, more so than the first, shallow reason I talked about, though both are valid.

It would also explain why he instinctively told himself things like "I know myself. I'm a terrible person." After all, he's his father's son. Even though he doesn't see him as a father in anything besides paper, they are genetically linked. He might not be able to disregard his father's existence completely when assessing how he is as a person, even though they don't see eye to eye on everything. And as shown from how he thinks about him in key moments (like Y1 V5 when he meets Sakayanagi for the first time where he desires for himself to lose so his old man would, or Y1 V1 for the quote I brought up just now), that man's existence certainly weighs heavily on him.

His desire for vengeance against his father, by not using his powers as the masterpiece of the White Room, I believe is a key motivator into why he wanted that quiet life, even though it really isn't explicitly stated. And thus why he comes to the school.

(Note: As to whether or not he hates his father, I think he definitely does (though even that morphs as the series goes on). His rejection of his ideals by wanting himself to lose so his father would lose, him calling him 'that man' which is probably his way of not seeing him as a father, his unforgiving nature which I hypothesize could be a byproduct of this hatred for his father, and so on.)

However, I need to clarify. These are his motivations before he enters the school, which hold true up until around Y1 V4.5, up until the scene with the fortune-teller (I think).
After that, things change.

Section 2: The Changing of His Motivations throughout Year 1 and realizing the path he wants for himself (occurs from around Y1 V4.5 to V11):
I said there were two reasons for why he came to this school, but the second one is a bit more of an intangible one. But it's also the bigger reason why he came to this school: Being able to decide his own path.
Now, a good question is: how is this different from him wanting to live a quiet life? As I tried to illustrate in the first section, Ayano's desire to live this quiet life was something he thought he wanted. So, at first, he compounded these two reasons into one (meaning he thought that being able to decide his own path = living a quiet life).
But the line differentiating the two shows up more and more as the story progresses, until we reach Y1 V4.5. I've already harked on and on about Y1 V1 and V2 showing off his desire to help people, but I really need to emphasize that this desire contradicts that wish of his to live a quiet life.
It depends on the person but some may say that helping a person, especially without any gain to had, is troublesome or not worth the effort. So the fact he does so means he didn't see it as much of a bother in the moment, or maybe that his desire to help these people around him overwhelmed him and that he may have not been thinking about that quiet life of his during the moment.
So going off the assumption he doesn't want to live the quiet life, being able to decide his own path… what does that mean for him?
There's a lot to consider here, because, well, there's a lot of uncertainty. For starters, let's talk about his phone call in Y1 V11.5 with Chairman Sakayanagi.
He says, verbatim, to the Chairman that he's accepted his fate and will go back to the White Room. Now, let me ask you: when did he start to think this? When did he decide that he would not struggle against the White Room? Well, he literally tells us directly:

*Ayano: "After graduating, I will return to the white room and take up the role of the leader. That man has trained me for all these years up to now for this."
Ayano (N): The moment I step out of this school, the walls protecting me will disappear. If I lived in a cheap apartment, he would attack me at night or use some other method to take me back to the white room.

Chairman Sakayanagi: “So you’ve accepted your fate… And on that basis, you came here.”
Ayano: “That’s the reason why I want to protect these three years to the end.”
Ayano (N): In simple terms, it is like being in a rebellious phase. To reject my father’s orders and do what I wanted.*

So what this means is that, from the start, before he came to the school, he came on the assumption that he would inevitably return to the White Room.
This means that when he says he wants to decide his own path (when he has this basis of returning to the White Room in mind)… It’s not something as simple as being able to escape or defy his father (after all, he’s accepted that he can’t for the foreseeable future) or being able to choose a career path.

So what does being able to decide his own path mean for him? And it comes back to the biggest draw to the character that is Ayanoukouji Kiyotaka, and that is, his real personality. Not the fake shit he puts on or the White Room side, but the one that lurks beneath all that, his genuine thoughts and how he genuinely wants to act.
One of my favorite monologues in the entire series comes in Y1 V4.5, when he's talking to Kei. Here's an excerpt, and the highlighted section is just… well, just read it:

*Ayano: “I want to ask you something. What would you say is the specific difference between me right now, and the usual me?”
Kei: “Usually, you’re this gloomy guy. You don’t talk at all. But now, you’re assertive. You’re being direct. Those traits are polar opposites. The way you talk is different, too. What’s your deal, anyway?”
Ayano: “What do you mean? Don’t people simply act differently depending on who they’re with? Don’t you do the same thing?”
Ayano (N): That was probably the best possible rebuttal, although it didn’t fit exactly. The truth was that it felt like I’d just been born as an individual. When I enrolled in this school, I wasn’t fully formed. I was like liquid, or moldable clay. Developing into a full person took time, and I had yet to completely understand how to interact, or the correct way to express myself.*

You know how people say "The first step towards change is awareness"? This monologue radiates that energy like the sun. What I mean is that this might've been his first step towards discovering himself. He begins to desire to learn more about himself.

(Note: This monologue takes place after the fortune-teller scene, implying that the fortuneteller may have affected him and caused him to change his views on how he thought about himself).
Before this moment, he constantly tried to write himself off as being one way (like how he kinda instinctively calls himself a terrible person), dismissing what might actually be the truth about him. It's weird, especially given how much he puts into trying to understand other people or how he never really ever called anyone a terrible person (he definitely does showcase frustration and cruelty towards others like Sae but I'm not sure if that's out of him genuinely thinking they're terrible people and that they deserve it, especially as that vengeful behavior fades as the story progresses). It's unfair to himself, and it's dehumanizing.
Little mini theory: I think part of the reason why Ayano comes off as an unreliable narrator is because he doesn't like to face the truth, in other words, he lies by omission to the reader and himself. Rationalizing to avoid seeing what may actually be the case. As I stated in my preamble, he's not a perfect human being. His rationalizations are certainly well-thought out but they may not be fact.
So yadda, yadda, yadda, Ayano starts down his path of self-discovery. Nice, but why do I think that correlates to him being able to decide his own path? Well, because to him, this path of self-discovery is done for the sake of self-actualization. In other words, he starts to want that path of his to go like:
Understanding himself as a person → Figuring out what he wants out of these three years.
By being able to understand how he is as a person, he frees himself from the shackles of the White Room, in a way. Then he can find out what he wants to do at this school, or what impact he wants to leave. It's an idea that builds very quietly, as we see Ayano start to do things that contradict what he thinks he should be doing. The first step of which is saving Kei in Y1 V7.
Now to bring up something I haven't addressed, why exactly does Ayano like to help people? Because he likes to see them grow. Something which he brings up time and time again. But why? Well, there's a couple of reasons for this. First is because of the fact he's trying to achieve a certain goal: to make his old man lose. Excerpt from Y1 V7 incoming:

