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Paul Wells on Satoshi Kon
Philip Brophy on The Sound of an Android’s Soul
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Editor’s Note

A nime is a visual enigma. Its otherworldly allure and burgeoning popularity across the globe highlights its unique ability to be more than just another type of animation. Originally a novelty export from post-war Japan, anime has now become a subtle yet important part of Western popular culture. Furthermore, it remains a key area of audience and fan research that crosses all generations – children, teenagers, and adults. From Osamu Tezuka to Hayao Miyazaki, Ayu (Katsuhiro Otomo, 1988) to Ghost in the Shell (Mamoru Oshii, 1995), anime’s extraordinary characters and oneric content still enable it to be regarded as one of the most awe-inspiring visual spectacles going into and during the twenty-first century.

Keenly aware of anime’s rich history, cultural and global context, and increasing presence and influence on Western art, literature and film, the theme of this issue of Cinephile is ‘Reassessing Anime.’ The six articles included herein aim to address and tackle some of the overlooked aspects of anime. Such a reassessment by each author hopes to encourage future academic scholarship into the evolution and value of anime and, moreover, its impact not only on film but also on TV, comic books, video games, music videos, and corporate marketing strategies.

To begin this issue, Paul Wells explores authorship, ‘magic realism,’ and postmodernism in the films of the late Sanoshi Kon, reassessing the Japanese film director’s œuvre via a range of theoretical and philosophical perspectives on anime and animation. Next, Philip Brophy discusses the importance of sound in *Time of Eve* and how music, muzak, and MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) work on multiple levels of soundtrack within this very recent anime product. Focusing on a rather uncharted and MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) work on anime and animation. Next, Philip Brophy discusses the importance of sound in *Time of Eve* and how music, muzak, and MIDI (Musical Instrument Digital Interface) work on multiple levels of soundtrack within this very recent anime product. Focusing on a rather uncharted

Unwavering dedication, remarkable creativity, and strong teamwork all enabled this issue of *Cinephile* to be brought to fruition. First, I wish to thank my advisor Ernest Mathijs for monitoring the progress of this issue and for all of his advice and insight along the way. Second, I want to extend my thanks to the entire editorial board for their hard work and assistance throughout each step of this scholarly endeavor. Together, we worked hard to create and promote this issue on anime and I am extremely fortunate to have worked with each and every one of you. Thank you, in particular, to Andrew deWard and Shaun Inouye for each providing extra assistance with some of the more technical and computational aspects of the journal. On a final note, I’d also like to express my gratitude to Chloé Chan for sharing her incredible artistic talent with *Cinephile* and for producing such exquisite artwork to enhance this publication.

Whether you’re a cinephile, bibliophile, technophile or even a proud Japanophile, this issue hopes to attract and unite an eclectic array of individuals and bring the topic of anime to the forefront of academic inquiry. So what are you waiting for? Read on! Enjoy! And get ‘animated’ about anime!

Jonathan A. Cannon

Contributors

Michael R. Bowman received his M.A. in History of Art from the Ohio State University in 2011 and his B.A. in Archaeology and Classical Civilization from Cornell University in 2009. Currently, he is a Ph.D. student at the Ohio State University continuing his studies of the art and archeology of the ancient world. His fieldwork has included archaeological excavations in Greece at the site of Halai, working under the Cornell Halai and East Lokris Project, and at the Ohio State University excavations at the sanctuary of Artemis. An avid anime enthusiast, his interests also include the development of the otaku community, especially outside of Japan, and the creation of otaku identity.

Philip Brophy is an internationally renown author, musician, filmmaker and educator based in Australia. He has edited three books from the CinemaSonic conferences and has written series and occasional columns for *Real Time* (Sydney), *The Wire* (London), *Film Comment* (New York) and *Empire* (Sydney). His book *100 Modern Soundtracks* (BFI, London) has been translated into Japanese and published by Film Art, Tokyo. His most recent books are *100 Anime* (BFI, London) and *Priscilla* for the Australian Film Classics series (Currency Press). As a writer and speaker on art, Philip has contributed numerous essays and articles for journals and catalogues. Additionally, he has also edited books to accompany two major exhibitions he curated: *Katsuhiko Okada: Expressive Animation From America and Japan* (MCA, Sydney) and *Tezuka: The Marvel of Manga* (NGV, Melbourne).

Frédéric Clément is a Ph.D. candidate in Cinema Studies at the Université de Montréal in Quebec, Canada. His current research focuses on the legacy of animated cinema in video games, as well as the depiction of women in films, animation and graphic novels. His first book, *Machines désirées: La représentation du féminin dans les films d’animation Ghibli dans le Shell de Mamoru Oshii*, was published by Editions L’Harmattan in 2011.

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Paul Wells is Professor and Director of the Animation Academy at Loughborough University in the UK. He has published widely in the field of Animation Studies, including *Understanding Animation (Routledge)*, *Re-Imagining Animation: The Changing Face of the Moving Image (AVA Academia)*, and *The Animated Bestiary (Rutgers)*, and is an established writer and director for radio, TV and film. He conducts workshops worldwide based on his book, *Scriptwriting* (AVA Academia), and is currently making a film with the Oil Museum in Stavanger, Norway. He is also the Chair of the Association of British Animation Collections.

John Wheeler is an M.A. student in modern Japanese literature with a focus in Japanese cinema at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He also moonlights as a closeted otaku. Before entering graduate school he worked sporadically as an entertainment journalist in Los Angeles, California covering Asian popular culture for publications such as LA Weekly and Asia Pacific Arts. His greatest professional (and personal) moment came in 2009: an exclusive interview with legendary Japanese animator and film director Hayao Miyazaki. John would like to thank his academic adviser Robert Tierney and fellow colleague Colin Raymond for reading drafts of the article included in this issue of *Cinephile*, as well as Makiko Ishizawa for correcting a Japanese translation.

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Playing the Kon Trick Between Dates, Dimensions and Daring in the films of Satoshi Kon

Paul Wells

When Satoshi Kon tragically passed away in the Summer of 2010, anime lost one of its true auteurs, and animation, one of the most playful exponents of the way the animated form can re-define space, time and sensibility, both through its characters and environments, and its audiences. Kon’s films, Perfect Blue (1998), Millennium Actress (2001), Tokyo Godfathers (2003) and Paprika (2006), as well as his screenplay for Memories (1995) all signal a preoccupation with how identity is bound up with the perception of temporal order, spatial laws and configurations, and how any one person might ‘evidence’ their presence and influence in the material world.

Kon is in some senses best known for this formal playfulness, and the satirical insights which emerge from his operational flux of perspectives, but often less acknowledged is what might be termed the ‘emotional intelligence’ of his films, and the ways in which his interests in the fundamental aspects of the human condition are revealed through his use of a ‘magic realist’ register. It is also the case that Kon is probably viewed as a quintessentially post-modern filmmaker, given the attention to visual surfaces and fragmentary narratives or ‘micro-narratives’ (see Wells, 89-105), which in turn, preserve some aspects of the specificity of the Japanese sensibility unadorned with Western traits and tropes. Hayao Miyazaki, of course, has been noted for the ways, for example, he reminds Japanese audiences in films like Princess Mononoke (1997) and Spirited Away (2001) about a more spiritual engagement with the primary epiphanies of Shinto, before its tenets were mobilised ideologically in the support of militarist ends (see Callis, 93-103). Kon has a similar but more socially grounded vision in which he addresses the themes that have their bearers rooted in the past, but which emerge problematically in the contemporary world.

One need only immediately address the issues of sex, sexuality and sexual representation to evaluate this in Kon’s breakthrough film, Perfect Blue. Japan had imposed a ban on sexual imagery in graphic form up to 1985, rendering sex education texts useless in regard to their illustration, but somewhat ironically, Japan had sustained a rich tradition of erotic art since the early nineteenth century, the first ‘tentacle’ porn, arguably Hokasai’s Netsuke, prints - conjure a picture of a place where the sensations are always new,” argues de Waal, “where art pours out of daily life, where everything exists in a dream of endless beautiful flow” (de Waal 53).

There is much here to draw upon, not least the idea of a sensual, creative continuum in the dream-like expression of an inherently rich, everyday experience – life somehow imbued with feeling and aesthetics. De Waal then engages with Japanese culture as it was mediated in the post-war period, when numerous books were written seemingly trying to ‘explain’ the otherness of the Japanese: “Japan – my, what an odd country! A country in transition. Vanishing traditions. Enduring traditions, Essential vities. Seasons in. Myopia of the Japanese. Love of sensuality and animation, then, are not, therefore, based on classical editing, or ideologically charged agencies of montage or counterpoint, but the accumulation of aestheticized vignettes or ‘micro-narratives’ (see Wells, 89-105), which in turn, preserve some aspects of the specificity of the Japanese sensibility unadorned with Western traits and tropes. Hayao Miyazaki, of course, has been noted for the ways, for example, he reminds Japanese audiences in films like Princess Mononoke (1997) and Spirited Away (2001) about a more spiritual engagement with the primary epiphanies of Shinto, before its tenets were mobilised ideologically in the support of militarist ends (see Callis, 93-103). Kon has a similar but more socially grounded vision in which he addresses the themes that have their bearers rooted in the past, but which emerge problematically in the contemporary world.

