Toku Thoughts: Depressing Villain Ends

Considering I don't think I'll be doing a full review of a Sentai again for a long time (due to circumstances), I am willing to still do articles about various thoughts about Super Sentai and other tokusatsu here in my Deviantart page, as I occasionally. The latest installment more or less comes from a conversation from another board about "how a villain group's end is depressing". In particular, it was about the Armed Brain Army Volt from 1988-89's *Choujuu Sentai Liveman:* the group that basically is made up of a group of delusional geniuses who all think they're going to be on top but are basically all tools of their leader, Great Professor Bias, for his own goals instead. For the most part, nearly no one outside Bias himself gets a happy ending; the closest is Doctor Obular, who left less than half-way through the story and had lost his memory before returning for a crucial position in the final episodes (and even then doesn't stick around after Mazenda's no more; you'd think that with Kemp he would at least try to reach him but the series is very weird in that sort of way)

But a thought came in my head: is this the most depressing villain end...or even the first? There are seasons where villains end up just getting destroyed and that's that; and others where they get a happy ending with only the really bad ones getting what they deserve. But then there are the bittersweet endings: the ones where the villains do die or get their punishment, but you just aren't happy about it. There's something about this fate that they get that isn't either happy or justifiable; in many cases it's probably the best end they can get or the one that befits the story, but that doesn't mean they're going to have a happy ending like the Sentai heroes or where they're just so evil that their death really is something to feel relieved about.

So thus this list: sort of an addendum to my "Career of Evil" villain analysis from October of last year, I sort of want to get my feelings on just how the endings of these villains end up being. Who really is the first "depressing ending", and are some of these really that justifiable considering what many of them have done. The only thing of note compared to "Career of Evil" I have to mention is this: since then I have completed three more Super Sentai series: *Gaoranger, Hurricaneger* and *Abaranger*; they'll be here even before I get a real review of their villain groups they probably deserve. With that, it will mostly be consecutive from *Gorenger* to *Goseiger...*with one exception but I'm watching it currently. So with that said, let's get started:

-Black Cross Army (Gorenger): Not depressing at all; in fact, it really is just the end of the story and the only way. The Black Cross is evil without question and every monster and villain within it really has no shade of gray regarding what they're doing; they do experiment with it near the end with the last episode before the finale (involving Peggy's former boyfriend becoming the obedient Tiger Mask), but it really is an end where the villains get what they deserve. Possibly the only one who perhaps had a depressing end was Iron Mask General Temujin, who basically spent the entire arc of his run trying to defeat Varibaloon, doing so in the end with his own sacrifice giving the villains one of their few lasting successes. (outside obvious weapons upgrades)

-Criminal Organization CRIME (J.A.K.Q.): Despite the mess the series becomes,

there is nothing but black and white about CRIME, whether it be human or alien run. With how one-dimensional Iron Claw and Shine were, they got what they deserved.

-Secret Society Egos (Battle Fever J): Probably the first season where you sort of wonder about how justified the end for the villains is. For Satan Egos and Headder, obviously them going down just ends their threat and is for the betterment of the world. But then there's Salome: her loyalty is unwavering but she's just caught in the crossfire when Egos finally is destroyed, killed in their headquarters as Satan Egos transforms into a final giant form. It's not supposed to be depressing but it is a dark end for her and it isn't like she asked for this.

-Bader Clan (Denziman): To me, the end of this group is the first true tragedy among the villain side. The Bader are just this crazy extradimensional family, living together and just doing whatever they want because they could due to the power they possessed and a mutual hatred of the Denzi and their beauty. The reason they all eventually goes down can more or less be summed up in three words: Demon King Banriki. He was never supposed to be part of the group and only joined because they needed the assistance, but he basically lead to the destruction of this family dynamic and it's just sad and shocking seeing Queen Hedrian lose her trusted minions and companions one by one; first Hedrer, then Keller, and ultimately Mirror after she relayed to Denziman the means to defeat Banriki and his final servant, the Banriki Monster. When Hedrian leaves at the end, she doesn't die but emotionally she's at a weak state: she's a defeated empress, a queen with no one to rule over and nowhere to go, ultimately unfortunately leading her...to the mess known as Black Magma.

-Machine Empire Black Magma (Sun Vulcan): As mentioned, this is where Hedrian ends up post-Bader; and her end here just sort of accentuates how little control she had in Black Magma even when she tried to take control near the end by the conspiracy to remove Hell Saturn. Hell Saturn, and by connection the Omnipotent God, gave her new life to fight again; and her end is Hedrian's final attempt to defy those who gave her the life in order to do one last scheme with her own true powers for herself as opposed to for her machine masters. (which is more or less the abduction of Misa Arashiyama) Her death isn't by the heroes but by her machine heart, granted by Black Magma, finally giving out, bringing a sad end and, outside "living ghost" messes that happens in the final episode, allowing Hedrian to truly rejoin her Bader Clan allies. The only other depressing end is that of Amazon Killer, who is Bader Clan by connection and who is stuck as the only one left who could lead Black Magma after Hell Saturn and Hedrian were gone; a position she didn't want. In a way, I think her final battle with Sun Vulcan, particularly with the Omnipotent God forcing her to fight on her own, was her only way out and the acknowledgement that the Bader connections had no place in this so-called army of machines. On the other hand, everyone else in Black Magma is a robot tool of the Omnipotent God (Hell Saturn, Zero Girls) or just a selfish being looking out for themselves (Inazuma Ginga)...so no losses there.