*Ayano: "I don't know whether there is salvation for you or not, but I have no plans to give up learning. The methods may be different, but it's true that this school is raising talents. That's where my expectations are."

Atsuomi: "What gibberish. You don't understand what kind of place this school is. This is nothing more than a shack for the mobs. There should be some in your own class I'm sure. Lowlifes without any chance for salvation."
Ayano: "Lowlifes? That's not true. This is a place where I can find out whether people are equal or not. It's a pretty interesting policy I think."
Atsuomi: "So you think even worthless people can grow up to stand in the same ring as geniuses?"
Ayano: "That's my wish."*

So by helping people to grow, he can see whether or not anyone can stand up to other geniuses, like Sakayanagi. In other words, proving that geniuses are formed only as a direct result of being subject to a good environment and not things like genetics, and acting for the goal of winning.
The second reason (which is a bit more speculative) is because this sort of is the impact he wants to leave on people. He wants to be able to help them develop into people capable of taking on the world in a sense.
The reason I think so is because of that same moment in Y1 V1, where he thinks himself a fool for wanting to hide his skills. Why does he think himself a fool? Just because his father may think him to be one by hiding them? No, he must also think so himself. Why? Because being able to be an honest person is something he values. Here's an excerpt where he echoes that belief in Y1 V6:

Ayano (N): It was better to be a genuinely kind, helpful person who made mistakes than someone two-faced who bragged about being perfectly good. A kind but flawed individual was more honest than a saintly liar.

So by choosing not to hide his skills in those first couple of volumes, he desires to express those skills that have been honed into him through his years in the White Room by impacting the people around him. It's like an artist to a canvas but instead of a canvas, it's the people around you. It's both self-fulfilling as it could convince him that maybe that time in the White Room wasn't worthless, if it led him to this moment where he could help people, and kind, as it is an expression with the purpose of being able to guide someone towards success.
Of course, guiding someone on a path towards any end could be seen as manipulative, but if it's only done for the sake of putting them on the path to their own success and fulfillment, I dunno if it truly is so bad. After all, by just existing, you impact the others around you, as they have to think about you and respond to you. Just by something as simple as one conversation, you can move a person.

So he slowly starts to help people to grow, prioritizing that over that quiet life (specifically after the Rooftop incident). From helping Kei, to Ichinose (in Y1 V9, when she's writhing in guilt over her actions), to Hirata (as he moved around aimlessly in Y1 V11). And of course, Horikita, throughout all of that.
And this desire slowly builds up, subconsciously. And it manifests beautifully into one of my favorite scenes in the entire series, which occurs in Y1 V11, in Chapter 5, Part 5, as he converses with Horikita Manabu. I'm just putting the whole thing because very it's great:

*Manabu: "But, if…"
Ayano (N): The elder Horikita stopped walking for a moment and fixed his eyes on me. For some reason, I found myself getting caught up in his powerful gaze and stopped walking as well.
Manabu: "If Suzune could stop chasing after my shadow, break away from her dependency, and become honest with herself…"
Ayano (N): A Spring breeze blew through the air.
Manabu: "She would surpass me altogether, and probably become someone you wouldn't be able to ignore."
Ayano (N): He wasn't saying this just because he was doting on her as an older brother. He truly meant it. In a lot of ways, I also admired Horikita's high potential. Why was that, though? Was it because of what he just said?
Ayano (N): Suddenly, a thought crossed my mind. What was I supposed to be doing here, at this school? No, what did I want to be doing? I felt like I had suddenly found the answer to that question.
Manabu: "But in the end, it all depends on whether she can make the change at all."
Ayano: "She will change."
Ayano (N): I responded to him confidently.
Ayano: "Or, no, let me rephrase that."
Ayano (N): But then, I chose to correct myself.
Ayano: "I'm going to make her change. Not in the same way I've gone about it so far, but for real this time."
Manabu: "…Oh? I never thought you'd say such a thing."
Ayano (N): It felt like this chance encounter with the elder Horikita would leave a large impact on my life. It would be a very long time before I knew whether that premonition proved to be true or not.*

And this is the moment where he consciously realizes what is the path he wants for himself. In other words, what impact he wants to leave on this school. And he confidently verbalizes this to Manabu.

He wants to help people grow. As to why, I'll be getting into that in the next section.

Section 3: Enacting his path (Y1 V11 to Y2 V7):

So this section is going to be quite speculative as we still don't have clear answers as to how exactly he plans to help Horikita (and the others, I'd presume).
But even so, there's still a lot of information we can go off of.
So, before I get to that open-ended question I left at the end of the last Section, let's start off with another question: Why does he want to help people grow?
Before, I speculate he does so out of a desire for vengeance for his father, and a form of self-expression. Is that still the case? Kind of.
I do think it is still out of a desire for a form of self-expression and fulfillment. But I think the vengeance thing might not really be a factor, or that it fades throughout Year 2. Why?
Well, cause, firstly, he sort of doesn't really talk about his father much in these volumes or his ideas. This might be a little bit of a cheap answer but this could be an intentional move from the author.
So the fact he doesn't think about his father's opinions, wants to reject them and doesn't think of parallels between his father and himself anymore is the author indirectly telling us that hatred he has for his father isn't what is driving him anymore. To make a comparison that is easier to understand, let's say you had a toxic ex.
They fucked you up, you guys broke up, and you can't stop thinking about them, both because of how they fucked you up, and also because you probably wished for things to be different or for them to have expressed things differently. But then, you start to do more things, experience more things, and you come to appreciate what exactly these things mean to you, and that your ex's opinions don't define you and shouldn't restrain you. And at the same time, you probably analyze your ex, realizing what may have led them to think the way they did. You start to hate them less, viewing them not as some terrible, irredeemable that can never be forgiven but as another human. Even if the shit they did felt inhumane (And well, if it was genuinely inhumane, they should probably be jailed). It's all for the sake of your own growth, because you start to value