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K on’s breakthrough success with Perfect Blue, and its marketing to the West as a Hitchcock style thriller, to some extent misrepresents his work and its specific achievements both in animation and as a Japanese film. Although Kon uses genre carefully, the preoccupation here is not with the Hitchcockian idea of being directed or misdirected to see in a certain way, but to explore the ways of seeing that both lead to seemingly challenging conclusions about how and why humans think or act, or signify psychological chaos and confusion. This is not then mere playfulness with film form, or only the mixing of different registers of reality, but the use of narrative vignettes point ing to the contradictions and tensions in the cultural the matics Kon has identified. In Perfect Blue, ingenue Mimie Kirigoe, seeks to develop her career by leaving the teen pop group CHAM, and becoming an actress. What this entails is essentially the shift from the platonic sexuality of a ‘girl group’ to the adult realm of mainstream eroticism and exploitation; a shift which prompts psychological and emotional uncertainty in Mimie herself, but also those around her, who act upon their assumed knowledge about her, and the ways in which they wish to manipulate her for their own ends. It also moves Mimie through different registers of social and theatrical performance, as well as through her own engagement with changing aspects of her personal ity. Kon effectively documents these processes – through a mode of ‘magic realism’ – thereby revealing the underpinning emotional terrain.

Fredric Jameson, intrigued by the illusiveness in defining ‘magic realism’ in film, traced it back to its Latinate roots, but ultimately found it most notably in Eastern Euro pean cinema, concluding that:

In spite of…stylistic differences, however, I retain a sense of shared features, of which I will here isolate three: these are all historical films; the very different color of each constitutes a unique supplement, and the source of a particular pleasure, or fascination, or jenaissance in this case. In each film, the dynamic of narrative has somehow been reduced, concentrated and simplified, by the attention to violence (and to a lesser extent sexuality)...All of them in different ways, enjoin a visual spell, an enthralment to the image in its present of time, which is quite distinct... (Jameson 130). Jameson’s refinement of the ‘magic realism’ principle could arguably be recognised in a great deal of cinema, and certainly much animation, but it is clear that the historical preoccupation, conceptual colour use, and concentrated

social, sexual and economic conduct, with the permissive excesses of the contemporary era.

From the outset then, it is worthwhile noting that I do not see the shifting parameters of Kon’s narratives and images as evidence of postmodern fragmentation and cultural malaise, but as a different model of ‘flow’. This is predicated more on what Scott McCloud has noted in Osama Tenzuki’s graphic story-telling, namely the more extensive presence of subject-to-subject transitions and non-sequitur juxtapositions in extended narratives (McCloud 76-83). The relationship between images in manga and animation, then, are not, therefore, based on classical editing, or ideologically charged agencies of montage or counterpoint, but the accumulation of aestheticized vignettes or ‘micro-narratives’ (see Wells, 89-105), which in turn, preserve some aspects of the specificity of the Japanese sensibility unadorned with Western traits and tropes. Hayao Miyazaki, of course, has been noted for the ways, for example, he reminds Japanese audiences in films like Princess Mononoke (1997) and Spirited Away (2001) about a more spiritual engagement with the primary epiphanies of Shinto, before its tenets were mobilised ideologically in the support of militarist ends (see Callis, 93-103). Kon has a similar but more socially grounded vision in which he addresses the themes that have their bearers rooted in the past, but which emerge problematically in the contemporary world.

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narrative vignettes in the service of heightening the ‘present of time,’ is a clear feature of Kon’s work, especially in the ways in which he heightens both physical and emotional violence.’ In Perfect Blue’s now notorious ‘rape’ scene in which Mimie endures a simulated, though seemingly ‘real’ rape, when playing a night-club stripper in an episodic drama, ‘Double Bind,’ Kon localises a moment of transition in which violation, manipulation and performance are entwined, and the restraint and repression of the past is replaced by an acceptance of a seemingly lax, immoral, corrupt, code of existence. Kon, having already over-extended the rape scene with interruptions that signal the indifference about what is happening, and to heighten unease, uses Mimie’s resistant yet resigned confusion amidst a swirl of ever darkening violet and blue lights and faces to create an emotionally charged moment when the celebratory cheers of the crowd of men watching her rape remind her of the crowds who once adored her as a pop idol in CHAM. Her innocence is lost, beginning a psychological fragmentation in which Mimie is constantly confronted by her former identity in the girl group; the voice of Me-Mania, her psycho- nortic stalker, who mimics, indeed, replaces her in ‘Mimie’s Room,’ her on-line blog; and ultimately, a mentally unstable ‘double’, Rumi, her erstwhile agency manager, but former pop idol, now jealous of her charge’s success.

The multiple layers of Kon’s universe – dreams and nightmares; memories; fantasies; solipsistic sceneri- os; theatrical performances; social role-playing; mediat ed constructions, references to other visual sources, etc – are readily facilitated by the ontological equivalence of the animated image. All animated imagery, however tentative, mimetic or quasi-realist, foregrounds its constructed-ness and illusionism. Kon takes this to its next level in creating ‘magician realist’ epiphanies like Mimie’s state of consciousness at the height of her rape, where aesthetics work in the service of a transcendence that points at one level to the emotional/ emotive outcomes of the scene, but also bigger concerns, ones here related to a ‘slippage’ in the Japanese sensibility from a sense of balance and order, to an emo- tional and sensual capitulation, resulting in a chaotic and sometimes contradictory existentialism. This is also histori- cally specific, in that it represents the emergence of a mod- ern Japanese identity, no longer bound by its religious or insular culture, or the post-war impact of American occu- pation and Western intervention. Kon is the fundamental chronicler of this emergence, dealing with these topics and themes much more playfully in Millennium Actress.

Millennium Actress takes the ‘magician realist’ principle further still as Kon bases the narrative on the making of a documentary film, in which a former studio runner, Genya Tachibana, now in his late career, seeks to make a film about a reclusive actress, Chiyoko Fujiwara, a woman he has loved and admired from afar throughout her glittering film career. Kon recognises that in essence it is the act of image-making in itself, which is at stake in prompting what defines and interrogates reality/identity/history, and how far this reveals the sensibilities of those who make the images and those who are depicted in them. Consequently, Chiyoko’s reported memories of her life actually see Tachibana and his sceptical cameraman, Kyoji, feature in the imagery she is describing; imagery which moves seamlessly between her recollections of the life she led, and scenes from her films – most notably a samurai movie referencing Akira Kurosawa’s Throne of Blood (1957) and a science-fiction film recalling the work of Karel Zeman.

A s is usual in Kon’s work, one register is as ‘real’ as the other, and here, the conventions of the romance genre seem to inform Chiyoko’s everyday life as she constantly pursues the ideal of once again meeting, and be- ing with, a16divident artist, who she briefly met in her youth, and from whom she attained a key. As Andrew Osmond has pointed out, the film’s premise emerged from the concep- tual idea of a trompe l’oeil, a painted illusion that seems so real, it effectively temporarly ‘replaces’ reality to those per- ceiving it, until the illusion itself becomes apparent under closer observation. Consequently, this points to the notion that all images, illusions and issues, are only matters related to how we perceive them, so as Osmond notes, ‘the artist’s key (to the most important thing there is) seems [sic] to be a bit of junk once owned by a man who is finally revealed to have been dead for most of the film. But it might [sic] just be the key that unlocks Chiyoko’s door to eternity’ (Os- mond 58).

In the film’s possibly surprising ending, in which Chiyoko admits that it is actually the thrill of the chase that she enjoys rather than the possibility of the attainment of her dream, Kon reveals his own imperative, and implicitly, that of documentary Tachibana, in wanting to know and retain the emotional flux of experience, rather than the ‘fi- nality’ of fulfilment. In Kon’s worlds, it is better to believe in something that heightens and elevates experience than to merely accept its fundamental mundaneness, and it is this that both underpins his interest in depicting shifting registers of reality/perception, and his desire to create mo- ments of ‘magician realist’ transcendence. This serves to show not merely the fluidities of existence, but reveals to personal, social and cultural perspectives. Chiyoko’s ‘magic realist’ life is thus effectively based on the motif of running, and moving through, the contours of Japanese social his- tory since the 1930s. This engaging aesthetic flux can thus also be understood as a range of competing ideological and ethical perspectives, that once more show the re-invention of Japan in vignettes of ‘presences’ – at once ‘magical’ and ‘real’. I wish to finally term this, existential coding, since it seeks to record modes of perceived reality and experience in

In Kon’s worlds, it is better to believe in something that heightens and elevates experience than to merely accept its fundamental mundaneness...

Miyuki, a teenage runaway, and Gin, a deluded alcoholic, find a newborn baby girl in the midst of discarded rubbish, and begin a bizarre journey across a snowbound Tokyo to try and find the infant’s mother. Crucially, Kon turns his ‘magic realist’ gaze on the tension between the ‘magic’ sug- gested in the Christian conception of Christmas, when the film is set, and the ‘realism’ of homelessness in contempo- rary Japan. Hana, in particular, mediates the idea that con- temporary Japan has lost some of the moral and social sense bound up in past practices, and that those consigned to the margins might offer a reminder of the kind of compassion and dignity now forgotten in the wake of self-serving, indif- ferent and indulgent cultures.