-Dark Science Emprie Deathdark (Goggle-V): This group is sort of split down the middle regarding how depressing and dark their ends are or whether or not what they got was deserved. Both Furher Taboo and Grand Marshall Deathmark were rotten to the core and everything they did was just to further their own mission to the very end in proving scientific superiority, which of course means no loss when eliminated. But then there are the more recent additions and their positions, all of whom have their own say in regards to their ends. Both Doctor Zazoriva and Doctor Iguana had gone from trusted scientists to comic relief, and it was this that more or less lead Deathmark to execute them after his revival. Mazurka is probably the most tragic: she was a loyal spy to Deathdark until near the end, but has had enough when she is turned into a living bomb with the Hightron energy and doesn't care if anyone survived when she went off, whether it be Deathdark or Sentai hero. Mazurka hated being used as a tool by others and wanted to go out her own way. The same sort of could be said about Deathgiller, but it's a bit more confusing for him: he felt betrayed by Taboo and Deathmark trying to eliminate him with Mazurka and did help try to deal with the Hightron problem, but still wanted to fight Goggle-V in a final battle. My guess is that his end is tragic in that he wanted a true, clean battle, which he ultimately got but only after surviving Deathmark's Hightron obsession which basically forced the group into an end that it didn't need having survived for millennia prior. Before I was sort of confused on whether or not Deathgiller got what he deserved or why he was still obsessed with Goggle-V after they saved his life, but I think it really does make his end that more depressing: he was one of the few who was more concerned in defeating the enemy and not just on continuing Deathdark's scientific progress mission; he only carried out the Hightron missions because of orders, but in the end wanted to go down his way...maybe it's a bit of a copy of Hedrer from Denziman (only in just wanting to go down as a warrior instead of an experiment as opposed to "having a final battle his way to escape from Banriki's influence" like the former general), but I think it did work in Deathgiller's favor and makes his end more depressing than you'd think.

-Tailed-Person Clan Jashinka Empire (Dynaman): The main element of tragedy for the season is basically in the evolution of Prince Megiddo, but his end really isn't as tragic as the season wants you to believe. To me, most of the tragedy is the path that lead him from prince to outlaw to Black Knight to finally Jashinka emperor, but his continued desire to attack humanity and prove Jashinka superiority in the end (let alone marrying his sister Chimera) really just sort of took away a lot of what he had been through and just ended up leading the entire group to its own dead-end (both in progress and genetically). The only character that seems to have a real depressing finish is General Kar, who despite being the most loyal of all of Aton's servants, ends up being tricked into his own death by circumstances with Aton and Zenobia's battle for the Retro Genes. Aton didn't realize he had lost a good Tailed-Person until he was gone and I think that the respect he gave to a loyal soldier who just wanted to serve does highlight the tragedy. You could even say that Emperor Aton himself was more tragic than Megiddo, in that he loved his son and wanted him to be his heir, but had to go through hardships with the lessons he had to go through in order to reach that point. (and then there's Zenobia...she got what she deserved in obsessing in power and no tears shed so moving on...)

-Neo Empire Gear (Bioman): The only really depressing ending of the season is for the only truly human villain of the season: Doctor Man himself. His entire meaning and purpose is completely derived from this psychotic belief of machines' superiority over man brought about by his own experiments; he more or less brought the nightmare of the season upon the world himself due to his own curiosity in mental and robotic experiments. Only with the emergence of his son Shuichi and his final attempt to try and reason with him that somehow something may have finally gotten through, with Doctor Man potentially using the final remains of Nobuo Kageyama within himself to allow for the final Anti-Bio Bomb he created as a final failsafe to be diffused before the planet ended up like Bio; an uninhabitable disaster left behind as wreckage in space. Though the rest of Gear is made up of machines that inhabit his will (though cases could be said for some of them having depressing ends, particularly Monster and Farrah), Bio Hunter Silva likewise could be seen as a depressing end; the final relict of the Bio Civil War in an unending pursuit of Bio Particles to destroy, finally done in by Bio technology that, in a way, lead to his own birth in the first place. (it's ironic: Anti-Bio Particles were created to stop the supposedly dangerous Bio Particles, yet it was the Anti-Bio Particles and Anti-Bio war weapons like Silva and Balzion that became the real menace)

-Star League Gozma (Changeman): For the most part, this is one of the first villain groups where we actually have survivors that make it to the end of the season, with key defections like Gator, Shiima and even Gyodai making it to the end safe and sound. But the depressing elements still exist with those that didn't make it: Booba's entire final battle and passing was all a means to save Shiima in the first place, having sworn to protect her and make sure that she was able to try to restore her own world while his is completely gone with his pirate crew dead thanks to the Gozma. And then there's Queen Ahames: she was much more malicious, but all because of the slight sliver of hope that her homeworld was still alive and that she could finish her job and just go home to become gueen again, even though Bazeu had destroyed it long ago. Her destruction of the Dengeki Squadron base really is a sad moment for her, watching her die for a cause she may or may not even realize anymore is futile. On the other hand, Bazeu is just a monster and really has no emotional connection other than being a tyrant; while Giluke basically has nothing holding him back to give any sympathy when his end finally comes, mainly due to his obsessions of being Bazeu's right hand no matter what without regards for whatever he left behind.

-Reconstruction Empire Mess (Flashman): The main depressing tragedies of the end are more or less just about the sacrifices that happen as the group reaches its end and the truth about who was really running the operation comes to light. The females in particular have it the worst: Kilt is turned into a Deus Beast Warrior and Wolk sacrifices herself to keep her alive in a futile attempt to defeat Flashman; and Leh Nafel basically is the daughter who is willing to sacrifice herself for the safety of her "father", Lie Kophlen. And at the same time there's also the head alien hunter Sir Cowler, who finds himself basically becoming a spoiler and sacrifices himself in the end in hopes of destroying the dreams of both Kophlen and Lar Deus after wanting nothing more to do with them; he was a hunter hired to do a job and it ultimately became apparent that he wasn't needed because of who was really in charge of Mess, even if appearances seemed otherwise. It's hard to say if there's depression with Kophlen, since he is a human but abandoned it long ago due to being over 300 years old and believing himself to be a god with the Gene Synthesizer, but the mere fact that the final villain is a human does bring in the dark elements of what humanity can accomplish if put into this situation, in a similar situation to Doctor Man; the only difference being that Kophlen never knew he was human until the end and by then was too far gone to be saved; whereas at least

Doctor Man had a life as a human before the experiments that nearly took him away from that humanity until his son re-emerged. (by comparison Leh Wanda just goes out in a burst of rage...so he's sort of immune to this)