yourself more, not exactly more than them but just enough that you feel like you are also another person that exists within the world. Who deserves to be able to find things that matter to you.
So what am I trying to say? Well, basically I'm trying to compare Ayanopapa to a toxic ex... God, I let my mind run wild sometimes.
Anyways, the summary of it all is he's found something more important than vengeance, than his father. Inciting hope rather than despair and hatred.
You can sort of sense this by viewing his interactions with people who he has directed his vengeful nature towards in the past and seeing how his behavior around them has changed. Namely, Sae-sensei.
To say the least, throughout most of Year 1, he was pretty merciless towards her. But that changes in Year 2, and you can see glimpses of it, especially in Y2 V5 in the last chapter, where he conceptualizes her growth, and recognises her as his teacher:

*Sae: "If you're interested……would you be willing to listen to my confession?"
Ayano: "The Sacrament of Reconciliation it is. I'm not much of a religious person, but if that's fine with you then go ahead."
Ayano: "No problem. Then, I'll leave now, Chabashira-sensei.".
Ayano (N): I've been calling her that lately, but I said it with emphasis. She will be fine now. Through this special exam, she has grown as much as the students. Her mind, which had been stuck in the third year of high school, had quickly begun to catch up to her current age. Her mind, which had been stuck in the third year of high school, had quickly begun to catch up to her current age.*

So his vengefulness fades. But he still wishes to deny his father of his ideals, indirectly. Indirectly, as in the story, it's solely because it's an idea he doesn't like. So he wants people, people who have had a normal childhood, to beat him. Which would thus deny the White Room's existence, in an ideological sense.

My evidence for this is his monologue at the end of Y2 V6:

Horikita: "Of course, you're one of them. I don't know what you're thinking, and you're uncooperative in many ways, but... you're indispensable to the class and to me."

*Ayano (N): I'm like training wheels on a bicycle. At first, it's indispensable, but then it comes off, falls down, and shakes repeatedly, and eventually you learn to ride it without difficulty. There is no single person who can support your back

as you pedal your bike. Your classmates will support you. And after watching you grow for a little while longer… I'm leaving your class. I'm not going to say why yet, but I'm sure Horikita will find out why sooner or later. And then… There will come a time when the class you thought invincible will meet a reality you can't beat. I will teach you that. For myself, and no one else. I'm fine as long as I'm winning. If I decide to be the enemy and defeat Horikita, that's a done deal. But I'm leaving because I want to be defeated. There is a future that I hope is uncertain. The answer is already there, but there is a contradiction within me that I deeply want the answer to be different.*

So by guiding them, helping those individuals to grow, he plans to create a classroom capable of defeating him.
Of course, he says stuff like "If I decide to be the enemy and defeat Horikita, that's a done deal." But his line after, "there is a contradiction within me that I deeply want the answer to be different" is clearly his desire, his dislike for his method to victory: a meticulous way of winning no matter the cost. So that would be his reason for why he wants to help people, and why helping people grow is both the way he is able to leave his impact within the school (and by extension the world) and the way he can achieve his goal of proving this ideal he dislikes wrong.
So he goes along with this idea in mind, helping key members who are essential to the class to grow so that the class can become capable of beating him and also so his impact is felt. Pretty epic. And this also results in the heartbreaking scene that occurs within Y2 V5, where Sakura is expelled.
I bring up this scene because I think it is like a "point of no return" sort of moment to his plans. In that, although he's been following through with this idea to build up the class to being amazing, he may not have been sure of how far he would go. This might have been why he had never opted for people who were "holding the class back" to be expelled before, like Sudo. After all, he certainly believes in the students of the class's potential, even Sakura's (here's an excerpt from Y2 V7):

Ayano: "It's true what I said about you being protective; Airi may indeed have been a handful, but she started growing at an incredible rate after she was expelled from school."

So why does he switch gears and start to adopt that policy of "cutting off the weakest members of the class" that he talks about? Because he begins to fully embrace the idea of letting the class grow, grow into a way that is true to all of

them. And it all comes back to how he embraces Horikita's decision to expel Sakura over Kushida, because he wants to let her be autonomous and be the class leader only she can be, by letting her follow through with her decisions. All because he wants to believe she and her class can defeat him, so he lets her follow a route that he disagrees with because he wants to see what she can do.
Which results in Sakura's expulsion. And which he hopes will allow them to win against him.
And after that, as he says, he just plans on watching them for a little more, with Kei by his side, guiding them along. But he'll be leaving.
So now... what does he plan to do after this?

Section 4: The Future of CoTE.

If the previous section was speculation, this one might be straight up hypothesizing. Let me clarify, most of what I'll be doing here is just sort of speaking up about ideas that I think would be interesting, not ones I necessarily believe.
So firstly, class-swap theory... Yeah, I think it's gonna happen.
(Note: Especially with the release of the latest volume, where he doesn't try to recontinue his friendships with the Ayano group, chalking it up to be more "convenient" so that it both won't heavily restrain Miyake, Haruka and Yukimura from helping the class going forward (due to their previous ties to Ayano) and so that he doesn't have to worry about those attachments as he leaves.)
There's so much building up for it already going on, specifically with Ichinose's class. So I'd say, he plans to build up Ichinose's class into one capable of defeating all of the other classes, and specifically, Horikita's class.
I dunno how exactly he's going to get into the class but I do think that the battle he will be having with Nagumo may have something to do with it, as Nagumo would definitely have enough capital necessary to help him do so.
That aside, he's gonna go to Ichinose's class, I think that's probably gonna be the case, especially as Kanzaki and he will devise an environment which would help him to be able to come into the class without being thought of as an outsider who plans on dragging the class down.
As to whether or not he's going to take up the role of the leader, it's possible. At the very least, I do see him possibly becoming something like a shadow leader, helping out Ichinose and Kanzaki behind the scenes, similarly to how he did in Horikita's class. Or maybe he'll make it so that Kanzaki sort of overthrows Ichinose as leader.