The trio encounter criminals, drug addicts, and vio- lent street thugs; broken marriages and attempted suicide; each addressing their own reasons for their homeless condi- tion – Miyuki’s stabbing of her father in a petty argument, Gin’s addictions to gambling and alcohol, which resulted in the loss of his family, and Hana, reconciling the contradic- tions she perceives in himself as ‘a mistake made by God’. Importantly, though, if Perfect Blue and Millennium Actress are concerned with imagined or desired relationships, Tokyo Godfathers is grounded in the relationship between the trio, who arbitrate a new morality amidst the degradation which they confront, in a spirit of reconciliation and acceptance. The ‘existential code’ here is the recovery of an emotional reality beneath the circumstances that create the kinds of alienation and emotional dissatisfaction experienced by Mimie in Perfect Blue and Chiyoko in Millennium Actress.
On this occasion, though, Kon is not concerned with the irrationality or obsession of the individual psyche, but rather the everyday irrationality and arbitrariness of the social world. It is this very arbitrariness, however, which allows Kon to deploy the kind of ‘magic realism’ in which divine intervention, in the shape of a gust of wind, saves Hana as she plunges from a roof, clinging to a street banner, holding the abandoned baby. The fall occurs at the night’s last moment of darkness, and the day’s first moment of sunshine as the banner slowly descends to earth; a miracle witnessed by the dumbfounded onlookers. The film enjoys these magic-realist moments, consolidating the Christian themes of forgiveness, redemption and salvation in two further incidents of good fortune and coincidence: when Gin picks up a winning lottery ticket and also the hint that Miyuki may be reconciled with her father. Kon uses his animation to authenticate his shifts of register and ‘magic realist’ transcendence, not in this instance to reveal the conflicted mind or the social body, but instead to privilege an essential soul and a defining spirit in humanity in response to hopelessness and disillusion at the heart of the more apocalyptic agendas of the Japanese post-war sensibility.

These apocalyptic scenarios present in much (sci-fi) anime, at one level, demonstrate a deep ambivalence about the advances in post-war technology, and Japan’s place at the forefront of such innovation. Typically, Kon embraces this in what will sadly be his last film, Paprika. Drawing together themes from his previous films, and the work of author Yasutaka Tsutsui, Kon sets a scene in which the heroine, Dr Atsuko Chiba is equipped with a device – the DC mini – by which she can enter others’ dream-states as her alter-ego, Paprika. As in all scenarios dealing with advanced technology, there is always the underpinning idea that the positive or negative outcomes of their use is fundamentally related to the hands in which they are held. When some DC minis are stolen, this sets in train a thriller plot which by Chiba seeks their return, but this is but secondary to the opportunity such a narrative conceit affords in enacting the free play of visual invention in the representation of dreams (and other kinds of visual narratives), and more significantly, in the use of animation as a form of creative expression.

The Sound of an Android’s Soul

Music, Muzak and MIDI in *Time of Eve*

Philip Brophy

At a crucial reveal halfway through Yukihiko Yoshii’s *Time of Eve* (Eruru no giite, 6-part OVA, 2008-9, compiled into a feature film in 2010), teen Rikuo remembers a past conversation with his best friend, Masaki. Unbeknownst to them at the time, they innocently stand at crossroads. Masaki will continue his studies in law; Rikuo is uncertain, having given up his aspirations to be a concert pianist. Masaki ridicules his decision, for Rikuo has rejected his aspirations after seeing a robot perfectly perform a piece of music on the piano. Rikuo doesn’t mention to Masaki what was most disturbing about the performance: only at this point in *Eve’s* back-story do we realise that Rikuo was truly ‘moved’ by the robot’s performance. This is not your usual existential dilemma – a field in which teen-oriented anime excels, more than most Western photo-cine attempts at the same. Here in this near future (sardonically tagged as ‘probably Japan’ in a pre-title card), the teen Rikuo has his world inverted because a robot achieved not a technically perfect actualisation of a piece of classical piano forte music, but because to Rikuo’s advanced listening sensibilities (dedicated to encountering and hopefully generating such moments of actualised perfection) this robot’s performance emotionally ‘moved’ him. Japanese cinema and anime has consistently told stories in manifold genres that evidence this inversion, wherein everyday life is accepted to be ‘existential’ until one day a ‘humanist’ moment occurs and transforms things. Anime’s preponderance of ‘androids with souls’ is thus less likely to be formally motivated by generic machinations of science fiction, and more likely to be culturally determined by philosophical enquiries of dramatic fiction.

In *Eve*, we never get to hear that robot’s performance, yet it weighs heavily in Rikuo’s head, softly ringing with emotional gravitas. With acumen and sensitivity, sound and music in *Eve* – an acute meld of sound effects design, spatial environment mixing, musical arrangement, phonographic reproduction and compositional performance – function like a ‘meta-score’ moulded by concave and convex undulations of the inner surface of Rikuo’s head. Belying an apply Japanese sense of how dramaturgy and psychology are represented in and expressed by narrative moments, arcs and formations, *Eve’s* conduction of sound and music precisely maps the story’s key themes of consciousness (a boy realising androids have feelings, while a ‘girl’ android realises her feelings to her ‘master’ boy) and in the process gives rise to a bounty for musico-linguistic significance.

While sound and music are easily foregrounded in *Eve* due to Rikuo’s character, the aural issues it raises are particularly well presented by the anime world, wherein considerations of the minutiae of post-human behaviour (as both social interaction and internal motivation) have been a staple meme ever since Osamu Tezuka’s ground-breaking manga, *Tetsuwan Atomu* (Astro Boy, serialised between 1947 and 1963, then made as an animated TV series in 1963, 1980 and 2007). Atomu is the definitive ‘android with a soul’, questioning not only his own existence, but also interrogating Isaac Asimov’s famous “Three Laws of Robotics” from a robot’s point-of-view. (Not by coincidence is Asimov’s logic similarly interrogated throughout *Eve*). More so, just as the anime form gives rise to considering how appearance and simulation constitute a self-reflexive given (i.e., a realm where graphically rendered images of humans include identically rendered androids who within the fictional world are perceived as being indistinguishable from actual humans – but which to us watching anime appear equally ‘unreal’ due to their shared status as drawings), so too does its sound-
In a café, the stage is set within a stage of the story’s drama... a figurative auditorium which symbolically and materially audits and ‘auralizes’...

In their ‘opening music requires scrutiny prior to its effect and purpose in the film. But Japanese cinema has long employed a type of ‘interior/exterior inversion’ to govern where, how and why its musical moments occur.’ Eve’s opening music requires scrutiny precisely because it seems inconsequential, offhand, insubstantial. Just as emotional tenor in anime is transmitted through moments of micro-material occurrences. The act of listening to the music of Eve is predicated on a contemplative awareness of this operational threshold — one decidedly more complex and subtle than the faux-European orchestral scores which have assailed the listener in CGI animated movies over the last decade.

Eve’s next musical moment occurs when we are introduced to Rikuo and his ‘houseroid’ Sammy. They sit side-by-side in the lounge room, a haze of afternoon sunlight bleaching their quiet space. Both are motionless; Sammy has her abdominal cavity exposed, showing us cables connected to Rikuo and his ‘houseroid’ robots. Customers, please cooperate. Obey the rule and have a fun time…” Specifically, this covert café sends a cryptic Japlish message (“Are you enjoying your Time of Eve?”) to androids who make their way to the café in order to – of their own volition – experience an absence of prejudice. In a way, the café is a stage within a stage of the story’s drama... a figurative auditorium which symbolically and materially audits and ‘auralizes’...

The act of recording, but from MIDI’s ability to position temporal events and harmonic nodes on a neural grid, maturing music rather than composing it. While this is a standard reading of the pleasure drive of techno since Kraftwerk’s pioneering work in the late 1970s, such a matrixing of events here is synthesised to the large screen’s display of a network of androids separately attaining a moment of consciousness (activated by receiving the mysterious Eve message). Profoundly, this entirely ‘non-human’ and ‘non-signifying’ BGPM represents not how humans bellow their humanism, but how androids attain consciousness. Diverging from Kraftwerk’s (and in a sense, Asimov’s) celebration of programmed mechanics and automated robotics, this music is not ‘machine-like’ (an oft-bandied criticism of techno in general) but suggestive of how machines can innately and animistically ‘self-generate’ their own musical language.

As a giant screen simulates the tracing of an illegal data transmission from an unknown source to a random network of androids in the opening of Eve, background music plays – or to use the Japanese acronym, BGGM. It sounds electronic, computerised, current (glitchy ambient techno af) a Japanese melodic bent, to be more precise). To musicologists who proffer rationalist qualitative views of how ‘great’ film scores operate, this would likely appear to be ‘non-signifying’ music: something simply

from photo-cine films oppositely concerned with reductive emoting and human-centric mori-vation. **

As it appears to be ‘non-signifying’ music: something simply
boom of a cannon blast. As we hear this musical moment and register its euphonic, uplifting, transcending tone, we see Rikuo’s eyes widen slightly. But it remains unclear what he is thinking or feeling, despite the clarity of its impact. This musical refrain is repeated twice more in Eve, and only at those later moments can we deduce the aggregated implications and synchronized effect of the music.

One of these moments involves Akiko – a girl Rikuo meets at the café whom he later discovers to be an android, but who like all the undisclosed androids there behave devoid of their difference to humans. Rikuo is thinking of what she said once at the café: that no matter how similar humans and androids appear, they remain completely different on the inside. Rikuo now replays that thought as voiced from an android, not a human, and thus realises that androids are capable of feeling difference between themselves and humans – in contradistinction to Asimov’s robins who could not achieve this sort of consciousness. The music’s ‘multiplied polyphony’ then represents the bilateral consequences of human-android co-existence. Furthermore, its ‘radicalism’ lies in its subversion of musical language as it has developed along Eurocentric thematism.

Again, we encounter another topic which in the West is treated with derision. Few musicologists would bother with the signifying wealth of muzak, and when it appears to be happening in a film score, there is the assumption that the score is vapid, empty, pale, thin, ‘soulless’. Muzak of all sorts plays in many public spaces in contemporary Japan (as it has ever since the post-war period) and especially so in spaces designed for rest, repose and relaxation. Eve’s choice of a café for the ‘stage’ of its themes is a pointed choice, as cafés – or the kiosen as it developed in Japan in the ‘70s – is a place where one can feel especially relaxed by enjoying a momentary yet complete detachment from society. The kiosen is an infamous site for muzak; many a Westerner, it’s like a nightmarishly numbing interment straight out of a Kurt Vonnegut novel. Much of the score in Eve deftly assumes a muzak guise in varying degrees of diegetic presence, never straying far from the type of ‘light instrumental music which one might hear at a kiosen, café or koubai chain like Doutor or Excelsior.