-Underground Empire Tube (Maskman): Everyone in Tube is affected by the tyranny brought about by Zeba/Lethal Doggler II, but the tragedy is all in how much they're affected and what it means for them in the end. Obviously the biggest depressing end is for Princess Igam, who was the most affected by what happened: she could have been a ruler of the underground before Zeba took power under her family or even joined with lal in being in open rebellion against the usurper, but she continued to stay in a delusional state all season, both pretending to be a man to remain a general and thinking that if she stayed by the tyrant's side, she'll be the next ruler of the kingdom. (Despite Lethal Doggler II being alive for centuries even before becoming the ruler) Further, she literally had no intention of leaving Zeba/Lethal Doggler until the very last episode, and it really took her ninja Fuumin's sacrifice to finally make her join with Ial, end the threat and then spend the rest of her life atoning for her sins of what she had done. Fuumin in some ways is probably as depressing, due to her loyalty to Igam and with her probably never really on Zeba's side to begin with, fighting for her master and probably hoping that she would come around to taking down the one who usurped her family's throne instead of trying to wait for an opening to rule when their leader is a literal and figurative monster. And then there's the rival general, Baraba: his loyalty to Zeba is basically the loyalty his family had to any leader of the underground, fighting for them without question. (heck he even lost his mother because of this unquestioning loyalty) When he's finally seen as removable by Zeba after all of his failures, he finally calls into question this loyalty and joins with Kiros in hopes of being of some use, only to be betrayed yet again and killed by Maskman. Baraba's depressing end is that his loyalty didn't do him any good; then when he is disloyal for one brief moment he pays for it regardless. (while his ninja, Oyobu, just continues to be loyal and dies in order to allow for the final scheme of Zeba's to succeed in raising the castle for turning the planet to infinite darkness, just with him continuing to be used as a tool) And of course, Kiros' bad end is more emotional with him basically having the ability to gain everything he ever wanted...except lal's love, getting killed and having his final sight being her and Takeru reunite after all this time. If you ignore Zeba just being a monster and dying being said monster, everyone in Tube is basically doomed to a sorrowful end.

-Armed Brain Army Volt (Liveman): The group that basically started this conversation, and obviously one of the standard-bearers for depressing endings for its villains. And like Tube before it, it's basically because of its lead villain just being so all-controlling, only in Bias' case it is just outsmarting everyone in order to get his way and using all those around him just to complete his "brain array" for eternal youth and power. All three of the traitorous Academia students all essentially escape from Bias' influence, but do so in the worst way possible: Gou/Obular is basically forced to acknowledge his and his mother's faults in putting academics over living your life, but he loses his memory until the end-game in escaping the grasp; Rui/Mazenda exchanges all of her humanity to turn into a machine, even sacrificing her brain in the end after reaching the final goal so Bias wouldn't have it and blowing up with nothing left for her; and Kenji/Kemp finally awakens and stops Bias...after sacrificing everything to become said "final brain" and doing so because of Megumi's pleading attempting to reach towards Bias' own humanity. (oh which he had none anymore so it was futile if it weren't for the captive brains) Every other member of Volt were just there to further the three traitors so they don't fair any better: Arashi/Ashura goes through his "Flowers for Algernon" storyline, basically losing his artificial genius but still choosing guts over brainpower in blowing himself up; while Guildos and Butchy were just robots who believed they were aliens meant to push the trio along and died not really knowing what they actually were. As for Great Professor Bias himself...it's hard to say: they don't give any background to him other than he was human before his brain experiments and that unlike, say, Doctor Man, he had no change of heart in the end and continued to think he had succeeded even as a dying old man in the arms of Guardinoid Gash in an exploding Brain Base. I guess with the similarity of all those he screwed over like Zeba, a humane or depressing end for Bias was out of the question.

-Hundred Boma Tribes (Turboranger): Weirdly the Boma are the first group since CRIME that really has no depressing end for anyone: those with the most loyalty to the tribe and Lagorn all died in the end while those who had the least loyalty or who found a better way (Yamimaru and Kirika primarily) survived. Sure there were depressing members that weren't as major (Bell Chime Boma for starters) and those that really could have had more to make them depressing (Zimba), but it was rather cut-and-dry and with no real problems of depression for the enemy.

-Silver Galactic Army Zone (Fiveman): And thus a season after everyone got out without any real tragedy, we get to the group who spent their entire lives working for a giant monster they believed to be a spaceship...which means it all hits the fan in the end once they realize that Vulgyre, not Meadow, was their master. Some of the villains, like Billion and Chevalier, really don't get too much of a tragic finale since they just decided to go out fighting and dying against Fiveman; though in Billion's case you could get a bit of sorrow in that he wanted nothing to do with the whole Vulgyre reveal. But then you have Galactic Scientist Doldora: she was the first member of Zone recruited, there from the very first planet the group destroyed, and she ends up completely shattered once the Meadow facade falls away and she's stuck serving a monster. She trusted Meadow and thought everything she was doing was for a greater purpose, but in the end collapses to the point where she and her fighting partner, Zaza, are fused into a Galactic Warrior to destroy the intrusive Sidon Flowers still on Earth. The two remaining generals both end up trapped in their own delusions that prevent them from escaping in the end: Captain Garoa is so obsessed in being the "leader" of the ship that he really doesn't seem to care as long as he pilots whatever that ship is (even if it is Vulgyre) as it goes down (to the point that he gets trapped in the coffin formerly holding the body used for "Meadow"), while Dongoros dies trying to protect whatever finance he still had in Vulgyre, not willing to give up his greed for a loss just to save his own life. It's hard for some to determine if this is the fate either Garoa or Dongoros deserve, but I guess the tragedy for them is they aren't willing to give up what they've gained through their destruction for their own survival.

-Dimensional War Party Vyram (Jetman): Anyone who somehow ends up recruited into the Vyram is just doomed to tragedy or insanity; pure and simple. This should be realized early on when the former empress, Juuza, returns to try and

retake the group: no one wants to associate with her and she has basically been reduced into a madwoman whose only obsession is the birth of the extradimensional monster Semimaru. I know many consider her weak because she's only around for two episodes and doesn't contribute anything to the story, except I think Juuza is a foreshadowing in the end of just the sad fate all four of the Vyram are doomed to reach by sticking with their combative methods and desire for extradimensional conquest. Obviously the most telling of this is Rie/Maria, who is driven to her own madness due to Radiguet's mutation transforming her and her continued desires for Ryu nearly turning him into a monster; thus when she is finally stopped, she has to force someone to kill her if only to pay for everything she had done; her death of course ends up driving the robot Gray to similar suicidal drives brought about in order to continue to be with her. And then there's Tranza and Radiguet, both of whom you'd think would have more conventional endings and wouldn't be as tragic, but I think both just continue to show that all Vyram are doomed due to their own circumstances. Tranza was forced to "evolve" into an adult in order to escape torment, but continued to have his childish tendencies and obsessions even after appearing to grow physically mature, particularly with him trying to become the Vyram's leader. This culminates with the Veronica incident, where he appears to finally have the power to back up his supposed leadership, only for Radiquet to assist the letman in stopping him, pushing him closer to the edge in hunting down the team before finally going over it with his final defeat (once again thanks to Radiguet), forcing him into a mental hospital for the rest of existence. And then there's Radiguet himself: he doesn't seem as affected by the madness of the group for most of the season and is able to keep control of himself and manipulate what he needs to survive...but then Veronica happens, where his mind and body are mutated beyond the point of no return leading to him pushing away all the other generals despite having the ability to become the unstoppable giant Raguem. Radiguet's tragedy is that he kept thinking he had to find ways to outlast the others despite having some rationality to perhaps show he could have been a better person, and while he succeeds it basically turns him into a monster to do so and reduces the group into an army of one that can't handle Jetman on his own; thus proving that the Vyram madness is inescapable.