Also something I think will happen: Ayano will break up with Kei so he can get together with Ichinose. This is going to be heavily tied together with how Nagumo will lose to Ayano, but Ayano will either team up with Ichinose or defeat Nagumo in such a way that proves he may care about her, which may cause her to fall in love with him more. Then, he'd capitalize on it, and, when he joins her class, will have rule over it alongside her.
As to whether or not he'll grow to love her... I dunno man, this ain't what this post is about. Who he loves and who he doesn't is a whole other diatribe, though I do think it is important, after all, he does value connections (as seen in Y1 V7.5):

Ayano (N): Falling in love with someone. Considering them precious. Sharing happiness merely by being together. Elation. I wondered whether I'd ever be able to experience such strong feelings.

As to something I think will definitely be happening to Horikita's class: Kouenji will become a bigger presence. As to how: Ayano will incite him. By undeniably defeating him and probably by doing something to Mii-chan, which would invigorate Kouenji to fight back against him with all of his strength, by either taking up a higher position within the class or acting independently but not disturbing Horikita's actions (so sort of like Ayano's shadowy tactics). It is also possible that he can become the leader of the class itself (either alongside Horikita or over Horikita) but it would definitely be a contentious thing within the class.
As to the battles that will occur between the classes: Those are gonna be intense.

I think Ayanokoji will put Horikita and the others down, showing them how powerful he is. And as they waver because he left the class, sometime after, they'll either discover the existence of the White Room or his motivations for leaving. Or maybe both.
That secret he has with Sakayanagi in Y2 V6 will rear its head sometime, maybe as a result of the class swap. Sakayanagi may feel a mixture of jealousy and excitement because of it, because she'd finally be able to fight him on the main stage, without having to do it in coy ways.
Ryuuen is also definitely gonna be excited, probably interested as to why he went for Ichinose's class as well as him finally taking the main stage.
And Ayano's dirty laundry aka his meddling as 'X' will probably get revealed, probably by Kei (as Ryuuen would probably not feel safe revealing it).

In other words, he'll be the final boss, to like... everyone. And, oh god, don't get me started on the Year 1 classes.

Trickster: Nature and Traits in general.

"Trickster by nature is witty and deceitful" Ayanokoji constantly deceives anyone and everyone, even readers since he lies in his own mind and narrations at times. About him being witty is just nothing to consider; he's extraordinarily witty.

"The best way to describe a trickster is to say simply that the boundary is where he will be found, sometimes drawing the line, sometimes crossing it, sometimes erasing or moving it, but always there, the god of the threshold in all its forms. - Lewis Hyde, Trickster Makes This World" Ayanokoji Kiyotaka certainly is a character who always exploits the rules and finds loopholes in them, while not getting caught and seemingly following them while he uses them in his own way and advantage. Ayanokoji exploited even the strategies and schemes, plans etc of other characters, even those who are tricky and witty by themselves. Yet none of them were an actual trickster like them, so he destroyed them all with his own tricks.

"Victims of Trickster are generally those who are unaware of him, those who are naive, those who are greedy and those who are self-deceitful.
Unaware of him: All the classes in the first three volumes and a bit of fourth Volume are here. They were constantly tugged along by the string and he tagged them along to do what he wanted.
Naive: Ichinose, Ayanokoji Group, Horikita, Kushida, Hirata, Kei, Ryuen. Ryuen was naive enough to think X is like him, Kei that she'll be unharmed and immediately helped and cared for, Ichinose with being saved by him, while in reality he started those rumors and more.
Greed: Ryuen, who tried to overcommit and went for Class D to get Mastermind out even though he could focus on his class and exams. He paid the price. Takuya who wanted to be placed as the best and the Masterpiece with any method for him working, even killing Ayanokoji. Horikita who only cared about her self gain and was greedy for the class points and Class A.
Self-Deception: Ryuen and Horikita who thought they are superior or as capable as Ayanokoji, Takuya who thought Ayanokoji is doomed was also destroyed himself.

"There can be people who believe they are helping people but they are in fact tricking them"
This fits perfectly, as Ayanokoji is helping his class a lot and at the same time he still tricks them all the same as with others.

"Trickster is only disruptive only when it operates unconsciously" we can also add here Horikita at Vol 1-2 where he manipulated and tricked her without even thinking of doing so consciously.

With the Trickster, no matter how much we try to trace him or have him in our perceptual boundaries, he overcomes both while still playing his tricks on both of us. This is what happened with Ryuen, who tried to perceive X and thought of him as someone similar to himself but was dead wrong. And no matter how much he tried to trace him, he couldn't. Until the Trickster didn't show up and destroyed him personally.

"First lesson to learn about a trickster, whatever we do, he's one step ahead of us" Ayanokoji is always ahead of everyone in WR or ANHS and has no problem with doing so, a lot of the events are part of his schemes or plans, that's how much he's ahead.