When Rikuo and Maasaki make their way down the secluded stairwell to the café, the music mimics their excitement as they nervously approach the place for the first time. It starts with vamped chords played on simulated mellotron (i.e., a digital version of an archaic analogue tape instrument designed to emulate the sounds of strings, flutes and/or voices). Once they open the door to the café and see the sign of its ‘rule’, the music blossoms into a bouquet of wordless female voice, electronic keyboards, bongos, shakers and acoustic guitars. This arrangement is typical of the ‘ernos-bossa nova’-style pop of Onote-sando and its hip designer cafés, so its musicality references a certain ‘certain’-analytical and precise within the Japanese context. If one were to ‘read’ or evaluate the music here outside of its context, one would miss how it deliberates muzak as a vernacular mode of music tied to the environs depicted in Eve. But most importantly, the ‘souls’ aspects of muzak – the affectation of human presence in stark contrast to the highly emotional human presence encoded within Japanese roko ballads and tunes – reflect not only how androids might find pleasure in listening to music which absences humanism, but also how humans – Rikuo especially, but also Maasaki as we discover later – can become capable of registering emotional depth in such music precisely because it displays no human presence.

The anaesthetic realm of MIDI production – its absence of actual audible spatial occurrence (such as a piano playing in a room) – would seem a perfect modus operandi for the matrixed simulacra of anime. Just as nothing pre-exists in anime due to its world being engineered and actualised rather than photographed and captured, MIDI generates music that in a sense never happened. Most of Eve’s score is MIDI generated, yet this is so because the ‘spaces’ in Eve constitute a topography of non-existing zones: from the Ethics Committee’s insistent regulations about how androids co-inhabit human space, to the de-sanctioning of these rules within the walls of the Eve café, to the piano practice room which Rikuo no longer frequents, to his own interior head space wherein he harbours unmentionable feelings toward the houseroid Sammy. Eve is a dense cartography of no-go zones, and the unactual nature of MIDI aptly reflects Eve’s dramaturgy.

Pastic modern theoretical precepts would hold simulated virtual instrumentation in line with the notion of the simulacrum, presuming that the instruments’ affected sound and audible mimicry (such as the sampled marimba or bongos in Eve’s score previously mentioned) are meant to reference, replace or replicate their originating instruments. But what would that presume that there is neither depth, density nor congestion between the original and its simulation, as if the dynamic flux of history, technology, musicology and culture somehow freezes between two binary states of musical occurrence and existence (the oft used ‘real’ and ‘fake’ dichotomy). The MIDI construction of music (a notion unaddressed by the iconic and linguistical parameters of postmodern theory) has for half a century being played by a human. The dramaturgical device of androids attaining consciousness in Eve defines a non-binary arena for considering new and alternative ways of considering human pleasure principles. Put bluntly, people like techno because it sounds nothing like ‘the Neville Brothers; it is not as if techno artists are trying to sound like ‘the Neville Brothers and failing, in place delivering a soulless sound. Eve’s androids and humans – plus its composer and its audience – momentarily inhabit the unactual space of its musical drama, to vicariously experience how androids hear music.

* * *
Beyond Maids and Meganekko
Examining the Moe Phenomenon

Michael R. Bowman

The phenomenon of moe is perhaps the most significant and controversial phenomenon in Japanese popular culture to have gained prominence in the last decade. However, despite its increasing pervasiveness within the zeitgeist of the anime fan (otaku) community, it is a phenomenon that has been almost entirely ignored by scholars studying Japanese popular culture. Moe, pronounced mo-eh, with two morae, is a rather nebulous concept that at the most basic level can be thought of as an almost fetishized appeal of a character (overwhelmingly female) in anime or manga (comic books). This emphasis toward ‘appeal’ exploded in prominence after the turn of the new millennium to dominate an ever larger percentage of anime output; in 2003 moe-related programming and merchandise accounted for $810 million in sales in Japan (Hirano 42). However, despite its importance, a more precise definition of moe is hard to come by. There has yet to be a truly satisfactory definition developed in any academic source, and even the definitions one finds in common use in the otaku community are often vague or contradictory.

The origins of the term moe itself are also debated. Moe in Japanese literally means “budding,” as a plant, in this context taken to mean perhaps a “budding affection” (Bolton, Csicsery-Rony and Tatsutomi 230). The term is also postulated to have come from the verb moeru, meaning “to burn,” in this context “to burn with passion” (Delia Peru 9). It has even been suggested that the term originated from the names of early ‘cute’ female anime characters Hotaru Tomoe from Sailor Moon (Junichi Sato, 1992-3) and Moe Sagisawa from Dinosaur Planet (Masami Kurukawa, 1993-4) (Oplinger).

In any case, moe has come to be commonly defined in the anime and manga fan communities less by a general overarching concept but rather by a set of identifiable character traits. In this particular schema, moe can be divided, in the broadest sense, into two categories: one called ‘narrative moe’ and another referred to as ‘non-narrative moe.’ Narrative moe is that which is derived from a character’s actions, personality, or back-story; that is, those things which are only identifiable within the context of the story narrative and therefore cannot easily be reproduced in a single still image. Characters exhibiting such traits would include Mio Akiyama or Yui Hirasawa from the anime series K-On! (Nakano Yamada, 2009) whose moe appeal is based on personality quirks (in this case Mio’s fearfulness or Yui’s clumsiness and scatterbrained nature). Archetypal personality traits such as tsundere (alternatingly hostile and loving) would also fall under this category.

Non-narrative moe is that which is created by a set of specific visual characteristics that are not dependent upon a story to be understood and interpreted, and would include such things as physical appearance, clothing and costume as well as ‘fetish objects’ such as glasses (megane), ear or cat ears (nekomimi). Exemplary of this category are Rei Ayanami from Neon Genesis Evangelion (Hideaki Anno, 1995-6) seen wrapped in bandages, Sakura Kinomoto from Card Captor Sakura (Morio Asaka, 1998-2000) in her elaborate, frilly costume, and Anzu Nakano, again from K-On!, wearing the aforesaid nekomimi.

Additionally, overarching qualities exist for all types of moe that govern those more specific traits outlined in our two categories above. First, the moe character, whether expressed narratively or non-narratively, must often exhibit a sense of vulnerability, which induces a feeling of protective-ness towards the character. This vulnerability can be either physical or mental (e.g. a child-like appearance or person

Because of its nebulous nature, some have shoved sexuality into their definition of moe, but such definitions miss the point of what moe actually is.

In summary, Azuma claims, “[t]he chata-moe [a character’s moe], which represents otaku culture of the 1990s, is not the simple action of empathy (as the anime fans wish to believe). It is a quite popular consumer behavior, sustained by the movements back and forth between the characters… and the moe-elements” (53). This postmodernist bent has been taken up in more recent scholarship on anime by Thomas LaMarre, who again focuses on this forced repetition of character traits as the driving force of moe.

In effect, moe refers to an affective response to images…Moe might be thought of in terms of the excite-ment you feel for an image, which leads you on to more images. This onward movement might become organized as repetition compulsion, for instance. You may become obsessed with certain details, and repeat them automatically—as, for instance, with the otaku tendency to repeat images of women with specific kinds of skirts, breasts, hair, weapons, and so forth. What powers such repetition is an élan for the image that allows attention to, and interest in, new images that is, moe (380)

However, these definitions are unsatisfactory for two primary reasons. First, viewing moe only through the lens of its commonly ac-
ccepted traits and markers is inadequate. Such charac-
teristics should be seen as a necessary, but not suffi-
Reassessing Anime

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feeling is one of a nurturing affection. He claims, “Akamatsu has posited that the principal nature of the viewer’s specific response. In this regard, the real focus should not be on superficial external traits, but on the nature of the viewer towards the image is valid.

moe

ow, this is not to say that moe is necessarily only a phenomenon experienced by males – female parallels can be seen in yuri (homosexual female romance) products targeting women, among others. However, since moe products in Japan are overwhelmingly targeting a male audience (intending, therefore, a male response), and since this male-focused manifestation is that to which the otaku community is normally referring when discussing the topic, it will remain our main focus here. Regardless, the moe aesthetic might be conceived of being external to the image itself, or, at the very least, the emotional state of the viewer might be seen as the reason why the quintessentially moe characteristics have the concentrated appeal that they do.

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Second, Anzuma and LaMarre seem to be suggesting that moe is essentially a direct product of the otaku ‘movement’ and of the repetition indicative of the ‘database’ viewing structure of animation and, therefore, is necessarily a new construct inexorably linked with the modern otaku subculture. This, however, is simply not true. While the modern otaku subculture may have helped to accelerate the proliferation of the phenomenon, moe can be seen even in the earliest Japanese animation and comics. If we look for tell...

cient, condition for the explanation of the moe phenomenon. Thus, they should not be singularly seen as definitions of moe, but rather as merely triggers of the phenomenon (Bolton, Csicsery-Rony and Tatsumi 230). What is properly moe is the response these characteristics evoke in the viewer, enhanced by these triggers being concentrated to such an extent within the moe image. Therefore, the real focus should not be on superficial external traits, but on the nature of the viewer’s specific response. In this regard, Akamatsu has posited that the principal nature of the moe feeling is one of a nurturing affection. He claims, “moe is a ‘maternal affection’ which a part of males have been left with that has undergone a change and shown itself and, originally, is an irregular feeling a male should not have; however, it is a pure love which does not include any sexual action and is an exceedingly peaceful desire.” While Akamatsu’s identification of the psychology of the male viewer may be unsatisfactory, nevertheless his identification of the ‘true’ nature of moe as the response created in the viewer towards the image is valid.