-Bandora Gang (Zyuranger): Bandora's group just feels to have a happy ending despite their defeat: practically everyone survived and they get to spend eternity singing joyfully in a giant dumpster in space. The only problem: in order to get this ending, Bandora had to face losing her son...again. The entire war she fought where she sided with Dai-Satan occurred because of the loss of Kai and her failures as a mother to make sure he did what he was supposed to; and yet while Kai was brought back for the final battle, it was completely as Dai-Satan's servant to utilize Dora Talos for its own purpose. When Dai-Satan is finally stopped, Kai ends up "dying" once again, making Bandora realize whatever motherly instinct she had left...and making her lose her magic in the process. It's really a bittersweet ending more than it's depressing, probably since the witch realized that everything happened from start to finish because of a mother's love of her son.

-Gorma Tribe (Dairanger): And then there's...this group. Obviously the Gorma's end is less depressing and more outrage and frustrating because of the final reveal: everyone was a clay doll created by the real Shadam (outside...those who weren't... like Akomaru...and Kaku...and Master Mirror...) and the whole season was basically for nothing. The worst of this obviously has to go with the Gara storyline because of what it was about: the concept of the conflict between her and Kujaku and the search for forgiveness between the two friends. Of course it's thrown away after it looked like they were ready to make up...and then blown up completely when that Gara turned out to be another clay doll and the real Gara had forgiven Kujaku long ago. The only depression I get from the Gorma is that we could have had real solutions instead of a shock ending.

-Yokai Army Corp (Kakuranger): The weird thing about this group is that most of the sad elements end up being with the early Yokai compared to the later ones. The Yokai that remained in the human world until the reopening of the Seal Door all seemed to have legitimate concerns and problems with humanity and were trying to get by despite all this; see the factor of Kappa and Rokurokubi's child dying due to Earth air pollution and not having the Yoki to allow for him to be strong enough to withstand it; or the arrogance that Oboroguruma felt driving humans around, or the loneliness factor of Konakajiji. But then once Gashadokuro and Daimaou show up, they all turn into more one-dimensional villains, with their only advantage being revealed at the end that they can never really die, just go away until next time. Perhaps that's the only depressing thing: someday they'll be back or come back out and the cycle will begin again until the next Seal Door opening.

-Machine Empire Baranoia (Ohranger): The tragic element of the ancient machine empire is more a generational thing than anything and actually takes it's time to emerge. Bacchushund really was a family man who wanted the best for his wife and son, but it had to take his "death" and his disembodied head summoning them to another planet to reveal that important attribute; while Hysterrier really didn't seem to show any true love until that moment, basically becoming the only innocent left in Baranoia as the babysitter of Buldont Jr. as her son and his wife come to care more about themselves than about either conquest or their own child. After Baranoia's final end, Hysterrier basically commits suicide to make sure that perhaps the next generation won't have the same problems; and while Gunmajin's care could be a start, who knows what could happen to the child in the future... (especially with Acha and Kocha still being around)

-Space Biker Gang Bowzock (Carranger): If any group deserved a true "happily ever after", it's these misfits, basically with all of them manipulated into working for Exhaus, thus basically getting out scott free when their "boss" finally goes down for what he did. It's tough to say how much they deserve this since they did destroy a lot of planets, including Dapp's homeworld of Hazard, before the series, but it's probably a case of being the "triggerman" as opposed to the "planner", which obviously was Exhaus. (and Exhaus isn't a depressing end because he was just a powerful man of industry who had no care or concern for anyone, thus the universe is better off without him)

-Wicked Electric Kingdom Neziregia (Megaranger): As usual, we seem to go from a vehicle-based season with no depressive ending...to a season where a lot of villains suffer. Doctor Hinelar in particular has a very sad end considering everything he had been through: betrayed by I.N.E.T. for the loss of his daughter, he joined Neziregia in order to get his revenge while likewise creating the means to create a world which he had greater control over in his Hinelar City project (gaining it by way of destroying his master and returning to Earth in the process). Hinelar is a villain who wants to have full mastery over what he desires and is willing to go all out if something ends up going terribly wrong; thus when Hinelar City goes down due to both the Megaranger and his own Neziranger, he is driven in the final episodes on a final campaign of revenge to humiliate them to a point of breaking them completely. It's just sad that more or less Hinelar is a more modern, psychological rendition of Doctor Man, created not from mere science gone wrong but a breaking of a trust in others using science for benefit but ruining lives in the process; whether it be the dead or the living. Yugande and Shibolena likewise have depressing ends, more or less due to their own trust in Hinelar and each other and wanting to protect each other in the end like the siblings they were; creations of their master but still caring about one another to the point of sacrifice.

-Space Pirates Balban (Gingaman): Despite the treachery and turmoil within the Balban, it's hard to say whether or not there was a truly depressing end to anyone within the group with the shared goal of reviving Daitanic and getting off Earth once and for all. Only two members of the squadron have what you can consider a really tragic/depressive ending: one is Sword General Budoh, who ended up having his men tricked into a situation where his failure essentially guaranteed thanks to one of Illies' minions, leading to a futile campaign to get revenge when the pirates have moved on; the other being Barrelled Scholar Bookcrates, whose entire trust in the squadron and his own partner Zahab was destroyed due to the horrible treatment of his niece Illies in the end and leads to his own campaign against the pirate despite still wanting Gingaman and the Earth to fall. Neither of them really have anything that make it a true tragedy like all of the Balban, but at least their ends are a bit more sympathetic in regards to how traitorous being a pirate can be.