"The Trickster cycle corresponds to the earliest and least developed period of life. Trickster is a figure whose physical appetites dominate his behavior; he has the mentality of an infant. Lacking any purpose beyond the gratification of his primary needs, he is cruel, cynical, and unfeeling.
This figure, which at the outset assumes the form of an animal, passes from one mischievous exploit to another. But, as he does so, a change comes over him. At the end of his rogue's progress he is beginning to take on the physical likeness of a grown man. -Man and His Symbols Part II: Ancient Myths and Modern Man - Joseph L. Henderson."
This can be applied in an interesting way. Ayanokoji started his new life in ANHS as said in Vol 1, so we count this as the earliest cycle of his new life, he also said he's not developed as a person and is like a clay, liquid waiting to take form and shape. This is what was said in early Volumes, the beginning of his journey as a trickster. At the same time, he was always described as "Robot" or "Doll" due to his expression, "Gloomy" due to his attitude and "Monster" or "Demon" due to his capabilities and methods. That's why we also see such a big difference in how he's seen in the Manga or early Volumes of COTE. At the same time we don't see him have any real big goal aside from gaining freedom and to

experience normalcy. Which are, by themselves are the primary needs of any regular human being, which he, as Trickster, wanted to experience. At the same time he doesn't mind sacrificing others or harming them to get his way.
He goes from one mischievous exploit to another very quickly and frequently.
Continuation:"But as he does so, a change comes over him. At the end of his rogue's process he is beginning to take on the physical likeness of a grown man"
The first sentence means, the more he crosses the boundaries and exploits others, the more he changes(kiyo coming to anhs and projecting). When he came to anhs,he didn't even think about how his true self will affect everyone and create an imbalance which is like a trickster acting like a child and doing whatever he wants. At the same time he was acting to be like a "horny teenager" having the same joke as Ike about menopause, or how he praised Ichinose's thighs and bodies of Kushida with Horikita. It's more than that. Since Libido is a life instinct which now he has as he is also following his primary urges, it's more than that.
Libido: instinctual psychic energy that in psychoanalytic theory is derived from primitive biological urges and that is expressed in conscious activity. Later he broadened the word's meaning and began using it to mean the mental energy behind purposeful human activity of any kind; in other words, the libido (for which Freud also used the term eros, a Greek word meaning "sexual love") came to be regarded as the life instinct, which included sex along with all the other impulses we rely on to keep us alive.
"His energy sweeps in and hard knocks in an attempt to wake up as individuals and as a culture. He steps in and points things out, asking the culture to look at its own folly" He goes against some rules and ideologies, of WR, ANHS and even characters as well. At the same time the society itself as we see in his introduction with Social Inequality speech.

"The trickster is a perpetual incarnation of change and surprise, doing the last thing expected, the most unpredictable action, coming like a thief in the night, violating the usual rules of going in through the door at a reasonable hour and first giving a knock. —David Williams, The Trickster Brain
The key is in not taking anything too seriously. In her article titled It’s Better to Be a Trickster than a Martyr, Elizabeth Gilbert says: The trickster understands that all this world is temporary, all of it is shifting, all of it is nonsense, all of it is fair game for delight.
And as Tracy Chapman sings in Telling Stories: In the fiction of the space between…sometimes a lie is the best thing."

Ayanokoji Kiyotaka was always unpredictable for any character in the COTE verse, he was always a mystery that people did not understand or predicted. Even his father couldn't know his true desire despite watching over his growth and self constantly nor could anyone else. He would do even the most reckless at a first glance thing, like get himself stabbed or get the Leader Card to be found, only in the end for it to be one of his schemes that grant him the victory. He even violated the rules many times and exploited them in a way that he won't be caught or punished, such is he as the trickster. As we saw in latest volumes he even finds things like manipulating others as an enjoyable thing to have or well, delightful. We also can't take him fully seriously at times even in his thoughts, for example when he was saying Horikita could kill him with one blow or Ike is a better one of the two. You cannot understand him, even if you have him as both the narrator and the character he is still unpredictable, as we don't even know his future goals. He constantly lies to others and himself, that's how he is.

"Trickster is often identified with specific animals, taking the form of a fox, raven, monkey, coyote, hare, or spider, among others. He possesses no well-defined and fixed form. As a shapeshifter, he is just like liquid, escapable. Trickster can cleverly show up in any guise and imitate the form of other animals, yet we can identify trickster energy by the very nature of its changeability and its incendiary actions. Whatever form he takes, he is a primordial being of the same order as the gods and heroes of mythology." Simply put, in Volume 2 Ayanokoji said how he still isn't complete as the person, he is like the liquid or clay, waiting to take shape, developing into a person takes time. At the same time we see him imitating a regular, boring and bland person, or also a gloomy one. A lot of people have obviously seen him as such too.

Trickster and Shadow:

“*The so-called civilized man has forgotten the trickster. He remembers him only figuratively and metaphorically, when, irritated by his own ineptitude, he speaks of fate playing tricks on him or of things being bewitched. He never suspects that his own hidden and apparently harmless shadow has qualities whose dangerousness exceeds his wildest dreams.*"
Every person has their own subconsciousness they may as well not known about or not realize, in our modern society people started thinking about the change or improvement of the society, and they just see it as the fate playing tricks on them, which is referenced to in Vol 4.5 when Ayanokoji goes to the

Fortune-teller with Ibuki and gets Tenchuusatsu fate. And Ayanokoji's motives and desires changed the more he understood himself and his shadow.
Carl Jung, C.W. Vol. 9.1: On The psychology of the Trickster Figure
For Jung, the trickster forms part of the shadow, both of which are dangerous to the extent that we keep them hidden from ourselves and project it onto others. He writes:
The trickster is a collective shadow figure, a summation of all the inferior traits of character in individuals. And since the individual shadow is never absent as a component of personality, the collective figure can construct itself out of it continually. Not always, of course, as a mythological figure, but, in consequence of the increasing repression and neglect of the original mythologies, as a corresponding projection on other social groups and nations.
Carl Jung, C.W. Vol. 9.1: On The Psychology of the Trickster Figure"
Ayanokoji is portrayed as the Icarus, the Greece Mythological Figure who is yet quite different from him as well in his own ways. At the same time Ayanokoji collected in himself at beginning the flaws and regularities of the regular highschoolers. Like being horny, unsocial and hanging out with the dumb people as well. He was using the projection a lot through the first volumes especially. And currently he still wants to find himself as the person, as he views himself as the liquid waiting to take shape.