In this same male-focused vein, Scott Von Schilling sees moe as a “longing for fatherhood.” Certainly, a significant portion of the consumers in the moe-targeted market are unmarried males in their 30s. Von Schilling believes that these men are beginning to see a lack of purpose in their lives and the “window of fatherhood slowly closing” and, in response, are creating an emotional state in which the longing for fatherhood becomes all the more pressing and mentally all-consuming. In this state, then, they turn to moe products to fill this gap in their emotional being. A perfect example of this ‘fatherly nurturing’ sentiment explicitly expressed in anime can be seen in the character of Henrietta from the series **Gundlanger Girl** (Morio Asaka, 2003-4). Henrietta is a young girl who has been turned into a cyborg to act as an assassin for the Italian government. Over the course of the series she develops a strong affection for her handler, who in turn develops strong paternal and protective feelings towards her.

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sister in a completely platonic relationship (the Akamat-suian “nurture” here explicitly presented to the viewer) – a truly quintessential moe scenario (McCarthy 2009).

Therefore, if the traits that are normally used to describe moe are not seen as the fundamental nature of the phenomenon, then they should be seen as representative of a peculiarly Japanese expression of it, one derived from the unique culture and society of Japan. In particular, we might see these stylistic attributes as an outgrowth of the so-called cult of kawaii (aka: kawaii) – that is, the seeming obsession of the Japanese people with the ‘cute’ and child-like. Sharon Kinsella explains that this aesthetic, which “celebrates sweet, adorable, innocent, pure, simple, gentle, vulnerable, weak, and inexperienced social behavior and physical appearances...saturated the multimedia and consumer goods and services whilst they were expanding rapidly between 1970 and 1990 and reached a peak of saccharine intensity in the early 1980’s” (220). Indeed, one need not look very hard at all to see this predisposition to the ‘cute’ in Japan’s culture. Outside of their natural home in video games, comics, and animation, cute mascots are used in all manner of commercial promotions, from food and household items to Microsoft products and even military and political advertisements.

However, while the outward stylistic elements of the Japanese cute aesthetic can clearly be seen in many moe characters, the “cult of kawaii” is perhaps more important in being symptomatic of a cultural mindset that allowed the expression of Japanese moe to develop. Tomoyuki Sugiyama, author of **Cool Japan**, believes the Japanese fondness for the cute and innocent is rooted in Japan’s harmony-loving culture, stating, “[the] Japanese are seeking a spiritual peace and an escape from brutal reality through cute things” (Kageyama 2006: Washington Post). In this same vein, Miki Katō claims that kawaii and the child-like behavior associated with it are “inherent in the Japanese character” and a consequence of the social and psychological pressures of modern Japanese society. She writes, “[kawaii] gives people a way to hang onto child...

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moe has occurred during a time when these issues are reaching a crescendo. In any case, it becomes quite clear that moe is very much admired in the Japanese psyche, character, and modern culture.

If, then, the tropes most commonly associated with moe are seen as merely culturally dependent trappings, the general concept of moe – as the simple response to the ‘concentrated appeal’ – should alternatively be seen as in universally valid. Indeed, this concentration of the appeal is clearly displayed in all forms of popular art, not only anime and manga, and not only in Japanese art. For example, a possible comparison might be the ‘appeal’ of such films’ ever-increasing levels of explicit violent and gore in Ameri- can horror movies, such as the Saw franchise (2004–2010), originally created by James Wan and Leigh Whannell. Of course, in this case the nature of the viewer response is to the increasing concentration of this appeal and, as such, is very different from the nurturing response engendered by the Japanese expression. It is, nevertheless, a product of the same broad phenomenon found in contemporary popular culture. Indeed, the backlash that developed against the same broad phenomenon found in contemporary popular culture. It is, nevertheless, a product of the Japanese manifestation merely the most obvious form. It is symptomatic of an occurrence of a much more universal, possibly necessary, trajectory of popular art, with its general occurrence of the phenomenon in popular art is the manifestation. A more suitable term for this other more concentrated appeal in this universal way, it would be best not to refer to these other incarnations as ‘extreme’ horror cinema), is the “M-phase” (that is, the “Moe-phase”). In the end, then, is the true significance of the moe phenomenon that has been completely overlooked by anime and manga scholars: moe is symptomatic of an occurrence of a much more universal, and possibly necessary, trajectory of popular art, with its Japanese manifestation merely the most obvious form. It is also a trajectory in which a viewer’s response to the moe or M-phase image, whatever it is intended to be (whether the ‘nurture’ of Japanese moe or the ‘thrill’ of the explicit violence and/or gore in contemporary horror cinema), is maximized by the ‘appeal’ that triggers it becoming increasingly saturated and focused in moe products. In this way, moe has relevance not only to scholars of modern Japanese culture and art in addition to those scholars who consume moe images, but also to all those who are concerned with modern popular art and who inhabit any region of the world. If moe is finally to be understood as a path that all popular art can take, the question really then becomes – what is the next step? Only time will tell.

Works Cited


S since the 1990s, anime has been gaining considerable recognition outside of Japan. This popularity has, and continues to be, bolstered by both our current climate of intense globalisation and the dynamic practices of cultural production which anime fans engage in. It is this intersection between globalisation, popular culture and fandom, which makes anime a fascinating subject of cultural analysis. In particular, anime poses a unique counterpart to the traditional discourse of globalisation as presented by scholars such as George Ritzer (1993), who had suggested the inception of a homogenised global industry moulded on American popular culture. Such a traditional model has been challenged by the way anime as a non-Western cultural product has been enthusiastically received across the globe, due in a very large part to the dedicated involvement of fans who created more exposure for anime by translating and circulating it to audiences worldwide. Furthermore, this global appeal has been attributed to anime’s hybrid nature, which refers to the mixing of Japanese and non-Japanese elements that at the same time signifies neither one culture nor another.

However, I argue that anime cannot be completely dissociated from the ‘Japaneseness’ which typically frames its creation. The challenge here, of course, is to then articulately a discourse of ‘Japaneseness’ for an era of global or transcultural influences and flows. This article suggests that one way to do this is to address Japaneseness as a process of genre formation. More significantly, it emphasises the cultural studies approach to genre, which aims ‘not to posit the inherent value of value, nor to ascribe positive value to any particular entity … but rather to vindicate the activity of evaluation’ (Burgess 347) which underlies the way non-Japanese fans engage with anime.

Hybridity and the Mukobukoi Factor

S ome scholars have attributed anime’s ability to appeal to so many diverse audiences worldwide to its perceived hybridity, whereby ‘distinctive Japanese aesthetics and Western cultural forms and values coexist,’ and can therefore be ‘appreciated by Japanese and Western audiences alike’ (Bainbridge and Norris 243). While anime undoubtedly draws on Japanese traditions of art, the first Japanese animators in the 1910s were also inspired by early American and European animation (Parten 278). For example, acclaimed Japanese animator Tezuka Osamu, hailed as the pioneer of anime, acknowledged the influence which Western animators like Walt Disney had on his work (Schodt 63). This hybridity is likewise reflected in the story

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narratives of the anime themselves, from the retro series Samunzi Champloo (2004-05), characterised by a fusion of hip-hop and samurai/chambara culture, to Tenkuu Tenkou Nazaai (1998), which revolves around a group of modern-day Japanese individuals who discover that they are the reincarnation of samurai of the Edo period. Some of these narratives, furthermore, appear devoid of Japanese cues altogether, like the pseudo-European setting premised on the medieval art of alchemy in the series Hagane no Bokurinjutsu (Fullmetal Alchemist, 2002-04), or the post-apocalyptic landscape of Trigun (1998), with its eclectic blend of science fiction and cowboy/Wild West motifs.

Anime as a hybrid form thus might be seen to represent "the mixing of elements of multiple cultural origins" (Iwabuchi 71). At the same time, its mixed nature enables anime to occupy a space that signifies neither one nor another culture, but is instead 'stateless'. It exists "at a nexus point in global culture; this position allows it to inhabit an amorphous new media territory that crosses and even intermingles national boundaries" (Napier 2005: 23). To that end, some commentators have argued that anime owes its appeal to what has been described as its mukokuseki quality.

The Japanese term mukokuseki literally means "something or someone lacking any nationality," but also implies "the erasure of racial or ethnic characteristics or a context, which does not imprint a particular culture or country with these features" (Iwabuchi 28). In analyses of anime, this concept is most obviously addressed through the depiction of characters that are decidedly non-Japanese in appearance. Usagi Tsukino, the main protagonist of the series Bishoujo Senshi SSSrinta Mus (Pretty Soldier Sailor Moon, 1992-93), for example, is a regular Japanese schoolgirl who nevertheless has blonde hair and blue eyes. This bi-ethnic quality became further pronounced in anime series that adapt their narratives from non-Japanese texts, such as Watanuki no Ashinaga Ojisan (My Daddy-Long-Legs, 1998), which is based on the American novel Daddy-Long-Legs (Webster, 1912), and Akage no An (Red-haired Anne, 1979), which is an adaptation of the 1908 novel Anne of Green Gables by Canadian writer L. M. Montgomery.