-Psyma Family (GoGoFive): The Psyma are a family despite being evil invasive space demons; and watching a family fall apart ultimately is going to hurt. Thanks to Grandiene basically shutting out her own children due to their failures, the siblings more or less are forced to fight on their own in hopes of trying to gain back some sense of brotherhood but end up leading to more sacrifices. First we have youngest child Salamandes sealed in "Hell" with GoGoFive for his failure, leading to his own attempted manipulations to get out and hope to impress his mother only to fail. Then Denus sacrifices her own life in hopes of bringing back Zylpheeza and bring back some sense of family or sense to their mother; only for the eldest sibling to be forced to kill his younger brother Cobolda before he goes down again. And then, by the final battle, we have the tragedy of Zylpheeza and Salamandes being revived again to be Grandiene's final "heralds" after merging with the darkness of the universe; making it all the worse in that Salamandes has lost his will and the eldest Psyma is forced to try and reason with a berserk younger brother before both become mindless giant slaves of their mother. Obviously the rescue heroes have no ideas about the true tragedy going on, but as an audience we can sympathize in watching a family fall apart as a cruel mother turns brother against brother and uses what should be a matronly nature to destroy the universe.

-Londerz Family (Timeranger): The saddest and most tragic element about the Londerz, particularly "partners" Don Dolnero and Gien, is that they're trapped in an inescapable fate, all because of TDB leader Captain Ryuya manipulating circumstances to make them trapped in a destiny they may not want. Dolnero's

greatest saving and regret remains the revival of his former partner into a cyborg, despite the capabilities of him losing his mind to his own insanity. He was irredeemably evil, but Dolnero took care of those who took care of him. Yet as he's forced to watch Gien's mind decay into madness, furthered along by Ryuya's own manipulations, he is finally forced to consider how far is too far regarding what he really wants in the world. In the end, he couldn't pull the trigger and put down his friend, all as Gien easily killed Dolnero in cold blood, just showing how far the former Don cared about him and wanted things to work out for the better, even if it was potentially impossible with how far Gien had decayed. Gien as well is likewise a tragic figure of fate: Dolnero could have had him become a non-factor after the Emboss incident and the Spirit Key was restored in him, but Ryuya destroyed it so that Gien could just ultimately decay into his final "God of Destruction" mindset and cause the Great Annihilation. His tragedy was merely being kept alive longer than he should have because of Dolnero, leading to the combination of man and machine that culminated in madness. And of course there's also Captain Ryuya, playing with time and manipulating the past and future to avoid a fate of death that would ultimately happen regardless. His was a situation of "by defying fate, he ultimately brought it about". Lira is probably the only one who doesn't have any depression in her end: she basically just steals whatever Dolnero has left after the Don's death and vanishes into 2001 with no further trace of existence.

-Ogre Tribe Org (Gaoranger): The central Org cause got what they deserved: they wanted destruction, and thus they were destroyed by the constant miracles the Gaoranger kept bringing upon them due to the storybook concept of the season. If there is any real depression regarding the end, it's more about Tsuetsue and, in particular, Yabaiba. The latter of the two Duke Orgs really was the most "incompetent" of them all and really could never handle any of the mission alone, always needing a leader or even a friend to be there with him. If it weren't for the circumstances leading to him fishing out Tsuetsue from Org Hell, he could have escaped and maybe have a better ending than he got...except Tsuetsue had become corrupted to bring about Senki's advent and it basically doomed all the Orgs in the process. Tsuetsue likewise you could see as a tool who never really could fight for herself considering how many Orgs had used her (from growing with the Org Seeds to some of what Ura and Rasetsu pulled), but its hard to say she had a truly "depressing" end since she did bring about Senki...but that was probably the general Org spirits and that she was just the means to bring it about. And the worst part: both she and Yabaiba just die when the Matrix falls apart upon Senki's fall anyway so...

-Space Ninja Group Jakanja (Hurricaneger): In following the general idea of being a ninja, the Jakanja's entire focus is completely about their central mission: cause suffering and pain to the world and figure out the means to cause "that". In general the Jakanja have no sympathy since they're completely about said mission, regardless of the quirky ways they go about it. But of course the only real depressing element about it...is that once the Seven Spears find out what "That" is (basically a black hole to annihilate the current universe so that the Evil Will can create a new universe of it's own) and that their boss, Tau Zant, was just using them with no regards to basically have their universe destroyed and allow for him to be the Evil Will's right hand in the new one, then ultimately you get the idea that everything they did was for nothing. It's hard to say if you should feel depressed that the Seven Spears were tools...but that's how ninja end up being for the most part.

-Invasion Garden Evolian (Abaranger): This is another villain group with no real "depressive end" since everyone who is "good" (the Saurians of Dino Earth, Mikoto) gets some sort of redemption, while all the real evil forces (Dezumozolrya, Michaela, Voff) all die. It sort of says something when even Jeanne's brother Mizuho, who died in episode 2 after the first attempted invasion, gets a justification of having a noble end, while there is no sympathy for anything under Dezumozolrya...except maybe Yatsudenwani but he had evolved into something else completely by that point. Maybe Mikoto could be considered having a depressive end since he was used all along and it is hard to discern which of his evil actions were his own and which were the Dezumozolrya of Another Earth...but he really doesn't care either way and is willing to take responsibility for the ideas even if the evil being could have given the impulses.

-Alienizers (Dekaranger): This was a weird season in that everything was caseby-case and the main villain was a weapons broker who just wanted to make a buck and didn't have as much influence as others. Since there isn't any real central threat outside Abrella, it really is an episode-by-episode basis, and of course the elements of how crime can go from something merciless to something you can understand the tragedy of the matter.

-Underground Hades Empire Infershia (Magiranger): Again, there seems to be a greater simplicity to the villains in more recent Sentai in that it really just becomes rather black and white in the survivors getting out and the monsters all being killed. Wolzard obviously was always Ozu father Isamu and he got out; and both Vancuria and Hades Goddess Sphinx both realize the importance of courage and are able to survive after the fall of N. Ma. Everyone else in the organization were monsters obsessed with the cult of N. Ma and died accordingly without any real pity...well, there is Golem, but he was more a sacrificial lamb character unfortunately so it's hard to be depressed on a huge afro stone-man who just really gets known for two episodes before releasing the final form of the main villain.