Trickster as agent of change:

"Trickster is against any authority and does what's best for him, he will never put anyone else above himself. "Ayanokoji Kiyotaka never cared about the authority, WR, ANHS, SC, Leaders. All of that is meaningless to him, as he defeats and exploits them for his own gain, no matter what. For him no matter what or who he sacrifices, he'll always stay on top and one step ahead.
He is never putting anyone above himself, absolutely no one, Ichinose, Kei, Hirata. He can throw them away if it's needed for himself.
"The Trickster of Change pokes holes and weaknesses in rules, systems or even how the world is operating." His exploits of ANHS as well as his speech about inequality or how unfair and unjust the world is, already show this trait.

"Trickster, It is the figure that pushes us to question those in power, and the limitations, and rules that are imposed upon us" Ayanokoji is the narrator of the COTE series, which shows how a 'perfect' school for Elites like ANHS is also defective and what's more has its own exploits and loopholes. He always tests

out the limits too and looks over the rules to see the exploits, inaccuracies and loopholes in them.
Trickster of change is the companion of Growth through any methods he'll make the person improve or change into something else, either better or worse, he'll change them into someone more fitting for our society and ANHS.

"His energy sweeps in and delivers hard knocks to wake us up as individuals" That's exactly what Ayanokoji did with so many people, Horikita, who gone over her arrogance, Hirata, Kei who were clinging to their past and couldn't develop due to it, Ichinose who couldn't wake up from her fairy tale of trying to keep her class defended without any risk but also to rise to Class A, now she finally got competitive. His Aura and his capabilities is exactly what caused that, even in his opponents like Ryuen.

"The trickster brings in the public attention to the underbelly of society" Ayanokoji Kiyotaka does this time and time again, showing just how flawed the ANHS system is, while at the same time uncovering heavy topics like Social Inequality which we can't do anything about but try and hide away from it, while we do know it's the hard truth.

"The trickster helps people confront the fear of change" The fear of change or the negativity towards the change is also something he confronted the characters about, take for Example Honami who feared that change and wanted to stay the same but understood that it's a no-go, Hirata and Kei who had big hesitation towards letting go of those heavy things that weigh them down, Horikita who also couldn't let go of it easily due to the weight of her ego and arrogance as well as superiority complex. Despite all that he brought change and development to them. At the same time he is also always the companion in these paths to change.

"Every construct is constructed. The trickster puts us in contact with the sources of creativity from which we can be empowered to construct our own construct...and reminds us that life is endlessly narrative, prolific, and open-ended. —William J. Hynes, Ph.D." Ayanokoji Kiyotaka through his time in ANHS multiple times changed the course of how history was supposed to go for his class, and for the people inside it. He got people like Kei to stop being the parasite and start making her own life decisions, she was able to let go of her past and continue on to the present and future. Honami was able to overcome her irresponsibility in class competitions and start actually thinking about

beating others and not saving themselves. He was able to open her mind to it. With Horikita, she was close minded towards others and seen herself as superior while others as Burdens, he was able to change that by himself, into Horikita being a dependent and competent leader who is doing it for her own class and not her own selfishness while leading her class

"Plasticity vs. Stability
Your Inner Narrator's job is to provide you with personal stability, a sense of self that persists over time, by weaving together your experiences, your memories, your beliefs, and your desires. Most of this happens below your level of awareness, without your direct input. Without your Inner Trickster, you would essentially be stuck on the hamster wheel: a result of an unconscious process—a complex process, but an unconscious one nevertheless.
While tricksters are usually observed tricking others, and using their wit and their wiles, their scheming and their mischief-making, to outfox adversaries, consider the possibility that the greatest gift your Inner Trickster may offer is its ability to outfox you—to trick your brain into creating transformational change.."
Ayanokoji, the Narrator of the story is greatly showcasing this trait, as he always outwits his opponents as the narrator of the story always pointing out at the flaws of others and how he can out-scheme them and the school system. Same was true even in WR when he was able to hide his actual thoughts from his father and escape due to his actual desire being very different from his father's goal. Ayanokoji always seen to change based on his experiences (Ice cream, Friends, Lover), Memories (The WR which holds him not able to fully change), beliefs (His beliefs of things like Social Inequality is greatly correlated to the situation of the COTE verse both in WR and ANHS), your desires (Currently he is in ANHS due to his inner desire to experience it). At the same time he's always the one bringing the change, in events and characters all over the place. In WR everyone in 5th generation tried to overcome him, with his mere presence there changing the whole place, having to outsource to get him to continue improving and structuring other generations trying to replicate someone like him. In ANHS, he is both the Trickster and The Joker, the Wild Card and sort of entity that completely breaks the balance of the scales, out-schemes others and even the system itself, while bringing big and major changes to everyone and everything around him.

Conclusion: Ayanokoji is the Trickster Agent of Change. Who won't bend down to the "king" as he's the "trickster" that same thing we can see with how he was

with Manabu, the highest authority student, who can be viewed as the "King" yet he never did mince his words with him, just like the trickster with the king. Ayanokoji always brought change to wherever he was. The Whiteroom or ANHS, both are impacted simply by his existence being there. At the same time he changes a lot of people and improves them while also finding out his own self to stop being the liquid that he is.
As the Shadow here would be more of his own path of self discovery and personal development and learning.

Dialogues and monologues:

Y1 Vol 1:*In the end. I couldn't talk to anyone at all. At the rate things were going. I'd be completely alone. Had I heard someone say, "Is he still all alone?" Had I heard chuckling? Perhaps it was all in my head. What on earth are "friends," anyway? Where do friends come from? Do people become friends after sharing a meal together? Can you become friends with someone after you walk to the bathroom together for the first time? The more I thought about it, the more I wondered: What is friendship? Is it something deep and meaningful? I tried to piece it together.*
"Ayanokoji-kun."
"Hmm? Oof!"
Horikita chopped me in the side.
"What was that for?"
"For whatever."
She left me as I clutched my sides in agony. Jeez, what a bothersome classm...bothersome person. With that thought, I decided to chase after her.