Acclaimed Japanese animator Mamoru Oshii (Ghost in the Shell, 1995 and The Sky Crawlers, 2008) has been oft quoted for his suggestion that Japanese artists view Western bodies as the ideal over ‘realistic’ Japanese characters in their work (Iwabuchi 2002; Napier 2005). Furthermore, non-Japanese viewers unfamiliar with anime’s visual designs have been known to “cast such representations as possessing signify Asian stereotypes” (Napier 2007: 175), which include examples such as large, sparkling eyes and hair of every colour imaginable, and comic or cute ‘superdeformed’ characters with small torsos and oversized heads. The appeal of this ‘anime style’ for both Japanese and non-Japanese fans might thus be that it provides a ‘stateless’ space, neither distinctly Japanese nor distinctly Western, for exploring what Napier describes as fluid, ‘postethic’ identities (Napier 2005: 20) against the background of a postmodern world. This argument is supported by the way fans identify with values or themes that, while embodied in an anime character or setting, are universal in the way they relate to the human condition: like the determination to never give up, the empowerment of women, nostalgia for childhood or the uncertainties of adolescence (Napier 2007: 179-85).

Anime’s mukokuseki status, as inferred by its hybrid nature, thus serves to demonstrate the understanding that “the Japan” in Japanese popular culture is always already dislocated, contaminated, cross-pollinated and cross-crossed (Allen and Sakamoto 2008). Indeed, in his study of cultural globalisation against the backdrop of Japan’s progressive rise as a cultural power in Asia, Koichi Iwabuchi observes that Japaneseness as a nationalist discourse has historically been addressed through Japan’s perceived “sophisticated capacity to culturally indigenize the foreign, in which terms the putative Japanese national essence is imagined” (18). Iwabuchi further argues that, in response to Western domination, the capacity to assimilate the foreign became defined “as a unique Japanese characteristic” and was moreover considered “evidence of Japanese superiority to the West” (55). In the 1990s, the surge in and consumption of Japanese popular culture worldwide prompted Japanese commentators to confer a distinctive Japaneseness on cultural products like anime, by claiming that such worldwide “appeal of Japanese popular culture lies in its subtle indigenization of American popular culture” (Iwabuchi 19). The mukokuseki quality which informs the hybrid nature of anime hence becomes articulated as a key feature of Japaneseness itself; the Japanese ‘essence’ of anime is thus ironically derived from the blending of cultures to create a ‘stateless’ space that might be viewed to be absent of any ostensibly Japanese markers, or indeed, racial or ethnic markers of any kind.

Yet I would argue that the concept of mukokuseki is challenged even in the very utterance of the term ‘anime’. While ‘anime’ simply means ‘animation’ in the Japanese language, the processes of globalisation have absorbed and translated the word for an emerging global lexicon; as such, it is used in Anglophone discourse, by fans and in academia, to refer specifically to Japanese animation. Such an understanding distinctly distinguishes anime from other analogous visual media as ‘different’. At the most obvious level, the reasons for this difference are naturally linked back to anime being ‘Japanese’. In this respect, its mukokuseki nature notwithstanding, the ongoing use of the term ‘anime’ confers a ‘Japanese’ cultural odor on these products, which Iwabuchi defines as ‘the way in which cultural features of a country of origin and images or ideas of its national, in most cases stereotyped, way of life are associated positively with a particular product in the consumption process’ (27). Iwabuchi goes on to cite anime as a key example of a Japanese commodity, which is “culturally odorless” in that it does not “evoke images, or ideas of a Japanese lifestyle” (28). But this is a very broad generalisation to make, which can be disproved by considering specific examples of anime series as well as audience responses toward anime. Just as some series take place in markedly non-Japanese settings, like the ‘pirate fantasy’ adventure One Piece (1999-present), others still are grounded in the Japanese landscape, such as the portrayal of contemporary suburban Tokyo life in Sazae-san (1960-present). Furthermore, Napier’s empirical study shows how an interest in anime has led to an interest in Japanese culture for some fans, such as learning the history and language of Japan, cultivating knowledge of contemporary Japanese politics or even cooking dishes depicted in some anime series (Napier 2007: 185).

Thus, despite the view of anime as a mukokuseki product, it cannot be completely dissociated from ideas of Japaneseness. Attempting to locate this Japaneseness in anime is a complex task, given that it has to take into account its global distribution, the Japanese national or cultural backdrop against which it was created, and translation of anime for non-Japanese sociocultural contexts. Significantly, the Japaneseness as Genre

Japanese as Genre

Tr1aditional genre theory has typically offered formalist and generalised definitions of genre that are primarily interested in “identifying the abstract theoretical ‘essence’ of a genre in an idealized form” (Mittell 4). Such approaches have attempted to delimit genres as formal...
The cross of Mitrell's study is his proposal that genre be re-envisioned as "discursive practices": "by regarding genre as a property and function of discourse, we can examine the ways in which various forms of communication work to constitute generic definitions, meanings, and values within particular historical contexts" (12). Mitrell argues that it is more fruitful to view genre as an "archetypal category" rather than in terms of textual components—that is, genres do not emerge from intrinsic textual features of texts, but instead "work to categorize texts and link them into clusters of cultural assumptions" (xiv). This is achieved through the processes of definition, interpretation, and evaluation, which Mitrell describes as "the three primary ways genres circulate and become culturally manifest" (16). According to Mitrell, genres are not "ahistorical and static" but "shift and evolve in reflection of another important understanding of genres: the conventions of traditional genre analysis, anime as a genre is thus reduced to the textual components of 'science-fiction' and 'violent or explicitly sexual material'" (16). Mitrell argues that anime as a genre is not defined by textual elements, cultural practices constituting generic categories through definitional discourses typically focus on textual features (10).

Western criticism of the uncompromising portrayal of violence and sex in anime in particular lends weight to Mitrell's assertion that genres are culturally practiced categories. Cartoons in Japan cater to every conceivable viewer demographic, and thus express a vast range of subjects to accommodate these various audiences.

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drop on a character's head to symbolise embarrassment or bemusement, are defined as Japanese because they accrue their meanings in a Japanese context—to put it another way, it is the way these visual cues are coded as symbols and propagated in Japanese culture which enable them to produce meaning (Leong 50).

The disinclination by some fans to specify examples of Japaneseness in itself was revealing. One fan felt that the “scope is just too big” and it would be “like trying to list the elements of American culture that appear in Hollywood films” (Leong 51). Yet even in articulating the difficulty of defining Japaneseness, such a comment draws attention back to the observation that anime is first and foremost an “original product of the concatenation of circumstances that have created the culture of modern Japan” (Napior 2005: 27), thereby reaffirming the link between anime and Japanese culture.

My scholarly study of non-Japanese anime fans, therefore, demonstrates a conceptualisation of Japaneseness that is diverse in its scope, whether as textual features or as an evolving concept, according to their frequency or prominence in anime narratives, in comparison to Western cultural paradigms, and even in explications of the difficulties of delimiting a discourse of Japaneseness (Leong 46-53). In Mittell’s terms, Japaneseness here can be constituted as a genre through the way these individual fan interpretations are linked into “clusters of cultural assumptions” (16) in anime fandom. Hence, rather than downplay the Japaneseness of anime to account for its global popularity, its formulation as genre within a cultural studies framework allows for a more sophisticated negotiation of the complex mix and also an exchange of transcultural values and flows which characterise today’s global climate.

Works Cited

**The Higurashi Code**

**Algorithm and Adaptation in the Otaku Industry and Beyond**

John Wheeler

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1. Dōjin producers range from single artists/writers working alone and publishing comics (analogous to American underground “zines”) to small independent companies such as 07th Expansion or Dōjin industry, see Azuma 25-26.

2. This phenomenon is best exemplified by the way Ueda’s original work, *Higurashi When They Cry*, has been adapted into video games, novels, manga, anime, and numerous other media forms, each of which has its own unique set of features and can be considered a “distinct 07th Expansion property.” See Azuma 25-26 for a more detailed discussion of the ways in which these properties have been created and marketed.

3. This implies that the nature of the adaptation and the medium in which it is produced can have a significant impact on the final product, as well as on the relationship between the creator and the audience. For example, the adaptation of *Higurashi When They Cry* into a visual novel was seen as more faithful to the original work than the anime series, which was seen as more faithful to the novel version of the story. This suggests that the medium in which a work is produced can influence the way it is perceived and understood by the audience.

4. This is consistent with the idea that the relationship between the creator and the audience is not a one-way process, but a two-way interaction in which both the creator and the audience play active roles in the production and consumption of the work.

5. This is also consistent with the idea that the nature of the adaptation and the medium in which it is produced can have a significant impact on the final product, as well as on the relationship between the creator and the audience. For example, the adaptation of *Higurashi When They Cry* into a visual novel was seen as more faithful to the original work than the anime series, which was seen as more faithful to the novel version of the story. This suggests that the medium in which a work is produced can influence the way it is perceived and understood by the audience.