-Negative Syndicates (Boukenger): After several seasons of rather simple villains with no real means of understanding the gray, we get some more interesting ones this season and some stories that actually do make us feel regarding what happened. The simplest are the Questers: Gai and Rei basically just want to prove their superiority to humanity and since we have a half-Ashu like Eiji to sympathize with, they can be eliminated without any problem of feeling for them. Next up is Gajah: sure he's an ancient conqueror himself, but he feels more like just some old man who was woken up from a long nap and tries to do something before going back to sleep. It gets more complex with Ryuuwon and you can understand the sympathies and sadness of his character: he sees humanity as a problem and has greater sympathies with the dragonoids, thus his desire to draw power to become a true dragonoid instead of remaining as a human being. In some ways, Akashi does ultimately feel pity for him and you could say that it was his own disappointment in humanity that lead him down the path of the Jaryuu...but of course before we can see what he feels as a human, SGS blows up the Precious Bank with him in it so it's sort of a lost opportunity. Then of course is the villain group that actually does have

the most depressing ending: Dark Shadow. They're probably the most simple of the Negatives being merely ninjas who wish to steal Precious for themselves, but it's this simplicity that allows for monsters when they truly emerge to try and distort their intent, as we see when Yaiba finally makes his move for Masumi, particularly in transforming Gekkou into his cursed bird form and disregarding fellow ninja Shizuka. Obviously Gekkou and Shizuka aren't innocent in themselves, but they really don't deserve the treatment they get from Yaiba for trying to just be simple thieves.

-Rinjuken Akugata (Gekiranger): Rinjuken is a very strange group in that they all do have a depressing fate, but the main stream of thought ultimately do find redemption in time to prevent Long from using them for planetary destruction. The main focus is obviously Rio, who had his entire life ruined and manipulated so that he could follow the path of Rinjuken, ultimately as part of Long's scheme to turn him into the final destroyer of the world. It's tough to say how depressing his fate is because he is able to ultimately overcome it with the help of the rivalry with Jan and the Gekiranger and the love of Mele. In some ways, Mele as well has a bit of a depressing path in that she both acts as the positive and negative influence on Rio in the path he takes that nearly leads him to follow Long's plans. If there is anyone who has it as bad if not worse than Rio, though, it's the Rinjuken triangle of Taka, Rageku and Maku: those three started the path of Riniuken (once again because of Long) and are forced to act as villains if only to prevent a true unity of the schools. Because of secret jealousies and manipulations, the Rinjuken trio believe themselves to be right and have created an entire school to counter the teachings of the seven who remained on the "Gekijuken" path, and seem to be the misunderstood of the 10 teachers until ultimately the schools are finally reunited during the final battle. It's tough to say how depressing it is, but I do think that prior to their redemption that these three nearly end up with a depressed end of being "the bad teachers".

-Gedoshu (Shinkenger): The path of Gedou is the path without redemption; where those who descend into the dark waters of the Sanzu cannot bring themselves back into the light. While the main Gedoshu like Dokoku and Akumarou obviously are irredeemable true monsters, the true tragedy are those of the half-Gedou who were once human and became driven down the path of Gedou: Juzou Fuwa and Dayu. Juzo is the more murderous side of the duo, having killed his family in order to undertake the path of the Gedou, but becoming one who cannot let go of his human desires for combat and must keep fighting if only to try and satisfy something in himself. His depressing element is merely that the only part of his humanity that remained behind is the worst part, the part that lusted for combat and challenged Takeru again and again forgetting about what else used to make him human, until ultimately his own family drags him down to his final end. Dayu, on the other hand, is one who could have perhaps rediscovered an element of humanity within herself due to her death being associated in killing a man who treated her in a loveless manner. Her tragedy is in that she is trying to find someone to support her...and in the end, she chooses Dokoku; her human desires for compassion driving her right to the most Gedou of the Gedoushuu. Even if he was a monster, Dokoku was the only being in existence to treat Dayu in a way that actually made her feel loved and respected, bringing about her final tragedy while also allowing for the final means of the Gedoshuu leader to begin his final invasion of the surface.

-Evil Spirits (Goseiger): Can you find a sense of compassion and tragedy in an angel who wants to be a God? I'm sort of torn regarding Brajira and his "mission" in regards to how depressing it is, because of course the reason behind his rebellion against the Gosei Angels of the past and his multi-stage plan in our time is because of his hatred of the world and what it has become, with the feeling that if he was to remake the world in his own image, it would be a better place. In some ways, it sort of reminds me of a more "altruistic" version of the Evil Will's final plan of remaking the universe, but of course the tragic element is that he seems to disacknowledge the idea that humanity and all those within the planet (Gosei Angels included) should have the free will and ability to make their own decisions for the betterment of the world without someone telling them to do it at the cost of everything that now exists. It's sad thinking that really despite being a villain, Brajira does have the best in mind even with the massive costs of what would happen if the "Earth Salvation Plan" finally succeeded. Regarding other Goseiger villains, two others obviously stand out as having a situation where you can't help but feel pity for them: Mons Drek, whose nobility as Warstar's leader really showed as he felt compassion and sadness for all those sacrificed for his own planetary conquest; and Metal Alice, who of course wished to rebel against her Mantrintis leader Robogog but merely falls into Brajira's own schemes and dies as a consequence.

So with that said, who are the most depressing ending of a villain group in all of Super Sentai? Among these thirty three groups (not counting Gaiark, since I'm currently watching *Go-Onger*; and obviously every series from *Gokaiger* on), here is a list of my own personal top 5 "most depressing villain group end".

5. *Dimensional War Party Vyram (Jetman):* Obviously any villain group associated with Toshiki Inoue was going to find itself on the list, and really it's obvious why they're here. The Vyram are just cursed with the element of "madness" that seems to surround them and their constant bickering with one another in regards to group leadership. All four members have something they want from being a part of the dimensional invaders, and all four ultimately lose themselves and all meaning trying to outdo the others in the midst of trying to destroy the "Front Dimension". The closest they possibly came to actually working together and being their strongest was under Tranza; but then after Veronica it all fell apart leaving four enemies dead, broken...or carted away due to the madness they've descended into.