While getting physically abused by Horikita because he's gloomy, his description of her changes from classmate to person. Logically those two are polar opposites, friendships and pain would be considered antithetical to Ayanokoji.

A subtle nod to the theme of human possibility vs cold logic, their relationship goes about as opposite as he predicts it to yet is still born out of the fundamental principle of self-interest, in accepting this friendship Ayanokoji can accept society as a whole and learn to live within it, as well as lay his rationality to rest and accept that human possibility isn't contingent on anything, "true" in the truest sense. It's his resolution and desire.

Y1 Vol 1:*"If someone lacks persuasiveness, he or she won't be able to make others believe in their cunning theories." She clearly wanted to know why I was so desperate to persuade her that Sudou and the others' expulsion was bad. "Cut the crap. I want to know the real reason. Is it for points? To rise up, even by one class level? Or is it to save your friends?"
"Because I want to know what a person with true merit looks like. What is equality?"
"Merit, equality..."
"I came to this school to find answers to those questions." The words freely spilled out of me before I could collect my thoughts.*

In order to correct his defect, Ayanokoji wants to find a person who's truly perfect so he can adapt and absorb that perfection. Chasing after a purpose that he didn't choose, he seeks something that transcends value, social status, and personal bonds, all the goals Horikita asks him if he seeks.

Y1 Vol 1: *I don't think it right to simply say that we are unequal and then live our lives based on pure instinct. In other words, though "equality" is a complete lie, we cannot accept inequality, either. Right now, I'm trying to come up with a new answer for humanity's eternal question.
Hey, you there. You, the one reading this book right now. Have you ever given serious thought to the future?
Have you ever considered the purpose of going to high school or to college? Though the future may seem hazy right now, do you think you'll find a job someday? That's what I used to think. Back when I finished my compulsory education and became a high school student, I hadn't really considered the future. I'd only felt joy at being nearly free of obligation. I didn't consider the incredible influence that school would continue to have in my life, on my future. I didn't even understand the purpose behind studying language or numbers.*

Ayanokoji's contradiction is apparent in the prologue of V1. He can't imagine a future where he gets to live as a normal person, but wants it anyway. It goes completely against his logical nature, and ultimately fuels his internal conflict throughout the series. At the same time he relays a message to the readers, about Importance of thinking ahead and thinking about the future and not letting it get to waste. While at the same time he contradicts it and shows that he himself hasn't thought about it. Which shows just how defective our narrator is, and how well it's described.

Y1 Vol 1: *"Perhaps. I'm simply acting according to my own beliefs. That's different from someone who just dislikes trouble, like you. I don't want to spend any time around people like you."*

Since Ayanokoji holds no beliefs, he always chooses the path of least effort. This lack of free will and agency is him acting on his instinct at birth, to serve the white room. Humans aren't supposed to act solely on instinct, and on his path to becoming human he must develop his own beliefs.

Y1 Vol 1: *What on earth are "friends," anyway? Where do friends come from? Do people become friends after sharing a meal together? Can you become friends with someone after you walk to the bathroom together for the first time?*

Ayanokoji is someone whose mind is fundamentally incomplete. The only way Ayanokoji can view friendship is the same way he views himself. You either follow the rules set out for achieving your goal, or you're a failure, a rock by the roadside, a purposeless, defective human.

Y1 Vol 1: *I, too, was especially peculiar, in that there was nothing peculiar about me. I had wanted to be free, free as a bird, but prior to this I'd languished in a cage. I had wanted to fly into the expansive open skies. If you looked out the window, you could watch birds gracefully soaring... Well, not right now, but in general. Anyway, that's the kind of guy I was.*

Ayanokoji wants freedom so that he can become more perfect, always to fly, but unlike the birds, real humans don't always use their freedom to fly. It's simply the choice to fly or not that defines their freedom. Ayanokoji is restricting freedom to his expectation of what it might bring him.

Y1 Vol 1:*No one else's eyes or words would ever reach me. I could start ag-no. I could begin anew entirely. A new life. I resolved to enjoy my time here to the fullest, but without drawing attention to myself.*

Inequality arises from societal perceptions. Ayanokoji wants to escape the eyes and words of others, praising him as a perfect genius or condemning him as a defective monster. This way he can create a facade of equality for himself, even if laying low is just his words for escapism.

Y1 Vol 1: *She was cute. Even though I'd agreed to help her, I was still the kind of person who preferred to remain in the background. I shouldn't do anything reckless.
"So, what exactly are we going to do? Even if you say you want to be friends with her, it's not that simple."
Personally, I wasn't equipped to know how to make friends.
"You're probably right... Well, first I think we should try to make Horikita-san smile," Kushida said.
"Make her smile, huh?"
Smiling means letting your guard down in front of another person, even if just a little. Such a relationship could most likely be referred to as friendship. Kushida seemed to understand people well, especially when it came to making them smile.*

Ayanokoji views humanity as synonymous with weakness, but this shortcoming is made up by our human relationships making up for that weakness. To someone who has no weakness, someone who gains nothing by holding the hand of another, gaining humanity is folly.

Y1 Vol 2: *"Honestly, there's so much about you that I don't understand. You're a mystery. You're the most difficult person to predict in our class. You're versatile, yet you often idle your time away. You never seem to stay still. It's as though you cannot be categorized."*

The reason Ayanokoji hides his abilities is that he fears categorization. In the white room, his abilities made him known as a genius, but his lack of emotion was a glaring defect, and what was once praise became disgust. If he reveals who he is, he risks being viewed as a tool rather than a human.

Y1 Vol 2: *"The students in Class D all have some kind of defect, more or less. To borrow an expression used by others in this school, Class D is an assemblage of people that could be called 'defective products.' You already understand this quite well though, don't you?"
"I don't intend to admit that I have a defect. But I do understand."
"Well, what do you think is Ayanokouji's defect?"
Ayanokouji-kun's defect... One thing immediately came to mind.
"We've already established it. He already knows what his own defect is."
"Oh? And what is it?"