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The most important function of the algorithm in Higurashi is the lack of freedom it affords the player within the game-space.
Adapting the Algorithm

The major problems inherent in adapting an interactive text into a film or novel are potentially unsolvable because translating the player’s living, reciprocal relationship with an algorithm into that of a passive reader or viewer creates a fundamental sense of loss and constraint in someone familiar with the adapted game. As Linda Hutcheon writes, “Transposition to another medium, or even moving within the same one, always means change, or in the language of the new media, ‘reformatting’” (16). As was discussed in the previous section, Higurashi occupies a middle ground between interactive and non-interactive mediums. With the clearly demarcated “arcs” of the Higurashi television series, which on a strictly narrative level, stay little from the original visual novel series, the appeal of ‘watching’ becomes linked to the ‘pleasure’ of attaining the ‘good’ or ‘bad ending’ in a video game. Other adaptations, such as the adaptation of a single narrative with branching paths based around the choice between a ‘harem of girlfriends’, tend instead to remove all traces of interactivity by establishing a single, canonical female character for the male protagonist to interact with. The ‘pleasure’ of choosing and solving the algorithm to ‘win’ each individual character becomes merely the ‘pleasure of watching the characters’, the interactive choice between female anime character archetypes internalized in the viewer’s mind. When the original Higurashi question arc, ‘Spring/Summer’ (a Demon Chaser part of the sound design line, 2002), was adapted into a live-action film by Aataru Oikawa in 2008, it opened up the world of Hinamizawa to a new audience yet also left these individuals without a solution. As with the background story elements and characters change fundamentally from iteration to iteration, part of the appeal of Higurashi as a property becomes the medium-to-medium translation itself, seeing changes in the perspective and style used to essentially tell the same stories.

There is an unbreakable link between the algorithm that defines a game and the narrative, and often the algorithm also manifests itself in the visual aesthetic chosen by the developers to represent their game-space. If the flatness and simplicity of the algorithm underlying the dōjin Higurashi manifests in the visual two-dimensionality of text running over non-animated, two-dimensional characters superimposed on immobile backgrounds, then naturally the adaptation from the static world of the visual novel to an animated world structurally defined by ‘cells’ rather than ‘codes’ would change the visual aesthetic of the product fundamentally.

The shift from the aesthetic of a visual novel to an anime series is, therefore, a transition that occurs on both a level of animation and of perspective: the novelistic first-person perspective of the dōjin becomes a third-person narrative in the anime, and all characters are visible in face of the camera’s lens. Yet remnants of the visual novel’s static two-dimensionality remain, particularly in the quasi-deformed character styles and the use of ‘shock cuts’ instead of camera zooms to move toward characters within the frame. The Higurashi anime, therefore, retains some of the static qualities of the visual novel, and a degree of continuity of visual aesthetic is established across adaptations. One of the obvious contradictions between style and substance is the relationship of the visual novel to the anime, is the uneasy relationship between the bright color palette and ‘cutesy’ characters, in addition to the shocking, usually gyrocryptic violence of the narrative. Interestingly, however, it is in the transition into a manga series – with its clearly defined “arcs” of the story and static images – that Higurashi gains a true visual depth that reflects both the psychological states of its characters and the striking horror of its storyline. Its artists – a different one for each arc used – use shadows to greater psychological effect than the anime or the visual novel, thereby conquering some of the ‘flaws’ defined by the underlying structure and aesthetic of the previous forms.

The transition from visual novel to anime is also about the relationship between the two forms: both game and series use ‘shock strands’ on the soundtrack music to emotionally signal the player/viewer. In the case of the visual novel, this is another departure from the format of the novel – the creators even refer to their series as a ‘sound novel’, a small and rather vague definition sub-genre of visual novels. Nevertheless, this categorization partially works to fundamentally distinguish their work from other visual novels. As Higurashi is more about player affect than gamer input, the use of sound, especially the ubiquitous and maddening cry of the higurashi cicadas themselves, is a major means of conveying emotion. The music and effects in the visual novels are simple and oft-repeated in the same way the character animations and backgrounds are, owing much to the limited budget of a dōjin game and having the effect of reducing emotional cues to an extremely simple level. As with many elements of the game, we see in the sound design a fundamentally cinematic technique used in the service of the game’s more novelistic elements: the conveyance of an unbearable narrative through screeching text.

Higurashi has proven conducive to fan production, with a dōjin released at Comiket composed entirely of fan-submitted narratives turned into games by 07th Expansion. As Hiroki Azuma writes, the small, self-contained narratives that have become the storytelling norm in the otaku industry beg for fan input, and in the case of Higurashi, the draw of inserting one’s own story into the established world and characters of Hinamizawa was a natural byproduct (Azuma 2009). In many ways, the original visual novels created by 07th Expansion were themselves a form of fan production in their independent origins and reliance on otaku character tropes. While my research and this article have drawn from a specific example from within the Japanese otaku industry, the line between interactivity and spectatorship continues to blur by major producers of entertainment around the world. For this type of malleability, both as it suc- ceed, the nature of the gamer and their interaction with the game-space must be reformed by the algorithm itself. In other words, the game becomes the viewer and the character becomes the viewer/reader.

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29 Reassessing Anime

28 CINEPHILE Vol. 7, No. 1, Spring 2011
since the enactment of the revised Bill 156 of Tokyo Metropolitan Ordinance Regarding the Healthy Development of Youths,1 creators of manga and anime who had to reconsider the representations of sexuality in each of their respective works. A shrewd observer of his medium and society, anime and manga scholar Mamoru Oshii, had already been reflecting on the increased sexualization of fictional characters. In 2004, several years before Bill 156, Oshii directed the anime film Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence, a futureist story in which ‘sex dolls’ — modeled after little girls — become sentient and murder their owners. Oshii’s preoccupation in this film seems to be with the remnants of desire and sexuality ‘in the age of their mechanical reproduction’ and the consequent discomfort in such a civilization. In this article, I will first discuss a few points on the depiction of ‘little girls’ (shôjo literally meaning “little female”) brought up in the two essential writings on Japanese anime in the West and in Japan: Thinking Before the Act, released a revised and augmented version of her 2001 ground-breaking ‘anime-exclusive’ book, Anime from Akita to Princess Mononoke: Experiencing Contemporary Japanese Animation. In one of her added chapters, “Now You See Her, Now You Don’t: The Disappearing shôjo,” Napier discusses the evanescent figure of the ‘little girl’ in recent anime series and movies, and demonstrates the existence of a character type in anime that goes against historical and etymological links between feminine characteristics and their corporeal materiality. Rather than being associated with her corporeality, Napier’s shôjo is better associated with a process of evanescence and ‘vanishing.’ In contemporary anime, the stability of corporeality seems to be a major issue for the ‘little girls’ studied by Napier: one gradually becomes transparent when she is transported to a ‘fantastic world’ and must even forgo the use of her name, thus falling into a kind of linguistic invisibility (Spierled Away, Hayao Miyazaki, 2001); another, wandering in a ‘surreal world,’ seemingly ends up being impaled by thousands of flying swords and physically disappears, but also ‘vanishes’ from her friends’ memories (Shôjo Kakumei Utena, Kunihiko Kuwahara, 1997); a group of them, unknowingly imprisoned in a kind of purgatory (most likely to expiate their suicides), eventually ‘leave’ their bodies, thus disappearing twice rather than just once (Hayabune Renmei, Yoshitaki Abe, 1998); and, Lain, the protagonist of Serial Experiments Lain (Ryutaro Nakamura, 1998), assumes the form of an all-powerful, immortal entity by becoming a ‘cyber-goddess’ and then ‘removing’ herself from the memories of everyone who has ever met her, therefore bringing about a kind of psychic ‘disappearance.’ Napier also identifies the protagonist of the first Ghost in the Shell film (Mamoru Oshii, 1995), a cyborg police officer named Motoko Kusanagi who inhabits a little girl’s body at the very end of the film, as “the most prominent progenitor of the disappearing shôjo” (Napier 170). The ‘vanishing’—indeed, almost ‘erasing’—aesthetic that permeates representations of the ‘little girl’ in anime and manga is a prominent and thematic characteristic of these art forms. This sexualization of the little girl is known in Japan as ‘loli’ (aka: ‘eroteniku’), which is a portmanteau of the term “Lolita complex.”2 The word ‘lolicon’ is used both as an adjective (e.g. a lolicon work) and a noun, in which case it refers to an enthusiast of lolicon material (e.g. to be a lolicon). In one chapter of his book, Dreamland Japan: Writings on Modern Manga, Frederik L. Schodt, chronicles the evolution of the representation of sexuality in general — and particularly of lolicon — during the late 1980s in Japan (1996). Up until that time, manga creators adhered to the guidelines set forth by the relatively vague Article 175 of the Japanese Penal Code, otherwise known as ‘the obscenity law,’ as well as tacit rules concerning what be longed to ‘good taste’ and what did not. Compliance with these guidelines gradually receded to a resurgence of sexual imagery brought, among other things, by increasingly more violent sexuality, including depictions of undergarments characters not exclusive to adult-oriented manga, but also in publications targeting the general public. Schodt sums up this change in disposition in the following way, underlining the difference between the female sexual ‘ideal’ in the West and in Japan: The specific prohibition against showing pubic hair, however, may have induced some encouragingly more erotic manga artists to draw pubescent girls as sex objects, with ridiculously inflated breasts. Never before in the history of manga than the late 1980s, when the very first scene, Batô fights one of the gy- nosis infused with the ‘ghost’ of a kidnapped girl. The girl, whose ghost is imprisoned within the ‘shell’ (i.e. the body) of a ghostly named as a geisha, beseeches Batô: “Tasuketē” (“Please help us...” in the English subtitles). At this point, the ‘real,’ living little girl exists only on the audio track, since the body seen on screen is only a borrowed form which she ‘haunts’ against her own will. Batô shoots the girl, de- 1. Bill 156, which concerned the sexualized representations of so-called ‘fictitious youths’ in Japan, was submitted in November 2010 and then later approved in December 2010. It officially took effect in July 2011. 2. The term originates from the type and stigmatic character of the 1955 novel Lolita by Vladimir Nabokov, in which a teacher in his 40s falls in love with a girl at the dawn of adolescence nicknamed ‘Lolita’ (1959). 3. The ‘shell’ is the ‘spirit’ and/or ‘consciousness’ of an individual (this is never made explicit in any of the movies), while the ‘shell’ is its ‘physical body.’