4. Bader Clan (Denziman): The depression here is all completely based on the fact that the Bader are probably some of the closest villains regarding their alliances, even if they aren't technically a family. The Bader are the first villain group who feel more like an actual "group" as opposed to a bunch of people ruled by some big guy on top, and you can tell with intent that Queen Hedrian loved her "family" as much as they loved her and each other. The worst thing to happen to them is when Banriki showed up, sitting there like a giant lump causing trouble until he finally takes them over, ultimately leading to the heartbreak as Hedrian is forced to watch one member after another fall away due to the influence and destructive capabilities of the space barbarian. By the time she "departs" after Banriki finally goes down, she is broken: a queen who has completely lost her family and who isn't even willing to fight Denziman any further, just wanting to be alone to regroup what

she's been through. It's sort of sad that she is soon after found by Black Magma, but the end of Denziman does show her probably at her lowest, thus trying to prove herself to a new villain group meant she had nowhere to go but up.

3. Armed Brain Army Volt (Liveman): The group that started my discussion regarding "depressing villain ends", and obviously one of the gold standards of the franchise. Everything was all set up for Great Professor Bias to find that last brain for brainwashing humanity with his Giga Brain Wave and assure his immortality and he literally broke everybody within his group (outside maybe Guardinoid Gash, his own guardian and protector) to do it, all under the intent of "advanced education". Everyone that Bias got in contact with or "created" were all to find that final superbrain, thus everyone who became associated with the professor would become tainted in this dark path and not end in a happy manner. Obviously it would happen the moment Kemp, Mazenda and Obular betrayed their friends and went to the Brain Base to begin this dark path, but it only became worse the bigger Volt became with Ashura, Guildos and Butchy; thus creating more to disappoint and confuse as the time for the final brain to emerge approached. Even with those obviously "created" by Bias as opposed to merely recruited for his research projects, finding out that you're merely a robot instead of an alien or being forced to have a limited means of existence due to not being as smart as Bias wants you to be compared to his true mission just ends up hurting those psychologically when they find these truths out and are forced to cope with what the leader truly wanted. And obviously with Mazenda and Kemp's own ends and even the idea of Bias withering away into an old man thinking he won in his defeat, you just feel nothing but shock and depression witnessing all that you have in Volt's fall to Liveman. The only reason they're not higher...is because Gou/Obular got out before things got too hectic and became a help to try and at least attempt to save his former friends during the ending.

2. Underground Empire Tube (Maskman): What happens to people who are forced under the thumb of a merciless tyrant? This, in a way, is a reason why I think Tube is even more depressing than Volt, because they're a villain group who weren't "chosen" to be in the position they were in but ended up trapped due to internal politics and with its people forced to figure out how to survive by adapting to a tyrant's rules. Earth Emperor Zeba, like Great Professor Bias, is a monster with a plan; but in Zeba's case, the plan has already succeeded and he has become the underground's master, with ambitions to further his empire to the planet's surface being the only reason why Maskman is needed. When Zeba ascended to power, the people in the underground appeared to have no choice on their path: either they worked with the emperor or faced the consequences of defying his rule. While there was elements of resistance, you had to be lucky or have the means to escape to even have a chance of leaving behind his rule, as is the case of lal's attempt to abandon Tube only to find herself frozen in ice most of the season. For the most part, those who are stuck working for Zeba end up having no choice in the matter: they work for the underground, thus the underground's benefit is their benefit...and thus, Zeba's benefit is to their benefit. Even if they don't want Zeba to rule, they're trapped under his thumb and can't defy him lest it leads to worst problems for them down the line. In some way, Earth Prince (Princess) Igam is probably the culmination and standard-bearer regarding the trouble of this rule and the no-win situation everyone is under due to Tube: she was the former daughter of the original leaders before Zeba took over the throne, but then chose to stay and remain loyal to her emperor even as she still believed that she would be the ruler of the underground once again. But of course the heart of the tragedy is that Igam was living a life of utter delusion; she thought she could become the leader, but was trapped by a creature who was already hundreds of years old and could possibly rule over Tube for centuries more; yet any true act of rebellion on her part would ultimately end in failure and put that idea of ruling over the underground at risk. She hated her sister lal and chose to let her become frozen as a prisoner for her defiance of Tube, yet couldn't acknowledge that she at least found a way to become free, even if just for a short time, and that Maskman could have helped her reach a goal of taking down the tyrant due to their own connections to the incident. As I have mentioned, Igam is so stubborn in regarding how she wants to rule yet trapped by Zeba's control that she doesn't fully actively defy him until the last half of the series' final episode, and in that case it took the pleading of her own dying ninja servant to finally make her swallow her pride. Therein lies why it's so depressing: she had a choice and chose to follow a way that would never let her rule; and because of this, she has to atone for the rest of her life for living a life of delusion thinking it would lead to her being the underground's ruler.

But while Igam is the poster-child of Tube's depressing nature, let's also remember that everyone is trapped by the tyranny implanted on the underground by Zeba and no one has a happy means of improving their conditions. Even Baraba, a general who is forever going to fight for the underground regardless of who rules, is trapped in a circumstance where he has to throw away everything, including the love of his mother, in order to fight for Zeba. And when Baraba is ultimately to be executed for his failures by the leader, he finally performs his only act of defiance he can possibly perform in joining Thief Knight Kiros in just stealing Ial away and taking away whatever leverage Zeba had in much of the torment he was issuing...and even then, it was a trap due to Kiros not wanting to give lal up due to his own lusts and Maskman...being Maskman and seeing him as just another enemy for them to destroy due to his support of Tube. The ninjas likewise are bound by loyalty and end up dying for said loyalty to "their nation", Fuumin due to her loyalty to the former royalty and thus to Igam; Oyobu to Zeba, who basically "adopted him" for his final scheme after Baraba was lost to them. Those two have no free will and are forever bound by loyalty to their "masters", which will always be something associated with the underground (the former kingdom or Zeba). And while Kiros isn't necessarily associated with the underground kingdom other than just being brought with them due to his obsession with Ial, his end of course shows a love that he could never have: Ial was never going to change her heart from Takeru no matter what he did or how he was going to bring her back himself. All of his pursuits of the underground princess was in vain, made worse in that since lal chose to abandon Takeru for her kingdom at the end, the "love" the two had really had no purpose other than to motivate Maskman! (when it wasn't like they were without it since Sugata had his own reasonings to see Tube fall)

Ultimately, Tube probably is one of the most tragic, depressing endings for any villain group due to the whole feeling of futility they have; no one can escape whether by personal choice or just the nature of the tyrannical Emperor Zeba, and even death doesn't justify any sort of true relief for most of those involved; heck even the one who survives is forced to live with her sins for the rest of her life. But

as horrifying and depressing as Tube's end is, there is still one group I think is the most depressing and saddest of ends...