"He dislikes trouble," I answered, with confidence. However, I felt a strange sense of discomfort that I couldn't explain.
"He dislikes trouble, hmm? Is that what you perceive when you look at Ayanokoji?"
"No... It's because he said it himself."
Chabashira-sensei snorted and chuckled. She spoke again, her tone firm.
"Well, Horikita. Let's try to learn as much as we possibly can about the boy called Ayanokouji, without delay, shall we? Otherwise, it'll be too late. You already seem to have fallen into Ayanokouji's trap."
"What do you mean?" Fallen into his trap? That was nonsense.
"Why do you think Ayanokouji purposefully got scores of 50 points across the board on his entrance examination? Why do Ayanokouji is helping you? Why do you think that Ayanokouji doesn't put himself forward as a superior student, despite having superior ability? Do you think Ayanokouji Kiyotaka really is someone who dislikes trouble"?"
"That's..."
If he truly wanted to prioritize peace and tranquility, then why score 50 points in all subjects and allow himself to draw this much attention? Had he deliberately poked his nose into this incident as well? I wondered if he ought to have been carefully monitored, like many other students. As Chabashira- sensei said, his behavior didn't fit the pattern of someone who "disliked trouble." That unconscious realization must have been the cause of my earlier discomfort.*

Ayanokoji's teacher rightfully suspects that his "defect" is the reason he helps others. But ultimately the bonds he's trying to form are tools, to serve his purpose at growing more and more perfect. Even if he doesn't flaunt his superiority, it's still ingrained in every action he takes.

Y1 Vol 2: *"I like to avoid trouble, remember?" "That's certainly true. But then, you're as contradictory as ever, since you're helping out a friend. "Well, human beings are, for better or worse, creatures of convenience."*

Contradiction creates change, through the conflict created by your contrasting sides. Ayanokoji's apathy towards everything, including himself, leads him to ignore that clash between him avoiding trouble but also taking actions that create it. His mask of normalcy is slowly becoming more questionable.

Y1 Vol 2: *That was impossible. Kushida Kikyou was normally a sweet, angelic girl, but I had glimpsed a different side to her. It was difficult to even imagine

when you saw her gentle smile or heard her pleasant tone, but I recalled the vicious comments she'd spat out. Horikita probably didn't know about that.
"No need. I'm fine with the Kushida we have now," I said.
"What you just said was really disgusting, you know that?"
"Yeah."
Even though I'd spoken the words, I did feel disgusted with myself.*

Inequality is born by denying one side of a contradiction, as through contradiction humans change over time. For Ayanokoji, denying Kushida's darkness is the same as denying his desire to be human. To let society determine who you can be is to let your humanity be lost.

Y1 Vol 2: *"There's a popular expression in this world: Great talents mature late. Sudou could probably become a professional player in the NBA, right? I think there's a possibility that he'll make a great contribution to society. The power of youth is infinite." I uttered a catchphrase that sounded about as original as a television commercial.*

Ayanokoji wants "the power of youth" for the sake of increasing his social contribution. but he thinks that his journey towards humanity is an original expression of his free will Subconsciously, he knows he is still solely bound to the purpose given to him by the White Room.

Y1 Vol 3: *As we listened, we did certainly determine that parts sounded unreasonable or unrealistic. But, just like Mashima-sensei said, we had no basis to oppose their claims. Those who found this beyond the realm of their understanding could call it "bizarre" or "unbelievable," but for someone who did understand the point, well, it would be absurd to think otherwise.*

This line, being in the same volume that Ayanokoji reveals his true psyche to the readers in, serves as both foreshadowing and warning. Ayanokoji's classmates' inability to understand his purpose is due to their own weakness, their humanity, but Ayanokoji's understanding of it but thinking otherwise is absurdity.

Y1 Vol 5: *"Please, relax," she added. "I've no intention of telling anyone about you at present."
"Wouldn't things be easier if you did?"

"I don't want anything to get in my way. I'm the perfect person to bury false genius." Clack. Her thin cane clattered against the floor.
"I've found little pleasure in this boring school life."
"Can I ask you something else?"
"Please, go ahead. I'm honored to have you ask me a question. If you'd like to know, I'm even happy to tell you how I know about you."
"No, I'm not interested in that. There's just one thing I want to know." My eyes met Sakayanagi's.
"Can you bury me?"
"Hee hee!" Sakayanagi chuckled softly to herself, and smiled once more. "Sorry for laughing. I don't intend to insult you. I know quite well how incredible you are. I've been looking forward to this. I'll be able to realize my dearest wish by destroying the greatest masterpiece that your father ever made."
I wanted that, too. My destruction-my defeat-would mean that the old man would lose.
I wanted the sad contradiction that I carried within me to be destroyed. I wished for that from the bottom of my heart.*

Ultimately the same warmth that burns the wings of Icarus is the one that is held in human bonds. Ayanokoji knows he cannot free himself from the heights his father placed him upon, and so he calls upon others for his defeat and burial, which would prove he was human like anyone else, which would help him escape his past and start anew.

Y1 Vol 6:*"Authority is a powerful weapon, but even the student council president couldn't create that much mayhem. There's no way someone like Kushida could reduce a class to nothing through authority."
"Then what is it? What can bring an entire class to its knees?"
"Forget Kushida for a moment. What powerful weapon is available to anyone? Lies. People are natural liars by birth. Anyone can lie. Depending on the time and the place, a lie can do more damage than simple violence."
Statistics show that people lie two or three times a day, on average. You might think that seems impossible, but the definition of a "lie" is rather broad. "I didn't get enough sleep," "I caught a cold," "I didn't notice that email," "I'm fine." Everything we say is full of lies.
"Lies. I see. You might be right."
Lies were incredibly powerful. A single lie could even drive someone to their death.*

Ayanokoji believes that lies are a form of equality, and the equality he created for himself; that he is a normal student like everyone else, is conversely a lie. As his lie unravels, people begin to fear his superiority and force him into fights, only making more apparent his innate inequality. While he justifies it, as something natural for a human being, still trying to hide in the shadows and put on a mask of ordinary.