Mamoru Oshii’s Ghost in the Shell 2: Innocence Thinking Before the Act

Frederic Clément

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At this point, the ‘real,’ living little girl exists only on the audio track, since the body seen on screen is only a borrowed form which she ‘haunts’ against her own will. Batô shoots the girl, de-
it is revealed during a meeting between Batô, his colleague Togusa and their superior that the ‘sex dolls’ are called “Hadaly” by their manufacturer. This name is a reference to the novel L’Ève Future by French author Villiers de l’Isle-Adam, published in 1886, from which the film takes its opening quote: “Since our gods and our aspirations are no longer anything but scientific, why should our loves not be, as well?”5 As for the gynoids’ physical appearance, it is directly borrowed from the works of German surrealist artist Hans Bellmer who, in the 1930s, published a photo album titled The Doll. In his particularly thorough essay on the thematic and visual links between this film and the works of Bellmer, Steven T. Brown correlates the uncanny subjects seen in the movie and the pertinent elements borrowed from Bellmer (2008): the cruciform silhouette of a doll seen in the opening credits, the book The Doll shown from Batô’s point of view (long enough for the spectator to read the title and the author’s name), and the gynoid/gynoid tearing her own torso open to reveal her mechanical ‘bowels’ which evokes Bellmer’s drawing Rose Ouverte la Nuit (1935). As Brown points out, the two little girls are indifferent to the display of their insides, of their intimacy (Brown 239-40). Brown notes that Bellmer’s work was partly made in reaction to the ambient fascism of the time; the way the dolls reveal their interior mechanism seems like a protest against the cult of beauty and youth conveyed by the Nazi regime. In the gynoid’s self-destruction, Brown sees “an act of resistance against the ideal of beauty to which the kidnapped adolescent girls are being held captive” (Brown 241).

Such exhibition of intimacy does not occur only in that scene, but rather seems to permeate the whole film. Already, in the first Ghost in the Shell film, the visual representation of anatomical gender was problematic: despite numerous shots depicting Motoko’s bare crotch, no genitals

4. This character is a real-life reference to philosopher and cyber-artist Donna J. Haraway, who wrote the influential essay “A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century” (Haraway 1991).

5. For more information on the importance of L’Ève Future in this movie, see Sharalyn Orbaugh’s article titled “Emotional Infectivity: Cyborg Affect and the Limits of the Human” (Orbaugh 2008).
were visible. While it was diagnostically possible that Motoko had no anatomical gender (she is, after all, a cyborg whose only remaining organic part is a piece of her brain), the gynoids of Innocence are a different matter altogether. During the investigation, the forensic scientist Haraway tells Batô and Togusa that these gynoids have ‘extra’ organs unneeded by normal service androids. The gynoids are actually ‘sex-arois’ (‘sexbots’ in the English subtitles): dolls that feature functional genitalia. However, the anatomical gender of these gynoids remains unseen, despite the plethora of shots showing their pubic areas, especially during the final battle and the opening credits, just as in the previous Ghost in the Shell.6 The gynoids seem to occupy an anatomical gender of ‘no man’s land’: they are artificial beings, unable to reproduce through sexual activity and are powered by the spirits of little girls who are too young to procreate. As automata, the gynoids exist at the threshold of reproduction: they reproduce gestures and words (“Tasukête”), but can never reproduce themselves, in spite of the intrinsic link between their existence and sexuality. Destined for eternal unfulfillment, they instead opt for self-destruction, making this their only ‘act of resistance’.

**Feminine as Possessed Monster**

In her book *The Monstrous-Feminine: Film, Feminism,* *Psychoanalysis* (1993), Barbara Creed identifies seven ‘faces’ of the monstrous-feminine found in horror movies: the archaic mother, the woman as possessed monster, the woman as monstrous womb, the woman as vampire, the woman as monstrous mother and the castrator. Of these seven types, Innocence’s gynoids are closest to women as possessed monsters. Creed describes this archetype by analyzing the movie *The Exorcist* (William Friedkin, 1973).

In the film, a female teenager on the threshold of puberty named Regan MacNeil (Linda Blair) is possessed by an ‘evil spirit’. Many parallels can be traced between The Exorcist and Innocence, notably that the murderous gynoids seem to relate to the archetype of the possessed monster in the same way that the hosts of a copied ‘ghost’ that comes from little girls, just as Regan is the host of a ‘foreign spirit.’ Just like the little girls that ‘possess’ in the same way: the ‘sex dolls’ are the hosts of a copied spirit of little girls who are too young to procreate. As automata, the gynoids exist at the threshold of reproduction: they reproduce gestures and words (“Tasukête”), but can never reproduce themselves, in spite of the intrinsic link between their existence and sexuality. Destined for eternal unfulfillment, they instead opt for self-destruction, making this their only ‘act of resistance’.

6. In the (mostly Lacanian) psychoanalytic duo, the woman is defined by what she lacks – the phallicus – placing her in a state of ‘incompleteness’. In anime, where instead of sexual organs, secondary gender characteristics are depicted, the gender which is defined by the ‘lack’ is male. They neither have breasts (a prominent feature in most anime) nor eyelashes. Except in the case of men whose ‘harness’ is emphatically depicted, in anime, it is the masculine that is ‘physically’ incomplete.

In the second half of her book, Barbara Creed then tackles the Freudian concept of the castrated woman. Creed demonstrates, in her reading of the psychoanalysis of Little Hans in ‘Analysis of a Phobia in a Five-year-old Boy’ (2001), that the phobia afflicting the child does not stem from fear of the apparent castration of his mother, but rather comes from the fear of the *femme castratrice* (in French in Creed’s text). Apparently, Freud, along with Hans’s father, analyzed the child’s dreams and behaviour in such a way as to make them fit Freud’s own psychoanalytic theories such as the Oedipus complex and the castration complex, which was sure to bias any interpretation. Freud security guards. Powerful and agile enough to ‘take down’ the guards bare-handed, they do not even bother picking up their guns once they fall; their artificial and feminine bodies are more than adequate as murderous weapons. This is in stark contrast with typical rape-revenge movies, in which women often use phallic weapons such as knives to penetrate men’s bodies – and often to ‘emaculate’ them.

**Powerful and agile enough to ‘take down’ the guards bare-handed...their artificial and feminine bodies are more than adequate as murderous weapons.**

The monstrous-feminine, as Creed shows, is often associated with abjection from the body. In her *Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection* (1982), psychoanalyst Julia Kristeva makes a distinction between abjection and the uncanny: ‘Especially different from ‘uncanniness’, more violent, too, abjection is elaborated through a failure to recognize its kind; nothing is familiar, not even the shadow of a monstrosity’ (Kristeva 14). More than male characters in horror movies, the female’s ‘monstrous’ embodiments are associated with bodily fluids and other viscous elements: menstrual blood, placenta, vomit, etc. In this context of abjection, Innocence’s gynoids seem to break the mold. Their artificial bodies are immaculately white and, in a way, their monstrosity is contained: their spilled entrails are cables that do not float in any kind of fluid or viscous element, unlike androids such as the one from Alien (Ridley Scott, 1979) out of which a whitish ‘blood’ sprays when it is damaged. The gynoids’ shrouded faces display a skull on which no blood flows: the associated monstrous quality of the feminine in Innocence is sleek, dry and sterile. When the monstrous is displayed in a male character, such as To- gusa’s wounded torso or the ripped-out organs of Volkerson (a Locus Solaris employee found dismembered in his villa), blood drips, spurs and leaves marks, which is the case in Volkerson’s bloody handprint in the mirror. This ‘dry’ femininity within the monstrosity of the gynoids contrasts with Motoko’s character in the first *Ghost in the Shell* movie, where her female corporeality was much more linked with ‘liquid’ elements: her genesis in fluid, the pouring rain during the scene when she wandered around the city as well as her underwater diving all establish that fact. Furthermore, about halfway through the film, during her battles against a ‘hacker,’ and in the end against...
a tank, she becomes invisible and the only sign of her presence is the water she displaces with her steps. The cyborg policewoman evokes the monstrous only once in *Ghost in the Shell*, but her evocation is not of the dry and contained kind like the gynoids. As she strays to open the tank hatch, her limbs break apart and pieces and debris from her ‘body’ are scattered around her. Destabilized, she falls to the damp ground and is lifting by the tank’s pincers, her body dripping. In *Innocence*, the gynoids are also manufactured in a liquid environment, but even when emerging from the water in *Locus Solus*’ factory, they never look ‘wet,’ except from their victims’ blood. The monstrous they represent is as sleek and cold as the porcelain their immaculate white bodies seem to be made from. This ‘whiteness’ may be viewed as a symbol of their purity… and innocence.

**Beyond Innocence: The Anti-Body**

In the closing words of Frederik Schodt’s 1996 book, *Dreamland Japan*, the author warns the reader of the downside of manga’s ‘booming’ popularity outside of Japan, and the skewed reception of some of its content, stating that “[i]n a worst-case scenario, the ‘Lolita complex’ might even be inadvertently exported” (Schodt 340). While Japan’s “virus” might not disappear completely even after Bill 156’s recent approval, its strength might be seriously dampened. Whatever happens, let us not forget that six years before Bill 156 was passed, Mamoru Oshii had already made public his own version of the antibodies for that particular virus: fabricated instruments of ‘pleasure’ in *Ghost in the Shell*. Fabulated instruments of ‘pleasure’ in *Ghost in the Shell*. Fabulated instruments of ‘pleasure’ in *Ghost in the Shell*. Fabulated instruments of ‘pleasure’ in *Ghost in the Shell*.

**Works Cited**

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