1. Psyma Family (GoGoFive)

I find it interesting that most of the potentially depressing villains in Super Sentai, at least in my top five, all came from prior to *Zyuranger*, the series where the influences of *Power Rangers* and Noboru Sugimura seemed to make the franchise become much more black-and-white, particularly with it's villains. That doesn't mean that the post-*Zyu* series are completely absent of these types of characters, since some of the most interesting villains such as Neziregia, the Londerz Family and Rinjuken Akugata all came from this period. However, the most depressing villain group of the period, and possibly all Sentai, is a group that takes the greatest and worst elements of emotion and connection and uses them in one villain group that goes through the worst until they reach their final end. They're not redeemable since they still want Earth destroyed in some fashion, but they are villains who we can sympathize due to the connections they hold being torn apart by circumstances. And this villain group...is the Psyma Family, the space demons fighting against the rescue heroes of GoGoFive.

What makes the Psyma so tragic can be seen in their basic concept: while they want to accomplish what most villain groups tend to want in causing destruction and chaos, their main mission is still one that can be understood and comprehended by even the hardest of hearts: they want to bring their mother, Great Witch Grandiene, to Earth by way of the special Grand Cross alignment. To do this, they hope to build up the potential Minus Energy of Earth by way of its negative emotions to become a beacon for both chaos and, ultimately, to direct Grandiene to the planet so they could be with her again and assist in her mission. The Psyma are defined as demons (and possibly "space demons" considering their cosmic origins within the primal bases of existence), but they are first and foremost a family, one who looks and cares for each other in the best and worst of times. The eldest, Zylpheeza, is constantly looking after the welfare of his younger siblings, all while leading the mission of trying to bring their mother to Earth. What makes the Psyma work is that they love and care for each other all while the main Sentai team of the season, the Tatsumi family (GoGoFive), are getting on each other's backs having spent 10 years apart after their father ran off to prepare for the Psyma and the Grand Cross and their mother became presumed dead after a plane crash. The Psyma are doing everything for a mother they love; and the Tatsumi can't stand each other, can't stand what their father pulled and now have to work together in order to save the world from space demons who have the love and care for each other they actually should.

The tragic elements of the Psyma don't seem to emerge until the Grand Cross draws near, particularly when Grandiene herself becomes so disapproving of Zylpheeza's love and management of the group that she's willing to make the youngest of them, baby Drop, the new leader when she returns. The eldest Psyma is put on the spot and tries his best, but is ultimately killed by GoGoFive in the process before the series is halfway through, which amazingly happens before the Grand Cross itself and the changes it brings, namely the partial summoning of the mother to Earth and the transformation of Drop into the new, powerful dragonoid general, Salamandes. Salamandes has the same loyalty to Grandiene, but seems to do so at disregard to his elder siblings, Cobolda and Denus; all while Grandiene herself seemed to show less care for anyone other than those who could give her results. The separation from their mother's disregard combined with the loss of Zylpheeza affects these two siblings in a way that ends up making them turn rivals against their own family, possibly in hopes of trying to return it to some sort of stability; it's hard to say they hate Salamandes despite being their brother, but Grandiene's desires and Salamandes' arrogance drives a wedge between them that only gets worse as the season goes along and as their enemies, GoGoFive, grow closer as a family.

Eventually, the fall of the Psyma is sad and tragic, completely bound by the realization that Grandiene never cared for her family as much as they cared for her. After too many defeats, the witch abandons Salamandes as well, who desperately tries to remain relevant and in her good graces only to be destroyed by the rescue heroes. With their mother abandoning them as well, Cobolda and Denus are forced to revive Zylpheeza as their only means to try and get someone to understand them and support them in the midst of this collapse, only for Denus to sacrifice her own life to secure their elder brother's return. Then not too long after Zylpheeza's return. Grandiene forces Cobolda to fight against him in hopes of being her new herald, only to have him forced to be killed by his elder brother and ultimately kills her eldest son again by flames meant to likewise destroy the Tatsumi. Ultimately during the final phase of the battle, both Zylpheeza and Salamandes are revived yet again to be her final "Gods of Destruction"; made worse by the eldest brother keeping his conscious and hoping to try and regain his younger brother's favor, but with Salamandes no longer even recognizing him at all prior to both merely becoming massive "puppets" for their own mother, victims as much as they are heralds for the power of the evil space witch.

What makes the Psyma the most tragic, depressing group of every single Sentai villain group is that they are a group that literally shows the love of a family and how it can fall apart due to the manipulation of the simple element of love....or what's believed to be love. The Psyma siblings all want to save Grandiene thinking that by uniting their family, it will make them all the stronger; but Grandiene has no acknowledgement of the element of family within her, only seeing her "children" as those who should be manipulated or used as servants for her own whims. All four of the "generals" die either trying to prove themselves to Grandiene or trying to protect the bond that they have with one another as siblings. Amazingly they're fighting for the same thing as GoGoFive in fighting for a family, except their desires remain those that are bound by typical Sentai villains: none of the Psyma ever show any real repentance or a desire to do good or the right thing (compared to Power Rangers, where there at least they try to give a bit of sympathy for Diabolico in stopping Bansheera; except there the only "child" she was ever related to was Salamandes/Olympus so it was more about someone trying to reign in another who had gone too far) While GoGoFive knows of the familiar relations of the Psyma, they never really had any interactions to strengthen their understanding of how a family of space demons could exist or work out how these relations end up leading to the troubles and emotions choices made by them; they're too worried about their own problems to probably worry about Zylpheeza trying to stop his youngest brother from replacing him, or why Cobolda and Denus want to revive Zylpheeza so badly.

And in the end, that probably just sort of shows the ultimate tragedy of the season: two families fighting one another, yet one starts off completely wrecked and become united by love at the end; and the other was completely loving and caring at the start and collapses into "physical embodiments" to be used as tools instead of as free-thinking individuals. The Psyma Family did care about each other once; and that's why their collapse makes them the most depressing villain end of all those l've seen...

Honorable Mention: -Star League Gozma (Changeman) -Reconstructive Experimental Empire Mess (Flashman) -Silver Galactic Army Zone (Fiveman) -Wicked Electrical Kingdom Neziregia (Megaranger) -Rinjuken Akugata (Gekiranger)

That should be it for my first "Toku Thoughts" entry; if you have any ideas or want to ask me any questions or any ideas for possible entries, don't be afraid to ask.